

## PETE'S POND WILDCAM UPDATE – April 2008

April was a wonderful month at the pond. The cam worked and we had many many lovely sightings.

The Wild Dogs were released on 5 April and the first sighting of the Wild Dogs on cam was on 7 April at 6h14. We saw five of them walk past in the distance. It was quite exciting to watch and wait for them, but they didn't come to the pond that day. The first real visit was on 8 April at 18h00. But the most exciting Wild Dog day at the pond was on 9 April.

First they came in the morning around 10h30. They met a herd of Wildebeest at the pond and after some movement back and forth a large cow charged towards the Wild Dogs, scattering them. The rest of the herd soon followed and we saw how the Wildebeests chased the Wild Dogs off into the bush.

You can watch the video at <http://nl.youtube.com/watch?v=GMMtUA8bfaw>

Later that day, around 17h45, the Wild Dogs came back, but we had a large herd of Elephants here. First a few younger female Elephants chased the Wild Dogs off, but the Wild Dogs came back and entered the pond's beach where part of the herd of Elephants were drinking. One large Elephant female responded quickly, standing tall with head high and open ears, facing the pack of Wild Dogs. All the Elephants started to close in on the Wild Dogs, trumpeting and kicking up dust. The end result was that all the Elephants chased the Wild Dogs off and followed them. We could here the trumpeting and rumbling for quite some time, but all that was left at the pond was a large cloud of dust.

You can watch the video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xaXazDHQ3Eg>

On the evening of the 7<sup>th</sup> April, a large Leopard visited the pond and stayed for a short while. It is always a privilege to see those wonderful spotted cats at the pond. We saw many beautiful birds this month. To mention a few: Secretary bird, Tropical Boubou, Fork-tailed Drongo, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Pied and Arrow-marked Babbler, Fish Eagle, White-backed Vulture, Hadedda Ibis, Crested Barbet, Hamerkop, Goliath Heron, Green Wood-hoopoe, Grey Hornbill, Giant Kingfisher and African Hawk Eagle.

We saw the Tawny-flanked Prinia again. It has been away for a while and it was so good to see that lovely little bird back at the pond. And the basking Speckled Mouse birds are always fun to watch.

Warthogs visit the pond every day and it is a pleasure to watch them having a good wallow in the mud. One day our resident Crocodile was basking on shore. A group of Warthogs checked it out and one of them came very close to the Crocodile. First on it's "knees" sniffing at the Crocodile, but later even nudging the Crocodile with it's snout! The first time the Crocodile just turned it's head a little, but the second time it had enough and lashed out, scattering the Warthogs. We heard it's mouth shut with a loud bang!

You can watch the video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRxuYObjkfo>

At night we watch large Catfish hunt many little fish. It looks quite beautiful. The Catfish shoots up with open mouth, creating a circle of little jumping silver shiny fish fleeing away from it. The sound is also wonderful. One big splash and then a sound like it's raining when all the little fish "run on water".

We watched the Wild Hibiscus flowers with the many different beetles and ants on them; we had storms and even a tiny bit of rain. The sunrises and sunsets are stunning and the sounds of the bush are wonderful day and night. Moonlight on the pond's surface, reflections of trees, birds and animals in the water, its all part of life at Pete's Pond. Life in the bush is exciting and peaceful, noisy and quiet, colourful and dark. I can't think of a better place to be.



*Afke, the wild cam operator*