



Newsletter August 2009

Extra, Extra Read all About it!

The morning of the 6th, a trophy size kudu bull was found dead near the electric fence outside the lodge. After intense investigation and eliminating the usual suspects, it was found that the hyaena were the culprits. Later that evening they (mother and now almost adult size cubs) were caught in the act as they were feasting off the carcass.



Be afraid, be very afraid!



Sightings of the buffalo have been more than usual this month and they are still seen separated. On the 22nd we witnessed how Steven, ranger for Elephant Rock Lodge got chased after by one of the bulls. Steven was very lucky and not much damage was done to his game viewer. This buffalo has ophthalmia in his one eye and is obviously not very happy. Please be very cautious and keep your distance from any of the buffalo!



**Black wildebeest (in front)
&
Blue wildebeest (at the back)**

Battle of the beast?

Black wildebeest (white-tailed gnu) and blue wildebeest (brindled gnu) have been seen together, which is a major concern here at Nambiti. Originally it was thought that these two species won't mix, as the black wildebeest is exclusively a plains animal, as opposed to the blue wildebeest which prefer savanna bushveld. Unfortunately this is not the case! Genetically speaking, the two species are so closely related that they will mate and the offspring from a hybrid between the two species would still be fertile.

The blue wildebeest has three subspecies, all resident north of southern Africa. However, the black wildebeest is a true South African species, not found (endemically) anywhere else in Africa. The Tshwane University of Technology is interested in collecting genetic material from both species for their database and would like to conduct further studies in regards with these two species interbreeding.

New arrivals...



On the 22nd and 24th respectively, 22 blue wildebeest and 79 impala all from Pongola were released at the new loading ramp on the Braakfontein Plains.

More game will be released in the next few months ... watch this space!



Birdwatching paradise...

Little Bee-eaters, the smallest bee-eater in southern Africa, are commonly found along riverine reedbeds. Bee-eaters, as the name implies, primarily feed on aerial insects that sting, namely bees and wasps. They will also eat other flying insects, such as butterflies and moths. They can identify dangerous species by sight and won't waste time rubbing the harmless species on branches to remove the sting or venom before swallowing.



Stork visited Nambiti...

It was reported by Nambiti management that the southern rhino cow and the southern sub-adult rhino cow both had calves in July. And to add to all this excitement ... the Phinda female cheetah had her first litter here at Nambiti. This was reported mid August and it was said that one of the Braakfontein male cheetahs sired these cubs. The den site is unfortunately inaccessible and to keep traffic minimal in the area, the exact location thereof hasn't been revealed. If disturbed Phinda will move the cubs and this will increase the chances of other predators finding and killing them. Cheetah cubs do not have a very high survival rate and it is thus better to give them their space.

Unusual Sightings...

The evening of the 7th, on my way to the parking area, I saw a weird looking creature running next to the road. It was only when it crossed the road in the headlights of the vehicle that I couldn't believe my eyes...it was an armadillo! This was my very first sighting of one in the three years that I have been at Nambiti, unfortunately I couldn't get a photo of it.

General...

Lion sightings have mostly been in the areas of Lions Valley Lodge and Links Valley. The male has on numerous occasions been seen mating with both females. The afternoon of the 9th, in an uncomfortable nail biting situation, we witness the lions mating right next to the vehicle. The lions were also seen as far north as the Sunday's River on the 29th.





Cheetah sightings have been regular. The Phinda female cub was found on the Braakfontein Plains on the 9th. She was nervously feeding from an impala kill.

Rhino and elephant sightings have also been regular. The breeding herd has however decided to stay in the south, as their chances of getting darted there is less. BFE is still in musth and can be smelled a mile away.

Weather report...

Average minimal temperature: 9.7mm

Average maximum temperature: 21.3mm

Rainfall: 58mm

Greetings

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