



Game Report



A lioness from the Kambula pride attempts to hunt buffalo.

MalaMala Game Reserve June 2020

“No one could imagine encounters as dramatic as nature enacts each day.”

Anon

It must be noted that due to Covid-19 our camps were closed from March 2020. Therefore, no camps were open during the months that followed, including this one. Consequently, the number of sightings will be lower in this Game Report than typical. In addition, the sightings in this Game Report are of animals found by the small skeleton team of rangers who remained on site while conducting field work and filming the *Rangers in Isolation* series for our YouTube channel.

THE MONTH'S WEATHER SUMMARY					
Temperature					
Celsius (°C)			Fahrenheit (°F)		
	Actual	Average		Actual	Average
Maximum	36	25.3	Maximum	96.8	77.5
Minimum	4	10.3	Minimum	39.2	50.5
Rainfall					
Millimetres		Inches		Days of rain	
15.5		0.6		3	

TOTAL SIGHTINGS	
Lion	42
Leopard	47
Elephant	94
Buffalo	29
Cheetah	5
Cape hunting dog	18

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	1 impala, 1 zebra
Leopard	5 impala, 1 bushbuck
Cheetah	1 juvenile nyala
Cape hunting dog	4 impala

*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS

LIONS
LION PRIDES

THE KAMBULA PRIDE = 20

3 ADULT FEMALES	± 7 YEARS 3 MONTHS
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 7 YEARS 0 MONTHS
3 CUBS	2 YEARS 0 MONTHS
3 CUBS	1 YEAR 11 MONTHS
2 CUBS	1 YEAR 10 MONTHS
3 CUBS	1 YEAR 9 MONTHS
3 CUBS	1 YEAR 1 MONTHS
MALAMALA, FLOCKFIELD (16 sightings)	

A similar trend as in May was seen with this pride spending the first half of the month in the southern parts of their territory and the northern parts of their territory in the latter half of the month. One or both Gowrie males were seen in eight sightings of this pride.

On the 2nd was out first sighting of members of the Kambula pride at Charleston north crossing where 3 females and six cubs were seen. On the 3rd four females, all 14 cubs and a Gowrie male were seen near Beaumont's camp. On the 5th the female yet to have cubs was seen in the Rock drift donga near its confluence with the Sand River. The entire pride (barring one female) and the two Gowrie males were seen near Rattray's camp on the 6th. From here they moved east and on the 8th four females and eight cubs were seen at Buffalo Bush dam. Following up in the same area the following day we tracked these members of the pride to the borehole in eastern Flockfield. In doing so we found the other six cubs on their own near the rocks on baby elephant walk. The full compliment of the pride was found on the 12th near Charleston North crossing in two separate sightings separated by half a kilometre. From here the pride moved north along the Sand River with two females being seen near the causeway, while three females and all the cubs were with a Gowrie male at West Street bridge on the 13th. Over a week went by with no sightings of these lions. We next found the full pride and both Gowrie males on the 22nd behind MalaMala camp. All 22 lions moved south together and were found at Donald's crossing a couple of days later, on the 24th. The last sighting of all 20 lions together was on the 27th near MalaMala camp. The female not to have had cubs was seen alone at the Ngoboswan donga on the 29th. She was seen again on the 30th with an impala kill at West Street bridge but this time in the company of both Gowrie males. We have good reason to believe, and contradictory to what we've previously thought, that this female is pregnant.

THE EYREFIELD PRIDE = 2

1 ADULT FEMALE	13 YEARS 0 MONTHS
1 CUB	1 YEAR 0 MONTHS
CHARLESTON (0 sightings)	

There were no sightings of this lioness and her cub this month.

THE TORCHWOOD PRIDE = 14

7 ADULT FEMALES

UNKOWN AGES

6 SUB ADULT FEMALES

± 4 YEARS 5 MONTHS

1 SUB ADULT MALE

± 4 YEARS 5 MONTHS

NORTH EASTERN EYREFIELD.

**This pride is starting to fragment, and we believe a 'breakaway' is in progress.*

(5 sightings)

This month we only saw the young females and the young male from the Torchwood pride. On the 4th we found four females and the young male at Clarendon dam. The following day a female was seen by herself at Matshapiri Dam. Then again on the 6th the same five lions were seen in Clarendon. The last sighting of the pride was of a female by herself on the Gowrie boundary between the Mlowathi and Matshapiri Rivers.

