

# GAME REPORT JANUARY 2011

## WEATHER AND VEGETATION

During this month we experienced sunny weather with plentiful rain in the afternoons. The vegetation around the reserve is very green. Only 160 mm of rain has been recorded during the month of January.

## GAME SIGHTING DURING JANUARY



### LEOPARDS

Leopard sightings have been fairly good. At night, a leopard was heard on several occasions around camp vocalizing, a hoarse rasping cough which is repeated at intervals as an alarm of its presence to other leopards in the area. On game drives the secretive animal has been observed engaged in a number of activities, ranging from hunting and sometimes taking down its prey.

### LIONS

This month saw the arrival of three sub-adult males, but these three did not oust the resident pride of lions. Observations show that these sub-adults males avoided encounters where they could by relying on roaring, scent marking and patrolling to demonstrate their presence.



### CHEETAH

Cheetah sightings have greatly improved during January. This predominantly diurnal cat has peaks of activity around sunrise and sunset. On several game drives a coalition of three

cheetahs were observed simply walking up to their prey, pausing motionlessly from time to time when the impala showed anxiety. Roughly one hundred meters away from their prey, the impala sensed danger and took off. The cheetah targeted a male impala and slapped it with the front limbs while the impala was still running, throwing it off balance. The brothers quickly finished the impala off by strangling it. All of this took place within a few meters of one of our game viewing vehicles and our guests had a wonderful opportunity to take some very good pictures.



## **ELEPHANTS**

Herds of up to 200 were observed feeding along the Vlei and also along Elephant Valley on several occasions, with a lot of young. Herd group sizes increased dramatically soon after the rains due to the availability of grass and browse.



## **BIRDING**

Bird watching is one of the most enjoyable activities at Mashatu in which most of the guests undertake. Summer migrants are around in large numbers and at the Vlei different storks are observed pursuing insects throughout the day. Observations show that water birds are viewed on many of our game drives as the Majale River has pools of water for most of its course all the way down to its confluence with the Limpopo. At the Vlei the White Storks, Black Storks, Marabou Storks and Abdim's Storks are seen in large numbers.

