



Game Report



Photo by Ranger Lourenco Da Silva

MalaMala Game Reserve
June 2021

It's all about the wildlife!

THE MONTH'S WEATHER SUMMARY					
Temperature					
Celsius (°C)			Fahrenheit (°F)		
	Actual	Average		Actual	Average
Maximum	33	25	Maximum	91	77
Minimum	8	11	Minimum	46	51
Rainfall					
Millimetres		Inches		Days of rain	
17		0.67		3	

TOTAL SIGHTINGS	
Lion	62
Leopard	87
Elephant	119
Buffalo	41
Cheetah	3
Cape hunting dog	20

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	1 impala, 1 waterbuck, 1 buffalo
Leopard	12 impala, 1 scrub hare
Cheetah	No kills recorded
Cape hunting dog	1 impala, 1 nyala

*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS

LION PRIDES

THE KAMBULA PRIDE = 19

3 ADULT FEMALES	± 8 YEARS 3 MONTHS
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 8 YEARS 0 MONTHS
6 SUB ADULT FEMALES	± 2 YEARS 10 MONTHS
5 SUB ADULT MALES	± 2 YEARS 10 MONTHS
2 SUB ADULTS	2 YEARS 1 MONTH
5 CUBS	4 MONTHS

MALAMALA, FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON

(40 sightings)

The Kambula pride remains the most prolific group of lions seen on MalaMala. This month, a total of forty sightings were recorded of members of this pride. As has become the norm, in none of the sightings was the entire pride together. Instead, the bulk of the sightings this month were of lionesses, either moving alone or together, most commonly three with the five young cubs. The majority of the pride consisting of two lionesses, and the sub-adults have been moving widely through their territory and, at this stage, are somewhat unpredictable.

The most noteworthy development in this pride for the month is the addition of at least two new cubs. A lioness was seen moving cubs in the Sand River in front of Rattray's camp on the 22nd.

Some noteworthy sightings include:

On the 6th, one female was seen mating with the two Northern Avoca males around Senegal Bush, yet another example of how the lionesses from the Kambula pride are initiating the southward movement of this coalition.

On the 6th and 7th, a few of the sub-adults and a lioness had a waterbuck kill in the Sand River south of Pedro's Pub.

On the 14th, the Gowrie males were seen with three lionesses and five cubs west of West Street Pans. The bulk of the pride was trailing a herd of Cape buffalo in the south for a few days before bringing down a bull north of River Rocks in the early hours of the 18th. We watched as the herd attempted to chase the pride off the kill, but this was in vain. During the chaos, the two young **NWALUNGU** (Styx and Nkuhuma males) appeared on the scene. At first, the pride gave them space but then processed to join them on the kill. Despite the odd scuffle here and there, they fed 'peacefully' on the carcass.

On the 22nd, the sub-adults and two lionesses were at it again. They were in the Sand River at Sand Pit Crossing when a Cape buffalo bull appeared from the reeds. They sprung into action, and in an epic battle that lasted over an hour, the tiring lions made the mistake of allowing the buffalo to ascend the bank of the river. However, a herd of elephants disrupted the chase. With some space between himself and the lions, the bull quickly got out of the area, missing his tail but still alive. The art of catching and killing buffalo isn't an easy one, and the sub-adults inexperience is easy to see. However,

with every attempt, new lessons are learnt, and in time, it is almost certain these lions will become prolific buffalo hunters with numbers in their favour.

THE NKUHUMA PRIDE = 17

1 ADULT FEMALE	± 9 YEARS 0 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	± 8 YEARS 6 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	± 8 YEARS 3 MONTHS
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 5 YEARS 1 MONTH
1 ADULT FEMALE	± 4 YEARS 11 MONTHS
8 CUBS	± 1 YEAR 11 MONTHS
1 CUB	1 YEAR 6 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

(5 sightings)

This pride, like the Kambula pride, does not appear to be spending time together. This is a result of lionesses having new cubs. We have yet to see these cubs and are therefore unable to comment on their age and number. The mothers of these cubs spend time together along the northern reaches of the Mlowathi River while the remaining lionesses and the sub-adults move through the pride's territory.