THE MARTHLY PRIDE = 2

1 ADULT FEMALE

7 YEARS 0 MONTHS

1 CUB

1 YEAR 3 MONTHS

MARTHLY

(5 sightings)

We've seen an increase in sightings of this pride over the course of June. After the dramatic events of last month on the 18th we were delighted to find mother and daughter reunited and looking well on the 5th in the Manyelethi River south of Stwise. We viewed them again on the 6th at Stwise. On the 9th they were seen together at Paraffin drift. From here they moved east, and we found them somewhat on the outskirts of their typical territory at Campbell Koppies on the 11th. The last sighting for the month of June of this pride was of the lioness alone at the base of Stwise where she was sniffing in the area the Plaque Rock female leopard had had an impala kill stolen by hyenas not long before.

THE NKUHUMA PRIDE = 17

1 ADULT FEMALE

± 8 YEARS 0 MONTHS

2 ADULT FEMALES

± 7 YEARS 6 MONTHS

1 ADULT FEMALE

± 7 YEARS 3 MONTHS

3 SUB ADULT FEMALES

± 4 YEARS 1 MONTHS

1 SUB ADULT FEMALE

± 3 YEARS 11 MONTHS

2 CUBS

1 YEAR 1 MONTH

2 CUBS

11 MONTHS

3 CUBS

10 MONTHS

1 CUB

6 MONTHS

NORTH WESTERN EYREFIELD

(2 sightings)

We only saw the Nkuhuma pride twice this month and both sightings were of the entire pride. The first sighting was near Mlowathi dam on the 17th. The following day we found them well fed just to the north of Stwise. Again, proving that the Marthly lioness is under immense pressure, wedged between the territories of our two largest prides currently.

THE STYX PRIDE = 6

1 ADULT FEMALE	12 YEARS 5 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 5 MONTHS
2 SUB ADULTS	3 YEARS 6 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT	3 YEARS 4 MONTH
1 SUB ADULT	2 YEARS 11 MONTHS
NOMADIC	
(0 sightings)	

We again did not see the Styx pride this month.

MALE LIONS

THE GOWRIE MALES = 2

1 ADULT MALE	± 9 YEARS 6 MONTHS
1 ADULT MALE	± 8 YEARS 6 MONTHS
EYREFIELD, MALAMALA	
DOMINANT OVER THE KAMBULA PRIDE AND MARTHLI PRIDE.	
<i>First encounter: September 2015.</i>	
(10 sightings)	

The two Gowrie males were seen together on four of the 10 sightings of this coalition. For the most part they were seen with members of the Kambula pride and for those sightings please refer to the section on the Kambula pride. Only twice did we see these males not accompanying the Kambula pride. On the 8th one of the males was seen at Campbell Koppies. On the 29th both males were seen near mamba waterhole.

THE 'NORTHERN' AVOCA MALES = 2

2 ADULT MALES	± 7 YEARS 0 MONTHS
NORTH WESTERN EYREFIELD	
DOMINANT OVER THE NKUHUMA PRIDE	
<i>First encountered:</i>	
(1 sighting)	

We only saw these two males once this month and not with the Nkuhuma pride for a change. They were both together on the 14th at Mlowathi dam.

THE 'SOUTHERN' AVOCA MALES = 2

2 ADULT MALES	± 7 YEARS 4 MONTHS
CHARLESTON	
(0 sightings)	

We did not see these two males this month.

OTHER LIONS ENCOUNTERED:

- **Plains Camp 'breakaway' Pride (two sub adult females and two sub adult males)** were seen twice this month. The first sight was of just the two males near Beaumont's camp on the 6th. The second sighting was of all four in the Sand River at Verreaux's crossing on the 24th.
- **The Fourways Pride (3 adult females and 6 cubs)** were seen on the 12th near Paddy's pools in the company of the two unknown males. On the 28th and 29th only the pride was seen close to the Kruger National Park boundary just south of the MalaMala/Flockfield boundary.

