



Game Report



The Piccadilly female and cubs by Ranger Piet Van Wyk

MalaMala Game Reserve
March 2023

It's all about the wildlife!

THE MONTH'S WEATHER SUMMARY					
Temperature					
Celsius (°C)			Fahrenheit (°F)		
	Actual	Average		Actual	Average
Maximum	36	21	Maximum	97	86
Minimum	18	30	Minimum	64.4	71
Rainfall					
Millimetres		Inches		Days of rain	
18.5		0.75		6	

TOTAL SIGHTINGS	
Lion	83
Leopard	91
Elephant	113
Buffalo	41
Cheetah	8
Cape Hunting Dog	2

**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	3 impala
Leopard	4 impala, 1 guineafowl
Cheetah	No recorded kills
Cape Hunting Dog	No recorded kills

*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS
LION PRIDES

THE KAMBULA PRIDE = 29

3 ADULT FEMALES	± 10 YEARS 0 MONTHS
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 9 YEARS 9 MONTHS
6 YOUNG ADULT FEMALES	± 4 YEARS 7 MONTHS
5 YOUNG ADULT MALES	± 4 YEARS 7 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT FEMALE	3 YEARS 10 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT MALE	3 YEARS 10 MONTHS
2 CUBS	2 YEARS 0 MONTHS
11 CUBS	0 YEARS 3 MONTHS

MALAMALA, FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON
(57 sightings)

The viewing of this pride has been stellar over the past month. We recorded 57 sightings of members of this pride! 31 of which included members from the youngest cohort of cubs. The lionesses from this pride have been moving the cubs around but seem to be keeping them in four predominant spots; the Airstrip, Vulture Waterhole, beneath West Street Bridge and in the lower reaches of the Kapen River (and into the Tamboti Thickets).

Sadly, while it has been a month of excitement, it has also brought its own sorrows. Two lionesses were found dead at the beginning of the month. One on the 3rd, the remains of which were eaten by hyenas, and another on the 5th, whose body had numerous puncture wounds, possibly from an angry antelope or perhaps even an elephant.

Despite the loss of two lionesses, the pride appear stronger and more unified now than they have been for months. Even lionesses from Kambula Group A have reintegrated with the core of the pride. On the 24th, an older female and one of the Gowrie males offspring were together with a Ndhenga male south of the Airstrip; the three lions were cautious but rested comfortably in one another's presence.

Perhaps the only potential turmoil comes in the form of the Black Dam males, who mated with a lioness from this pride from the 21st to the 24th. The two males and mating female began mating at Mlowathi Dam and only concluded the copulation on the 24th, by which time they had moved south and were at the Airstrip.

THE NKUHUMA PRIDE = 18

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

WESTERN & CENTRAL EYREFIELD

(2 sightings)

We have noticed a decline in our sightings of this pride. As we continue to observe the Black Dam males in their territory, we expect this pride to keep a low profile until they accept the new males as their dominant coalition.

Two lionesses, two cubs and one sub-adult female were at Senegal Bush on the 5th. Two adult females, two sub-adult females and one sub-adult male were together at Lion Rocks on the 8th. This is a significant displacement from their northern territory.

THE SAND RIVER PRIDE = 16

2 ADULT FEMALES	± 9 YEARS 8 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	± 4 YEARS 8 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT FEMALE	3 YEARS 2 MONTHS
3 SUB ADULTS (1 FEMALE & 2 MALES)	2 YEARS 7 MONTHS
6 CUBS	1 YEAR 7 MONTHS
2 CUBS	0 YEARS 3 MONTHS

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

(2 sightings)

After the rain of the past few months, March was a little drier; this has meant that access to the parts of the property where this pride is found has been restored.

The only two sightings of members of this pride were on the 19th and the 30th. On the 19th, seven individuals killed two impalas in F-Bend Open Area. On the 30th, we were introduced to their newest members, who are about three months old. 14 members of this pride, including two small cubs, were at Flat Rocks.

THE MARTHLY PRIDE = 1

1 SUB ADULT FEMALE

4 YEARS 0 MONTHS

MARTHLY

(4 sightings)

On the 7th, this lioness represented her species as the only lion seen for the day when she was at Manyeleti Crossing. She was around the Confluence of the Three Rivers on the 11th and 12th. On the 17th, she was seen at Elephant Rock. Now four years old, she is no longer a sub-adult and should be receptive soon.

