



Game Report



Giraffes in the Sand River by Piet van Wyk

MalaMala Game Reserve
June 2023

It's all about the wildlife!

THE MONTH'S WEATHER SUMMARY					
Temperature					
Celsius (°C)			Fahrenheit (°F)		
	Actual	Average		Actual	Average
Maximum	32	26	Maximum	90	79
Minimum	10	12	Minimum	50	54
Rainfall					
Millimetres		Inches		Days of rain	
11		0.43		2	

TOTAL SIGHTINGS	
Lion	83
Leopard	109
Elephant	135
Buffalo	54
Cheetah	0
Cape Hunting Dog	12

**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	2 impala, 1 wildebeest, 1 hyena cub, 2 waterbuck, 1 warthog
Leopard	17 impala, 1 duiker, 1 scrub hare, 1 warthog, 1 steenbok, 1 bushbuck
Cheetah	No recorded Kills
Cape Hunting Dog	5 impala

**AGES ARE APPROXIMATIONS*

LION PRIDES

THE KAMBULA PRIDE = 29

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

MALAMALA, FLOCKFIELD, NORTHERN CHARLESTON

(58 sightings)

With their cubs developing well, we are basking in great lion viewing across their territory.

Noteworthy sightings:

- Five lionesses and seven cubs were east of Donald's Crossing on the 1st.
- Two lionesses were with a Ndhzenga male south of Styx Crossing on the 2nd.
- The lionesses moved seven cubs west, and the group was at Confluence Crossing on the 3rd and 4th.
- The lioness with the three youngest cubs were at Flockfield Pools on the 7th. They moved north and were at Confluence Crossing on the 8th.
- On the 9th, three lionesses reunited around Piccadilly Triangle.
- A lioness stole an impala ram from the Xinkhova female south of the Airstrip on the 10th.
- On the 16th, four lionesses and 10 cubs played in the Sand River, north of Kikilezihash Crossing on the 16th.
- Six cubs were around Pete's Bridge, while three lionesses were at Lower Mlowathi Crossing on the 17th.
- On the 18th, five lionesses and nine cubs had a wildebeest kill south of the Airstrip. A fight broke out between the adult lions when the Ndhzenga males arrived and stole the kill.
- On the 21st, five lionesses, nine cubs and the Ndhzenga males were at Hyena Waterhole.
- Nine cubs played in the sand at Flockfield Camp on the 22nd while a young male leopard observed them from a distance.
- Kambula Group B made a grand reappearance this month, killing a young hyena cub at its den in the Maponyoleni Donga on the 23rd.
- Three lionesses and three cubs had two waterbuck kills at the Settling Dam on the 24th and 25th.
- One lioness stole the Nkoveni female's impala ram kill on the 28th, south of the Causeway.
- On the last day of the month, four lionesses and nine cubs killed a warthog south of Styx Rocks.

THE NKUHUMA PRIDE = 18

1 ADULT FEMALE	9 YEARS 11 MONTHS
3 ADULT FEMALES	± 6 YEARS 10 MONTHS
4 SUB-ADULT MALES	± 4 YEARS 0 MONTHS
2 SUB-ADULT FEMALES	± 4 YEARS 0 MONTHS
1 SUB ADULT MALE	3 YEARS 6 MONTHS
7 CUBS	± 2 YEARS 2 MONTHS
<i>WESTERN & CENTRAL EYREFIELD</i>	
(2 sightings)	

Three sub-adult males and one adult female were together at Manyelethi Crossing on the 6th. Three adult lionesses were north of Mlowathi Dam on the 16th.

THE SAND RIVER PRIDE = 16

2 ADULT FEMALES	± 9 YEARS 11 MONTHS
2 ADULT FEMALES	± 4 YEARS 11 MONTHS
1 SUB-ADULT FEMALE	3 YEARS 5 MONTHS
3 SUB-ADULTS (1 FEMALE & 2 MALES)	2 YEARS 10 MONTHS
6 CUBS	1 YEAR 10 MONTHS
2 CUBS	0 YEARS 6 MONTHS
<i>SOUTHERN CHARLESTON</i>	
(0 sightings)	

No sightings were recorded of this pride this month. Charleston has been eerily quiet this month. The Nkuhlu males may be stirring the waters in the south. Time will tell.

