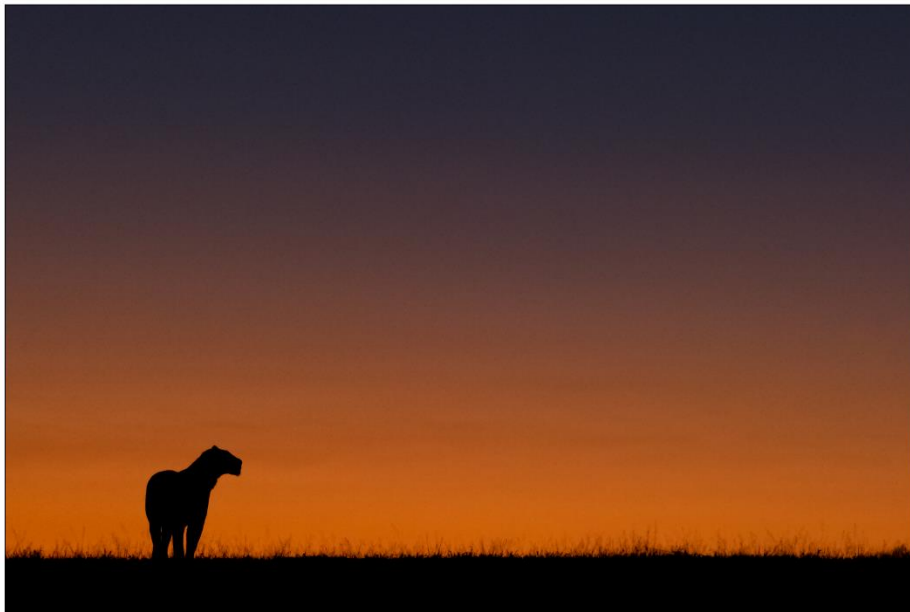




Game Report



Silhouette of a lioness by ranger Gareth Nuttall-Smith.

**MalaMala Game Reserve
July 2021**

It's all about the wildlife!

THE MONTH'S WEATHER SUMMARY					
Temperature					
Celsius (°C)			Fahrenheit (°F)		
	Actual	Average		Actual	Average
Maximum	33	24	Maximum	91	76
Minimum	6	11	Minimum	43	51
Rainfall					
Millimetres		Inches		Days of rain	
1		0.04		1	

TOTAL SIGHTINGS	
Lion	89
Leopard	109
Elephant	161
Buffalo	52
Cheetah	2
Cape Hunting Dog	8

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, 3 Cape buffalo
Leopard	13 impala, 1 warthog, 1 nyala, 2 bushbuck, 1 scrub hare
Cheetah	No recorded kills
Cape Hunting Dog	4 impala, 1 scrub hare

*AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS

LION PRIDES

THE KAMBULA PRIDE = 19

3 ADULT FEMALES	± 8 YEARS 4 MONTHS
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 8 YEARS 1 MONTH
6 SUB ADULT FEMALES	± 2 YEARS 11 MONTHS
5 SUB ADULT MALES	± 2 YEARS 11 MONTHS
2 SUB ADULTS	2 YEARS 2 MONTHS
5 CUBS	5 MONTHS

MALAMALA, FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON

(56 sightings)

The Kambula pride remains the most prolific pride seen on MalaMala and dominates most of the length of the Sand River. This month, a total of 56 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 young cubs. The majority of the pride consisting of two lionesses, and the sub-adults have been moving widely through their territory and remain somewhat unpredictable.

The most noteworthy development for this pride for the month was the addition of new cubs with a lioness giving birth to a litter in the Sand River north of West Street around the 3rd. The second was the killing of two of the five young cubs by a Northern Avoca male at West Street on the 18th. After this event, the lionesses from the pride moved the cubs south to the area around Rattray's camp and deeper into what remains Gowrie male territory.

Members of the pride were seen with one or both of the Gowrie males in only seven of the 56 sightings. A lioness was mating with a Northern Avoca male around Campbell Koppies from the 28th until the end of the month.

Two lionesses and the sub-adult members of the pride brought down a Cape buffalo cow in the Sand River on the 31st.

THE MARTHLY PRIDE = 2

1 ADULT FEMALE	8 YEARS 1 MONTH
1 CUB	2 YEARS 4 MONTHS

MARTHLY

(0 sightings)

This pride was not viewed for yet another month. The Marthly lioness and her sub-adult daughter have shifted their territory west along the Sand River. This being a direct response to pressure from the two larger and formidable Kambula and Nkuhuma Prides.

