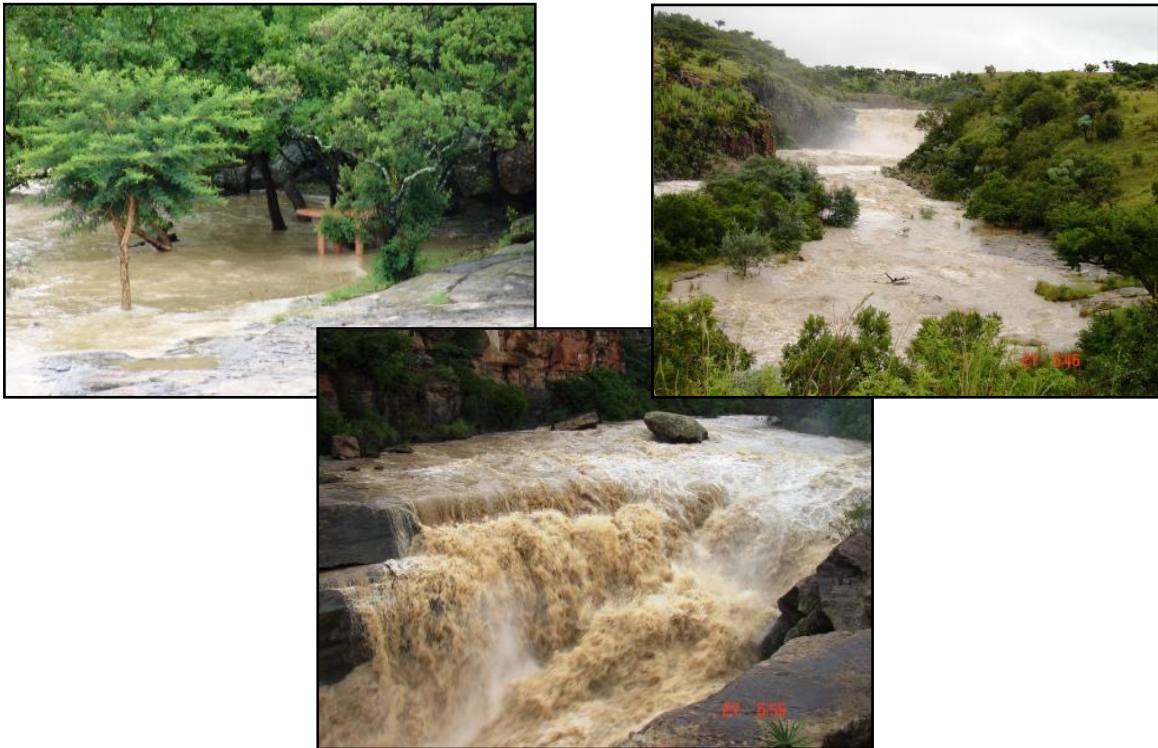




Newsletter January 2010

Notorious flooding...



It is that time of the year again when Ladysmith and its surrounding areas have most of its rain and the Sunday's River pushes over its banks. We had for January only, 240.5mm's of rain and the Sunday's River bridge was flooded four times. Although this is not good news for us situated north of the bridge and not being able to do game drives; for the animals this is heaven as the dried up wallows turn into 5 star spa resorts.



New additions!

The morning of the 10th of January, a nervous breeding herd of elephants was located on Repeater Ridge Road. They were nervous because one of the cows gave birth to a very precious baby elephant. The cows are very protective of this new addition to their family and will not tolerate any interference. Please be aware! Looking back at the records, the breeding herd has since 2006 had 5 calves.



Nambiti has also been buzzing with excitement as the 3 lions (1 male and 2 females) from Madikwe have finally arrived early Friday morning, 29th of January. Unfortunately nobody was allowed to be at their release into the Braakfontein Boma, but in two weeks time they will be all ours. Watch this space!

No laughing matter!

This buffalo bull is actually not showing us his nice looking teeth, but rather exhibiting flehmen. An action practiced by most hoofed animals and many carnivores. This action causes ducts (situated between the nasal and mouth cavities) to open, allowing scent signals (predominantly pheromones) to be transferred to, and analysed by, a special organ called the vomero-nasal organ. This is useful in decoding information such as sexual status, dominance, identity, and reproductive status of females or any strange smells. Was this buffalo maybe trying to tell us something?



The blues...

This young giraffe was detected (by concerned guests) as it was lying in a very peculiar position, in the open and on our approach it didn't even move a muscle. And to add to this the mother was standing only a few feet away. On closer inspection it looked like something was seriously wrong with its back right leg. However the next morning it was reported that nobody could find the young giraffe were we left it or in the immediate area and we could only assume that it must have moved off. Maybe this young giraffe just had the blues (it was in actual fact a Monday) and was getting ready for a siesta, when we caught it by surprise. Giraffe do spend a lot of their youthful days lying down and sleeping. They also lower their heads when alarmed or wishes to avoid detection by predators.



General news...

The Phinda female cheetah eventually decided to show herself and her cubs during this month. She has however lost another cub and currently has only two of the five cubs at foot. The cubs are approximately 5½ months old. Other cheetah sightings are regular and still provide excellent photographic opportunity.



Two spotted hyaena were seen one early morning as they were heading north from Tatu Access. They were in good condition and have definitely been feeding well.

The Nambiti Guides Association is putting together an identification kit of all the predators, as well as the rhino and elephant. This has in the past proved to be a difficult job for the Hyaena, as they are always on the move or seen at night time. I challenge everyone to take as many close-up photo's of the hyaena and help us with this project.

Weather report...

Average minimal temperature: 18.5°C
Average maximum temperature: 26.4°C

Greetings

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