

CENTRAL LIMPOPO VALLEY ELEPHANT RESEARCH PROJECT

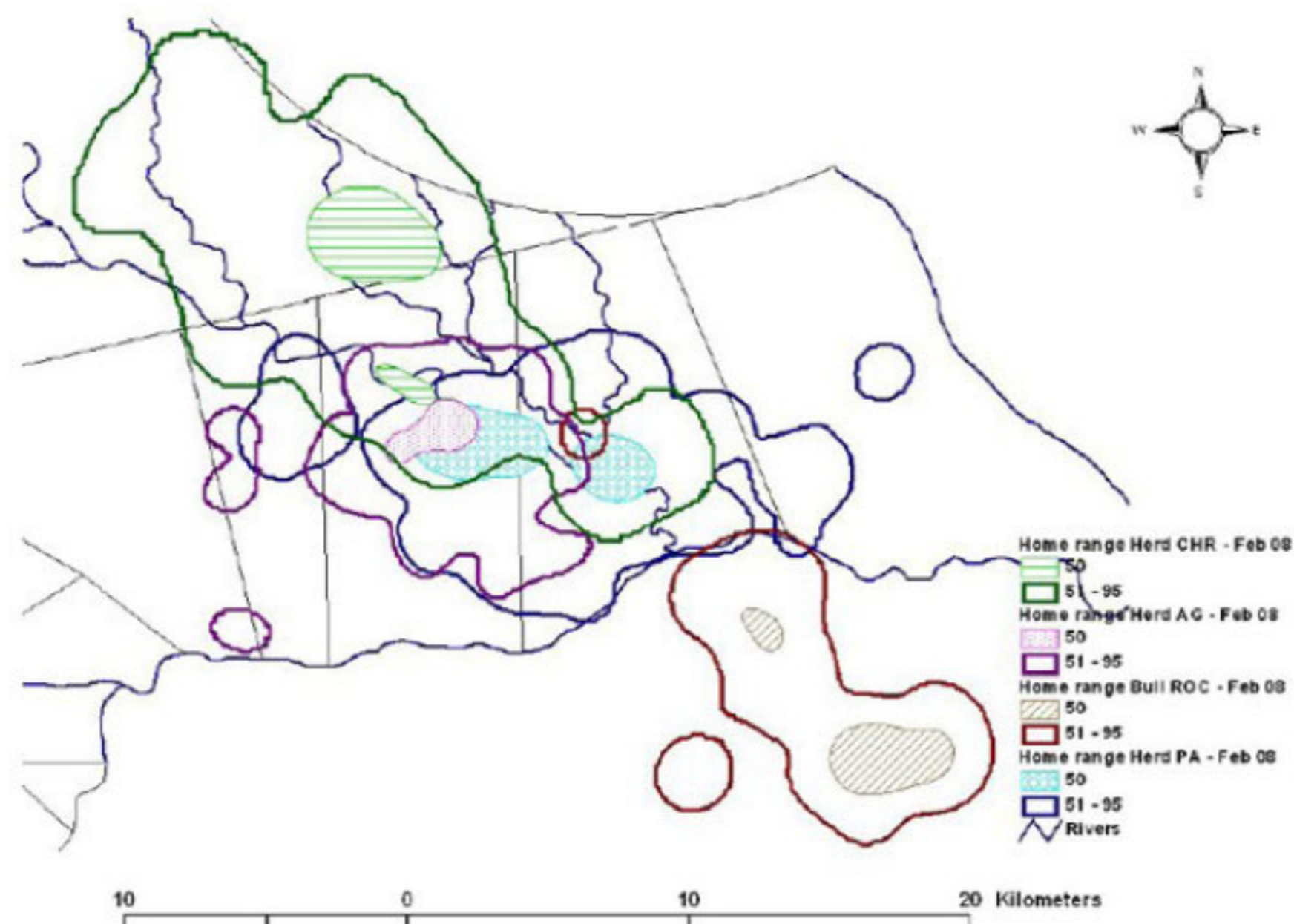
By Jeanetta Selier

Currently elephants seem to be all over the reserve. Signs and elephants were seen from the Limpopo River to Jwala in the north and even along the Motloutse River there are fresh signs of elephants. The bulls have also been doing the rounds and several of the known bulls have been seen walking long distances on the reserve. One such a bull is Floppy bull. He has been seen for some time on Mashatu, but about mid month started making his way up to the northern part of the reserve and was seen with a breeding herd near Boundary pools.

Pamina arrived soon after Kolobje, a 40-year-old female who broke away from Pamina's herd in 2001, gave birth. For the rest of the month the two groups were seen moving together. Cheeky's herd also joined up with Kolobje and even Segole joined up with the extended family for a few days after the arrival of the new baby. Eleanor, the matriarch who so unceremoniously lifted the baby up was seen only once more with the herd after the incident and never near the new baby. I do not believe her intentions were malicious but more likely out of concern.



Even though most of the collared herds home ranges still overlap with one or more of the major rivers in the reserve the herds spend less time along the major rivers and seem to be less dependent on the major rivers. Agatha and her family still prefers the Majale River and were often seen early mornings walking towards the Majale River where they would drink, graze and spend the hottest time of the day in the shade of the riverine trees. Christina and her family also returned to the Majale River frequently but also spend days away from the central section of the reserve concentrating more on the upper Matabole River areas. Pamina and her family recently arrived back in the central area and spend most of the month moving around the central area and were often seen along the Majale River. Rocky is still spending most of his time in South Africa but did visit the reserve for a short period during the month.





Mashatu



Research
Botswana



Ivory Drives

Old favourites have been seen regularly on the Ivory drives this month. Some of these included Diana and Hestelle. In both these herds new babies were identified. Agnes a female in one of the collared herds also gave birth early in the month. After Kolobje's dramatic experience she and her calf was seen on a regular basis. Not long after the incident Pamina and her family joined Kolobje and Cheeky. Cheeky and her family were present at the birth and assisted in the protection and care of Kolobje's baby. Sometimes it was hard to tell who's actually the mother of the little one. On most of the drives we were lucky enough to sit amongst several herds watching them feed or my favourite watching them in the river drinking and mud wallowing. Bulls were also plentiful and watching the interactions between the different aged bulls are always fun. On one occasion we watched a big bull chase a slightly smaller bull for quite some distance, making sure no other bull interferes in his business with the females.