



The Bush Telegraph

Volume 32: Oct - Dec 2017

“Return to old watering holes for more than water; friends & dreams are there to meet you” – African Proverb

Warm bush greetings from our little piece of paradise!

We were very excited to get some early rains in October to bring some reprieve to our dry bush. As you can see from the below table, the rains did not follow through for Nov and Dec. It is interesting to see from the below, that we are now in our third year of drought, with only some brief respite, before returning back to dry conditions.

The escarpment and southern parts of the reserve have received a fair amount of rain compared to us, and we were fortunate to see the Klaserie River flowing fast & full in Dec. It has had a slow and very low flow for a large part of the last quarter.

Sadly, the bush is desperately dry, with no grass to feed our grazers. The impala are losing their condition and looking thin. These are the only animals struggling so far.

Temperatures have been true to form with most days in late 30's, which a couple of early 40's on some occasions.

2017 has been an incredible year of growth for Klaserie Camps. We thank each of you for your support and for priceless friendships formed & continued.

Photo: Molly Varon

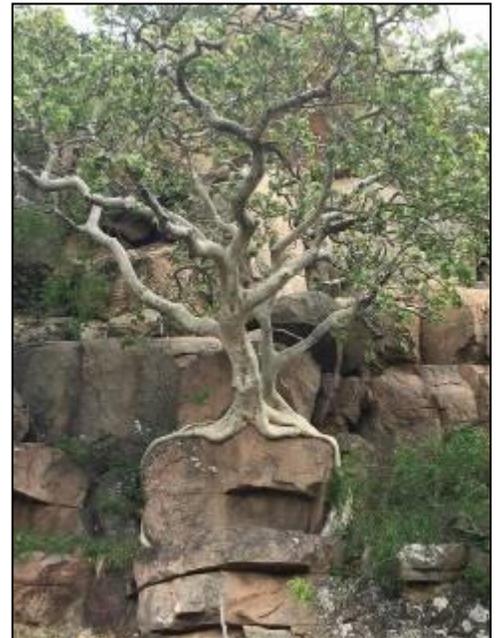


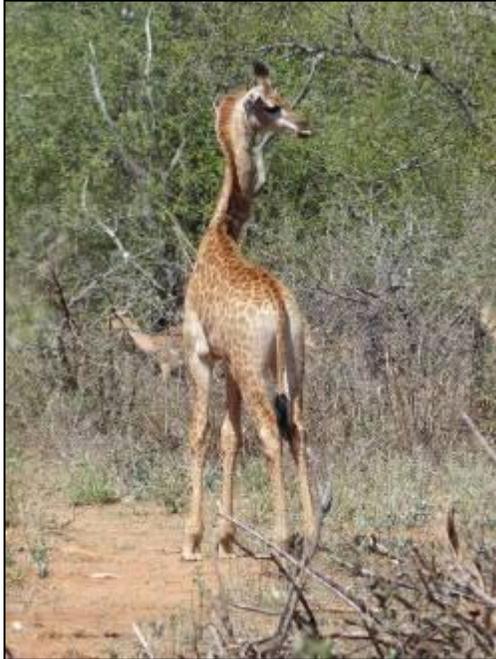
Photo: Shaun, Moriti Safaris



Rainfall figures (mm)	Oct	Nov	Dec
2015 : Nyeleti	10	76	12.5
Nzumba	6	58	26
2016 : Nyeleti	10.5	72	64
Nzumba	25	76	97
2017 : Nyeleti	46	17.5	29
Nzumba	35	21	34

GENERAL GAME SIGHTINGS

Photo: Dieter & Karin Burgert



General game sightings have remained consistently good, with a few quiet days on occasion.

From the rains in Oct, the impala lambs arrived in mass.

Some fantastic rare sightings include a Grey Mongoose, Pangolin, Porcupine, White Tailed Mongoose, Honey Badgers, Genet babies and a Crocodile on the rocks in front of Nyeleti.

Photo: Ella Allport (13 yrs old), Moriti Safaris



Photo: Dirk Moens

BIRDING



Photo (left):
Carol Patterson
(Pearl Spotted Owl)

Photo (right):
Terry Berube
(Lilac Breasted Roller)



The last quarter of the year is always special to see the migratory birds returning. The Woodlands Kingfisher was right on time as usual. Some wonderful sightings included Osprey, 2 Vereaux Eagle Owls, Pearl Spotted Owl with a quail kill, Rollers feeding chicks, Scops Owl. A unique sighting for our guests was a Gabar Goshawk hunting a dove, flying in circles getting closer and closer, the dove flew down underneath the stationary gamedrive vehicle and hid until the raptor had flown off.

BIG GAME SIGHTINGS

Rhino

Due to the severe high security risk on our rhino at present, we will not, until further notice, be updating our readers on any sightings or publishing any further pictures.

We urge you to please refrain from publishing any of your photos on any social media of any kind.

Thank you.



Photo: Rachel Ong



Photo: On Track Safaris (OTS) Camera Trap

At the beginning of the last quarter, the elephant sightings were frequent, with majority of our guests enjoying at least once, if not more, per day of their stay.

At the end of December, sightings dropped slightly.

Sightings ranged from lone bulls, to various sizes of breeding herds, the largest being around 50 seen on the Struwig and Thompsons properties.

There were days of small breeding herds visiting the Klaserie River for a drink.

The waterholes remain ever popular, especially a reprieve from the heat with a quick dip in the water.



