

# Tribute to a king

“Long live Skebengwa” – Chris Plant

It is with a heavy hart that I write this report on probably the most remarkable leopard I have ever known. Skebengwa, which means ‘fearsome’, has finally succumbed to his injury. The last couple of weeks of following this magnificent male leopard I realised that this frequent meeting of man & beast will soon come to an end. From all my time spent with leopards I have learned the most from this individual. His movement data will become an integrate part of my PhD degree. From the maps below it can clearly be seen how the injury and ultimate loss of his eye altered the territorial movement of this stunning cat.

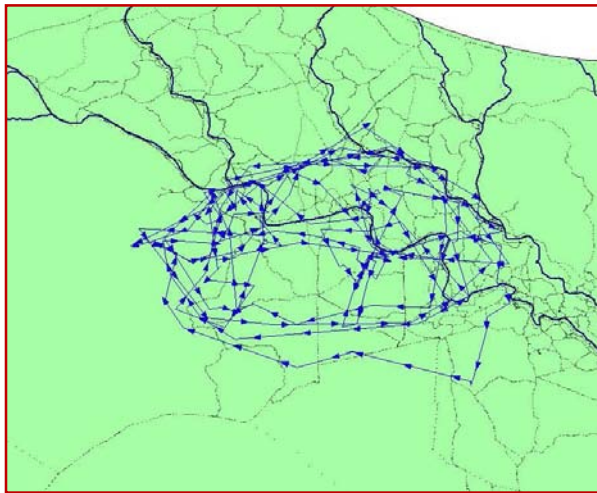


Figure 1. Monthly movement of male leopard while healthy

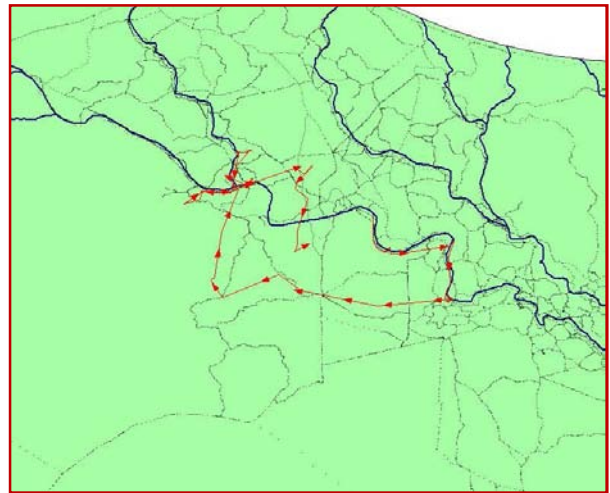


Figure 2. Last months' movement of male leopard while badly injured

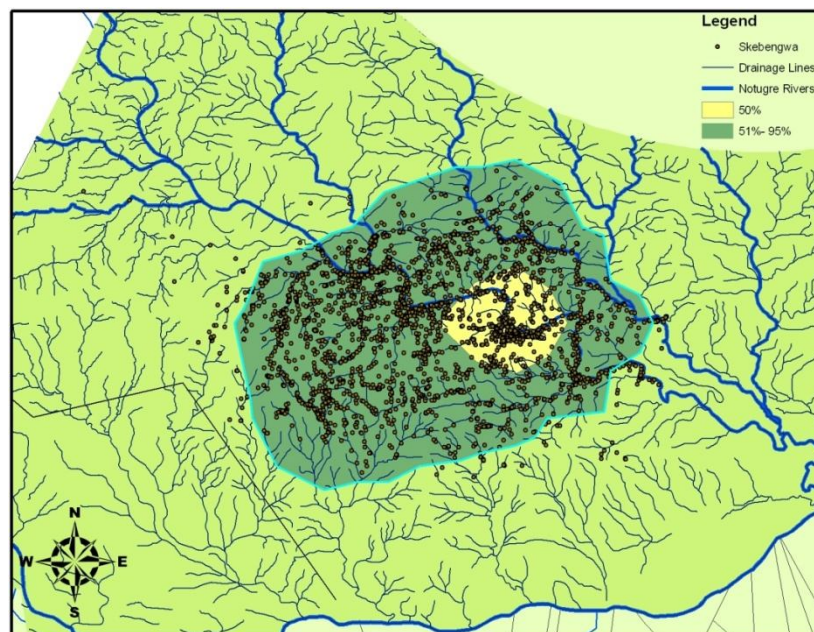
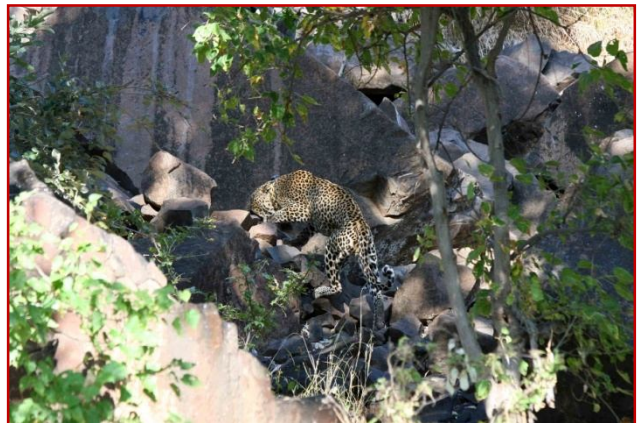
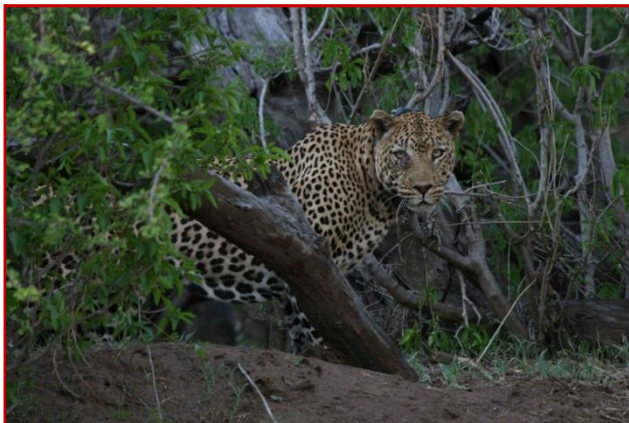
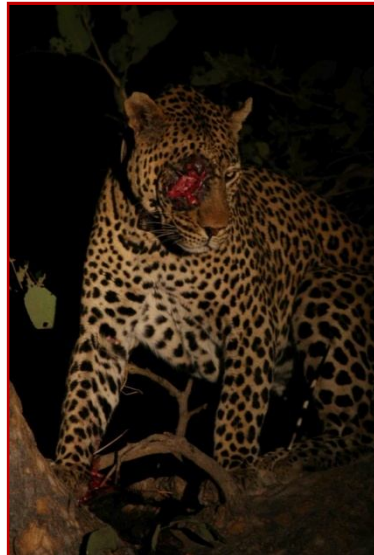
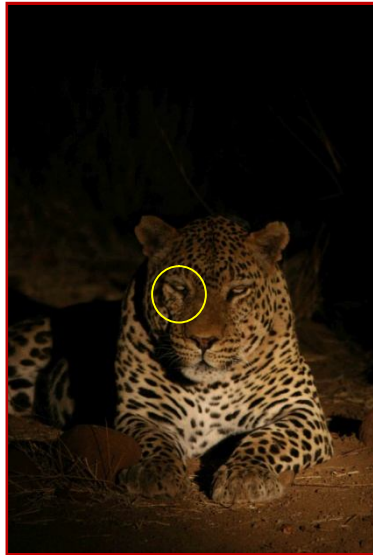


