

Posted 16th September 2008, for the period 1 – 15 September 2008

Greetings from Arathusa!



On a recent early morning we headed out for our drive in search of lions. Our guests at the time had seen everything else on their "checklist", bar lions. After a while we received a report on the two-way radio of a young male lion on his own.....

Shortly after, we arrived at the sighting and were busy watching the youngster. It did not take us long to realise something was amiss. First of all he was only about a year old: very young for a lion to be on its own. Secondly, he was partially blind. It seemed as if his eyes were plagued by a parasite of some sort, or if his eyes had been damaged physically in a fight, or by a branch or some such thing. The poor guy was walking into sticks and bushes, and seemed very lost. Unfortunately there was nothing we could do, as we must let nature take its course.

It was not long after we arrived at the young lion when two adult females walked past without noticing him. The youngster could not see them either. We left the blind male and followed the females for a while and had an excellent sighting of them walking through the bush. Just as we left them to go and find a nice sheltered spot for coffee (the wind was blowing) we came across two of the Mapogo males. No coffee yet. They did not seem to notice the females as the wind was blowing hard. The two big male lions were now following the females' tracks in the wrong direction, towards the blind youngster on his own.

After about 30 minutes of following the males, we came across the area where we left the young, blind male. When the two big males saw him it appeared as if they did not know what to do. They charged in and smacked him around for a bit and then left him. Afterwards, the youngster carried on playing with a stick as he was before. Very strange behaviour for lions.

When the males walked off the young lion made a dash for it and was immediately followed by the two big boys again, and knocked some more. This happened another two or three times with the lions eventually heading off in their own directions. We thought the bigger lions would kill him outright - as we have seen them do this before.



Other than the fantastic lion sightings we have experienced lately, all the game viewing has been great. We have watched leopards mating, leopards on kills, leopards hunting and even leopards fighting. There have also been hoards of elephant in our area, as well as huge herds of buffalo. The general game has also been excellent.

The bush is still very dry, and we are now anxiously awaiting rain. The summer migrant birds are starting to arrive, and the sun is rising earlier - all signs that the green season is near.

For those of you who know the camp - a small piece of funny news - we have had one, sometimes two, male Nyala who have been making themselves quite at home in the actual camp - helping themselves to our shrubs & flowers - much to our gardeners' distress (and Zack & Xena's distaste too!!)

Best wishes,
Andre and Rifos, Jay and Roy, Ryan and Maurice -
and the whole **Arathusa Safari Lodge** team.