THE TORCHWOOD PRIDE = 20

7 ADULT FEMALES

UNKOWN AGES

6 ADULT FEMALES

± 7 YEARS 2 MONTHS

7 CUBS

± 2 YEARS 7 MONTHS

EASTERN EYREFIELD

(0 sightings)

The Torchwood pride were not seen this month.

MALE LIONS

THE NDHZENGA MALES = 3

1 ADULT MALE

± 8 YEARS 1 MONTH

2 ADULT MALES

± 7 YEARS 8 MONTHS

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

(25 sightings)

The three Ndhzenga males are taking their fatherly responsibilities very seriously. This month they were seen with members of the Kambula pride on 14 days, six of which included the small cubs.

The Black Dam males have kept this coalition on their toes. On the 23rd, the Ndhzenga males roared on the MalaMala Airstrip. On the morning of the 24th, tufts of lion mane were found opposite MalaMala Camp. Shortly after this, one Ndhzenga male was found with superficial injuries. The Black Dam males arrived at the MalaMala Airstrip later that evening and announced themselves in the Ndhzenga male's territory with loud roars, but retreated north and were not seen in these males territory again this month.

THE NORTHERN AVOCA MALE = 1

1 ADULT MALE

± 9 YEARS 9 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

Dominant over the Nkuhuma pride.

First encountered in late 2019.

(1 sighting)

The only sighting of this male was on the 8th, when he was in the northern parts of Piccadilly Triangle.

THE SOUTHERN AVOCA MALES = 2

2 ADULT MALES

± 10 YEARS 1 MONTH

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

Dominant over the Sand River Pride.

First encountered on MalaMala Game Reserve

(0 sightings)

These males were not seen on MalaMala in March.

Other Lions Encountered:

- The **BLACK DAM MALES** (2 Adult males – 5 YEARS 7 MONTHS). From the 2nd to the 5th, these males were west of Buffalo Bush Dam. On the 12th and 13th, they loitered around Mlowathi Dam. On the 16th, they were in the northern parts of Piccadilly Triangle. On the 17th, they were at Mlowathi Pans. From the 21st to the 24th they made their intentions clear by mating with a lioness from the Kambula pride, shifting south, and even roaring from the MalaMala Airstrip, the heart of Ndzenga territory.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF LIONS ENCOUNTERED	51 (19 cubs)
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LEOPARDS

FEMALE LEOPARDS:

THE ISLAND FEMALE

10 YEARS 1 MONTH

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, SOUTHERN MALAMALA

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

Mother of the Drum Crossing female.

(2 sightings)

We only recorded sightings of this female on two days this month. She was seen on the 19th when she was north of West Street Crossing, she did not have suckle marks. The next time she was seen was on the 29th, when she was patrolling the banks of the Matshapiri River.

THE DRUM CROSSING FEMALE

2 YEARS 7 MONTHS

SOUTHERN MALAMALA

Daughter of the Island female, independent February 2022.

(0 sightings)

The absence of this female concerns some, while others remain optimistic that she has dispersed and will return if and when she feels it necessary.

THE THREE RIVERS FEMALE

6 YEARS 8 MONTHS

MALE CUB

1 YEAR 8 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALAMALA

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

(4 sightings, 4 of female, 0 of female and cub, 0 of the cub)

Only four days of March were anointed with the presence of this female. She was first seen on the 1st, when she was west of the Airstrip. She was next seen on three consecutive days, the 26th, 27th, and 28th, also west of the Airstrip.

This month, we did not see the cub of the Three Rivers female. As she was mating at the end of last year, it is possible her first son has begun dispersing.

THE NKOVENI FEMALE

10 YEARS 7 MONTHS

CUBS

3 WEEKS

WESTERN MALAMALA & SOUTHERN MARTHLY

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

(14 sightings)

The Nkoveni female was seen on 14 days. On the 3rd, she appeared pregnant when she was with the Stone Drift female at the Old Airstrip. By the 7th, her belly was empty, and she was sporting suckle marks, an indication that she had given birth sometime between the 3rd and the 7th. On the 10th, she was with the Xinkhova female east of the Old Airstrip. Her reunions with previous litters continued on the 14th, when she was with the Plaque Rock female at the Sable Rotunda; this interaction was more hostile, and the two females had a brief altercation. Rangers found this female on the Old Airstrip on the 18th; they followed as she moved east into a dense thicket. From the thicket, the unmistakable cry of tiny leopard cubs rang out. The area has been zoned for the time being, but we expect to be introduced to her newest litter sometime in April. Since then, she has been seen frequently in the areas where she is keeping her cubs.