- Three females from the **Sand River** pride made an appearance on the 8th near Charleston Rock.
- Two unidentified females were seen near Campbell Koppies on the 9th. It could well have been females from the Torchwood pride, but we were unable to get a great view.
- An unknown sub adult male was seen at Paraffin drift on the 3rd. He was walking north and east responding to a contact call, we suspect there was another male nearby.
- An unknown sub adult male was seen near Beaumont's camp on the 3rd. he was bleeding badly from his hind quarters. With the Kambula pride and a Gowrie male seen in the same area its possible he had a run in with them.
- On the 29th and 30th two sub adult males were seen along the Nwana Nonanshemeni Donga feeding on a zebra kill.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LIONS ENCOUNTERED	62(30 cubs)
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LEOPARDS

FEMALE LEOPARDS

THE PICCADILLY FEMALE CUB

6 YEARS 6 MONTHS
3 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLY

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

(2 sightings)

With both the sons of the Emsagweni female spending a extensive amount of their time in the Piccadilly female's territory she has had to move her cub further west. Therefore, sightings of this female were down this month and we did not see her cub. On the 4th we found the Piccadilly female with the 3:3 son of the Emsagweni female on the eastern ramp of the Causeway with an impala kill. We suspect the young male had stolen the kill from the female. Both ended up losing the meal to a hyena. The second sighting of this female leopard was right on our doorstep on the 24th. She'd killed an impala on the lawns of MalaMala Main camp and hoisted her kill in one of the sausage trees behind room one.

THE NKOVENI FEMALE 1 MALE CUB

7 YEARS 11 MONTHS
4 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA, WESTERN MARTHLY

Daughter of the Mashaba female, independent early 2014.

(6 sightings)

Yet another month where most of the sightings of this female leopard where near MalaMala camp. On the 1st she was seen on the Causeway. The following day she led her cub west in front of both Sable and MalaMala camps. For the remaining four sightings only, the female was seen without her cub. We have reason to believe she unfortunately lost her cub. On the 4th she was seen at Bicycle crossing. She was seen twice just behind MalaMala camp on the 7th and 27th. The last sighting of this female was on the 29th at MalaMala camp.

THE EMSAGWENI FEMALE

10 YEARS 6 MONTHS

NORTH/EASTERN MALAMALA AND EYREFIELD

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

(1 sighting)

With both her son's having been independent for the last 6-10 months the question is when and where will this female have her next litter of cubs? The only sighting of the Emsagweni female this month was near Ostrich Koppies on the 9th.

THE ISLAND FEMALE

7 YEARS 4 MONTH

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, SOUTHERN HALF OF MALAMALA

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

(3 sightings)

Again, we recorded fewer sightings of this much adored female leopard for the month of June. She was seen on three occasions and as was the case in May these sightings were spread throughout her territory. On the 8th she was seen near Maurice's pan. On the 10th she was seen at the confluence of the Matshapiri River and the Hogvaal donga. The last sighting of the Island female was an exciting one where she had an impala kill stolen from her by the Kambula pride south of West Street bridge.

THE LOOKOUT FEMALE

10 YEARS 4 MONTH

MALE CUB

9 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON

First seen on MALAMALA GAME RESERVE in late 2015.

(0 sighting)

We again did not see the Lookout female and her cub this month.

THE KAPEN FEMALE

2 YEAR 8 MONTHS

CENTRAL, WESTERN AND NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD

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

(0 sightings)

We did not see the Kapen female this month, although we briefly saw a female at new rocks that could well have been her.

THE THREE RIVERS FEMALE

4 YEARS 2 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALAMALA

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

(3 sightings)

The Three Rivers female was first seen at Flockfield tower on the 6th. She is now at the age that we can expect her to have her first litter of cubs and although she has been seen mating with the Maxim's male on many occasions it seems their efforts have been unsuccessful. On the 23rd we found her again mating with the Maxim's male in front of Rattray's camp. On the 27th she was further north than where we typically see this female. She was north of the airstrip and having an altercation with the younger Plaque Rock female. For a change she was not the inexperienced one in an interaction like this.

THE SIBUYE FEMALE 6 YEARS 6 MONTHS
2 MALE CUBS 10 MONTHS
WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLY
Daughter of the Kikilezi female[†], independent first quarter of 2016.
(0 sightings)

We have yet again gone another month without seeing this female and her two cubs.

