

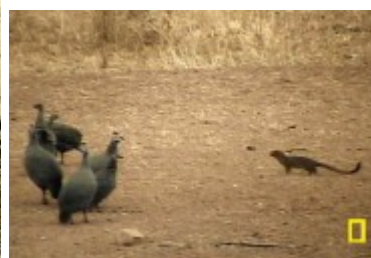
Pete's Pond May 2009

It's unbelievable, but true... we did get a bit of rain again. In May! Amazing... There is still a lot of water in the Limpopo river and in the Vlei. But the bush is dry now, with dead grass giving the bush a beautiful golden yellow color.

One morning the light was amazing... the whole area became pink around sunrise! The pond looked stunning and the animals became "fairy tail figures" for a few minutes. Specially the hamerkops doing their mounting greeting ritual.



We saw a big bull elephant barge in one day, looking very excited. We saw a tree squirrel on the roof, checking the entrance of the hide mice's house. And a young slender mongoose met a few guineafowls. Those are some of the fun sightings we have at the pond!



Baby elands visiting the pond for the first time, an impala fawn checking a red-billed teal are a few more of those fun sightings. And... we had the wild dogs at the pond! The very pregnant alpha female was with them and she looked huge and very healthy. What a sight!



We also had a few very special sightings this month. Let me start with the pearl spotted owl. We hear them call almost every night (and day!), but only get sightings at a distance usually. Until one night... it landed on top of the dead bush and we could watch it for a long time, in close up.

Wonderful... The first picture shows you the real face, the second picture shows the false face on the back of its head. It's the only owl that has this feature. Amazing isn't it...



Another unusual sighting was the leopard visit. We do see a leopard regularly, but this one stayed. He drank, rested and was not too far from the cam. So we had a great close up look for quite a while!



But this wasn't all... One morning we found a cape clawless otter at the pond! I must admit, I didn't believe what I was seeing for the first few seconds, but there it was... hunting along the shoreline! It was a first time ever sighting for the pond and only the second one for Mashatu I believe.



The otter got into a big fight with a large Nile monitor in the water, in the end killing it and feeding from it. A few days later an African fish eagle was feeding on the remains of the monitor.



The pond is such a special place. You never know what you'll see and/or hear. There is truly something new and interesting every single day.

Enjoy the pond!

Afke

**Cam operator Pete's Pond
Mashatu Game Reserve
Botswana**