

## Pete's Pond February 2009

In February the cam was down for a while too, but it was a good month with rain and wonderful sightings. The bush was still green and the animals looking good and relaxed.



Many, many birds visited the pond and some of them typical summer visitors. Like the woodland kingfisher, the Jacobin cuckoo and the grey-headed kingfisher. The latter kept us busy for quite a while, because we saw them as young birds and I had trouble finding the right ID for them.



We saw lots of animal babies too. All of them lovely to watch, but some really special to see. Like the young black-smith lapwings and the egyptian goose. I don't recall seeing those youngsters at the pond before. And the sight of nursing warthog piglet is something that makes you smile every single time.



The black egret kept us entertained for weeks. It is such fun to watch it hunt! It spreads its wings like an umbrella, with its head hidden underneath to catch fish. And we were all very excited when one day a black-headed heron arrived. Another day we saw a leopard tortoise coming to the pond for a drink. It was a good size and beautiful. Sightings like that are always very special.



One morning we watched a vervet monkey eat a moth. We see them feed on insects regularly and this time we were lucky to get a real close look.

Another day we saw some very interesting interaction between a Nile monitor and a troop of baboons. The monitor was walking along the shoreline when the baboons arrived and sat down to rest close to the reptile. The Nile monitor suddenly lay very still and became almost flat. The baboons were well aware of it, checked it out, but left it alone. Long after the baboons had left, the monitor very slowly came back into its normal shape and moved off.

And last but not least, a lovely visit of a big bull elephant. He wasn't in a hurry, had a drink and a shower and when he was on his way out, he had a dust bath.



Enjoy the pond!

Afke

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Mashatu Game Reserve  
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