THE NKUHUMA PRIDE = 24

1 ADULT FEMALE	± 9 YEARS 1 MONTH
2 ADULT FEMALES	± 8 YEARS 7 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	± 8 YEARS 4 MONTHS
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 5 YEARS 2 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	± 5 YEARS 0 MONTHS
2 SUB ADULT FEMALES	± 2 YEARS 0 MONTHS
6 SUB ADULT MALES	± 2 YEARS 0 MONTHS
1 CUB	1 YEAR 7 MONTHS
7 CUBS	± 4 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

(14 sightings)

The Nkuhuma pride are split in two, with the division being clear at the moment. Three lionesses from the pride have moved their seven young cubs onto the northern parts of MalaMala. The rest of the pride are still moving together.

On the 4th, four lionesses were at the Old Borehole. On the 4th, 5th and 7th, one of the sub-adult males was moving slowly in the northern parts of Eyrefield with what appeared to be a broken leg. Unfortunately, this injury proved to be a fatal one. On the 5th, two lionesses and the other eight sub-adults from the pride were southeast of Gowrie circle. Two lionesses and young cubs were seen along the northern parts of the Mlowathi River on the 11th. This was our first sighting of the new members of the pride. The entire pride with the two Northern Avoca males were together on a Cape buffalo bull kill in central Eyrefield on the 15th. On the 23rd, three lionesses and seven cubs were at Tlebe Rocks while the rest of the pride were north of Lower Mlowati crossing. The three lionesses were hunting the following day in central Eyrefield. On the 27th, another Cape buffalo bull kill brought the entire pride together with the two Northern Avoca males south of Matshapiri Dam. During the month's final two days, the three lionesses and seven cubs were viewed at a den site in the Tlebe Rocks donga, south of Tlebe Rocks.

THE STYX PRIDE = 6

1 ADULT FEMALE	13 YEARS 6 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	10 YEARS 6 MONTHS
1 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 7 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 5 MONTHS

WESTERN BANK OF CHARLESTON

(0 sightings)

The Styx pride was yet again not seen this month.

THE TORCHWOOD PRIDE = 20

7 ADULT FEMALES

6 ADULT FEMALES

7 CUBS

EASTERN EYREFIELD

(1 sighting)

UNKOWN AGES

± 5 YEARS 6 MONTHS

± 11 MONTHS

One female was seen in Clarendon Open Area on the 6th.

MALE LIONS

THE GOWRIE MALES = 2

1 ADULT MALE

± 10 YEARS 7 MONTHS

1 ADULT MALE

± 9 YEARS 7 MONTHS

MALAMALA, FLOCKFIELD & NORTHERN CHARLESTON

Dominant over the Kambula and Marthly prides.

First encountered on MalaMala Game Reserve in September 2015.

(17 sightings)

In contrast to last month when the two Gowrie males spent the bulk of their time together, we saw the opposite this month. Only in five of the 17 sightings were these two males seen together. In just under half of the sightings (7), one of both males were with members of the Kambula Pride. While their territory historically would have stretched as far north as Matumi Rocks, the steady shift south by the Northern Avoca males has resulted in the ageing Gowrie males shifting. Their focus further south and in what appears to be a retreat but alternatively is to consolidate territory and defend what is possible without stretching themselves too thin.

In only three of the 17 sightings were the Gowrie males north of West Street and with a Northern Avoca male killing cubs at West Street. Therefore, for the time being, West Street is, in all likelihood, now the northern boundary for the Gowrie males and the southern limits of the Northern Avoca males.

THE 'SOUTHERN' AVOCA MALES = 2

2 ADULT MALES

± 8 YEARS 5 MONTHS

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

Dominant over the Sand River Pride.

(1 sighting)

The two Southern Avoca males were seen once this month at Ivory Pan on the 6th.

THE 'NORTHERN' AVOCA MALES = 2

2 ADULT MALES

± 8 YEARS 1 MONTH

WESTERN EYREFIELD

Dominant over the Nkuhuma pride.

First encountered in late 2019.

(18 sightings)

The Northern Avoca males drew first blood in the battle for the Sand River between themselves and the defending but ageing Gowrie males. On the 18th, one of the males killed at least two young Kambula pride cubs at West Street. Sending a clear message that they have control of the north. In another shift, we viewed the third Northern Avoca male for the first time on MalaMala on the 16th when he was south of Mlowathi Dam. On the 15th, the two males were seen with the entire Nkuhuma pride on a Cape buffalo kill in central Eyrefield. On the 23rd, a male was at Senegal Bush with an impala kill. A male was with a lioness from the Kambula pride at Campbell Koppies and Kigelia Crossing on the 24th and 25th, respectively. On the 27th, the two males were with the Nkuhuma pride south of Matshapiri Dam on another Cape buffalo kill. The final four days of the month saw a male mating with a lioness from the Kambula pride in the vicinity of Campbell Koppies.

