



Posted July 21st, 2008 for the period 16 - 31 July 2008

**Greetings from Arathusa!**

In the midst of the worst dry season (winter) in 9 years, we are watching things get more and more difficult for the animals. There has been no relief, and even the winter days have been hot.



Big herds of buffalo have been moving in and out of the area on a daily basis, seeking water and the ever-decreasing food supply. Larger dams are the only source of water and the herbivores have to travel long distances to quench their thirst. Rhino and elephant have been plentiful, and it is not unusual to have up to 10 different species at a waterhole at a time.

Lions have not been around as much lately, but we have been seeing two young males that we believe have come in from the Manyeleti Game Reserve. They are about 4 years old, and do not yet sport full manes. They have been roaring and checking out the area for a few days now. As there is no sign of any of our other dominant males at the moment, we hope they will hang around for some time.

Our leopard population is still going strong and we have seen them all on a regular basis. We have seen Mafufenyane and Ntima mating a few times, which is a little strange as Ntima has a 13 month old cub. We think it must be a false estrous cycle she has come into.



We saw Mafufenyane catch and kill a young male impala. He fed on it for a day before losing it to three young hyenas. This created an awesome sighting of its own as we watched the three hyenas fight over the remains with the breathtaking "audio accompaniment". Safari and Matimba have also been well, although she is evidently extremely irritated with him, and is growing less and less tolerant of him by the day.

There have been some fantastic cheetah sightings. One of which was a male with an impala kill. We watched as he ate as much as he could before resting under a bush nearby. A hyena showed up on and we watched as the cheetah tried its best to chase it away – but to no avail. It wasn't long before the stronger predator found the carcass and stole it from the cheetah.

Smaller game sightings have also been lovely, as we have seen a lot of genets, bushbabies, civets, servals, honey badgers, and porcupines. Ryan, Maurice & their guests were lucky enough to see a caracal the other night as well, which is an awesome and fairly rare sighting.

So although things are tough for nature's kingdom out here at the moment, there are always positives. Every now and then the bush will throw something special at you...you just have to be in the right place at the right time . . .

Kind regards - Jason, Ryan and Andre