Photo (above): Rachel Ong

Photo (left): Shaun, Moriti Safaris

The majority of our guests have enjoyed buffalo sightings during their stay, often more than once. This is surprising because of the lack of food. There have been no large breeding herds seen, but mostly of small herds of dagha boys and a few small breeding herds. Distribution throughout our and neighbouring properties.



Photo: Dirk Moens



Photo: Dieter & Karin Burgert

Hyena sightings are always entertaining, such curious creatures, especially when visiting the den site on Thompson's property & the pups are ever so curious about the vehicles. Some of the sightings that stood out were seeing a male hunting impala and a clan of hyena breeding on the koppies at the Olifants River.



Photo: Ella Allport (13 yrs old), Moriti Safaris

In the last quarter, we have had 6 wild dog sightings. Majority of the sightings have been the pack of 20 and sightings have been around Bach, Thompsons, Timbila, Wild Dog Dam, as well as running up the riverbed in front of Nyeleti making contact calls.

Photo (Duma): Shaun, Moriti Safaris



Photo: Bumper Graham



There have been 16 lion sightings recorded with guests in the last 3 months, 3 of which were on a kill. With the Dundee Pride now so large and splitting up in various groups over periods of time, we cannot confirm which pride each sighting is. There have been 5 sightings of the Dundee Pride, the largest pride being 14 strong with cubs. There are no very young cubs with the pride.



Photo: Raf deBorgher



Photo: Graham Racher

We have enjoyed 20 different sightings of leopard in this last quarter, with majority of guests having at least one sighting, and some very spoilt guests with more!

The sightings have been widespread throughout our properties, but none on the Olifants River property.

About half of the sightings took place on Thompsons property (airstrip and waterhole), both male and female.

There have been some incredible sightings amongst them all including a female leopard attempting to climb to a Wahlberg's Eagle nest, only to be attacked by the male and female raptors so that she fell out the tree.

There was also the beautiful male that came to drink in the river right in front of Kitara main deck one evening, took his time for all to see and enjoy him.

Others also enjoyed the sighting of a male and female courting, as well as a leopard with a kill up a tree.

And last but not least, the incredible experience of seeing a male, female and 2 sub adult males all together feeding on a kill – this was deduced as the male being the father of the 2 youngsters as all 4 were very relaxed.



Meet Stefan Steenkamp & Ashleigh Donaldson, who joined our team in Aug. Stefan and Ashleigh are the managers of Kitara and Nyeleti. We wish them both a long & prosperous time with us.

Ashleigh was born and raised in Mpumalanga.

After school she went on to study Zoology at the University of Pretoria.

She enjoyed this field so much that she also completed a master's degree in Zoology. Ashleigh has worked in Welgevonden Game Reserve as well as Madikwe Game Reserve.

Stefan was born and raised in the Free State.

After completing matric, he went on to study tourism management in Bloemfontein. Upon completion, he started his career in the bush. Most of his time was spent in Madikwe Game Reserve, but also spent some time in reserves in the Free State and KZN.

After meeting at a lodge in Madikwe, Stefan and Ash decided to make a move as a couple to the Lowveld.

BUSH THOUGHTS EXCITING NEW PROJECT

Over the last two years, On Track Safaris have been using Nzumba as one of their destinations on their tour packages. Over this year, we saw the relationship grow considerably and we were approached by **Will & Carol Fox of On Track Safaris (OTS)** to join them in their leopard research project, which we are extremely excited about. Carys, who manages this project, has written this introduction for us. Werner is the liaison for this project.

Introduction to OTS/INGWE

The INGWE Leopard Research program is an independent, not for profit research organisation operating under the **On Track Foundation**, which has been researching leopard populations in South Africa for over ten years. The aim of this research is to identify the status of leopards outside of protected areas (National parks) where they are most threatened; data on the density and behaviour of leopards outside of these areas is significantly lacking, and thus this research is vital if South Africa's iconic leopard populations are to be conserved.

The INGWE Leopard Research programme is funded through **On Track Safaris**, a safari company with its roots in conservation. Founded in 2007 by wildlife conservationists **Will and Carol Fox**, **On Track Safaris** is designed not only to raise funds for their work in conservation, but also to offer their guests a unique and immersive safari experience, while offering a real insight into real wildlife conservation.

On Track Safaris and the **INGWE Leopard Research** were thrilled to partner with Klaserie Private Nature Reserve in October 2017. Five camera traps have so far been placed in Klaserie Reserve (*at various specially chosen locations on the Klaserie Camps properties*) to begin the data collection on the reserve's carnivore species; this data will be analysed further to study

leopard density, behaviour and dynamics within the Klaserie reserve.

The research is being led by INGWE's Head of Research, Carys Palmer. Carys is a zoologist and wildlife conservationist who joined the INGWE Leopard Research team in 2015, after graduating from Reading University.



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Please check out our website www.klaseriecamps.com
Please write in our on-line guest book, your feedback is much appreciated!



For those of you who would like regular updates on exciting happenings and aren't already on our Facebook, please "like" our Klaserie Camps page. We look forward to seeing you there!



We are on Instagram, so for all the Instagramers out there, please follow us and keep up to date on the wonderful photos we share: klaseriecamps

Photos:

Thank you Shaun, Moriti Safaris, Molly, Ella, Rachel, Carol, Terry, Bumper, Dieter & Karin, Dirk, Raf & Graham – thank you so much for sharing your story & pics with us – very special!

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