



# Game Report



Photo by Ranger Pieter van Wyk

MalaMala Game Reserve  
February 2021

*It's all about the wildlife!*

THE MONTH'S WEATHER SUMMARY					
Temperature					
Celsius (°C)			Fahrenheit (°F)		
	Actual	Average		Actual	Average
Maximum	34	29	Maximum	93	84
Minimum	18	22	Minimum	65	72
Rainfall					
Millimetres		Inches		Days of rain	
111		4.35		9	

TOTAL SIGHTINGS	
Lion	48
Leopard	73
Elephant	116
Buffalo	27
Cheetah	No sightings were recorded
Cape hunting dog	7

*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	No kills were recorded
Leopard	8 impala, 1 duiker
Cheetah	No kills were recorded
Cape hunting dog	2 scrub hares, 2 impala

*\*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS*

**LION PRIDES**

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**THE KAMBULA PRIDE = 19**

3 ADULT FEMALES	± 7 YEARS 11 MONTHS
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 7 YEARS 8 MONTHS
6 SUB ADULT FEMALES	± 2 YEARS 6 MONTHS
5 SUB ADULT MALES	± 2 YEARS 6 MONTHS
2 CUBS	1 YEAR 9 MONTHS

*MALAMALA & FLOCKFIELD*

(31 sightings)

Sightings of the Kambula pride are up from last month. This is mostly a result of the pride being splintered for the most of the month. It's getting harder and harder to tell who's with who and where all the pride members are. The lionesses are spending time away from the pride mating with coalitions other than the Gowrie males. The subadults are wandering around on their own. Subadult males are often found by themselves, and the pride is rarely intact these days. Added to these factors is the dense bush and flowing seep lines, adding to the already challenging task of tracking this pride. With all of this in mind, trying to understand and keep tabs on the pride dynamics currently is a futile task. We may have to wait for the dry season to eventually figure out the Kambula pride dynamics.

The month started with 15 members of the pride and a Gowrie male at Princess Alice Pans. This was one of only three sightings where the bulk of the pride were together this month. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> until the 20<sup>th</sup>, we recorded 19 sightings of the pride. They were scattered across their territory from the northern parts of the Airstrip to Mamba Waterhole. Ten of these sightings were of subadults alone or in the company with one or both Gowrie males. During this time, the two cubs were seen with their mother and other pride lionesses. 16 members of the pride were in a Gowrie male's company on the Airstrip (21<sup>st</sup>) and at Donald's crossing (22<sup>nd</sup>). From here, they moved south to Kapen open area, where 14 of the pride members were still with the Gowrie male. On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the remaining three lionesses from the pride were with the second Gowrie male on the Airstrip. The month was seen out with three sightings of different pride members all on the Airstrip on the 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.

**THE NKUHUMA PRIDE = 17**

1 ADULT FEMALE	± 8 YEARS 8 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	± 8 YEARS 2 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	± 7 YEARS 11 MONTHS
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 4 YEARS 9 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	± 4 YEARS 7 MONTHS
4 CUBS	± 1 YEAR 8 MONTHS
3 CUBS	1 YEAR 6 MONTHS
1 CUB	1 YEAR 2 MONTHS

*NORTH WESTERN EYREFIELD*

(4 sightings)

We had four sightings of this pride this month, with only one of these being of the full compliment. On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, a young lioness was mating with the Northern Avoca males east of Mlowathi Dam. The following day she'd linked up with the rest of the pride which had walked south to Senegal Bush. Later that day, they walked back north and linked up with the Northern Avoca males southeast of Mlowathi Dam. On the 7<sup>th</sup>, the young lioness was mating with the Northern Avoca males north of the Old Borehole in Eyrefield. The month's final sighting was on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, when three lionesses were at Mlowathi Dam with the Northern Avoca males.

