



Olifants North Game Reserve

JANUARY 2010

I can hardly believe that we were already four days into the New Year when I began this edition! How time is flying already!! Happy New Year everyone – may it be a very prosperous year for you all.

What a fantastic start to our sightings for 2010. Cats, cats and more cats!!! I have never seen so many cat sightings recorded day after day, as we have in our sightings book – our pride of lion, 1 x male and 3 female, a single leopard as well as the female leopard and cub who have been seen regularly near the causeway. Hyena have also been seen regularly – such a treat to live here and realize just how much we have on the reserve.

Here are photos that Nic took of some of our cats at the beginning of the month





Kuifkop – our resident male

RECORDED SIGHTINGS

2/01/10		B2	1x lion (Kuifkop)/3 x lioness – Sandbank hide
3/01/10		B35	1 x lion(Kuifkop)/3 x lioness – river loop near Sandbank hide
3/01/10	22h00	B13	Long viewing of civet on camp road
4/01/10		B2/B7 B34/B1	1 x lion crossed causeway South to North. 1 x lion (Kuifkop)/3 x lioness killed 4 impala. – Pagati link road. Hyena arrived soon afterwards – giggling
5/01/10	19h10	B36	2 hyena at turnoff to B21
5/01/10	21h30	B2	1 x lion(Kuifkop)/3 x lioness at bottom of old airstrip
7/01/10	19h30	B38	Female leopard at end of Candelabra Alley
	20h30	B38	3 hyena on Rhino Plains
8/01/10	17h00	B7	4 x bull elephant – Kudu pan
	17h30	B2/B34 B7/B21 B36	1 x lion (Kuifkop)/3 x lioness – Sandbank hide
	19h35	B36	Hyena – Ebony road
8/01/10	22h30	B21/B7	Hyena – Ebony road
9/01/10	07h30	B36	1 x lion (Kuifkop)/3 x lioness – Aviary road

	18h00	B2/B7	Kuifkop's pride – hunting along Aviary road to Moolman's airstrip
	20h00	B15	Caracal – camp road
10/01/10	22h30	Joe	Civet – camp road near office
12/01/10	06h00	B2	Kuifkop and 3 lionesses – Kudu pan
	20h00	B2/15/ B16/21	Kuifkop and 3 lionesses – Ebony road
14/01/10	11h30	B20	Pair of fish eagles at Jackalberry
	13h00	B20	30+ strong breeding herd elephant – Kudu pan
19/01/10	18h20	A7/Joe	Kuifkop and 2 lionesses – West of Zebra pan then Secret Valley road
20/01/10	18h30	B15	Kuifkop and 3 lionesses – flood plains near Zebra Pan
22/01/10	18h00	A7	3 hyena bathing in Kudu pan
25/01/10	18h30	B20	Female leopard on Ebony walking towards airstrip
27/01/10	10h00	Joe	Leopard – Rocky Horror 2 hyena – Hyena drive (one lactating)
31/01/10	18h00	B20	Kuifkop and two lioness – Rhino plains

The sightings book has had an extra column put in for shareholders to also record their name – this is because some of the units have more than one user. Please could you fill in this space as well as your unit number, date and time of the sighting.

STINK BUGS!!!

With the arrival of the rain at the beginning of the month, dreaded stink bugs descended making it almost impossible to do game drives at night. Within seconds of spotlights being switched on, the pesky creatures honed in on the lights, arriving in swarms!! In the mornings when house cleans were done, dustpan-full loads were swept up, the “stink” still emanating from them!



Eileen Fletcher (B35) sent me these stunning photographs of the yellow variety of flame lily, just reminding me of my 'roots' (the national flower of the then Rhodesia) which she came across at the Sedumoni river crossing and at Moolman's airstrip.

BABOON ANTICS AND DESTRUCTION

Arriving at the office on Monday morning the 25th we found that a troop of baboons had been through the gardens the previous day. How did we know this? Apart from their 'calling cards' lying on the verandah's pool cushions had been ripped apart and literally shredded. We had left them out on Sunday when we locked up the office, as there were shareholders making use of the chairs next to the pool, and we couldn't exactly pull the cushions out from underneath them. Please may I ask everyone to pack the cushions away inside the clubhouse when they leave the pool area?

SEDUMONI COMES DOWN IN FLOOD



After days and days of relentless heat with most days reaching a shade temperature of 39-40°C and a humidity factor of +80%, welcome rain finally fell. The morning of the 26th at 4a.m. we were woken to peals of thunder followed by huge bolts of lightning that lit up the sky for as far as the eye could see. Remembering the last time we had lightning like this when the devastating burning down of unit 19 happened in December, our first thought was to look for fire but it all turned out well – 90mm rain fell between 4a.m. and 7a.m. and it carried out raining until about 9 a.m. The

following morning the same pattern occurred and another 48mm were measured, bringing the Sedumoni down in full flood. Our total for the month is now at 155.5mm and the season to date is 475.25mm. Joe took this photo of the Sedumoni in spate, looking upstream

towards unit B5.

Ebony road was closed for approximately 6 hours until the water had subsided enough to ensure easy crossing.

A brief update on some of the items Joe's been busy with during the month:

Having become quite necessary, after the heavy rains at the end of the month, Joe has identified four areas where we are able to gather gravel for the repairing of our roads. The roads took a beating and there has been quite considerable wash.

Whenever the pipeline to Zebra dam was first put in it was not buried deep enough into the soil and as a result constant leaks are being found and repaired, Joe has now employed temporary staff to dig a deep enough trench in which to bury a new replacement portion of the pipeline, which should ensure that water reaches the dam instead of providing mud baths for many animals!

The swimming pool sand filter had developed a crack and as a result Joe battled to get the water clear, leaving many people wondering just what nasty creatures may be laying wait under the surface! Now for the first time in 10 months the water is crystal clear and the bottom of the pool can be seen!

Spraying herbicides on the cockle-burr at the Olifants river frontage took place during the month, as these have manifested themselves along the whole river frontage. These alien plants will always be a problem as the seeds are brought down when the river rises.

Please see our climate data chart which I have formulated and complete on a daily basis, giving an overall picture of temperatures, rainfall and cloud cover (attached to this newsletter).



This photo taken by Joe, shows the hyena seen on Hyena drive.

Well that's about it for this edition – budgets and financial year end procedures must now take precedence! Will keep you all informed when our website will be up and running – Nic's doing an extraordinary job – you're going to love it!!