

Posted 10 March 2009, for the period 15 – 28 February 2009



Greetings from Arathusa!

Early one morning as we were all on the vehicles ready to head out on drive, our trackers Rifos and Roy told us that lions had just killed a wildebeest calf in front of the camp's dam. At first we thought they were joking, but from the look of excitement on their faces we soon knew different.

Rifos and Roy were busy packing the early morning coffee station away when they noticed movement in the open area in front of the camp - followed by really loud grunts, growls and bellowing. They rushed over to the front of the deck to see the last few seconds of a kill.

We dashed around the back of the camp and onto the open area. When we got there we realised, to our joy, that the lions were four of the Mapogo males. They had indeed killed a wildebeest (gnu). Each one of them had a portion of animal in their mouths and were all pulling in different directions - to their heart's content. Wildebeest are rather tough animals, and this one was certainly being put to the test, considering the amazing strength of these huge and powerful cats.

When it comes to food, lions do not share readily, and all will fight to try and get more meat than the others. The spectacle we were witnessing was a great example of this. None of the lions were actually feeding, but were instead trying to steal the whole thing for themselves. Eventually the carcass started to give, and one of them pulled off a big piece. He promptly made off with it towards a Tambotie tree thicket. The three remaining lions were still at their "tug-of-war" struggle, and were getting tired. It was then that one realised he could let go his grip and feed while the other two were still tugging away. A rather funny sight - they are so scared of losing out!

While we were watching the Mapogo's, we spotted an old resident of the Arathusa Safari Lodge dam - the big old crocodile. It has been resident in another dam away from ours for more than a year, and we were overjoyed at his return.

What a way to start the day - even if it was pouring with rain! The previous night the clouds had gathered and gathered, and the heavens opened upon us. Good weather for the crocs' 3km trip.

Other than this amazing day, there were many more over the last two weeks. We have had good sightings of a leopard and her 3 month old cub; leopards mating; great elephant and rhino; and loads of buffalo. We have also had viewings of giraffe; wildebeest; warthog; impala; zebra and buffalo all in the same place. The bush has transformed completely now after all the rain, and there are a lot of spectacular birds as a result.

We hope to see you soon, or to welcome you back again!

Greetings from the Arathusa Safari Lodge, Safari Team

Andre and Rifos, Jason and Roy, Ryan and Morris.