**THE MARTHLY PRIDE = 2**

1 ADULT FEMALE	7 YEARS 8 MONTHS
1 CUB	1 YEAR 11 MONTHS

*MARTHLY*

(3 sightings)

Like last month we had few sightings of these two lions as their territory in Marthly was, for the most part, inaccessible due to the Manyeleti River flowing. The first sighting of this mother/daughter pair was on the 5<sup>th</sup> when they were north of Stwise. It was only at the end of the month we saw them again. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, a lioness was mating with one of the Northern Avoca males at Mlowathi Dam. The following day she was seen with both Northern Avoca males, and a young lioness was seen roughly 200m south of them, watching from a safe distance. At first, we were not sure of the lionesses ID, and it was only after looking carefully at pictures of the young lioness that we could confirm it was the cub of the Marthly lioness, confirming who the lioness mating with the Northern Avoca males was the Marthly lioness. Although these are two lions we see regularly, the cub has grown quickly, and is now only a tad smaller than her mother, and Mlowathi Dam isn't an area we expect to see this pride. This is an exciting development for the Marthly pride. The question is, was she mating to distract the two males away from her cub, or can we expect to see the Marthly pride grow in three months?

**THE TORCHWOOD PRIDE = 17**

7 ADULT FEMALES

6 ADULT FEMALES

4 CUBS

*NORTH EASTERN EYREFIELD*

(2 sightings)

UNKOWN AGES

± 5 YEARS 1 MONTH

± 6 MONTHS

We saw four lionesses from this pride on two occasions this month. The first was on the 7<sup>th</sup>, when they were north of Clarendon Dam. The second was on the 15<sup>th</sup> when they were west of Matshapiri Dam.

**THE STYX PRIDE = 6**

1 ADULT FEMALE

1 ADULT FEMALE

1 ADULT FEMALE

1 SUB ADULT FEMALE

*WESTERN BANK OF CHARLESTON*

(0 sightings)

13 YEARS 1 MONTH

10 YEARS 1 MONTH

4 YEARS 2 MONTHS

4 YEARS 0 MONTHS

The Styx pride was not seen on MalaMala Game Reserve this month.

**THE EYREFIELD PRIDE = 2**

1 ADULT FEMALE

1 CUB

*SOUTH WESTERN CHARLESTON*

(0 sightings)

13 YEARS 8 MONTHS

1 YEAR 8 MONTHS

We recorded no sightings of this pride this month. However, in January, we received reports from within the Kruger National Park that the last surviving lioness suffered an injury that likely proved fatal. Her 18-month-old cub is too young to survive on its own. So, barring a miracle, the sun will soon set on pride that's history on MalaMala is second only to the Styx pride. This pride has had an illustrious and long career on MalaMala, starting way back in the early nineties. In the early parts of the 21st century, the pride numbered 19, with 6 young males (Mlowathi males / Mapogos) who would gain huge notoriety with their aggression and total dominance over the region. But like all mighty prides, the dynamics shift, and the same happened with the Eyrefield pride. Over the following years, their numbers dwindled to the aforementioned mother and cub. This particular lioness will be remembered as the largest female in recent memory and one of the best buffalo hunters.

With this in mind, the Eyrefield pride will be removed from the monthly game reports after appearing in them for three decades.

## MALE LIONS

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### THE GOWRIE MALES = 2

1 ADULT MALE ± 10 YEARS 2 MONTHS

1 ADULT MALE ± 9 YEARS 2 MONTHS

EYREFIELD, MALAMALA

*DOMINANT OVER THE KAMBULA AND MARTHLI PRIDES.*

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

(14 sightings)

The two Gowrie males spent most of this month on the Sand River's western bank, similar to previous months and in their typical wet season distribution. In only four of the 14 sightings, one or both males were seen east of the Sand River. The two males were together in two of the 14 sightings and in the company of members of the Kambula pride in all but two sightings.

One of the males was with 15 members of the Kambula pride at Princess Alice Pans on the 1<sup>st</sup>. A week later, the same male was with seven of the Kambula pride's sub adults at the Parking Bay (9<sup>th</sup>) and four of the subadults on the Airstrip (10<sup>th</sup>). Overnight these lions had moved south and linked up with two of the other subadults and were at Drum Crossing. From here, they walked north, linked up with three lionesses and crossed west over the Causeway. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, a male was alone north of Rattray's camp. He moved north to the Airstrip overnight, where he linked up with his brother, three lionesses and eight subadults from the Kambula pride. One male was with 16 members of the Kambula pride on the Airstrip on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Donald's Crossing on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, and in Kapen open area on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. While his brother was with the bulk of the pride, the second male was with the remaining three members of the pride on the Airstrip on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and by himself on the Old Airstrip on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Both males were together on the Airstrip with 11 members of the Kambula pride on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

