



Pete's Pond Wilcam Update

This January was a very special month, because for the first time we had the cams still running during that time of year and everything we saw, we saw for the very first time. The bird life for example, was amazing. To give you an idea of what was there, I'll give you a list of the birds we had at the pond one day in January.

European Swallow, Southern and Lesser Masked Weaver, Cattle Egret, Black-headed Heron, Grey Heron, Cape Glossy Starling, Meve's Long-tailed Starling, Green-backed Heron, Woodland Kingfisher, Black-eyed Bulbul, Blue Waxbill, Grey-backed Camaroptera, Quelea, Grey-headed Sparrow, African Fish Eagle, Great Reed Warbler, Abdim Stork, Wattled Starling, White-faced and knob-billed Duck, Hamerkop, White-fronted and Carmine Bee-eater, Pied Kingfisher and Giant Eagle Owl. And I am sure I forgot to mention many others that were around.

We watched a male Pied Kingfisher catch and kill a fish, slapping it against a branch of a tree time after time. All the while the female was there too and when the fish was ready, the female begged and the male gave it to her.



One day we watched two large bull elephants seriously test each other in the distance. It was very interesting and exciting to see how they charged, stopped, pushed each other and backed off regularly and take dust baths in between. They were holding their heads high, spread their ears and shook their heads at each other. It went on for quite a while and eventually we lost sight of them.

We saw a second crocodile move into the pond end of December and during January our own crocodile, called Fatty, was not amused and chased it round the pond at high speed a few times. After a while the second crocodile left the pond again.



Visiting crocodile



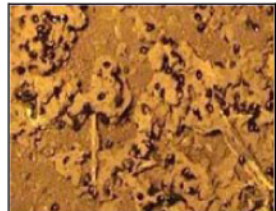
Resident crocodile, Fatty

The herds of blue wildebeests, impala and elephants were regular (sometimes daily) visitors during January. All herds with calves/fawns. The hyenas visited a few times and were calling almost every evening/night. The jackals called often around sunset.

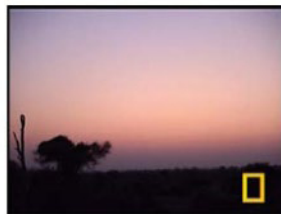
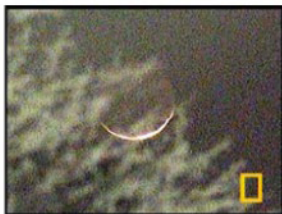
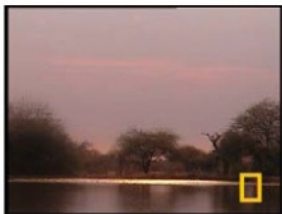


Waterbuck were at the pond a few times and one day they checked out Fatty, our crocodile, who was basking ashore. All animals, except the baboons, seem to do this. Especially the cattle egrets are funny to watch when they surround him in large numbers. We also had a small group of banded mongoose checking out the crocodile.

We saw many interesting insects. Sometimes one or two on a leaf or flower and sometimes thousands in the air or on the ground. It is amazing how many different species we have seen. It seems that we have new ones every week or so. We see them feed, mate, shed their skin or burrow. Really fun and interesting to watch.



All in all it was a wonderful month at the pond. We had lots of excitement and many interesting and new things to enjoy and learn from. But we also had lovely tranquil quiet moments, especially around sunset and dawn or at night, when we could listen to the sounds of the bush. To see so many healthy and well-fed animals with young is wonderful and to be able to see how the season develops and in what ways that affects the bush and the animals is such a privilege for all of us. Every day there is something new to watch or to listen to. Whether it's exciting or quiet, nature is amazing.



Thank you all, for sharing the experience!

Afke, cam operator at Pete's Pond