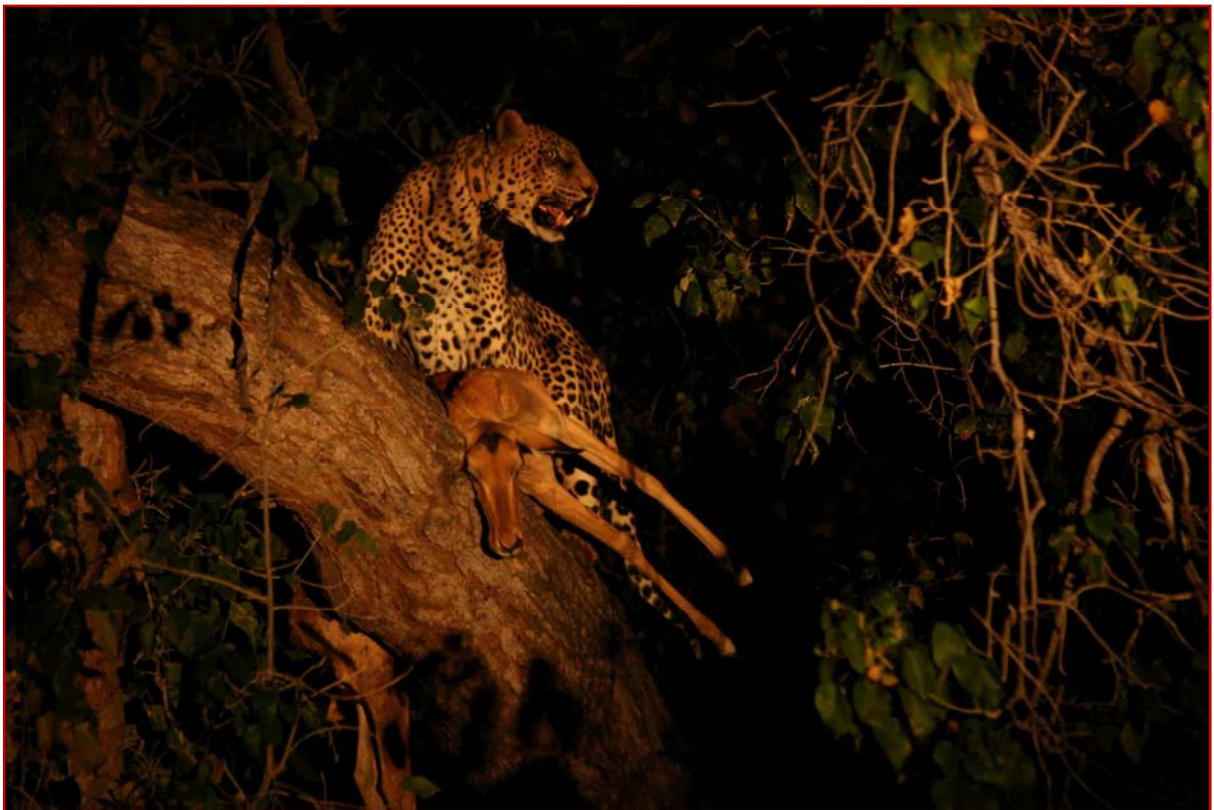
Figure 3. Territory boundary, with 50% & 95% Kernel territory estimates, of male leopard

The injury, a minor cut under the eye, is believed to have been caused by a female leopard. The cut was obtained during a mating spell in July 2008. It's amazing to see how this seemingly insignificant cut ultimately led to his death. From the pictures below you can see how the infection set in and how the male also started losing body condition due to inability to move and hunt successfully.



Here are a few pictures I took of this unforgettable leopard.





This truly magnificent male leopard will surely be missed and White-cliffs will never have the same 'feeling' to it again. Two young males, Kakanyo and Kwete, both sons of Skebengwa, are also collared and they are already showing signs of becoming the next leopard Kings of Mashatu.

**Long live Skebengwa!**