

## July 2010 Update

Being firmly in winter's grasp has its disadvantages, especially when it comes to getting up before sunrise to go out and spend time out in the bush. It is incredibly cold, yet the elephant sightings have been some of the best sightings this year. After the late rains in April, water was plentiful in temporary pools in the bush. However, these pools are drying up, which means that the elephants have started moving back towards the rivers to drink. There have been great sightings this month, many of them involving almost 200 elephants, coming down to the rivers to drink.



There are still many large bulls in the area. It is awe inspiring to see these enormous bulls following the herds, and I had a great sighting or two, showing the guarding behaviour of these large bulls. Often if there is a receptive cow in a herd, there will be several bulls following her. The largest of these bulls often has a rather difficult time, keeping the smaller, younger bulls from the cow. However these older bulls demand respect from the younger bulls, because normally they keep their distance, and all it takes is one look from a fully grown musth bull to send the younger bulls packing.





One of our other collared matriarch's, Pamina, also decided to come up into the central area this month. Pamina spends most of her time near the Limpopo-Shashe confluence and it is always great to see her in the area.

## Ivory Drives



On our ivory drives this month, we had some very interesting encounters with one particular elephant. There were several herds that were in the area this month that we saw on several consecutive mornings. One of these herd's was Funny-face's herd. Funny-face has a fantastic herd, they are very relaxed and a pleasure to spend time with. This

month however, one of the young cows in the herd, a rather young girl, has decided that she has simply had enough of the game drive vehicles (and all other animals as well), and harassed the vehicles on every possible occasion. This meant that we were getting up close and personal with her, and the best thing about this is how perplexed this cow gets when we don't run away (like all the other animals she chases). By not moving when these young animals are starting to throw their weight around, they learn that they can't chase vehicles around, and soon relax with us. It is just like a teenager testing his strength.

Most of the good elephant sightings this month were along the Majale River, and we had a few fantastic sightings of elephants drinking. There is something amazing watching herds of elephants converge on a pool in the river and on two drives this month we barely moved at all, and spent most of our time simply sitting on one of the banks overlooking pools in the river, watching herds of elephants coming from all directions to drink. It is fascinating to watch these herds come together, especially when these herds know each other, with the greeting ceremonies involved when the herds come together.

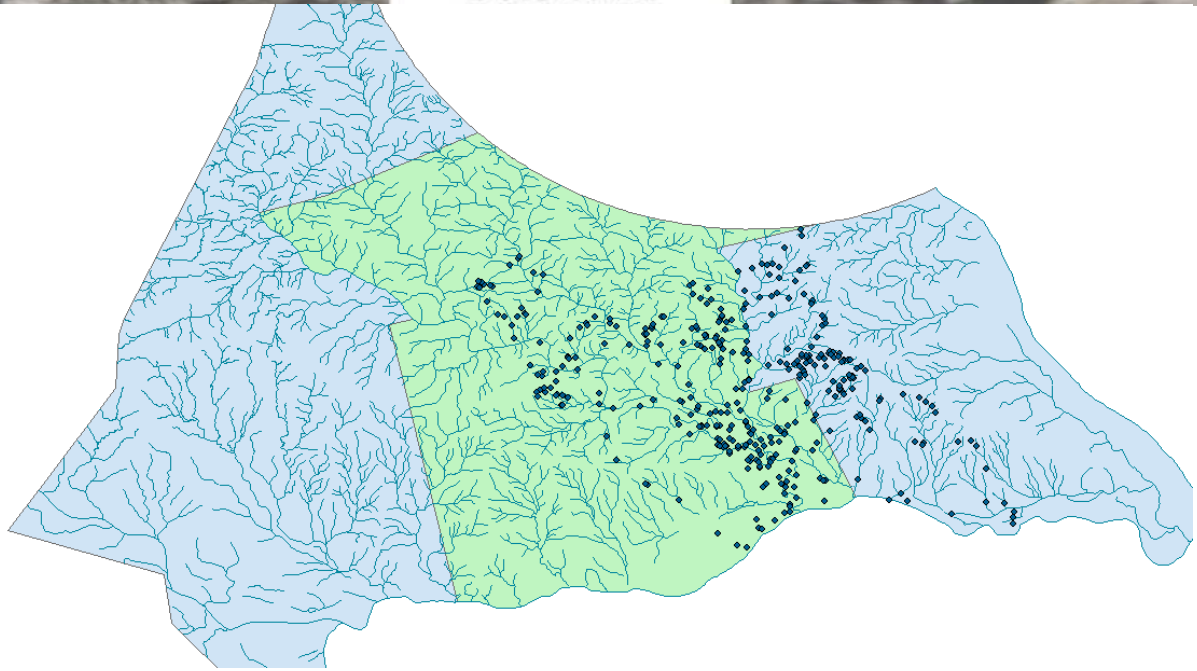


### **Collared Elephants**

This month Christina's herd did not move out of the reserve, and the brief forays that she made to Zimbabwe in the preceding months have stopped. This could be the result of a number of factors, however the main



factor could possibly be the increased human presence in the Tuli circle this month, which means the elephants generally stay out of the area.



Research would not be a reality if we do not have the amazing support from so many organisations and individuals who obviously share our love for nature and the vision to conserve our magnificent heritage. Thank you to each and every person who has made a contribution, in whichever way, to the project.