THE FLOCKFIELD FEMALE 16 YEARS 2 MONTHS
MALE CUB 1 YEAR 3 MONTHS
EASTERN FLOCKFIELD, EASTERN CHARLESTON
Daughter of the Jakkalsdraai female[†], independent last quarter of 2005.
(0 sightings)

As we are used to, another month goes by without seeing this the oldest female leopard on MalaMala and her cub.

THE TEARDROP FEMALE 10 YEARS 2 MONTHS
1 FEMALE CUB 1 YEAR 7 MONTHS
1 MALE CUB 1 YEAR 7 MONTHS
SOUTHERN CHARLESTON
Daughter of the Jakkalsdraai female[†], gained independence early 2013.
(0 sightings)

This time last year the Teardrop female and her two cubs were a frequent sighting in Charleston. However, this year and with the current pandemic, finding these three leopards is a lot harder especially with them likely spending less and less time together.

THE XIVINDZI FEMALE 3 YEARS 6 MONTHS
SOUTHERN CHARLESTON
Daughter of the Teardrop female. Gained independence in mid-2018.
(0 sightings)

We recorded no sightings of this female leopard. Although we have heard from our neighbours that she may be denning in the Sand River near Flat rocks.

MALE LEOPARDS

THE SENEGAL BUSH MALE 7 YEARS 9 MONTHS
WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLY, WESTERN MALAMALA
Brother of the Quarantine male leopard from the North.
(0 sightings)

With his move west and to our understanding little competition in his new territory we did not see the Senegal Bush male this month. Will he look to come back east towards the Sand River in the months to come with the bushveld drying? We will have to wait and see.

THE MAXIM'S MALE

± 5 YEARS 10 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in early 2019.

(6 sightings)

For yet another month, the Maxim's male is one of the most viewed leopards. The first three sightings of this male were at West Street bridge on the 3rd, 8th and 11th. On the 15th he was seen just to the south of the Airstrip. He was then seen mating with the Three Rivers female in the Sand River in front of Rattray's camp on the 23rd. The last sighting of this male for the month was again in the Sand River in front of Rattray's camp on the 28th.

THE 3:2 SON OF THE EMSAGWENI FEMALE

2 YEARS 6 MONTHS

NOMADIC (south western Eyrefield and eastern Marthly)

Independent late 2019.

(3 sightings)

All three sightings of this young male were during the first week of June. On the 1st he was seen walking south from Senegal Bush. The following day we found him at Piccadilly pans. Then we saw him again at Senegal Bush on the 6th. It would appear, like his brother before him, he is starting to explore further north up the lower reaches of the Mlowathi River.

THE 3:3 SON OF THE EMSAGWENI FEMALE

2 YEARS 6 MONTHS

NOMADIC (Marthly and western Eyrefield)

Independent late 2019.

(6 sightings)

Sightings of this young male were up from last month and he spent more time in the areas we've come to expect seeing him. We are yet to see him, and his brother come together but with them occupying the same area currently it can't be long before we do. On the 4th this male robbed the Piccadilly female of a fresh impala kill on the eastern ramp of the causeway. He subsequently lost his prize to a hyena. It was interesting to see him feed almost peacefully at the same time as the hyena for awhile but as soon as the Piccadilly female tried to approach, he growled intensely at her. After this interaction he spent a few days around Piccadilly pans. On the 5th he was still near the causeway and again on the 6th he was at Piccadilly pans. On the 8th he'd moved slightly east and was on Campbell koppies. Several days went by without a sighting before we found him on one of his usual rocks on Mlowathi Koppies on the 17th. From here he explored the Mlowathi river north and the last sighting we had of him was at the Gowrie boom on the 21st.

THE ACCIPITER MALE

± 9 YEARS 10 MONTHS

EASTERN MALAMALA, EASTERN FLOCKFIELD

First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in late 2015.

(0 sightings)

We had no sightings of the Accipiter male this month.

THE SPLIT ROCK MALE

6 YEARS 0 MONTHS

FLOCKFIELD, CHARLESTON

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

(1 sighting)

We had one sighting of the Split Rock male this month around Charleston river rocks on the 12th.

