



The Bush Telegraph

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*“the only man I envy is the man who has not yet been to Africa,
for he has so much to look forward to” – Richard Mullin*

Fond spring greetings to our readers,

It truly feels like winter passed ‘in the blink of an eye’. Whilst it was our coldest for a few years, it seemed to just sail by without hesitation. During the last couple of months of winter, we experienced some incredibly strong windy periods, that off times lasted for days. Our month of September, being our ‘spring month’, remained incredibly dry which is the way it should be. Historically, if it rains in September, then our rainfall levels will be low for the season and if it starts in Oct, then we will have a good rainfall season. With the confused weather system worldwide, it’s hard to say if that theory still stands, only time will tell. The bush is looking incredibly dry but there are still areas with (dry) grass and some of our repeat guests have commented that the bush has looked worse in the past. We wait in great anticipation for the first rains to transform our landscape to lush green and hope with all hope that we have an excellent rain-season for a reprieve for our wildlife.

Photo: Shaun, Moriti Safaris

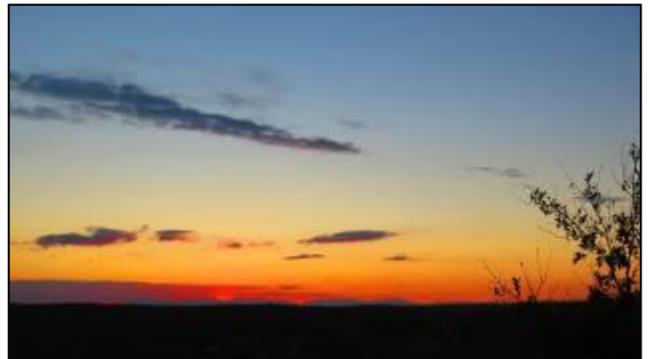


Photo: Vicki Pilcher

Rainfall figures (mm)	Jul	Aug	Sep
2016: Nyeleti	5	0	5.5
Nzumba	22	0	5
2017: Nyeleti	2	0	0
Nzumba	0	0	0
2018: Nyeleti	2	0	0
Nzumba	1	0	0

GENERAL GAME SIGHTINGS



Photo (left):
Camera Trap, On Track Safaris
Photo (right): Alison Reeve



Despite the dry conditions, our general game is still in very good condition. As you can see from pic on right, the warthogs are still coming into camp for some lovely green



grass & a drink from the pond or swimming pool. The Klipspringers at Nyeleti have had another lamb & we saw the mom & dad chasing the older sibling out, time to fend for itself now. They keep the lamb hidden most of the time, but mom & dad are becoming more relaxed in camp to get to food.



Photo: Viljoen Group

Photo: Alison Reeve

The Olifants River water level is quite low but there are still some small pods of hippo to view. It will start getting stressful for them soon, as the level continues to drop. In the middle of Sept, there was a sighting of a hippo at the fence outside Nyeleti.

Some other interesting sightings were chameleon, porcupine, honey badgers, civet, frequent African wild cats, one sighting including a kitten, a black mamba, springhare at Nyeleti and a springhare carcass up a tree killed by a young leopard, close to Dundee.

BIRDING



Photo: Ashleigh



Photo: Vicki Pilcher



Photo: Vicki Pilcher

Despite the lack of food, we still saw frequent large flocks of queleas gracing our skies throughout winter, as captured by Vicki above.

Kitara guests have been entertained by a Scopps Owl that spends his entire day on an open branch on the Knobthorn tree by the fireplace.

Some special sightings also included fish eagles, giant eagle owls, saddled-billed stalk, marabou stalk, diederik's cuckoo, spoonbill stalks & striped kingfisher

BIG GAME SIGHTINGS



Photo: Kelli Darang

In the last quarter, we started enjoying an increase in buffalo sightings, ranging from dagha boys to two nice-sized breeding herds in August & September that staying in the area for a few days.

Most of the sightings of the big herds have been around or close to waterholes on our & neighbouring properties, as well as our property on the Olifants.

Really awesome to see large breeding herds again!



Photo: Vicki Pilcher

Hyena sightings continue to be frequent, with majority of guests enjoying frequent sightings throughout their stay. The largest sighting was a pack of 15 hyena around a lion kill on Mvubu Link with Werner & his guests. Sightings are throughout our properties & neighbouring properties and range from single males to 3-6 in a pack.



Photo: Dr Andreas Boedecker



Photo: Andy Barrett



Photo: Alison Reeve

Again, there are endless sightings of elephant throughout our & neighbouring properties. On the sightings sheets per guests' stay, these beasts rule the number of sightings per stay by far, in the big game department.

