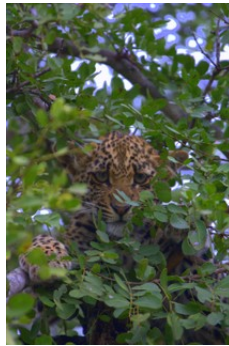


November 04, 2007

Greetings from Arathusa!

The last two weeks have been really productive, although we have had a few quiet drives as well which allows us to concentrate on the smaller wonders of nature.

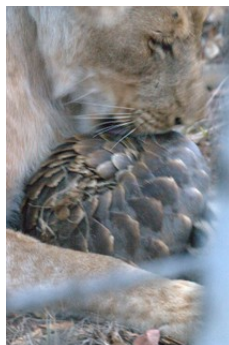
We have been spoiled with some really good sightings as usual, with our leopards never letting us down. We have had good sightings of Mafufenyane, Safari, Matimba and Karula (regularly with her cubs). We haven't seen as many kills though, and it's been a while since we have seen a leopard in a tree with an impala.



Karula's delightful cub

Matimba is really coming of age, and we have watched as he has started exploring further and further out of his mom's territory. He has also been in a fight with Salayexe. He was the ultimate victor, leaving a huge gash on the side of Salayexe's face. Scraps with Karula however have seen him come off second best - she has "beaten him up" twice!

Lion activity has been on and off but we have been seeing a few new young males now and then. The ever present, yet elusive Mapogo males have been around a fair amount. The Styx Pride (7 females) were seen the other day for the first time in a long while. It looks like two of the lionesses are suckling though – a sign that they have little ones somewhere which is great news.



A rare sight of a lioness trying her luck with a pangolin

Elephants have been few and far between, but it can't be long before the big guys return.

Big herds of buffalo have been seen fairly often, with the old bulls always around.

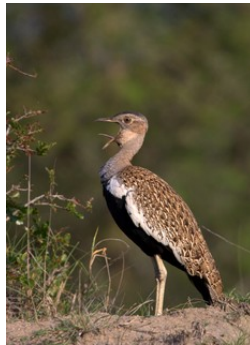


Rhino have also been plentiful lately. Bad news is that our favourite, most relaxed young bull, Utah, was found dead, with no obvious reason as to the cause of his death.

Our wild dogs are doing well for the moment and we have seen the female with the three puppies on a few occasions. The other morning we found a dead impala. We decided to stay with it and our patience was rewarded - not long after finding the impala, the four dogs came running down the road and we watched them feed together.

Cheetahs have been seen a lot more often and we were spoilt when we had a female with a little cub hang out on our airstrip for a while.

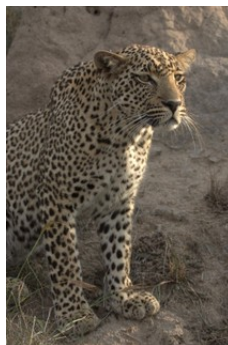
General game has also been good, with big herds of kudu, impala, blue wildebeest, zebra, waterbuck and giraffe being seen often.



Red Crested Korhaan

One noteworthy sighting was of a female buffalo that had died of natural causes not too far from the lodge. When we found her, Mafufenyane (male leopard) was feeding on the carcass. That afternoon we watched as Safari and Matimba (mother leopard and son) joined him. Shortly after, all three leopards were chased off by hyena.

During the night, one of the Mapogo male lions moved in and from there he dominated the kill. On night two, the Mapogo male lion's brother moved in, and we watched over four days as the three major predators battled it out for a share of the kill, all out-smarting one another in turns. A truly amazing sighting that kept us and our guests riveted.



One of the Mapogo Mail Lions, and Matimba (looking on at the hyena)

So all in all - another two weeks of great game viewing.

All is well at camp and over the past little while we've been very lucky to see lion come to quench their thirst at our waterhole. In the past few days we've had two elephant visitors in the camp. We haven't seen them at the lodge for a while but I guess they are letting us know they haven't forgotten us –or rather our sweet foliage which they so like to eat!

It's getting warmer and we are expecting a lot of rain soon. We had a wonderful display of electric light last night with crashes of thunder, but unfortunately no substantial rain to follow. No doubt it will come in good time.

Until next time!

The Arathusa Team
Ryan, Andre and Jacques