### THE TORCHWOOD MALE = 1

1 ADULT MALE ± 5 YEARS 1 MONTH

NOMADIC

(0 sightings)

In January, we had nine sightings of this young male as he wandered through MalaMala. This month we recorded no sightings of him. It's hard to know where he spent this month, and with the Gowrie males not spending much time far from the river, it's unlikely they pushed him further afield this month. Nomadic males are always searching for territory and opportunities to take over and secure their own pride/s. The Gowrie males are still very much the dominant coalition in the area, and it's

likely the young Torchwood male, being alone, has moved further afield in search of better prospects.

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

2 ADULT MALES ± 8 YEARS 0 MONTHS  
SOUTHERN CHARLESTON  
*DOMINANT OVER THE EYREFIELD PRIDE*  
(0 sightings)

We recorded no sightings of these two males.

**THE 'NORTHERN' AVOCA MALES = 2**

2 ADULT MALES ± 7 YEARS 8 MONTHS  
NORTH WESTERN EYREFIELD  
*DOMINANT OVER THE NKUHUMA PRIDE*  
*First encountered in late 2019.*  
(6 sightings)

These males were together in five of the six sightings and in the presence of lionesses in all sightings. On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, both males were around Mlowathi Dam with a young lioness from the Nkuhuma pride with whom they were mating. The following day the two males were east of the Mlowathi Dam crossing, where they spent the day before linking up with the full complement of the Nkuhuma pride that evening. A few days later, on the 7<sup>th</sup>, both males were seen mating with a lioness from the Nkuhuma pride north of the Old Borehole in Eyrefield. Two weeks passed before they were seen again, with three lionesses from the Nkuhuma pride at Mlowathi Dam. The final two sightings of these males left us a little confused about the ID of the lioness they were mating with, but after looking at photographs carefully, we can confirm it was the Marthly lioness. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, one of the males was mating with the Marthly lioness at Mlowathi Dam, and the following day the second male had joined the mating pair, with the cub of the Marthly lioness watching from a safe distance.

**Other lions encountered:**

- **2 no id females** – Senegal Bush on the 9<sup>th</sup>.
- **1 young male (likely a Kambula male)** – West Street Bridge on the 12<sup>th</sup>
- An **unidentified male** and **female** were in Clarendon open area on the 18<sup>th</sup>.
- An **unidentified male** and **female** were in Mlowathi open area on the 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Two **unknown females** and **one unknown male** were on the MalaMala/Flockfield boundary west of the KNP on the 20<sup>th</sup>.
- On the 28<sup>th</sup>, a lioness was hunting impala in Piccadilly Pans.
- A male from the coalition of two we've seen with the Fourways pride and likely two young Torchwood lionesses were north of Campbell Koppies on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LIONS ENCOUNTERED	<b>46 (23 cubs)</b>
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## LEOPARDS

### **FEMALE LEOPARDS:**

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#### **THE ISLAND FEMALE**

8 YEARS 2 MONTHS

#### **1 FEMALE CUB**

7 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, SOUTHERN MALAMALA

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

(18 sightings; 3 of female, 14 of female and cub, 1 of cub)

Drum Crossing and the kilometre north and south of this crossing is where you look if you want to see this mother and daughter pair. Like previous months this stretch of river is where these two leopards spent most of their time. The Island female and her cub had an impala kill on the Matshapiri River's western bank north of Drum Crossing on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. On the 8<sup>th</sup>, the Accipiter male visited them before realising there wasn't much left of the carcass and moved off. The cub had its first venture onto the 'other side' of the Sand River and a walk over West Street Bridge on the 11<sup>th</sup>. They had an impala lamb kill on the western bank south of West Street Bridge. This is the Maxim's male's territory, and if he isn't the father, which we suspect he isn't due to recent sightings of the Island female, and her cub with the Accipiter male, the Maxim's male would almost certainly kill the cub. The ranger team and our followers on social media held our breaths between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> when the Island female spent the three days clearly in distress looking for her cub in White Cloth open area. On the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup>, she had a brief fight with a young male. Due to the interaction's briefness, we were unable to ID him, but it was likely the cub of the Lookout female or the 2:1 young male who has ventured into these parts of late. Post this little scuffle, the Island female roared, and contact called throughout the day of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. On the evening of the 10<sup>th</sup>, we sighed in relief when she finally found her cub. Between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, mother and daughter were seen around Drum Crossing and Buffalo Pans. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, the Island female was patrolling territory around Emsagwen open area. From the 19<sup>th</sup> to the end of the month, both leopards were seen together on six occasions around Buffalo Pans and Drum Crossing.