On the 11th, three lionesses wherein the Mlowathi River north of Mlowathi Dam. On the 20th, four lionesses and eight of the cubs were north of Stwise. Almost a week later (26th), 13 members of the pride were in the Manyelethi River west of the Manyelethi Crossing, while two lionesses were north of Mlowathi Dam. The following day four lionesses were north of Mlowathi Dam.

Their movement into Marthly seems to have resulted in a shift in the Marthly pride's territory as they avoid the larger, more powerful Nkuhuma pride.

THE MARTHLY PRIDE = 2

1 ADULT FEMALE	8 YEARS 0 MONTHS
1 CUB	2 YEARS 3 MONTHS

MARTHLY

(0 sightings)

This pride was not viewed for yet another month.

THE STYX PRIDE = 6

1 ADULT FEMALE	13 YEARS 5 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	10 YEARS 5 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 6 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 4 MONTHS
<i>WESTERN BANK OF CHARLESTON</i>	
(0 sightings)	

The Styx pride was yet again not seen this month.

THE TORCHWOOD PRIDE = 17

7 ADULT FEMALES	UNKOWN AGES
6 ADULT FEMALES	± 5 YEARS 5 MONTHS
4 CUBS	± 10 MONTHS
<i>EASTERN EYREFIELD</i>	
(0 sightings)	

After a couple of months of good sightings of this pride, we did not see any pride members this month. Having said this, we did have tracks of lions in the areas that this pride frequents. Therefore, it's more than likely they were in the northeastern parts of MalaMala. Unfortunately, we didn't see them.

MALE LIONS

THE GOWRIE MALES = 2

1 ADULT MALE	± 10 YEARS 6 MONTHS
1 ADULT MALE	± 9 YEARS 6 MONTHS
<i>MALAMALA, FLOCKFIELD & NORTHERN CHARLESTON</i>	
<i>Dominant over the Kambula and Marthly prides.</i>	
<i>First encountered on MalaMala Game Reserve in September 2015.</i>	
(15 sightings)	

In an interesting and not entirely unpredictable turn of events, the Gowrie males spent the majority of their time together this month. Of the fifteen sightings, only four featured them separate from one another. This speaks to the wise old principle of safety in numbers. The pressure from the Northern Avoca males seems to be mounting. Most of the sightings of the Gowrie males were in the core of their territory, around the Airstrip and Sand River, south of MalaMala main camp. The Gowrie males also spent a fair amount of time with the newest Kambula pride cubs. This is an indication that they assume paternity over the litter.

THE 'SOUTHERN' AVOCA MALES = 2

2 ADULT MALES

± 8 YEARS 4 MONTHS

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

Dominant over the Sand River Pride.

(0 sightings)

The two Southern Avoca males were not seen this month. They appear to be spending more time to the east of Charleston in the Kruger National Park these days.

THE 'NORTHERN' AVOCA MALES = 2

2 ADULT MALES

± 8 YEARS 0 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

Dominant over the Nkuhuma pride.

First encountered in late 2019.

(6 sightings)

The two Northern Avoca males continue to make their intentions clear along the Mlowathi River south to Campbell Koppies. When they are in the southern parts of their range, they roar and scent mark continuously. With very little response from the two Gowrie males, the two Northern Avoca males are getting more comfortable in these southern reaches of their territory.

The first sighting of one of these males was on the 2nd at Mlowathi Dam. Overnight the brothers linked up and made their way south. The following day, both males were at Princess Alice Pans. This is the furthest south we have ever recorded this coalition. On the 4th, both males were with a lioness from the Kambula pride north of the Airstrip, and a couple of days later, the two males were with the same lioness at Senegal Bush. On the 8th, a male was at Mlowathi Dam. Two weeks passed without sightings of this coalition before both males were at Campbell Koppies on the 22nd.

THE TORCHWOOD MALE = 1

1 ADULT MALE

± 5 YEARS 5 MONTHS

NOMADIC

(0 sightings)

We did not see the young Torchwood male this month.

