



## Newsletter July 2009

### And Action!

Guests at one of the other lodges were out on game drive, when they came across the breeding herd of elephants. The elephants were at Terrapin Bay drinking water, when guests noticed and took pictures of a young bull with a gaping wound on his trunk and water squirting out from the one side. The photos were unclear and Nambiti Management thought it best to dart this bull and make sure that there was no infection and that the wire, which was the most likely cause of the wound, wasn't still around the trunk.



Dr. Dave Cooper from KZN Wildlife with the help of Mr. Van Heerden from Helicon successfully darted the elephant on the 11th. The outcome of this darting and the good news was, that there was no infection and the wound was already healing nicely. Unfortunately the bull lost the use of his one nostril meaning that it will take him longer to get his fill of water. Dr. Cooper assured everyone present at the darting that he has

seen many such incidents and that the elephant will adapt. He also mentioned that stitching up the trunk will be a lengthy procedure and as the wound is healing nicely it was better to leave it as it was. On the funny side...this young elephant bull will provide hours of entertainment to his friends and will be the life of the party with his new party trick!

## It's a boy!

The three rhino from Phinda have provided us with hours of entertaining sightings. They are still found in the area of the Braakfontein Plains. "Pimple nose" as the baby rhino will from now on be known as, are growing steadily and it has been confirmed that the calf is definitely a boy. Pimple nose spend a lot of hours lazing about and only gets up to suckling from his mother.



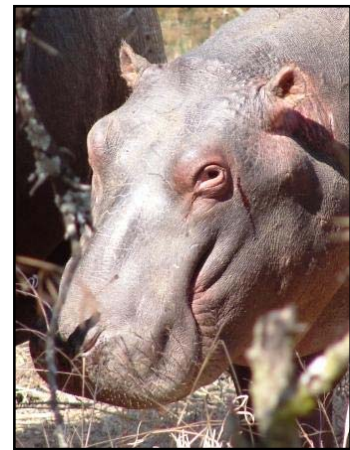
## Two heads are better than one...



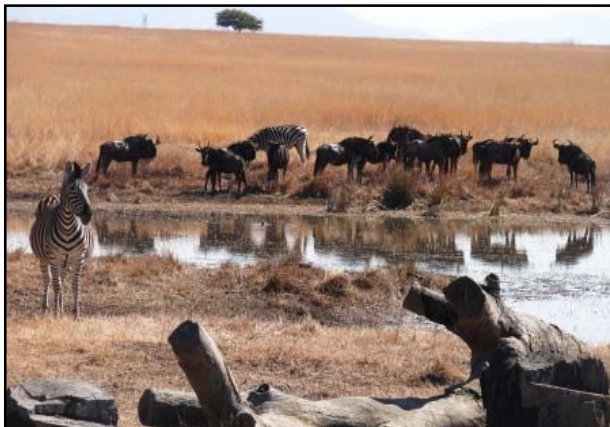
According to our cheetah boys from Phinda. The male coalition of three has been seen numerous times this month. They have been seen moving from behind the Rangers Village along Little Serengeti and as far north as Nambiti Plains.

## Big brother is watching!

Hippos tend to sun bask a lot during the winter months, which makes it the perfect opportunity viewing these creatures. A cow and young calf were seen frequently outside Le Sueur Dam and right next to the road. The young calf kept a watchful eye on us every time we approached.



## Word is out...



Homestead Dam is the new place to be! We had some awesome sightings here with high game numbers concentrating in and around this dam. Game such as waterbuck, wildebeest, zebra, warthog, buffalo and hippo were all seen gathered here.

## Joy ride!



Sightings of buffalo have been regular but what made this sighting on the 28<sup>th</sup> so special was to see two Red-billed Oxpeckers riding along the back of one of these magnificent creatures. Red-billed Oxpeckers weren't released on Nambiti and although they have been seen before on the reserve,

they have never been captured on film. Oxpeckers are closely related to starlings. They feed on ecto-parasites such as ticks, blood sucking flies, rotting wound tissue, fly maggots and blood. The Red-billed Oxpecker has a slender more tapering bill which is more suited to feeding on smaller ticks and they tend to occur on mammals with shorter fur. Oxpeckers are found on virtually all diurnal vegetation mammals from warthog to eland. Warthogs are generally the smallest herbivore on which oxpeckers will feed as the smaller antelope do not generally tolerate these birds. They are also not found on primates and carnivores for obvious reasons and interestingly are not found on elephants. Elephants do not tolerate them and they do not support ecto-parasites, as they lack sebaceous glands.



## General...

Game viewing has been great during this month! We only saw the sought after pride of lions once on the 20th, due to going out late morning. None the less we had plenty of other exciting sightings and some surprises to go along with it.

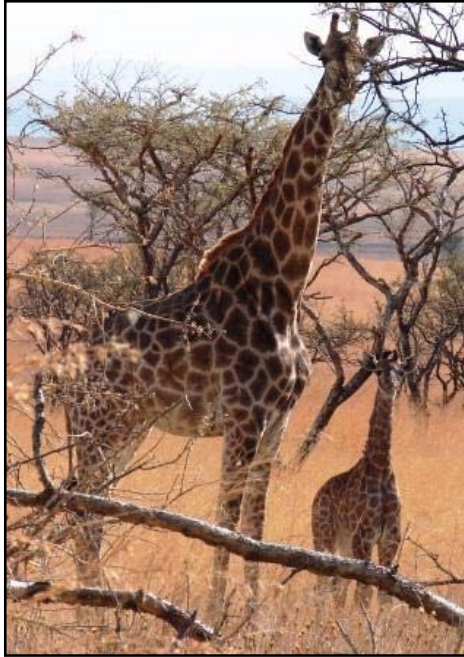


The morning of the 18<sup>th</sup>, young nature enthusiasts spotted a cheetah sitting on the hill just west from Idwala's swimming pool. We all jumped into the game viewer, some of us still in our pajamas, and went for closer inspection. Early bird catches the nice juicy worm!

The Braakfontein cheetahs have also frequent the northern area of Nambiti and were seen feeding from an eland kill down from Esiweni Lodge. It is an unusual sighting as cheetahs normally do not go for prey this size and it is

unclear whether they brought down this eland by themselves or whether it stepped in a hole while chased and broke a leg. It is also unusual that they stayed at the carcass for 3 days.

Same old, same old news for BFE! He is still in musth and is still making his rounds. On several occasions he has provided some heart racing sightings and made us aware of the greatness of his presence.



A baby giraffe (umbilical cord still attached) was seen on the Braakfontein Plains roaming around with its mother.

Sightings of gemsbok and eland have increased. About twelve gemsbok were seen up on the Western Plains, another few at Rhino Wallow and 3 young calves with mothers at Venture Dam. The herd of eland seen on the Braakfontein Plains after it was burnt last year, has split up and small herds are seen all over the reserve. Some eland came up onto the plains close to Idwala.



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