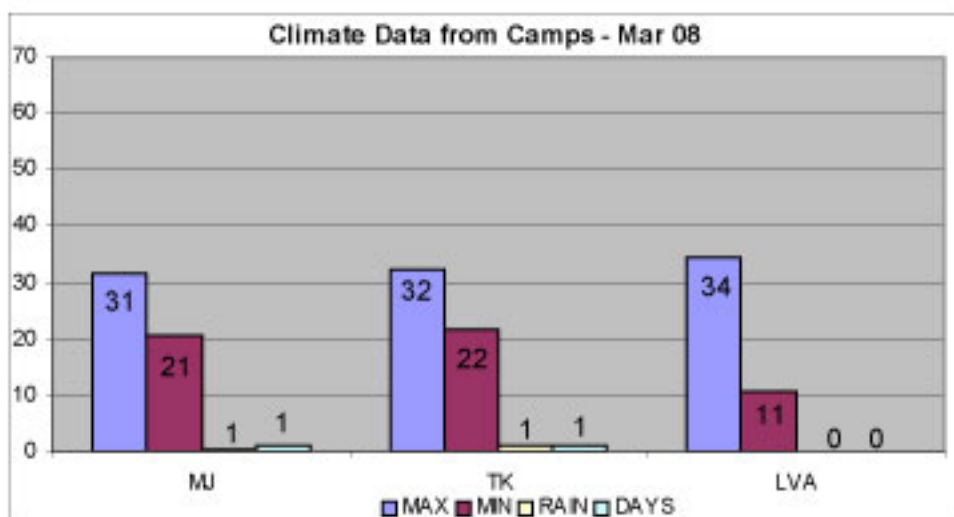


Game Report - March 2008

Weather and vegetation report

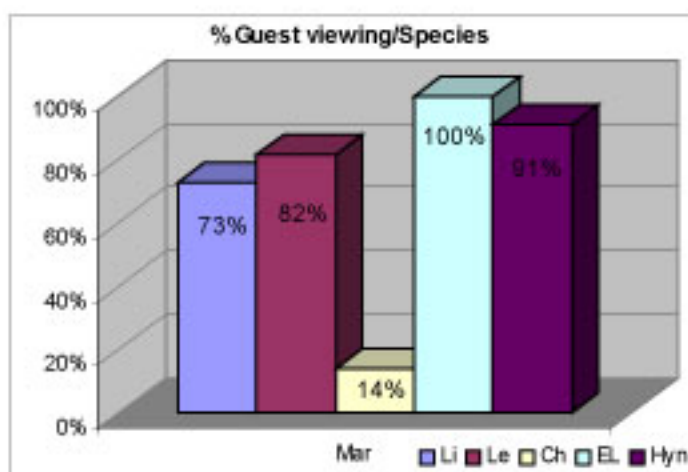


Little rain fell this month on the reserve and towards the end of the month the grass was turning a yellow brown. Throughout the whole month however grass cover was plentiful. The Limpopo River is still flowing and several pools were still available in all the major rivers throughout the reserve. Even within Nel's vlei pools of water could still be seen and the water birds in this area were plentiful throughout the month.

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.

There was a marked increase in game viewing from February to March this year but compared to March 2007 there was a drop in all game except for elephants which showed a slight increase from the previous year.





Predator Sightings

Leopards

There have been some great leopard sightings all around Mashatu. As we are heading into winter the vegetation is slowly 'opening' up again and it makes it possible to spot these elusive cats of Africa. Some memorable sightings were of a female leopard and her 3-month-old cub. They are seen regularly around Moddergat. Others stunning sightings include a leopard feeding on a freshly killed impala with 4 hyenas waiting at the base of the tree for any scraps to fall down; leopard 'drooped' across a large tree just resting and a female leopard leaping into trees trying to catch sleepy guinea fowl.

Lions

The 6 'new' lions that moved into the area were seen regularly, but although all 6 were seen together, most often they break-up into two small groups of 3 each. They are very relaxed and guests have great opportunities to take some stunning pictures of them. The two males are still mating on the odd-occasion with the younger two females, but the best sighting of them was when they killed a wildebeest next to the Majale River and we could watch them feed at their leisure while there were wary hyenas lurking in the background.



Picture taken by a camera trap set out in the bush.

Cheetahs

Cheetah sightings are slowly picking up. There have been a couple of cheetah sightings this month. Most of the sightings are located near the Vlei, but also up north to Fika Futi area.



Spotted and Brown Hyena

There were no brown hyena sightings during March.

As always, spotted hyenas were seen very frequently and sightings of these amazing predators vary from them hunting impala to scavenging kills from leopards. Almost every single night the call of a spotted hyena can be heard all across the reserve, and their tracks also prove them to be moving wide and far. Spotted hyenas are surely doing very well in the Northern Tuli Game Reserve.

The Tuli Elephants

As the conditions on the reserve got drier so did the herd sizes of the elephants. The average herd size this month was 46 elephants per group, where February the average herd size was approximately 60 elephants per group. Elephants, however were still seen every day of the month along the Majale and Limpopo Rivers with great sightings of elephants at Pete's Pond.

Birding

Thank you to the Evans Party for sending us a very complete bird list for during their stay at Rock Camp in February. They identified a total of 165 birds over a week period. During March 183 different bird species were identified by the rangers and researchers on Mashatu.