



Fifth Update – 3 August 2008

The pups are out!

After a long wait, the wild dog pups now venture out of the den and it is great to finally see the fluffy little creatures! It is quite difficult to count them but I think there are approximately 13 in total. Cairo's pups (the alpha female) are now six weeks old, while Nairobi's offspring were born about nine days later. There is a slight size difference between the pups. The dogs are doing exceptionally well and appear to be in great condition. On Friday morning I saw them chase an impala female into the thick riverine bush on the Limpopo, and when I caught up with them the dogs were feeding on the South African side of the river. After ten minutes of feeding and chasing each other around playfully on the sand, they headed back to the den. The pups are obviously very cute so I won't saw much more but rather add a few pictures instead! Enjoy!

Background to NTGR Wild Dog Project

A pack of 18 wild dogs was reintroduced to the Northern Tuli Game Reserve in November 2007. Initially held in an enclosure, the pack was released on 5 April 2008. The project aims to establish a viable pack of this endangered species within the Limpopo Valley region of eastern Botswana. A research programme has been established in addition to a community outreach initiative, educating local communities about wild dogs, predators and conservation in general.



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Hunting

The dogs are out most mornings and evenings and successfully bring back food on most occasions. Most of the time they are killing adult impala but have also taken a few warthogs and young kudus. They recently killed this young kudu (below) less than 300m from the den.



Left: No, Nairobi does not have an excessively large tongue, she is merely chewing on the young kudu's ear!!!

The pack frequently drinks at Rock Camp's waterhole as well as at Pete's Pond. Last week the dogs chased an impala into Pete's Pond. It swam through and ran under the hide (playing hide and seek?). The dogs followed in hot pursuit resulting in the poor impala heading back into the water. Fatty, the resident crocodile was most grateful and had a good meal!

Last night at about 21:00 an impala ewe was attempting an escape and jumped straight through a large window at Sethare Lodge. She was obviously seriously lacerated by the glass and bled profusely inside the chalet. Fortunately the guests were not in bed at the time, as the impala would almost have landed on top of them! They did however hear the commotion and went to investigate. They opened the sliding door to let the impala out, where the dogs quickly completed their hunt. The inside of the chalet was a real mess – see below (I did not insert the really gory photo's though!).



Above: Joseph inspecting the damage early this morning

Community Work

Rex Masupe, our community liaison officer, has been selected to attend a two-week long course on integrated livestock and predator management that will be conducted in Namibia. A limited number of applicants were accepted so well done Rex! We feel that this will be great training for Rex and help him immensely with his job.

Email list

Should you have received this update "via the grapevine" and would like me to email it to you directly in future, please send me an email (crjackson@zoology.up.ac.za) and I will add you to the mailing list. Please note that I do not have regular email contact and may not respond to email for several weeks at a time, and this also hampers getting regular updates out.

Until next time,
All the best

Craig Jackson

Disclaimer

I have compiled this document as a means to update interested persons on the current happenings of the NTGR wild dog project. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Northern Tuli Game Reserve, its landowners, or the project partners and/or sponsors.