



March 20, 2008

Greetings from Arathusa!

We can hardly believe that it is the middle of March 2008 already. It's obviously true what they say - "time flies when you are having fun!" The camp has been really busy and there hasn't been a moment to spare.



The past two weeks have once again been really good for leopard viewing.

One sighting that was particularly excellent involved two of our resident leopards. Everyone was looking for leopards as none had been spotted for about two drives. We were tracking some fresh spoor (footprints) when someone called in a pair of leopards spotted just up ahead on the radio. Leopards are solitary animals, so seeing more than one at a time is a special treat.

When we arrived at the sighting we could see that it was the male called "Matimba" and a female called "Ntima". Our records indicate that these two have never been spotted together before, so we were excited to see the outcome.

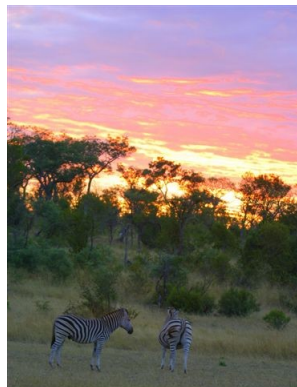


The older female was acting rather aggressively towards the younger male. (He was farther east than we had ever seen him, so Ntima was probably worried about this "new" male on her turf, where her cub lay hidden). With both leopards still in view, Matimba started to stalk towards an adult wildebeest bull (an animal about 4 times bigger than he is capable of catching). The wildebeest soon "trotted" off a safe distance away and gave his alarm call, alerting all animals within earshot of the predator's presence. This is when the young male moved away, as leopards don't like their "cover" been blown.

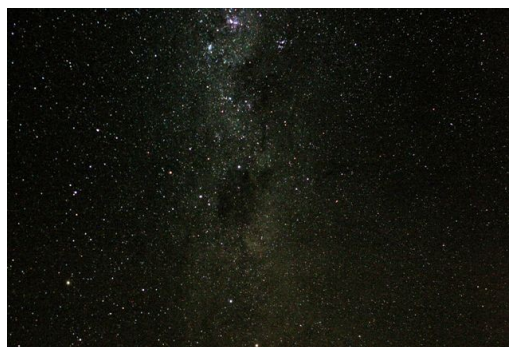
To top it all off, he walked past three white rhinos which were grazing on the open grassland.

We had an awesome encounter a few days ago with a big bull elephant. He was in "musth" - a sexual state in male elephants - and a little bit grumpy. However he was relaxed with the vehicles and allowed us to get fairly close for a good view of him. It was only when we were close that we could see his mighty tusks and great body size. We estimated him to weigh in the region of 6.5 tons. After watching him for a good length of time, we decided it was time to get back to camp for breakfast. On our way out he gave us a spectacular mock charge - asserting his dominance. As we departed, he continued eating his breakfast as we headed off for ours.

We were welcomed back to the lodge by a large dazzle of zebras, brilliant and vocal birdlife and a giraffe passing by our open area in full view of the breakfast table.



Our weather has been really good. We have recently had a couple of fresher mornings and late evenings but on the whole, it's still very hot during the day and we are enjoying lovely night skies. We have hardly had any rain and are still hoping for some as it is well needed.



Stars **as you have never seen them in Arathusa's skies!**

Bush Greetings and all the best to our past and future guests!

All of us at Arathusa