Other lions encountered:

- **SAND RIVER PRIDE (3 adult lionesses, 5 cubs)** – Calabash crossing (12th), Tjellahanga River south of Pumphouse crossing (17th).
- **3 LIONESSES** – Sand River west of Matumi Rocks on the 26th.
- **Fourways Pride** – Borehole in Flockfield on the 18th, five subadults had a wildebeest kill near

Zebra Skull on the 24th.

- The young **STYX AND NKUHUMA MALES**, now known as the coalition **NWALUNGU MALES** (meaning northern), were seen on a buffalo kill with members of the Kambula pride on the 18th, north of River Rocks in Charleston.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LIONS ENCOUNTERED	61 (25cubs)
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LEOPARDS

FEMALE LEOPARDS:

THE PICCADILLY FEMALE

7 YEARS 6 MONTHS

1 FEMALE CUB

1 YEAR 3 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLY

Daughter of the Kikilezi female[†], independent first quarter of 2016.

(3 sighting of female)

The Piccadilly female was seen three times this month. Although sightings of this leopard are but a fraction of over a year ago, we may see more of the Piccadilly female with her cub approaching independence. The first sighting of this leopard was north of Stwise on the 7th. She was next seen at Matumi Rocks on the 23rd. The final sighting for June was on the 26th when she was in the Sand River in front of MalaMala camp.

THE ISLAND FEMALE

8 YEARS 6 MONTHS

1 FEMALE CUB

11 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, SOUTHERN MALAMALA

Daughter of the Tamboti female[†], independent first quarter of 2015

(25 sightings; 8 of female, 12 of female and cub, 5 of the cub)

There were no real changes in the distribution of this mother and daughter pair this month. Like the past several months, they spent the bulk of their time in the vicinity of Drum Crossing. On the 2nd, the Island female and cub had an impala kill in the area of Drum Crossing. On the 4th, the cub was seen alone at Drum Crossing while the female was on a territorial patrol south of Paddy's Pools. On the 5th, the Island female caught a scrub hare at Drum Crossing. On the 13th, the Island female had an impala kill east of Maurice's Pan while her cub was east of West Street in the same area as the Son of the Lookout female. A couple of days later (15th), mother and daughter had another impala kill east of Maurice's Pan. They were there the following day again. On the 20th, they were on yet another impala

kill some ways northeast of West Street. A couple of days later, they had an impala kill east of Drum Crossing. The month rounded off with the two leopards on another impala kill west of Matshapiri Open Area on the 29th and 30th.

THE EMSAGWENI FEMALE

11 YEARS 6 MONTHS

NORTH/EASTERN MALAMALA AND EYREFIELD

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

Mother of the Ngoboswan and Eyrefield males.

(3 sightings)

The Emsagweni female was at Clarendon Dam on the 10th. The second sighting for the month of this female was on the 17th when she was south of the Mlhabitini Donga. The last sighting for the month of this female was on a rainy day on the 19th when she was moving northwest from Wild Dog Rocks.

THE NKOVENI FEMALE

8 YEARS 10 MONTHS

2 CUBS

5 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA & SOUTHERN MARTHLI

Daughter of the Mashaba female, independent early 2014.

Mother of the Plaque Rock female.

(10 sightings, 4 of female, 6 of female and cubs)

The Nkoveni female has been spending the majority of her time northwest of MalaMala camp with her two cubs. She uses the drainage line system on Jerrimaih's loop to keep her cubs out of harm's way. On the 1st, she and her two cubs were still at the broken dam on Jerrimaih's loop finishing off the impala kill they had there at the end of last month. A week passed before she was seen again, this time alone, hunting on the old Airstrip. On the 10th, the three leopards were just south of Sable camp, moving north to where they were the following day around Stone's drift. On the 15th and 16th, the mother and cubs had an impala kill west of the Causeway. The Nkoveni female was seen alone on the 22nd and 26th on the old Airstrip and Airstrip respectfully. The last sighting of the three leopards together was on the 27th, when they had an impala kill north of the Old Airstrip. The final sighting for the month was on the 28th when the Nkoveni female was in the Sable rotunda.

THE PLAQUE ROCK FEMALE

3 YEARS 3 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA

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

(1 sighting)

Unlike previous months the Plaque Rock female was only viewed once this month. On the 26th she was around the Parking Bay. As mentioned in last months game report the reduction in sightings of this young female is likely due to her mother, the Nkoveni female's new litter of cubs and her no longer tolerating her daughter in the same area.