Other leopards encountered:

- The **Plaque Rock Female** was seen on four occasions; at bicycle crossing on the 1st, at Stwise on the 21st where she had an impala kill stolen by hyenas, at the MalaMala stones on the 25th and along Ambush alley on the 27th having an altercation with the Three Rivers female.
- The **Daughter of the Sibuye female** now known as the **Kupona female** in the north and we'll adopt that name, was seen once at Mlowathi Dam crossing on the 14th.
- An unknown female with a **3:4 spot pattern** was seen on the Gowrie boundary just east of the Mlowathi river on the 6th.
- The Inyathini male was seen three times this month. On the 2nd he had a Zebra foal kill near the mouth of the Kapen River. 6th at the Kapen breakfast spot. 23rd at the treehouse with a bushbuck kill.
- The **Flat Rock male** was seen four times this month. On the 3rd and 6th, we found him scent marking the thatch of reception. On the 8th he was at bicycle crossing and on the 27th he was seen behind MalaMala camp.
- A female was briefly seen at the old Flockfield camp on the 3rd. We suspect it was either the Island female or the Three Rivers female.
- An unidentified **male and female** were mating on the 14th in the Mlowathi River south of Senegal Bush.
- On the 16th we witnessed two males having a standoff west of Mlowathi dam. At the time it was night and raining and therefore we could not identify the two males as they moved quickly into thick bush.
- An unidentified male was seen south of elephant slide crossing having an interaction with four Cape hunting dogs on the 20th. The visual of the leopard was poor but we think it may have been the N'weti male, but we cannot be certain.
- A female leopard was briefly seen on new rocks on the 25th. We cannot be certain, but it was likely the Kapen female.
- On the 29th and 30th we viewed a large, nervous male leopard near the Ngoboswan breakfast spot.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED	23 (1 cub)
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CHEETAH

This was a good month for cheetah viewing considering this is a species that we do not see much of. We had **5 sightings** of cheetah with **4 individuals** being seen. We saw a female make an out of nowhere nyala kill right at the entrance to MalaMala camp on the 8th. One of the biggest events of the month was a female with one cub estimated to be around 3 months old. We saw this mother and cub twice on the 11th at Clarendon and then again on the 14th north of the windmill. While looking for the mother and her cub on the 15th we came across another female cheetah near Styx rocks, she was however nervous around the vehicle and the sighting did not last long.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED	4 (1 cub)
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CAPE HUNTING DOGS

The month of June proved to be an exceptional month for viewing Cape hunting dogs with there being **18 sightings of four packs** and a staggering **33 individuals** seen. A pack of four were seen in the northern parts of the reserve on seven occasions. Near MalaMala camp on the 7th, on the airstrip on the 8th, at Bicycle crossing on the 13th, northern parts of the Mlowathi River on the 14th, near Senegal Bush on the 18th, planks pan on the 19th and the final sightings of this pack was at Mlowathi dam on the 30th. A pack of 12 was seen at Elephant rock on the 18th.

Another pack of four were seen three times; at elephant slide crossing 20th with he remains of an impala kill and interacting with a male leopard, at Kapen open area on the 23rd and then in the Tamboti thickets 27th. The most exciting Cape hunting dogs involved the pack of two with the alpha female with no ear. This pack was seen seven times, two sightings were of the two adults and then they moved their nine, two-month-old pups into a new den near MalaMala camp on the 27th. We viewed the pups in five sightings.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAPE HUNTING DOGS ENCOUNTERED

31 (9 pups)

CAPE BUFFALO AND ELEPHANTS

We enjoyed **94 sightings of elephants**, consisting of 76 sightings of herds and 18 sightings of bulls. Many of the elephant sightings were along the Sand River or at one of the few dams in the eastern parts of the reserve.

We have started to see more and more herds coming through the reserve with the on set of the dry season. We enjoyed 15 sightings of herds and 14 sightings of bulls adding up to **29 sightings of buffalo** for the month.

OTHER SIGHTINGS OF INTEREST

A **PANGOLIN** was seen on the 9th at Mlowathi koppies.

Two **HONEY BADGERS** were seen near the Windmill on the 9th

An **AFRICAN WILDCAT** was seen on the 14th.

There were two separate **SERVAL** sightings on the night of the 25th.