THE MARTHLY PRIDE = 1

1 ADULT FEMALE	4 YEARS 3 MONTHS
<i>MARTHLY</i>	
(3 sightings)	

The Marthly lioness was seen on the 7th, around Elephant Rock Lookout. She was around Exit Euphorbia Drive on the 11th. On the 18th, she was at Stwise, the last time we saw her this month.

THE TORCHWOOD PRIDE = 20

7 ADULT FEMALES	UNKNOWN AGES
6 ADULT FEMALES	± 7 YEARS 5 MONTHS
7 CUBS	± 2 YEARS 10 MONTHS
<i>EASTERN EYREFIELD</i>	
(1 sighting)	

We saw two adult males, five lionesses, and six cubs at Clarendon Dam on the 26th.

MALE LIONS

THE NDHZENGA MALES = 2

1 ADULT MALE

± 7 YEARS 11 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA, FLOCKFIELD & CHARLESTON

Dominant over the Kambula and Styx Prides.

First Encountered on MalaMala September 2020

(18 sightings)

Statistically, we are recording fewer sightings of these males than in previous months; this can be attributed to the fact that they are now a smaller coalition and are spending more time together than separately.

Noteworthy sightings:

- One male was with two lionesses south of Styx Crossing on the 2nd.
- Both males were west of West Street on the 6th.
- Four Kambula lionesses joined the Ndzenga males south of Styx Rocks on the 10th.
- The males roared in unison at Flockfield Lookout on the 17th.
- On the 18th, they were the catalysts in a family feud with the Kambula lionesses when they stole the pride's wildebeest kill south of the Airstrip.
- Both males were with a group of females and cubs at Hyena Waterhole on the 21st.
- One male was alone at the Windsock on the 24th.
- On the 25th, the Ndzenga males were alone at Hyena Waterhole.
- One male gave guests an unparalleled show when he entered the gates of Rattray's Camp in pursuit of the remains of a kill made by Cape hunting dogs earlier on the morning of the 27th.
- On the last day of the month, the dominant males were around Styx Crossing.

THE NORTHERN AVOCA MALE = 1

1 ADULT MALE

± 10 YEARS 0 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

First encountered in late 2019.

(0 sightings)

This male was not seen in June on MalaMala, although in exciting reports, it seems he has linked up with his sons from the Nkumahuma pride and is showing them the ropes.

THE SOUTHERN AVOCA MALES = 2

2 ADULT MALES

± 10 YEARS 4 MONTHS

SOUTHERN CHARLESTON

Dominant over the Sand River Pride.

First encountered on MalaMala Game Reserve

(0 sightings)

We did not record sightings of these males this month.

OTHER LIONS ENCOUNTERED:

The **BLACK DAM MALES** (2 Adult males – 5 YEARS 8 MONTHS).
(0 sightings) Interestingly, the new males of the north were not seen on MalaMala in June. Perhaps the Ndhzenga males have put them in their place... For now.

Two **sub-adult** males were at Stwise on the 16th.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF LIONS ENCOUNTERED	52 (17 cubs)
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LEOPARDS

FEMALE LEOPARDS:

THE ISLAND FEMALE

10 YEARS 4 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, SOUTHERN MALAMALA

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

Mother of the Drum Crossing female.

(8 sightings)

This female continues to perplex us as she moves greater expanses than other female leopards in the area.

Sightings:

- The Island female was east of Maurice’s Pan on the 1st.
- She was around entrance Flockfield Lookout on the 9th.
- On the 13th, the female was south of Emsagwen Waterhole.
- She moved south and was at exit Flockfield Lookout on the 14th.
- On the 17th, she was found around Flockfield Lookout with an impala hoisted in a marula tree.
- She was north of West Street on the 22nd.
- On the 23rd and 24th, she fed on the remains of a steenbok kill south of Drum Crossing.

THE DRUM CROSSING FEMALE

2 YEARS 10 MONTHS

SOUTHERN MALAMALA

Daughter of the Island female, independent February 2022.

(0 sightings)

As has been the trend, we did not see this young female this month.

**THE THREE RIVERS FEMALE
MALE CUB**

6 YEARS 11 MONTHS
1 YEAR 11 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD, WESTERN MALAMALA

*Daughter of the Kikilezi female[†], orphaned on 22nd May 2017.
(9 sightings)*

The Three Rivers female spent most of her time between Confluence Crossing and West Street. She was within this area in seven of the nine days she was seen.

