



## January 2011 Update

As with December last year, January's rainfall continued to be quite erratic in some areas of the reserve. However we did start having a decent amount of rain in the Central Area, and as a result, the elephants have started frequenting these areas again. We have started seeing not only our regular herds in the reserve, but also some of the herd that come in from areas adjacent to the reserve to share in the plentiful grass and other vegetation available on the reserve at the moment.



This month, much like December last year, we welcomed numerous new arrivals to our elephant population. One particular afternoon I spent with Hestelle's herd was particularly rewarding. The herd was very spread out, just south of Cheetahs Koppie, moving slowly while grazing on the lush grass. The herd was so spread out, that on a few occasions, I had to drive from one smaller group to another, and in the process, noticed that this herd has four new additions, certainly a fruitful year for the herd.



I spent another morning with this herd and thoroughly enjoyed myself, although probably not as much as the new youngsters, who still have no idea what to do with their trunks, and also have nothing better to do than to harass their older siblings. On this morning, I had a very interesting sighting of the elephants attempting to climb a rather muddy incline. The adult elephants seemed to take it all in their stride, while the calves seemed to get quite distressed when their feet did not stay where they



had put them, after a few minutes of sliding to get themselves out of the mud they ran to their mothers in complete distress, obviously not used to all of the mud.



Another new addition this month was to Dorothee's herd, and by watching this youngster for one morning, I can see that Dorothee is definitely going to have a tough time of keeping this young boy in his place.

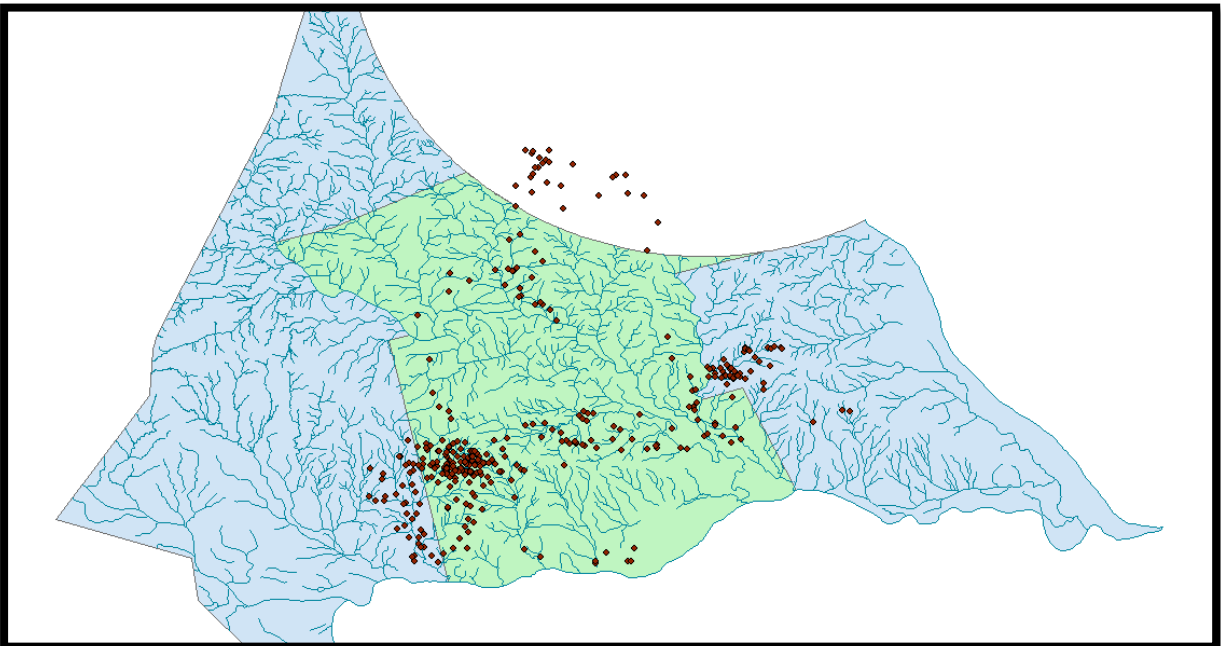
### Ivory Drives



On two different Ivory Drives this month we ran into Ilze's herd. Last month we saw that they have a new calf with them, but this month, one particular drive with them was really special. After receiving a large amount of rain the night before, we set out into an incredibly muddy reserve. When we found the elephants, they seemed to be taking full advantage of the muddy conditions and at one particular spot, near Jackal's Koppie, the elephants were rolling around in the mud much to their and our enjoyment. We are used to seeing the elephant calves engaged in this sort of activity, but what made this drive so special is that even though the fully grown cows were lying on their sides and cavorting in the cooling mud.



### Collared Elephants



As we can see from the map above, Christina's herds movements this month differed considerably from the preceding months. She spent a large amount of time on the western side of the reserve, with a brief foray into Zimbabwe and then a small amount of time was spent on the eastern side of the reserve. This may be as a result of the rainfall received this month, with us receiving considerably more rain in the central as well as western sides of the reserve.



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.