We are still seeing herds of elephants on both morning and evening drives, with most times different herds on each drive.

The biggest herd, where numbers were reported, was 80 strong. Most sightings are breeding herds. There have continued to be some "break-ins" into Kitara, where a bull has learnt how to open the electric ribbon across the entrance, as well as at Nyeleti. With the bush being so dry, they are desperate to get into what looks like a garden of Eden.

Kitara is enjoying sightings right in front of camp in the riverbed of ellies feeding on the Phragmites reeds. Majority of sightings are relaxed.



Photo: Alison Reeve



Photo: Stefan

We have had 28 separate lion sightings in the last quarter, a vast increase from 10 sightings recorded in the previous quarter. The sightings were throughout our & neighbouring properties and consisted of what we believe to be the Balule Pride, breakaway of the Dundee Pride and the River Pride. The River Pride are the "new kids on the block" who's territory also falls into Klaserie Drift / Camp George, where they have been seen for a long time. They have just this quarter started coming onto our & Thompson's properties.

As nature can be known to be extremely painful to witness, the saddest sighting this year, must be the killing of a young (approx. 10-month-old) male close to Dundee. None of us were witness to the attack, but Werner, Stefan and Shaun, Moriti Safaris saw him badly wounded and eventually die. A somber few days, its never easy to stomach.



Photo: Dr Andreas Boedecker (not the den pack)



Photo: Werner

Wild dog sightings have been phenomenal this quarter: we have had approximately 20 sightings, compared to 4 from last quarter.

July – 5 sightings / Aug – 1 sighting / Sep – balance of sightings.

In the middle of Sep, Shaun from Moriti Safaris found a wild dog den on Pump House Pan drive, with tiny pups. The site was immediately deemed as incredibly delicate in terms of sightings & strict procedures were put in place regarding number of sightings per day & distance to the site.

The Alpha male & female are extremely nervous of their pups & move their den in an instant that they feel threatened.

By maintaining the limitations implemented, we were able to enjoy the most incredible sightings of the pups, who were incredibly relaxed & curious of the vehicles.

The total number of pups is 13.

There is a lot of hyena activity around the den & the pups are growing fast, so we believe they won't remain at that den for much longer.

UPDATE ON OUR OTS LEOPARD PROJECT FROM CARYS



"The research project is going well; we now have seven permanent camera traps established on the reserve and aside from a few bumps in the road (mostly in the form of hyenas chewing up the cameras!), these cameras are providing a solid foundation for our data collection and analysis, and we have picked up around 30 leopard images over the year.

We are continuously developing leopard identification kits for the resident and transitory leopards on the reserve. Using these, we have been able to start identifying the different individuals, which enables us to start classifying territories and

movement patterns; this gives us a great insight into the overall health, size and the dynamics of the population.

Although leopards are the primary focus of this research, this data also provides valuable information regarding the abundance and activities of other carnivore species on the reserve, as well as a variety of prey species; these are all key factors when considering the wellbeing of leopard populations, and the ecosystem as a whole.

With continued data collection, these findings will not only improve our understanding of the species but also help guide future decisions aimed at ensuring its survival."



Photo: Werner

Our leopard sightings over the last quarter have been off-the-chart incredible.

Sightings are frequent, and these spotted beauties are extremely relaxed with vehicles & company.

We have enjoyed 43 different sightings over the last quarter.

This young male is resident around Dundee & Werner & his guests have had some exceptional sightings with him.



Photo: Stefan

Areas of sightings include:
Dundee (incl. young male first picture – Werner), Thompsons & Thompsons Airstrip & Thompsons pan, Elephant Drive, Nyeleti (incl. in camp), Kitara (incl. in camp), Knobthorn Valley, Mandevu Link, Olifants, Bateleur Drive, van der Skyf cutline, Bernitz Crossing, Hotspot, Tommy Bach,



Photo: Shaun, Moriti Safaris

This stunning male is an impressive size & has a “necklace” marking at the base of his neck making him easy to identify, as well as two distinctive line of spots above his eyes.

We have watched him grow up & he is also relaxed around vehicles. Always an incredible sighting.

GUESTBOOK PAGE ON OUR WEBSITE!!!

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, Stefan, Werner, Shaun Taylor (Moriti Safaris), Ashleigh, Alison Reeve, Andy Barrett, Dr Andreas Boedecker, Vicki Pilcher, Kelli Darang, Viljoen Group, On Track Safaris camera traps – for sharing your photos with us, much appreciated!

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