THE LOOKOUT FEMALE

± 11 YEARS 5 MONTHS

SON

1 YEAR 10 MONTHS

NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD

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

(6 sightings; 1 sighting of female, 5 sightings of her Son)

June marks a change in how we refer to the cub of the Lookout female. WE now refer to him as the Son of the Lookout female. This young male has not been seen with his mother for some time now, and we believe he is independent. He was seen five times this month. The first sighting was on the 3rd when he was in the Tamboti Thickets. On the 10th, he was near West Street, and a couple of days later, he was north of Styx crossing. On the 13th, he was seen in the area of the cub of the Island female near West Street and on the 14th, he was at Drum Crossing. His shift north out of his mother's familiar territory is likely a response to the presence of the Inyathini male, N'weti male and recently the Nchila male in the southern parts of Flockfield and the lower reaches of the Kapen River.

The only sighting of the Lookout female was on the 19th when she was west of Styx Rocks.

THE THREE RIVERS FEMALE

5 YEARS 3 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALAMALA

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

(6 sightings)

The Three Rivers female was seen six times this month. The first sighting of this female was on the 8th when she was near West Street Pans. On the 14th, she was south of Rattray's camp. A Gowrie male led us to this female leopard east of Princess Alice Pan's on the 18th. She had an impala kill hoisted out of reach of the male lion in a Tamboti tree. On the 19th, she was joined on the kill by the dominant male of the area, the Maxim's male. Ten days later (29th), she had another impala kill at Confluence crossing

and again was in the presence of the Maxim's male. They finished off the kill the following day.

THE KAPEN FEMALE

3 YEARS 8 MONTHS

SOUTHERN FLOCKFIELD

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

(0 sightings)

The Kapen female was not viewed this month, but reports indicate she has been mating with the Split Rock male in the south.

THE TLEBE ROCKS FEMALE

3 YEARS 5 MONTHS

CENTRAL & WESTERN EYREFIELD

Daughter of the Sibuye Female, independent second quarter 2019.

(3 sightings)

The Tlebe Rocks female was only seen three times this month, unlike previous months when she has been a regularly viewed female. The first sighting of this young female was on the 11th when she interacted with a honey badger at Lower Mlowathi crossing. On the 22nd, she was at the Sausage Spot with the Ngoboswan male on an impala kill. The final sighting for the month was on the 24th when she was moving south past Piccadilly Pans and Plank's Pan.

This area was previously up for grabs, and both the Plaque Rock female and the Tlebe Rocks female appeared to be vying for it in the absence of the Piccadilly female. However, with fewer sightings of the Plaque Rock female in the imitate area, has the Tlebe Rocks female got some freedom to secure this highly productive section for herself?

THE SIBUYE FEMALE

7 YEARS 6 MONTHS

1 MALE & 1 FEMALE CUB

1 YEAR 10 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

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

(3 sightings; 2 sightings of the female and 1 sighting of male cub)

The Son of the Sibuye female was north of the Old Borehole in Eyrefield on the 6th.

MALE LEOPARDS

THE ACCIPITER MALE

± 10 YEARS 10 MONTHS

EASTERN & CENTRAL MALAMALA & FLOCKFIELD

First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in late 2015.

(1 sighting)

The Accipiter male was only seen once this month on the 11th, when he was west of Styx Rocks.

THE MAXIM'S MALE

± 6 YEARS 10 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in early 2019.

(6 sightings)

The Maxim's male was seen six times this month. Five of the six sightings were in the core of his territory and one in an area that he is expanding his territory into. On the 10th, he was south of the Airstrip and on the 13th, he was around Flockfield camp. On the 19th, he found his way to a kill the Three Rivers female had south of the Airstrip. Almost ten days later (28th), he was in the Sand River south of the Causeway in an area he's starting to spend more time. The final two sightings for the month of this male he was with the Three Rivers female on an impala kill on the Sand River's western bank around Confluence crossing.