THE TORCHWOOD MALE = 1

1 ADULT MALE

± 5 YEARS 6 MONTHS

NOMADIC

(0 sightings)

Another month goes by without a sighting of this young male.

Other lions encountered:

- **SAND RIVER PRIDE (4 adult lionesses, 4 cubs)** – Confluence of the Sand and Tjellahanga Rivers on the 5th.
- Three of the four **NDHZENGA MALES** were north of Calabash Crossing on the 21st.
- An adult lioness, sub-adult lioness and sub-adult male were west of Kapen Rocks on the 22nd.
- **FOURWAYS PRIDE** were on the KNP break at Charleston/Flockfield Boundary on the 25th.
- The two **PLAINS CAMP MALES** were on the Airstrip on the 26th, Old Airstrip on the 27th, and on the 31st, they had a buffalo kill northeast of the bridge. A Gowrie male joined them, and the males took it in turns feeding while maintaining a safe distance.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LIONS ENCOUNTERED	65 (10 CUBS)
-----------------------------------	--------------

LEOPARDS

FEMALE LEOPARDS:

THE PICCADILLY FEMALE

7 YEARS 7 MONTHS

1 FEMALE CUB

1 YEAR 4 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLY

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

(1 sighting of female)

The Piccadilly female and her cub were seen once this month at Kigelia Crossing on the 25th.

THE ISLAND FEMALE

8 YEARS 7 MONTHS

1 FEMALE CUB

1 YEAR 0 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, SOUTHERN MALAMALA

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

(17 sightings; 4 of female, 9 of female and cub, 4 of the cub)

All 17 sightings of the Island female and cub were like the previous month, concentrated between Buffalo Pans and West Street Bridge. On the first and 2nd, mother and daughter had an impala kill on the Sand Rivers eastern bank, south of West Street. The Island female left her cub in the Matshapiri River at Drum Crossing for a few days while she was patrolling territory and hunting. On the 9th, the Island female made an impala kill in the Sand River near the Old Wildebeest Crossing. She stashed the kill and fetched her cub from Buffalo Pans before leading her back to the kill. During the afternoon, the Three Rivers female showed up, and a standoff between the two females ensued while the cub of the Island female took to the highest branches of an apple leaf tree. The Three Rivers female retreated only to return later that evening once the Island female had had her fill. The Three Rivers female fed off the carcass before leaving the area. The following day the Island female and cub finished off the kill without the company of another leopard. On the 26th, the Island female and cub had yet another impala kill around the Kikiliehash crossing.

THE EMSAGWENI FEMALE

11 YEARS 7 MONTHS

NORTH/EASTERN MALAMALA AND EYREFIELD

Daughter of the Kikilezi female[†], independent first quarter of 2012.

Mother of the Ngoboswan and Eyrefield males.

(2 sightings)

The Emsagweni female was east of Tlebe Rocks on the 6th and at Emsagwen Crossing on the 30th.

THE NKOVENI FEMALE**2 CUBS**

8 YEARS 11 MONTHS

6 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA & SOUTHERN MARTHLI

*Daughter of the Mashaba female, independent early 2014.**Mother of the Plaque Rock female.*

(19 sightings, 4 of female, 15 of female and cubs)

In July, the Nkoveni female was the most viewed leopard, with 19 sightings of her and her cubs. A similar distribution of sightings as previous months was observed this month, concentrated around MalaMala Camp and the Old Airstrip. On the 1st, the female and cubs had an impala kill north of Maxim's Lookout when the Plaque Rock female showed up and stole the kill. The female and cubs were seen several times from the 2nd to the 11th around MalaMala Camp. On the 13th and 14th, the three leopards were on a bushbuck kill east of the Old Airstrip. A few days later, on the 17th, the three leopards had an impala kill in the nyala berry tree west of MalaMala Camp. Between the 18th and 28th, the Nkoveni female and cubs were seen several times along the southern bank of the Sand River, west of MalaMala Camp. On the 29th and 30th, mother and cubs were on an impala kill on the Island South of the Causeway. The final sighting of the month was on the 31st when the Nkoveni female caught a scrub hare near the Boom while walking her cubs north.