#### **THE PICCADILLY FEMALE**

7 YEARS 2 MONTHS

#### **1 FEMALE CUB**

11 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLY

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

(1 sighting)

The Piccadilly female was only viewed on the last day of the month when she was in the Sand River south of Elephant Rock. Marthly, like last month, was mostly inaccessible due to the Manyeltethi River flowing for most of the month.



**THE NKOVENI FEMALE**  
**CUB/S**

8 YEARS 6 MONTHS  
1 MONTH

WESTERN MALAMALA & SOUTHERN MARTHLI  
*Daughter of the Mashaba female, independent early 2014.*  
*Mother of the Plaque Rock female.*  
(6 sightings)

Last month we reported that the Nkoveni female might have given birth. This month we can confirm with surety that the Nkoveni female is a mother again. We are yet to see the cubs, and we suspect she is keeping there somewhere around Maxim's Lookout, an area we can't access currently.

On the 6<sup>th</sup>, she was around the Quarry east of the Airstrip. She was southwest of the Parking Bay, close to the Three River's female on the 10<sup>th</sup>. The following day she was on the Causeway. On the 15<sup>th</sup>, she was north of the Airstrip. A week went by with no sighting of this female before she was on the Causeway again on the 21<sup>st</sup>. The last sighting of the Nkoveni female was on the 25<sup>th</sup> when she was near the Old Airstrip.

**THE EMSAGWENI FEMALE**

11 YEARS 2 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 Emsagweni female was seen once this month on the 15<sup>th</sup> when she was west of Matshapiri Dam.

**THE THREE RIVERS FEMALE**

4 YEARS 11 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALAMALA  
*Daughter of the Kikilezi female, orphaned on May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2017.*  
(2 sightings)

The question of when will the Three Rivers female have her first litter of cubs keeps being asked. At almost five years old, we'd expect to have already have had at least one litter of cubs. She's been seen mating on several occasions, but we've yet to see signs of her being pregnant. Could it be that she's had cubs, and they haven't survived long enough during periods of few sightings of her, and subsequently, we're unaware of these events? We'll have to wait and see what the year 2021 has in store for this much-adored female leopard. The first sighting of this female was on the 10<sup>th</sup> when she was near the Nkoveni female west of the Parking Bay. The second sighting of this female was at West Street Bridge on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

**THE LOOKOUT FEMALE**

± 11 YEARS 1 MONTH

**MALE CUB**

1 YEAR 6 MONTHS

NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD

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

(5 sightings; 1 sighting of female and 4 of her cub)

The cub of the Lookout female is starting to spend more time on his own and exploring his surroundings. The Lookout female still supports him and will do for a few months to come. As an example, the Emsagweni female's two sons went independent at two years old. Although the cub of Lookout female will still enjoy several months of his mother providing for him, these events will gradually become less frequent until he's left to fend for himself. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the cub had an impala kill at the Tree House. On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, he had the Accipiter male for company. The Lookout female was seen with her cub on the afternoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, walking north away from the Tree House. The most likely scenario is; the Lookout female made the kill, and when the Accipiter male was around, she moved off. Males tolerate their offspring at kills but not females. On the 7<sup>th</sup>, the cub was alone, and the furthest north we've seen him when he was northwest of Buffalo Pans. The month's last sighting was of the cub when he was trying to get into a leopard tortoise with little success on the 27<sup>th</sup> on the eastern parts of the MalaMala/Flockfield boundary.

**THE KAPEN FEMALE**

3 YEARS 4 MONTHS

SOUTHERN FLOCKFIELD

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

(1 sighting)

This young female was seen once this month on the 3<sup>rd</sup> when she was at exit Flockfield Lookout.

