



# Northern Tuli Predator Project

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## Lions

Our central pride of eight lions (1 adult male, 2 adult lionesses and 5 cubs) provided some magnificent game viewing. A few more eland kills were made and this comes as no surprise as we are heading in the late stages of the dry season, which means eland and kudu, especially the lone bulls, are losing condition and lions are readily targeting these species. In one week we knew of 4 eland kills, and 1 kudu kill made by lions.



### 1. The kill the male lion took from the leopard

The four sub adults (three female and one male) also roaming around the central region split up for nearly a week. Two of them were seen moving further SW in the reserve, areas they have never utilized before. Most interesting about these young lions are their opportunism. Two were seen feeding on an eland carcass for a couple of days, soon after they were done they moved down to Croc Pool waterhole in the Majale River. When rangers found them the evening they had linked up with the other two, but most surprisingly as they'd just killed a kudu bull!

Engorged would be the only word to describe the two lions that had just left an eland carcass...



**2. Another eland kill made by the Central Pride**

### **Leopard**

Fantastic leopard sightings were seen during June and by far the highlight on everyone's cameras was that of an adult female with three small cubs. As females with cubs don't move too far from their offspring, especially when the cubs are still less than 2 months old, this 'leap-of-leopard' was seen frequently around Fig tree Crossing. A few young males and an adult male were also seen in and around Mashatu.



### **3. Bogale the leopard watching his hard fought wildebeest kill being consumed by the male lion**

On one particular predator drive, we tracked down our adult male lion. He had a wildebeest kill with him, but it could not have been his kill, seeing that he was far from that site in the morning (based on his GPS Radio Collar movements) and not much meat was left. The location of the kill site, on a rocky ridge area, also made me wonder as to how this lion got this kill. As we left the site to look for my one collared male leopard, we were all stunned to see the male sitting not even 200m away! In all likelihood the male leopard had killed the juvenile wildebeest and by chance the male must have picked up the scent of the kill while on his patrol and gladly took it from the leopard.

### **Cheetah**

Random cheetah sightings were seen during June. The usual coalition of three males was seen close to the Vlei and a new male never seen before was found, ironically heading up Cheetahs-Koppie?! This male was very skittish and kept looking back at our vehicle as we tagged along. The female with the young cub is presumed to be living around the western parts of Mashatu, based on their tracks.



4. A cheetah on Cheetah's Koppie...

### Spotted Hyaena

As usual these amazing predators are seen randomly across the landscape. Now that there are 3 known active dens on Mashatu, spotted hyaena sightings are ever better. Cubs from the Majale River den are becoming bolder in their quest to explore the unknown-territories outside their den.



Sightings of the less common Brown Hyaena were also seen, but these were only around the far SW areas of Mashatu, along the Motloutse and Limpopo River. Camera traps in that region also confirmed their frequently presence along footpaths, but more interestingly a Caracal and Striped Polecat was also recorded on these camera traps.

### **Sighting of the month**

The sighting of the month was on our return from an evening drive when we spotted yet another Scrub hare running across the road. What made this sighting special was that unknowing to the hare, an African Wildcat was poised waiting to pounce. In a flash the little cat pounced on the hare (which was almost just as big as the cat!) and killed it by repeatedly biting it on the head. Unlike larger cats these smaller predators don't necessarily dispatch their victims by suffocation.



***Predator regards,  
Andrei Snyman***