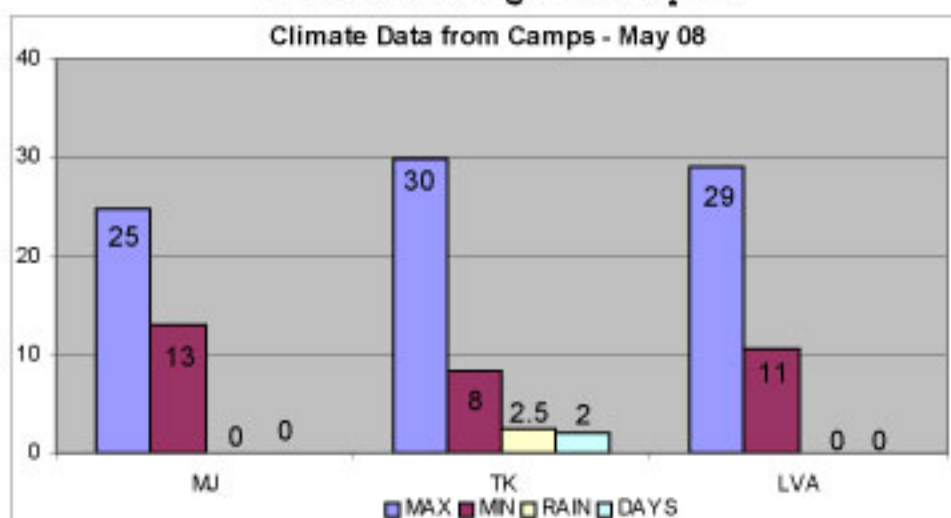


May - 2008

Game Report

Weather and vegetation report

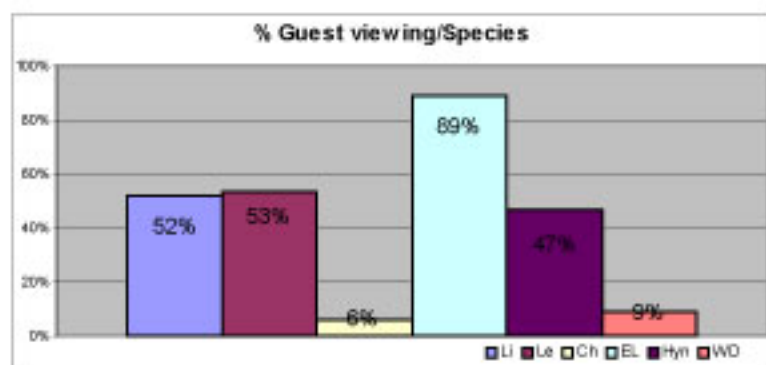


There can be no doubt that winter has arrived but typical to the Tuli even though the evenings have been very cold the days have been pleasant. Amazing for this time of the year the Limpopo River is still flowing and by the end of May just as we thought of crossing the river by vehicle the water level in the river raised once more.

Game sightings during May

Game viewing Stats

The following figures are obtained by determining the number of days with guests in camp when a specific animal was seen and assuming that all guests in both camps had a sighting of the specific animal.



Game viewing this month was a lot lower than the previous few months. Lion, leopard and hyena sightings dropped with more than 20% compared to April 2008. Lion and leopard viewing were similar to May 2007 but elephant and hyena sightings were also lower compared to the previous year.



Predator Sightings

Leopards

Leopard sightings were frequent and the most seen leopard this month was the female with her cub living around Moddergat. Guests have the opportunity to take stunning pictures of them every time, since most of the sightings were during the day and in fairly open terrain. The mother is still fairly skittish, but the cub seems to not know any better and poses very elegantly for the guests. There were also various other leopard sightings seen around Mashatu.

Lions

The pride of six was seen regularly and they seem to spend most of their time along the Pitsane, Matabole and Majale Rivers. They do however, like to hang around Nel's Windmill. The one male was again seen mating with one of the females and sightings of them are normally very good. They are very relaxed and offer stunning photographic opportunities.

Cheetahs

Not a regular sighting this month, but at the end of the May four male cheetah was seen and around Pole Hill a mother was seen with 3 cubs. Now that the terrain is becoming more open the visibility is improving leading to better and more frequent sightings of these cats.

Spotted Hyena

Again spotted hyenas were seen and heard every day. The hyena den just down stream of Majale Cocktail spot is teeming with activity. Young hyenas are often seen playing around the sleeping adults.

The Tuli Elephants

The average group size recorded by the rangers on Mashatu this month were higher than the previous month and is the result of several large groups seen moving together during the month. Groups of 200 or more elephants were recorded on several occasions during the month and mainly seen walking along the Matabole River below Beacon Hill or crossing Elephant Valley towards the Majale River. A few adult bulls were observed either on their own or in the vicinity of these large bond groups.



Birding

During this month on Mashatu alone a 157 different bird species were recorded. Most of the migratory bird species have long left by now but with all the water remaining on the reserve and especially the Limpopo River several of the water bird species are still around.

The Northern Tuli Game Reserve and BirdLife Botswana are currently planning an ambitious aerial survey of white back vulture nests within the Limpopo Valley. We hope to conduct the survey early in September. The aim is to record the number of active white back vulture nesting sites within the Limpopo Valley. At present it will be very helpful to know of any vulture nesting sites within the Northern Tuli Game Reserve. A GPS coordinate as well as a description of where the nest is located will be extremely helpful. For any information on the count or assistance with the count please contact Jeanetta at mashatu.research@telkomsa.net.