THE LOOKOUT FEMALE**SON**

± 11 YEARS 6 MONTHS

1 YEAR 11 MONTHS

NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD

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

(9 sightings; 5 sightings of female, 5 sightings of her Son)

The Lookout female and her son were seen on nine occasions this month, two of which saw them together on two separate impala kills. The first sighting of the Lookout female was east of Confluence Crossing on the 1st, while her son was first viewed on the 3rd at Drum Crossing. On the 5th, the Lookout female was east of Confluence Crossing again. The son of the Lookout female was north of the Kapen River, someways north of Kapen Rocks the following day. Both mother and son were together on the 8th when they had an impala kill northeast of Styx waterhole, and if two weren't enough, the Accipiter male was seen close by too. The following day the first carcass was no longer, but the two were in another marula tree with a second impala kill a could 100 meters from the day before. On the 28th, the Lookout female was midway along Flockfield Lookout.

THE PLAQUE ROCK FEMALE

3 YEARS 4 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA

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

(2 sightings)

With her mother, the Nkoveni female spending most of her time around MalaMala Camp in recent times, sightings of the Plaque Rock female have declined in recent months. The first sighting of this female was on the 1st when she approached the Nkoveni female, and two cubs with an impala kill north of Maxim's Lookout. The Plaque Rock female ran into the area, the Nkoveni female moved off, and the two cubs scaled to the top of the tree while the Plaque Rock female got to the kill. The second sighting was on the 12th when she was on the Old Airstrip.

THE THREE RIVERS FEMALE

5 YEARS 4 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALAMALA

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

(6 sightings)

July ended in excitement as the Three Rivers female became a mother for the first time. On the 30th, she appeared from a culvert under the Airstrip with a cub only days old. She processed to carry the cub south all the way to Rattray's camp before returning to the culvert and retrieved a second cub. This has been a moment that many a ranger and guest have been eagerly awaiting. We had four sightings of this female before the big day on the 30th, with the sightings all been along the sand river between the Old Flockfield Boma crossing and Old Wildebeest crossing. On the 9th, she had an interesting interaction with the Island female over an impala kill at Old Wildebeest crossing. The Island female had the kill and had brought her cub to the kill. As the sunset, the Three Rivers female approached the kill sending the cub high into an apple leaf tree while her mother saw off the Three Rivers female. Once the Island female had had her fill, the Three Rivers female processed to feed on the carcass into the night. On the 31st, the new mother had a bushbuck kill hoisted in a leadwood tree at Rattray's camp entrance

THE KAPEN FEMALE

3 YEARS 9 MONTHS

SOUTHERN FLOCKFIELD

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

(1 sighting)

The Kapen female was on the eastern bank of the Sand River opposite Beaumonts camp on the 27th.

THE TLEBE ROCKS FEMALE

3 YEARS 6 MONTHS

CENTRAL & WESTERN EYREFIELD

Daughter of the Sibuye Female, independent second quarter 2019.

(4 sightings)

The Tlebe Rocks female was viewed four times this month, like last month, the four sightings of this female were in the area of Piccadilly Pans. On the 2nd, she was mobile north on the eastern ramp of the Causeway. More than a week later, on the 11th, she was east of Campbell Koppies. Again a week passed with no sighting of this young female before she was found on an impala kill in the Mlowathi River at its confluence with the Sand River on the 19th. The following day she was joined in the kill by the Ngoboswan male.

THE SIBUYE FEMALE

7 YEARS 7 MONTHS

SON & DAUGHTER

1 YEAR 11 MONTHS

2 CUBS

2 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

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

(1 sighting of the female)

A Lactating Sibuye female was entering a drainage system east of the Mlowathi River south of the Nwana Nononshameni Donga on the 29th. We received information that the Sibuye female had a litter of cubs towards the end of May.

MALE LEOPARDS

THE NGOBOSWAN MALE

3 YEARS 8 MONTHS

NOMADIC (Marthly and western Eyrefield)

Son of the Emsagweni female, independent late 2019.

(9 sightings)

The Ngoboswan male is starting to settle in his territory, and like in previous months, the majority of the sightings of him were around the lower reaches of the Mlowathi River and the area around Campbell Koppies and Piccadilly Pans. On the 4th, he had an impala kill south of Campbell Koppies. He was on the eastern ramp of the Causeway on the 9th before moving north, where he was viewed on the 15th and 17th in the vicinity of Lower Mlowathi Crossing with little remains of an impala kill and Bicycle Crossing, respectively. A couple of days later, he was seen north of Tlebe Rocks (19th), and the following day, he was back south and was on Rhino pens sharing an impala kill with the Tlebe Rocks female. He moved east and was in the Loop in New Firebreak on the 22nd before heading north to Tlebe Rocks the following day. The final sighting of this young male was at Senegal Bush on the 29th.

