



April 20, 2008

Bush greetings from Arathusa Safari Lodge.

Another two great weeks have come and gone in the bush of the Sabi Sand Game Reserve. With amazing sightings around every corner, we never know what to expect when we leave the lodge in the morning and evening.



The very venomous boomslang ("tree snake")

Leopards have been great as usual and we have had some awesome sightings. We had six different leopards on our drive the other night where else can you do this? One of the amazing sightings we had in the past couple of days was Mafufenyane (dominant male), Karula (daughter) and her two cubs all sharing the same kill. The cubs aren't his and so we were all worried that he would kill them, but all they got was an occasional growl when they got too close while he was feeding.



One of Karula's cubs

Safari (female with one blind eye) has been around quite a bit with Matimba (son) lately. He is now over 29 months and still hanging around with her. If he stays with her for another 3 months it will be the longest time ever recorded for a leopard cub to remain with its mother. Thankfully all of our other resident leopards are doing well and are being seen on a regular basis.

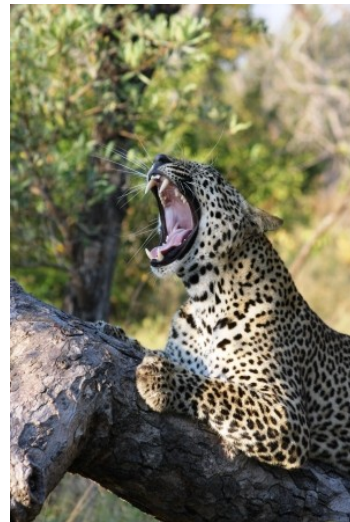
We struggled with lions for a few days, but once they came back, they were everywhere. We had all the Mapogo male lions pairing up with lionesses from the Kahuma pride and the Styx pride. Still no cubs from the pairings in December, which is a little disappointing.



Mapogo Male with female

Rhino, buffalo and elephant have been good, with breeding herds moving through fairly often and a lot of single bulls hanging around too.

As was said in the last diary, it is starting to get very chilly once the sun has set in the evenings and when we first leave on drive in the early mornings. We had two days of rain recently, but not enough to help with the poor wet season which we have had. Only 245mm have fallen this season - we usually have around 600mm. Pans that only dried up in August last year are already dry now. It is going to be a very interesting and probably very difficult dry season. We look forward to seeing how the wild adapts ...



Brave young elephant, a chameleon and a relaxed male leopard

Kind regards from the Bushveld
Ryan, Andre and Jason