Noteworthy Sightings:

- This female fed on a hoisted impala ewe on the western bank of the Sand River, north of Confluence Crossing on the 2nd and 3rd.
- She was south of Sable Camp on the 8th when she was with the Maxim's male.
- On the 14th, she was at Princess Alice Pans.
- She had an impala kill around Flockfield Tower on the 15th and 16th.
- On the 22nd and 23rd, she was in the Sand River, north of West Street Bridge.
- She harassed the Nkoveni female and cubs at Flockfield Camp on the 25th. No significant interactions occurred.

**THE PICCADILLY FEMALE
CUB**

9 YEARS 5 MONTHS
0 YEARS 5 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD, MARTHLY

*Daughter of the Kikilezi female[†], independent first quarter of 2016.
Mother of the Ngungwe female.
(17 sightings, 6 of female, 9 of female and cub, 1 of the cub)*

With her cub growing well and gaining confidence, we are recording more sightings of this beloved leopard.

Sightings:

- Mother and cub were at the Confluence of the Three Rivers on the 5th.
- The duo were at Manyelethi Crossing on the 6th and 7th.
- The female was alone in Piccadilly Triangle on the 8th.
- The female killed a scrub hare for her cub on the 10th, around Stwise.
- The female was alone north of Mlowathi Pans on the 12th.
- On the 13th, she was north of the Causeway.
- The female had the remains of an impala in Piccadilly Triangle on the 17th.
- Both mother and cub were south of Stwise on the 18th and 19th.
- The female killed an impala ram at Kigelia Crossing on the 20th. Both leopards fed here for two days.
- On the 24th, the young male cub was on the rocks north of Lower Mlowathi Crossing, while the female was south of this crossing.
- The female was without her cub at Lower Mlowathi Crossing again on the 26th.
- From the 28th to the 30th, both leopards shared an impala kill west of Kigelia Crossing.

THE NKOVENI FEMALE**2 CUBS**

10 YEARS 10 MONTHS

12 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.*

(22 sightings, 10 of the female, 9 of the female and cubs, 3 of the cubs)

With her cubs at a more confident age, our sightings of this female have increased to numbers resembling those we would record when the Xinkhova and Stone Drift females were cubs. Interestingly, this female seems to be extending the southern reaches of her territory. Perhaps this is to avoid the pressure from her eldest daughter, the Plaque Rock female.

Noteworthy sightings:

- The mother and both her cubs had a near-complete carcass of an impala at the Kikilezihash Breakfast Spot on the 6th and 7th.
- Two cubs were east of the Windssock, while the mother was west of the Old Airstrip on the 8th.
- The female was alone at West Street Pans on the 9th.
- She was at the Windssock on the 10th.
- All three leopards were south of the Windssock on the 13th.
- All three leopards were on the Old Airstrip on the 15th and 16th, where they had an impala kill.
- On the 17th, the mother returned her cubs to their den east of the Windssock.
- The cubs were seen at the den on the 18th. The mother was not present.
- On the 19th, the mother was at the quarry west of the Windssock while her cubs were at the den east thereof.
- On the 22nd, the female was at Flockfield Camp.
- On the 25th, the mother took her cubs to an impala kill at Flockfield Camp, where the Three Rivers female paid them a visit. Fortunately, the Three Rivers female was not aggressive towards the cubs, and little interaction was observed.
- The mother chased baboons in the Sable Rotunda on the 27th.
- On the 28th, rangers watched the female kill an impala ram. Unfortunately, it was stolen by a lioness.
- On the last day, the mother and cubs had a bushbuck ram kill north of Maxim's Lookout.

THE XINKHOVA FEMALE

2 YEARS 5 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA & SOUTHERN MARTHLY

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

(5 sightings)

The Xinkhova female continues to tip-toe around her mother's territory. On the 1st, she had a duiker kill north of Sand Pit Crossing. She was at West Street on the 8th. A lioness from the Kambula pride robbed her of her impala ram carcass south of the Airstrip on the 10th. On the 11th, she was south of West Street, so was her sister. She milled around at Flockfield Camp on the 14th and was not seen again for the month.

THE STONE DRIFT FEMALE

2 YEARS 5 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA & SOUTHERN MARTHLY

Daughter of the Nkoveni female, semi-independent.

