



February 2010 Update

The weather this month has been up and down and the same can be said for elephant sightings. At the beginning of the month we had normal February weather, however towards the end of the month, the weather turned overcast with a few days of drizzle, and all round strong wind. The strange weather seems to have acted as a catalyst for elephant movement, with them starting to move in and out of the area, with the last week or so having rather poor elephant sightings.



Even though the elephant sightings were not that great towards the end of the month, there was however a rather special consolation. The twins were once again spotted this month, and both seem to be healthy and growing well. There also seem to be many new faces amongst the herds, owing to the fact that even though elephants give birth year round, there is generally a peak in calving over the summer months.



Diana put in another appearance this month, however it was considerably more relaxed than our sighting last month. It never ceases to amaze how each of these animals has its own personality. Whereas the last time we encountered her last month she was on the rampage towards another herd of elephants, this month she was completely relaxed. It was a great morning spent with her herd, relaxing in the shade east of Cheetah's Koppie. Her herd was spread out around the banks of a streambed. The adults seemed to be just enjoying the shade of the Apple-leaf's and Fever-berry's, while the youngsters took this as a great chance to harass each other. Sitting virtually under Diana's trunk, I had a great view of



these youngsters shoving and badgering each other, and as usual, got challenged by one of them myself.



There are several bulls following the cows around this month. A mating was seen on one of the game drives and several lone bulls were seen in the Central region. I spotted this enormous guy who seemed to be moving in front of Hestelle's herd. Henry (Stella's floppy eared son) seemed quite content to follow him around, until he crossed the Majale River. That seems to be when Henry's nerves gave in and he returned to his mothers herd.

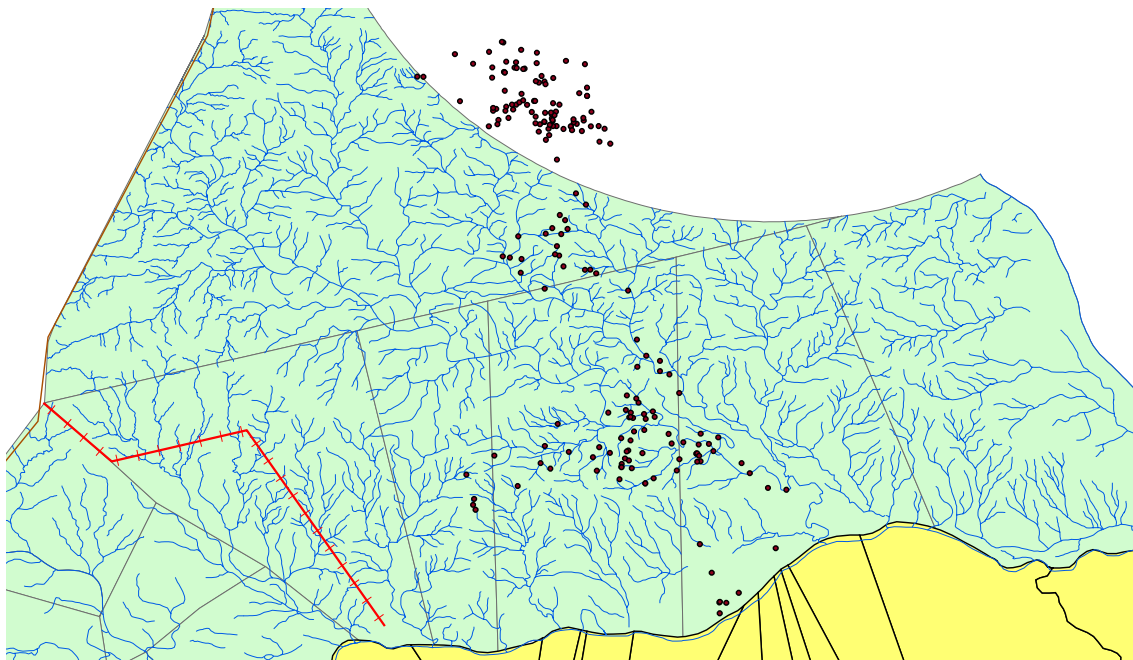




Collared Elephants

Our collared elephants have roamed far and wide this month, at times they proved to be a right nuisance. There were many days this month where I would stand on top of a hill trying to pick up signal for them and would come up with absolutely nothing. So it was to my surprise one morning, while on my way down to the office, that I drove straight past Agatha, calmly feeding on the southern side of MMBA Ridge, one of my favourite tracking spots.

Our newly re-collared cow Clotilda (CHR02) has gone on holiday this month. She has spent most of the month in Zimbabwe, with a few brief forays back into Botswana.



As a last bit of exciting news. After there were several reports of Soraya doing poorly towards the end of last year, she seems to be fit and healthy again. The rains have brought up plenty of grass and tender shoots. This seems to have given the old girl a well needed boost and she has been sighted a number of times in the last month.



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.