**THE TLEBE ROCKS FEMALE**

3 YEARS 1 MONTH

CENTRAL &amp; WESTERN EYREFIELD

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

(3 sightings)

The Tlebe Rocks female was seen only three times this month. On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, she was east of the Mlowathi River, north of Senegal Bush. Overnight she moved south and was found the following day south of Piccadilly Pans with a common duiker kill. It was only on the last day of the year that we found her again when she was at Senegal Bush.

**THE SIBUYE FEMALE**

7 YEARS 2 MONTHS

**1 MALE & 1 FEMALE CUB**

1 YEAR 6 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

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

(0 sightings)

We had no sightings of the Sibuye female and her two cubs this month.

**THE PLAQUE ROCK FEMALE**

2 YEARS 11 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA

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

(4 sightings)

The Plaque Rock female has been a female leopard that we've seen regularly west of the Sand River on MalaMala over the last year. From here, she's started to venture onto the eastern bank of the Sand River more recently. She appears to have followed her mother, the Nkoveni female, east towards the Sand River and is yet another young leopard we have exploring her options of establishing territory on MalaMala. Although still young at just under three years old, the shift of the Piccadilly female's territory west and the expansion of her mother's territory east has left this female with few established females to compete with between Maxim's Lookout and MalaMala camp on either side of the Sand River. However, this may change in the months to come with her mother's new litter of cubs. In three of the four sightings of this young female, she was seen with the Maxim's male. On the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, she was mating with the dominant male at Maxim's Lookout and on the Island south of the Causeway. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, she was found on Ambush Alley and went about finding the Maxim's male who was in the Sand River south of the Causeway. The following day she was making her way south through Piccadilly Pans, the furthest north we've recorded her.

**THE XIVINDZI FEMALE**

4 YEARS 2 MONTHS

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

*Daughter of the Teardrop female, independent mid-2018.*

(0 sightings)

We did not record any sightings of the Xivindzi female this month.

## MALE LEOPARDS

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### THE ACCIPITER MALE

± 10 YEARS 6 MONTHS

EASTERN & CENTRAL MALAMALA & FLOCKFIELD

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

(5 sightings)

Last month the Accipiter male was seen twice with the Island female and her cub at two different kills, and this month proved it wasn't just a once-off. The first sighting of February of this male was on the 3<sup>rd</sup> when he was with the cub of the Lookout female at the Tree House with an impala kill. Similar to the interactions we've seen with the Island female's cub, he showed no aggression to the young male, and they took it in turns to feed off of the carcass. On the 6<sup>th</sup>, we saw this still somewhat nervous male briefly when he moved off of the road and into a dense block of bushwillow some ways north of Matshapiri open area. The following day he was at Drum Crossing with the Island female and her cub with an impala kill. A week later, on the 16<sup>th</sup>, he was south of Lion Waterhole and the final sighting for the month was on the 20<sup>th</sup> when he was at Emsagwen open area.

### THE MAXIM'S MALE

± 6 YEARS 6 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

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

(5 sightings)

The Maxim's male was seen five times this month, with the Plaque Rock female for company in three of those sightings. On the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, he was mating with the young female at Maxim's Lookout and on the Island south of the Causeway. When a leopard on MalaMala has a kill hoisted in a tree, you'll do well not to see a hyena or several hyena patiently waiting at the base of the tree. This is exactly the scenario we found him in on the 17<sup>th</sup> at the old Giraffe Bones. The Maxim's male had an impala kill hoisted in a sausage tree (the same tree he shared an impala with the Plaque Rock previously) and with him were two hyenas. With his recent exploration north, we see this male around the Causeway more often, as was the case on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and the 26<sup>th</sup>. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, we technically didn't find him, the Plaque Rock female whom we were following did. She processed to flirt with the male, but he was having none of it.

**THE EYREFIELD MALE**

3 YEARS 3 MONTHS

NOMADIC (southwestern Eyrefield and eastern Marthly)

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

(2 sightings)

Another month goes by with fewer sightings of this young male than we're used to. On the 9<sup>th</sup>, he was on Mlowathi Koppies, and on the 14<sup>th</sup>, he was fighting with his brother, the Ngoboswan male, over his brother's kill at Piccadilly Pans.

