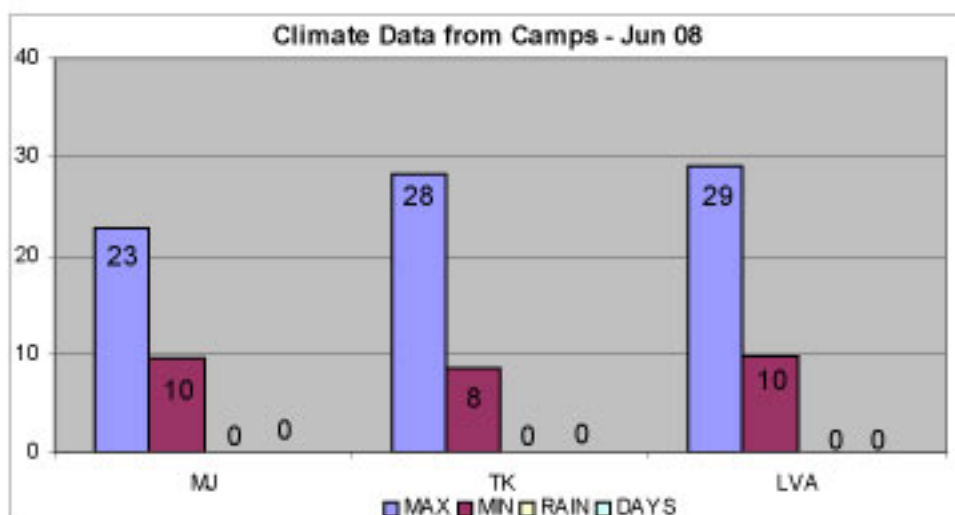


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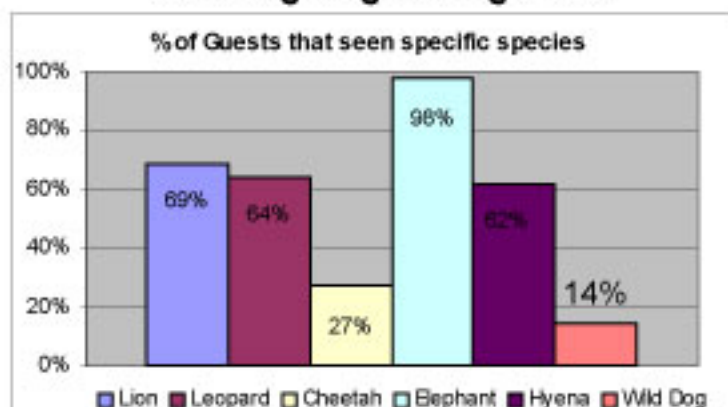
Game Report

Weather and vegetation report



Over night the reserve turned from green to all shades of brown and red. At the start of the month the mopane trees were still green but reaching the end of the month most of the mopane trees in the high lying areas have turned the most amazing red and brown colours. Up to the north of the reserve grass is still plentiful but along most of the floodplain areas the grass have but all disappeared. Water however is still plentiful with pools still visible in the Majale, Matabole, Jwala and Pitsane rivers and the Limpopo River by the end of June was still flowing. Very unusual for this time of the year. A cold front moving through the area during the month brought about a bit of a drizzle and apparently rain was received to the west of the reserve.

Game sightings during June



Sightings of all species increased tremendously from the previous month but were still lower compared to last year June. There was however several unusual sightings this month including an armadillo and an armadillo all on one drive and a horse/wild dog encounter! A pack of 12 wild dogs had come to investigate the sounds of running herbivores, and perhaps to test the possibility of an easy meal. The extremely inquisitive canines came to within 5m of the riders before

they used their calm horses to ward the dogs off by simply turning to face them. The dogs eventually lost interest in the obviously street-wise horses and melted into the thick riverine bush. Both the guest and the guides were left with an image of satellite dish ears, mottled sinuous bodies and white tufted tails, and not a few goose bumps.

During the month a few newborn eland calves were spotted. Very early indeed as most eland calf during August and September.



Predator Sightings

Leopards

Frequent leopard sightings were seen all around Mashatu, ranging from mothers with cubs, to big adult males patrolling their territories. Sightings of these elusive cats were found in the mornings, but mostly during the night when they are more active.

Lions



Our famous Majale Island Pride female with 4 cubs was found at last. Maybe not on Mashatu property, but the female and cubs were seen in Mapungubwe National Park South Africa, which borders the Northern Tuli Game Reserve. The 6 other lions are still moving around the central parts of the reserve and the two males of that pride is likely to be the reason the Majale Island female left the area. By moving away from potential infanticide males, she gives her cubs the best change of survival.

Cheetahs

This month was filled with cheetah sightings. There were on occasions 6 cheetah seen together. Ranging from just lying around scanning the landscape, to hunting impala. Some guests were even fortunate enough to see them hunting right in front of the game-viewing vehicle. Three males were found fairly regularly and they are very relaxed towards vehicles, so guest had the opportunity to take magnificent pictures of them. It really was a great cheetah month.



Spotted Hyena

Again spotted hyenas were seen and heard every day. The hyenas that had a den along the bank of the Majale River seem to have moved. Hyenas were seen regularly at the waterhole outside Main Camp and they even managed to kill an impala next to the fence right at the gate.





The Tuli Elephants

As always elephants were around in full force and were seen nearly every day of the month. On more than one occasion this month elephants and predators confronted each other. Early in the month the wild dogs and a small herd of elephants encountered each other near the Limpopo River. Contrary to what would be expected the wild dogs through their continuous nipping and yelping and far exceeding agility sent the elephants trumpeting and running. Later in the month a big elephant bull unintentionally wandered into the denning area of the wild dogs. Once again the elephant was unceremoniously chased off by the pack of wild dogs. The lions however were not as lucky and with an encounter between a herd of elephants and the new pride of lions, the pride of lions were sent running by trumpeting and charging elephants.



Birding

During the month a total of 83 bird species were recorded on Mashatu. The volunteers on the Research Shadow Program have been assisting us in identifying birds during the month as well as recording sightings of bird species identified as vulnerable within Botswana.

This photograph of an albino white crowned plover was taken near the Majale River close to Hamerkop Crossing. Another great and frequent sighting this month was that of a Giant Kingfisher at the Mashatu Main Camp waterhole.