THE XINKHOVA FEMALE

2 YEARS 2 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA & SOUTHERN MARTHLY

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

(8 sightings)

This young female continues to explore the areas surrounding her mother's territory. With the Sand River lower now, she is spending more time on the Western Bank. On the 4th, rangers watched as she killed an impala lamb and hoisted it in a sausage tree north of Maxim's Lookout. This female was with her mother on the 10th, when both cats were east of the Old Airstrip. Both leopards appeared unphased by one another; this will likely change as the Nkoveni female shifts her focus to her newest litter. The last sighting of this leopard was on the 21st when she was at Flockfield Camp.

THE STONE DRIFT FEMALE

2 YEARS 2 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA & SOUTHERN MARTHLY

Daughter of the Nkoveni female, semi-independent.

(15 sightings)

The Stone Drift female continues to be one of our most viewed leopards. She is filling out and becoming a regular presence in and around the Old Airstrip. This month, she was first seen south of the Causeway on the 1st. On the 3rd she had an interaction with her mother at the Old Airstrip – both leopards appeared unphased by one another's presence. While she was viewed on 15 days, none of the sightings included feeding activity or interactions with other predators beyond her interaction with her mother on the 3rd.

THE PICCADILLY FEMALE

9 YEARS 2 MONTHS

CUBS

0 YEARS 2 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLY

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

(9 sightings, 3 of female, 2 of female and cubs, 4 of the cubs)

The Piccadilly female announced herself in the best way this month when she introduced us to her newest litter of cubs. On the 12th, rangers found her lazing in a jackalberry tree south of Stwise. Excitement rose as she began to make soft contact calls from her spot in the tree. Her calls were answered, and two six-week-old cubs reunited with their mother in the granite boulders. Subsequently, we have viewed the cubs in five sightings; since the mother was not always present, the sightings were brief.

THE SIBUYE FEMALE

9 YEARS 2 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

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

(2 sightings)

The Sibuye female was with the Ngoboswan male on the 11th, east of Gowrie Circle. The two leopards had an impala ram carcass in the area. She was seen again on the final day of the month when a pack of Cape hunting dogs chased her up a tree. Rangers noted that she has suckle marks. Hopefully, we will meet her newest litter in April.

THE TLEBE ROCKS FEMALE

5 YEARS 2 MONTHS

CENTRAL & WESTERN EYREFIELD

Daughter of the Sibuye Female, independent second quarter 2019.

(3 sightings)

We had sightings of this female on three days this month. She was first seen on the 2nd, when she was around the Sausage Spot. On the 16th, she was around the eastern parts of Campbell Koppies. The last time she was seen was on the 22nd, when she slept in a leadwood tree at the base of Ostrich Koppies.

THE LOOKOUT FEMALE

± 13 YEARS 2 MONTHS

CUB

11 MONTHS

NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD

First encountered on MalaMala Game Reserve in late 2015.

Mother of the Kapen female & the Redhawk male.

(1 sighting, 0 of female, 1 of female and cub, 0 of the cub only)

The only day that this mother and cub were seen was on the 7th, when they had a standoff with the 2:3 young male in the Tamboti Thickets. The Lookout female chased the young male away from her cub.

THE PLAQUE ROCK FEMALE

5 YEARS 0 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA

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

(3 sightings)

The Plaque Rock female mated with the Maxim's male on the 6th and 7th, north of Maxim's Lookout. On the 14th, she had an altercation with her mother, the Nkoveni female, in the Sable Rotunda.

MALE LEOPARDS

THE MAXIM'S MALE

± 8 YEARS 7 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD & MALAMALA

First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in early 2019.

(6 sightings)

From recent months, it is clear that we enjoy more quality sightings of this male when he is mating with a relaxed female. This month he was seen mating on the 3rd and again on the 6th and 7th, all north of Maxim's Lookout. We could not get a clear view of the female on the 3rd, but the female on the 6th and 7th was the Plaque Rock female; as such, it is possible she is the female he was with three days prior. The dominant male was not seen for a fortnight but reappeared at West Street on the 21st. He was seen again at West Street on the 23rd as he tormented a troop of baboons at dusk. The next morning, he was in the Sable Rotunda.