THE NGOBOSWAN MALE

3 YEARS 7 MONTHS

NOMADIC (Marthly and western Eyrefield)

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

(13 sightings)

The Ngoboswan male was once again one of the most viewed leopards this month second only to the Island female and her cub. Like last month, all but one of the sightings of this young male were in the area around Campbell Koppies and Piccadilly Pans. The only sighting not in this area was when he was in the northern parts of his range southwest of Mlowathi Dam. On the 5th he had an impala kill stolen from him by two spotted hyenas north of the Sausage Spot. The following day, however, he had a second impala kill in the same area and was viewed here for two days. The next noteworthy sighting was on the 22nd, when he had another impala kill north of the Sausage Spot. He 'shared' this kill with the Tlebe Rocks female for a night before the carcass was finished.

THE EYREFIELD MALE

3 YEARS 7 MONTHS

NOMADIC (southwestern Eyrefield and eastern Marthly)
 Son of the Emsagweni female, *independent late 2019*.
 (1 sighting)

The Eyrefield male was only seen once this month. He was on a territorial patrol and was found near Ostrich Koppies on the 17th. He showed interest in several herds of impala but was not getting into the correct positions. In the end, it wasn't an impala that the young male caught. In a swift turn in events, while stalking a herd of impala, two black-backed jackals wandered into the area, and the Eyrefield male's attention shifted from the impala onto the pair of mesocarnivores. The pair walked straight past the leopard, and in just a few bounds, the young male caught one of the Jackals. Apex predators will catch and kill mesocarnivores. This is a process of removing potential competition.

THE SPLIT ROCK MALE

7 YEARS 0 MONTHS

CHARLESTON
 Son of the Ostrich Koppies female, *independent latter half of 2015*.
 (0 sightings)

The Split Rock male was not seen this month.

Other Leopards Encountered:

- A **NO ID** leopard was seen north of the Airstrip on the 4th.
- A **NO ID female** was south of Rattray's camp on the 7th.
- The **INYATHINI MALE** was in the Tamboti Thickets (11th), in the Kapen River north of the Sand River (19th), at Hyena waterhole (29th).
- The **TENGILE FEMALE** was seen on the 14th east of Calabash crossing.
- The **MISTERS KOPPIES MALE** was around pumphouse pan on the 17th.
- The **NCHILA MALE** was east of the confluence of the Rock Drift donga and the Sand River (21st).
- A **NO ID FEMALE** was seen around Plank's Pan on the 27th.
- A **NO ID MALE** was at Buffalo Bush Dam on the 28th.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED	23 (4 cubs)
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CHEETAH

We recorded **three sightings** of cheetah during the month of June. Two sub-adult males were north of Kapen Rocks on the 4th. A coalition of three males was seen twice. The first sighting was in Clarendon Open Area on the 9th. From here, the three males moved south and were around Split Rock on the 11th.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED	5
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CAPE HUNTING DOGS

We had 20 sightings of Cape hunting dogs this month. 18 of the sightings were of the pack of 15 that is denning north of Gowrie Boom in the Den site used by the pack of four from last year. We can confirm they are denning there, and the den will be opened for viewing at the start of July. We look forward to what should be an exciting month. On the 29th, the pack caught a young Nyala around Plank's Pan. The following day they caught an impala in Mlowathi Open Area.

We had one brief sighting of a pack of 20 south of Rattray's camp on the 11th and one sighting of a pack of 8 around Beaumonts camp on the 12th. These two sightings may have been of members of the Toulon pack, but we could not get a positive ID.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAPE HUNTING DOGS ENCOUNTERED	≥35
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CAPE BUFFALO AND ELEPHANTS

This month we recorded **119 sightings of elephants**. 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.

There were 41 sightings of **Cape buffalo** this month. With an increase in sightings of this member of the 'Big 5', we've also seen an increase in the number of herds visiting the reserve. This month we had 16 sightings of herds ranging from 60 to a large herd of 250.

Other sightings of interest

- The **hyena den** sites east of Campbell Koppies, south of Sytx Crossing and north of River Rocks are still active.
- **Honey badgers** and **Cape porcupines** are still being viewed on a regular basis.
- **Black-backed** and **side-striped jackals** were seen often.
- A **Pangolin** was seen on the 15th.