**THE NGOBOSWAN MALE**

3 YEARS 3 MONTHS

NOMADIC (Marthly and western Eyrefield)

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

(9 sightings)

"Both the Ngoboswan and Eyrefield males are vying for the prime area around Campbell Koppies, and neither wants to back down. How much longer will they be 'tolerant' of one another?" – December 2020 Game Report. It's too early to say, but the Ngoboswan male appears to have come out on top of this battle. While the Ngoboswan male was seen nine times in the area in question, his brother, the Eyrefield male, was only seen twice in this area.

All nine sightings of the Ngoboswan male occurred between Stwise and Piccadilly pans, the core of his territory if we can go as far as calling it that with him being just over three years old. However, both him and his brother are scent marking and roaring, both forms of demarcating territory behaviour. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, he had an impala kill in Piccadilly pans which on the 14<sup>th</sup>, he had to defend from his brother. Once again, he came out on top of this encounter between the vying brothers.

**THE SPLIT ROCK MALE**

6 YEARS 8 MONTHS

CHARLESTON

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

(0 sightings)

We recorded no sightings of this male this month.

### Other leopards encountered:

- The **Inyathini male** was seen at Mamba Waterhole on the 25<sup>th</sup>.
- The young **2:1 male** had an impala ewe kill in Matshapiri open area (11<sup>th</sup>), just north and east of West Street Bridge (25<sup>th</sup>), Matshapiri open area (28<sup>th</sup>).
- Two leopards were briefly seen around the Old Borehole in Eyrefield on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- An unknown male with a 3:3 spot pattern was seen near Tlebe Rocks on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and again on the prominent rocks on Gowrie Trust road on the 20<sup>th</sup>.
- An unidentified male was seen around Princess Alice pans on the 5<sup>th</sup>.
- The **Tavunguma (2:2)** male was seen near Flockfield Tower on the 6<sup>th</sup>.
- An unknown adult male with a 3:2 spot pattern was seen south of the Airstrip on the 8<sup>th</sup>.
- A female was seen at the Booms on the 9<sup>th</sup>, but we could not get an ID.
- On the 10<sup>th</sup>, a leopard was seen in the long grass on the Sand River's western bank south of West Street Bridge. It could well have been the Island female as the following day she was seen at the same place with her cub.
- Two leopards were briefly seen west of Lower Mlowathi crossing on the 12<sup>th</sup>.
- The **Kuchava female** and her **male cub** were seen on the 15<sup>th</sup> in central Eyrefield.
- The **Nyanga female** was seen in western Eyrefield on the 20<sup>th</sup>.
- The **Ndzutini female** had an interaction with the Island female in White Cloth open area on the 28<sup>th</sup>. This is the first time she has been recorded on MalaMala Game Reserve.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED	<b>29 (3 cubs)</b>
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### CHEETAH

We recorded no sightings of cheetah during the month of February.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED	<b>0</b>
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### CAPE HUNTING DOGS

February saw a decline in the number of Cape hunting dog sightings from months gone by. This month we had only **seven sightings** of these endangered predators. The first five sightings of Cape hunting dogs were at the beginning of the month. On the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, the Pungwe pack were seen at the white cloth, at West Street Bridge where they killed two scrub hares and then the alpha female with her exposed canine had to defend an impala kill from hyenas by herself at Matshapiri open area. A pack of nine dogs was seen on the 7<sup>th</sup> at Mamba Waterhole and then again near Zebra Skull the following day. The final two sightings of these cursorial predators was of a reduced Pungwe pack on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> when they were around Campbell Koppies. On the 27<sup>th</sup>, we lost them as they chased a herd of impala near Mlowathi Koppies to only find them having lost their kill to hyenas five minutes later.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAPE HUNTING DOGS ENCOUNTERED
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24
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### **CAPE BUFFALO AND ELEPHANTS**

This month we had an increase in sightings of bulls, with 37 of the **116 sightings of elephants** being of bulls. Elephants were seen throughout the reserve but sightings concentrated around the Sand River and the three Dams in the north.

**27 sightings of Cape buffalo** were recorded, with only two sightings of a herd numbering around 50 in Fourways open area on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. The remaining 25 sightings were of bulls most seen wallowing in the muddy pans of Piccadilly and Buffalo Pans and along the Mlowathi River.

### **OTHER SIGHTINGS OF INTEREST**

Black-Backed jackal pairs were seen in Mlowathi and Clarendon open areas as well around the area of Piccadilly pans.