THE NGOBOSWAN MALE

5 YEARS 4 MONTHS

MARTHLY & WESTERN EYREFIELD

Son of the Emsagweni female[†], independent late 2019.

(5 sightings)

This male was south of Campbell Koppies on the 7th. On the 11th, he shared an impala ram kill with the Sibuye female west of Gowrie Boom. On the 13th, he was in Piccadilly Triangle. He was seen again on the 20th when he was east of Gowrie Boom. On the 29th, he had the company of a shy female southwest of Mlowathi Dam.

THE ACCIPITER MALE

± 12 YEARS 7 MONTHS

EASTERN & CENTRAL MALAMALA & FLOCKFIELD

First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in late 2015.

(0 sightings)

Yet again, the Accipiter male was not seen.

THE SPLIT ROCK MALE

8 YEARS 8 MONTHS

CHARLESTON

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

(1 sighting)

This male was only seen once this month. He was at Styx Crossing on the 29th.

THE FLAT ROCK MALE

9 YEARS 11 MONTHS

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

(4 sightings)

As the waters receded this month, sightings of this male increased. He was seen for the first time on the 3rd, when he was south of the Gowrie Boom. On the 9th, he was in Piccadilly Triangle, as he patrolled the southern reaches of his territory. He was in the same area again on the 11th. By the 13th, he had moved north and was north of Lower Mlowathi Crossing.

THE REDHAWK MALE

3 YEARS 6 MONTHS

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

(0 sightings)

From recent reports, we can confirm that this male seems to be setting up his territory north of MalaMala Game Reserve. We are pleased that he is finding a space for himself.

Other Leopards Encountered:

- The **KUCHAVA FEMALE** was mating with the Ngoboswan male on the 2nd, in Piccadilly Triangle.
- The **2:3 YOUNG MALE** was seen on seven days this month. He is still nervous and nomadic but is being seen increasingly in the Tamboti Thickets.
- A **NO ID FEMALE** was on Tlebe Rocks on the 5th; while she was too far to confirm her identification, it was most likely the Sibuye female or the Tlebe Rocks female.
- A **NO ID FEMALE** had little remains of an impala lamb carcass hoisted in a jackalberry tree in the northern parts of Piccadilly Triangle on the 8th. She was well hidden by the foliage in the morning, and she had left the area by the afternoon.
- The **KAPEN FEMALE** was seen on three days this month—her tracks, as well as two sets of cub tracks, litter the ground in southern Flockfield, it is just a matter of time before we are view the cubs for the first time since they were found in December.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED	22 (3 cubs)
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CHEETAH

We enjoyed eight sightings of the fastest cat in the land this month.

The mother and two cubs were at the Borehole on the 9th and 11th. They moved west and were west of Cheetah Pan on the 12th.

A new young male has been spending time on MalaMala, he was first seen on the 18th, around Mlowathi Dam. On the 19th, he was at the Confluence of the Three Rivers. On the 23rd he was at Flockfield Tower. On the 26th and 27th, he was around the Parking Bay.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED	4
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CAPE HUNTING DOGS

Cape Hunting Dogs were seen on two days this month.

On the 6th, one individual was seen north of the MalaMala stones. The next time this species was seen was on the 31st when a pack was southeast of Mlowathi Dam.

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

41 sightings of Cape buffalo were enjoyed this month. Of these sightings, 6 were of large herds, and 35 were of small aggregations or lone bulls.

Sightings of elephants were more challenging than usual, and rangers had to seek out elephant sightings this month, even so, we recorded 113 sightings across the property, 82 of breeding herds and 31 of bulls.

Other sightings of interest

- A **side striped jackal** was in Wild Dog Rocks Open Area on the 9th.
- Four **ostriches** were seen frequently around Princess Alice Pans this month.
- Two **black backed jackals** were at Clarendon Dam on the 15th.
- A **serval** was at Paddy's Pools on the 20th.
- An **African wildcat** was around the Airstrip on the 22nd.
- Sightings of **southern ground hornbills** were recorded on 14 days this month.