

Game sighting update August 2009

Summer is approaching

Leopards

The leopard is generally more a forest species and is not so well adapted to an open savanna environment, where they occur like in the Tuli block Mashatu game reserve in a more open association the cover of bush stands tall or rocky terrain in which to lie up and which to hunt are important to their existence. The range of animals eaten depends on their availability in the area in which leopard live. In Mashatu game reserve analyses show that guineafowls are among the smaller prey and Impalas are among the larger and have the highest percentage occurrence .Impalas are one of the dominant medium sized dovid species and provides 78% of the leopards diet.



Late August some of our guests with rangers Diks were very lucky to witness a daylight kill of the young male leopard taking down an impala from the beginning to the very end when he started dragging the kill but as he was not yet fully grown it was too heavy to take it up the tree. The below pictures were taken by; **Biloe Family, (Serge, Frederique and Sophie) from France** Who were guests at Mashatu main camp from the 27th Aug to 29th and witnessed the whole thing. .



Cheetah

Cheetah sightings has greatly improved +during this month of August, possible due to the dry conditions and more open. A collusion of three males has been sported on several occasions on a hunt and some times on an Impala kill. Most trees have shaded making spotting these animals even more possible. Cheetah is the weakest of all the predators and with the amount of other predators around, cheetah always find it very difficult to have their prey for as much as they can cause other predators always take over their kill. Another collusion of two female cheetah has been seen walking up to the prey pausing motionless from time to time when the prey shows anxiety.

SPOTTED HYENA&BROWN HYENAS

The principal food of sported hyaenas is dictated largely by what is available and will varie from locality to locality. Throughout their range the sported hyaenas will feed predominantly on large and medium sized antelopes and also scavenge. In one very cold windy morning game drive a pack of sported hyaenas was observed initiating a hunt on a herd of Zebras. The chosen victim, a fowl got selected and the chase went on very slow as the hyaenas faced attacks from the stallion which hung behind to protect the very tightly bunched herd of mares and the fowls. As the chase got very aggressive one of the fowls fell out of the formation and was pulled down by the pack. After the kill was made the pack congregated at a carcuss and simultaneously fed alongside each other with very little intraspecific aggression but much vocalization. There was less chasing and biting.

LIONS

Lion sighting was great especially this summer as the conditions encourage animals to drink almost every day because of the warming up of the weather thereby enabling game viewers to see them on kills near big pools along the river.

The Elephants.

Elephant viewing is still the best this time when herds are concentrating around the Majale river for water. Having summer just around the corner and with the hotter tempretures we are getting to, this has also contributed immensely as it encourages herds of elephants to drink every day about twice, the bush still provides enough for them as the rains were good the last summer. Groups of between 150 and 200 elephants were seen ranging from drinking to feeding along the Majale river.

Birds

Bird watching is very enjoyable and can be undertaken ay time as this estate boasts a species list of about four hundred birds, many of which are summer migrants to the area. Most of the little brown jobs are been seen around grouping together to get ready for their breeding season in the summer, eg, red billed quilleas.