(3 sightings)

This month we recorded a record-low number of days we viewed this leopard. The Stone Drift female was first seen in the same area as the Xinkhova female on the 11th when they were south of West Street. On the 18th, she followed her presumed father, the Maxim's male, from West Street Pans to Flockfield Tower before he gave her the slip. He should have stayed with her because she killed and hoisted an impala in the same area the following day.

THE SIBUYE FEMALE

9 YEARS 5 MONTHS

2 CUBS

3 MONTHS

WESTERN EYREFIELD

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

(8 sightings, 1 of the female, 5 of female and cubs, 2 of the cubs)

As is the case with her littermate sister, the Piccadilly female, with young cubs, we are noting an increase in sightings of this female.

Sightings:

- Mother and both cubs fed on an impala southeast of Mlowathi Dam on the 10th and 11th.
- On the 16th and 17th, the mother and cubs had an impala kill south of Mlowathi Dam. Cape hunting dogs disrupted them and pilfered the last remains of their carcass.
- The cubs were alone in their den in the northern reaches of the Mlowathi River on the 24th.
- The female killed an impala ram at Mlowathi Dam Crossing on the 27th. Unfortunately, two spotted hyenas stole most of her kill.
- On the 28th, all three leopards shared little remains of the previous day's kill in the same area. Their presumed father, the Ngoboswan male, joined them here.
- A pack of Cape hunting dogs chased the two cubs up a tree near their den on the 29th.

THE TLEBE ROCKS FEMALE

5 YEARS 5 MONTHS

CENTRAL & WESTERN EYREFIELD

Daughter of the Sibuye Female, independent second quarter 2019.

(6 sightings)

The Tlebe Rocks female was west of the Sausage Spot on the 12th. On the 18th, she was in Piccadilly Triangle. She hoisted an impala kill at the Sausage Spot on the 20th. The next day she was back in Piccadilly Triangle. On the 27th, guides reported that she had suckle marks when found west of Campbell Koppies. She was seen for the last time this month on the 29th, still in the area west of Campbell Koppies.

THE LOOKOUT FEMALE
CUB

± 13 YEARS 5 MONTHS
1 YEAR 2 MONTHS

NORTHERN FLOCKFIELD

First encountered on MalaMala Game Reserve in late 2015.

Mother of the Kapen female & the Redhawk male.

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

The Lookout female made a miraculous reappearance this month. She was first seen in the Tamboti Thickets on the 19th. An unidentified female was at Flockfield Pools on the 29th (this was presumed to be her too). Her cub was not seen this month. Her habits seem nomadic as she ages, and it is unlikely (although not impossible) that her cub is still alive.

THE PLAQUE ROCK FEMALE

5 YEARS 3 MONTHS

WESTERN MALAMALA

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

(2 sightings)

The Nkoveni female's attempts to keep this female at bay appear to be working, as we only recorded two sightings of this female this month. The Plaque Rock female was west of MalaMala Camp on the 6th. She was at the Boom Hut on the 26th.

MALE LEOPARDS

THE MAXIM'S MALE

± 8 YEARS 10 MONTHS

WESTERN FLOCKFIELD & MALAMALA

First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in early 2019.

(4 sightings)

The dominant male leopard of the Western Bank was seen on four days this month.

Sightings:

- The Maxim's male was with the Three Rivers female south of the Causeway on the 8th.
- On the 18th, he was followed by his daughter, the Stone Drift female, from West Street to Flockfield Tower.
- He was at Bicycle Crossing on the 24th.
- On the 26th, he fought a hyena at the entrance to Rattray's Camp.

THE ACCIPITER MALE

± 12 YEARS 10 MONTHS

EASTERN & CENTRAL MALAMALA & FLOCKFIELD

First seen on MalaMala Game Reserve in late 2015.

(0 sightings)

We did not see this male this month.

THE NGOBOSWAN MALE

5 YEARS 7 MONTHS

*MARTHLY & WESTERN EYREFIELD**Son of the Emsagweni female, independent in late 2019.*

(3 sightings)

We viewed this male on three days this month.

Sightings:

- On the 3rd, he was seen at Mlowathi Dam.
- This male was at Mlowathi Springs on the 7th.
- He joined the Sibuye female and cubs around Mlowathi Dam Crossing on the 28th.

