

Greetings from all of us at Arathusa Safari Lodge!



Over the past two weeks, the cold fronts moving through have definitely spiced up the early morning and evening game drives. However, as always, the sightings have been brilliant! We were fortunate enough to see several of the rarer species of mammals on a few occasions, including three sightings of wild dogs, Serval cat, African Wild Cat and several nocturnal White Tailed Mongooses. Another unusual sighting that was of much interest was that of a Spider Hunting Wasp that had killed a Baboon Spider.

The lion sightings have been very good, with the two Mapogo males frequenting the eastern area of our traversing. Both of these males have been seen with the Styx pride many times. The oldest lioness of the pride has been seen some distance away from the pride together with the male, and may be coming into oestrus. On one occasion, the 5 remaining Styx cubs were seen together with four of the females in Hoffman's, but the pride has been fairly scattered recently. And we have been fortunate enough to experience both Mapogo male lions roaring next to the vehicle a few times!

Leopard sightings have been excellent, and it seems the higher concentration of lion in the area has had a slight effect on the number of leopard sightings. One of the female leopards, "Salayexe", and her two cubs have been seen on three occasions. The cubs are nearing three months now and one is considerably larger than the other - possibly a male. "Safari", the oldest female leopard in the area, has been sighted several times around the lodge. The beautiful "white cloth female" and her cub were seen twice close to Chitwa Chitwa. Two particular leopard sightings that stood out : one of the young females, "Thandi", who killed a young female bushbuck, only to be confronted by her mother, "Karula", when she and her new cubs arrived and "took" the kill from her. The second was of our dominant male, "Mafufunyane", who was moving very quickly through the bush late one. He stalked and chased some impala unsuccessfully, and after following him for a while longer we were fortunate enough to see him kill a young male steenbok, which he dragged into a tree when a hyena arrived.

There have been many rhino sightings in the eastern areas, and elephant sightings have been plentiful. On a few occasions we have been in among very relaxed herds of elephant, and have been witnessed amazing interactions between members of the herd. A bull elephant has taken a particular liking to the fig trees within the lodge, and on two occasions has come in to feed just in front of the rooms. He was later seen on drive, and seemed to have a guilty conscience as he moved off into the bush.

A large herd of approximately 500 buffalo was seen on our airstrip, and later came to drink in front of the lodge - an amazing sight.

Until next time!

From the Arathusa Safari Lodge Ranger and Tracker team
(Ryan and Morris, Jason and Roy, Andre and Rifos and Shaun)