THE ACCIPITER MALE

± 10 YEARS 11 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 8th when he was in the vicinity of the Lookout female and her son on an impala kill southwest of Styx Rocks.

THE MAXIM'S MALE

± 6 YEARS 11 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD

First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in early 2019.

(9 sightings)

Sightings of this male are up from last month, with there being nine sightings of him between West Street Crossing and Elephant Rock this month. Additionally, this month saw the Maxim's male spend more time north of Sand Pit crossing than we are accustomed to, as this is a clear indication of his intentions to continue expanding his territory northwest along the Sand River. All sightings of this male were in a pattern of one in the north followed by down further south along the Sand River, depicting his consistent pacing up and down the river.

THE EYREFIELD MALE**3 YEARS 8 MONTHS**

NOMADIC (southwestern Eyrefield and eastern Marthly)

Son of the Emsagweni female, independent late 2019.

(1 sighting)

For the second month in a row, the Eyrefield was only seen once. This month he was seen at Buffalo Bush dam on the 21st.

THE SPLIT ROCK MALE

7 YEARS 1 MONTH

CHARLESTON

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

(3 sightings)

The large dominant male of Charleston was first seen at Charleston Rock on the 1st. The second sighting of this male was on the 15th when he was in the northern extremes of his territory doing a territorial patrol just south of the Windmill. This final sighting was on the 25th as he patrolled territory along the eastern bank of the Sand River around the Rock Drift Donga.

Other Leopards Encountered:

- The **SON OF THE FLOCKFIELD FEMALE** had a warthog kill at Mister's Koppies on the 1st.
- A nervous **NO ID MALE** was south of Mlowathi Dam on the 3rd.
- The **N'WETI MALE** was south of Charleston North crossing on the 4th and at Calabash crossing on the 10th.
- The **SON OF THE XIMUNGWE FEMALE** had a female nyala kill in a jakkalberry tree west of Stwise on the 5th and 6th.
- The **FLAT ROCK MALE** was around Matumi Rocks on the 12th, Kigilia crossing on the 22nd.
- A **NO ID MALE** was at the Borehole on the 15th.
- A **NO ID MALE** was around Paraffin drift on the 17th.
- The **INYATHINI MALE** was in at Elephant Slide crossing on the 17th, at the treehouse on the 19th and 20th with an impala ram kill hoisted in a natal mahogany tree, Tamboti Thickets on the 24th, and around the treehouse on the 25th 27th.
- The **NDZATINI FEMALE** was at West Street Bridge on the 17th.
- The **TENGILE FEMALE** was at calabash crossing on the 21st with an impala kill.
- A **NO ID FEMALE** was in the reeds in the Sand River south of Elephant Rock on the 22nd.
- A **NO ID FEMALE** was around Mlowathi Springs on the 22nd.
- The **NCHILE MALE** was at Calabash crossing on the 24th.
- The **NANGA FEMALE** was at Mlowathi Dam on the 24th.
- There was a flash sighting of a leopard at Donald's crossing on the 24th.
- Two leopards were seen briefly at Matshapiri Dam on the 25th. Both leopards were a little nervous and slipped away.
- A no ID leopard was on Rhino pens on the 26th.
- The young nervous **2:1 MALE** was at Emsagwen waterhole on the 27th and around Buffalo Pans on the 31st.
- The **NDZANZELE FEMALE** was around Dudley Dam on the 30th.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED	36 (8 CUBS)
--------------------------------------	--------------------

CHEETAH

We recorded **two sightings** of cheetah during the month of July. Both sightings were of a nervous young female in Eastern Flockfield. On the 15th, she was around the Borehole, and on the 22nd, she was in the open area north of the Windmill.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED	1
-------------------------------------	----------

CAPE HUNTING DOGS

Sightings of Cape hunting dogs were down from last month. From 20 sightings in June to only eight in July. This month we viewed two packs, with seven of the eight sightings being of a pack of 15 in the northern parts of MalaMala, and members of the Toulon pack were seen once. On the 15th, the pack in the north caught two impalas west of MalaMala Camp, and on the 12th, they caught a further 2 impala, this time at the sausage spot. The Toulon pack were seen once, north of Beaumonts camp on the 6th, where they caught a scrub hare.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAPE HUNTING DOGS ENCOUNTERED	28
---	-----------

CAPE BUFFALO AND ELEPHANTS

This month we recorded **161 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 52 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 27 sightings of herds ranging from 60 to a large herd of over 400.

Other sightings of interest

- The **hyena den** site east of Campbell Koppies is still active with five cubs.
- **Honey badgers** and **Cape porcupines** are still being viewed on a regular basis.
- **Black-backed** and **side-stripped jackals** were seen often.