THE SPLIT ROCK MALE

8 YEARS 11 MONTHS

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

(4 sightings)

It is remarkable to see how this male has shifted his territory at the peak of his dominance. Theories range, but this male may be shifting to avoid breeding with his offspring (although it is likely he sired both the River Rocks female and her current litter). With the absence of the Accipiter male, he has discovered space for him further north.

Sightings:

- He was in Matshapiri Open Area on the 3rd.
- On the 5th, this leopard explored the area around West Street.
- This male was at Maurice's Pan on the 15th.
- On the 23rd, he was at Flockfield Lookout.
- He was on Styx Rocks on the 27th.

THE FLAT ROCK MALE

10 YEARS 2 MONTHS

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

(7 sightings)

We enjoyed seven days of viewing the dominant male of Marthly.

Sightings:

- On the first day of the month, he was at Matumi Rocks.
- He was in the Mlowathi River, north of Lower Mlowathi Crossing, on the 4th.
- He was around Manyelethi Crossing on the 15th.
- On the 16th, he was at the Confluence of the Three Rivers. He was here again on the 22nd and 25th.
- On the last day of the month, he was west of Kigelia Crossing.

OTHER LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED:

The **RIVER ROCKS FEMALE** was south of Jakkalsdraai Open Area on the 8th. On the 19th, the mother and both cubs had an impala carcass east of Beaumont's Camp. The three leopards joined the N'weti male at a warthog carcass on the 22nd.

The **N'WETI MALE** was seen three times this month. On the 5th, he was around Mamba Waterhole. On the 21st and 22nd, he had a warthog kill hoisted in a jakkalberry tree opposite Beaumont's Camp. The River Rocks female brought her cubs to feed from their presumed father's kill on the 22nd.

The **KAPEN FEMALE** was with her cub on the 10th, around Styx Crossing.

No ID female was at Confluence Crossing on the 16th. We suspect this was one of our regular females. However, we did not get a good enough look to identify her.

A **No ID** female was at Mlowathi Pans on the 17th.

A **No ID** female was at Flockfield Pools on the 29th, although this is suspected to be the Lookout female.

TOTAL NUMBER OF LEOPARDS ENCOUNTERED	29 (8)
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CHEETAH

We had no sightings of the fastest cat in the land this month.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHEETAH ENCOUNTERED	0
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CAPE HUNTING DOGS

Our Cape hunting dog sightings increased exponentially this month. We recorded 12 sightings of these animals from three different packs.

The most exciting news is that we have discovered a den in the northern parts of the property. A pack of six are denning in a drainage line and are using MalaMala as their hunting ground. The pups are too young to view, but as they grow, we expect plenty of Cape hunting dog sightings this season.

The **pack denning** in the north: five Cape hunting dogs killed two impalas north of Tlebe Rocks on the 17th, and the same pack killed two impalas south of Mlowathi Pans on the 18th. On the 22nd, they were at the den, and the area was subsequently zoned. Five members of this pack were at Maurice's Pan on the 23rd. They were east of Campbell Koppies on the 24th. On the 26th, they were at the Old Borehole. Two members were at Mlowathi Dam on the 28th. On the 29th, four Cape hunting dogs chased the cubs of the Sibuye female up a tree in the Mlowathi River, north of Mlowathi Dam.

The **Toulon pack** were at Rocky Crossing on the 9th. This pack killed an impala in Rattray's Camp on the 27th.

A **pack of four males** was around Stwise on the 26th.

On the 30th, a different pack was at Pats Drift Koppies.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAPE HUNTING DOGS ENCOUNTERED	36
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CAPE BUFFALO AND ELEPHANTS

Nine herds of buffalo were recorded on MalaMala in June. 54 different sightings of buffalo bulls were recorded this month. Most of these were scattered along the length of the Sand River.

120 sightings of elephant herds and 15 sightings of elephant bulls were recorded, bringing our elephant sightings total to 135 for the month.

OTHER SIGHTINGS OF INTEREST

A **honey badger** was seen at Clarendon Dam on the 3rd. On the 9th, two honey badgers were at Donald's Crossing. Two honey badgers were at Buffalo Pans on the 16th; potentially, the same two honey badgers were at Drum Crossing on the 25th.

A **Cape clawless otter** was south of West Street Bridge on the 8th.

On the 14th, an **African wild cat** was in White Cloth Open Area. On the 28th, an African wild cat was at Mlowathi Dam.

On the last day of the month, two **ostriches** were in Clarendon Open Area.