



Newsletter June 2009

Small but deadly...



This Transvaal thick-tailed scorpion - Parabuthus transvaalicus - is reputed to be the second most venomous (neurotoxic) southern African scorpion. The tail with stinger is held over the head ready to strike but it can also execute a sideways defensive jab. Scorpions are mostly nocturnal and during the day they can be found under rocks, bark, buffalo pats and rock crevices. This specific one was found indoors and it was only about 5cm in length, hardly noticeable.

Sunny side up...

On the 6th of June a pod of 9 hippos, including a very young calf, was seen at Venture Dam. It was a sunny windless day, perfect conditions for basking in the sun. To prevent them from getting sun burnt a reddish skin secretion sometimes referred to as “blood-sweat” gets secreted from the sub-dermal glands in the skin. It also keeps the skin soft and pliable.



Stampede...



On the 19th of June, Nambiti Conservancy in conjunction with 'Animal Plant' successfully darted the elephant Matriarch. Mr. Van Heerden from Helicon assisted Dr Dave Cooper from KZN Wildlife who did the darting. The

purpose of the darting was to place a radio collar on the Matriarch in order to track the breeding herd and thereby getting a better understanding of their movements within the reserve.

The breeding herd of elephants has been seen frequently this month. They have been seen in Links Valley, at Nambiti Plains Lodge, on Spruit Road, etc. On the night of the 12th, they were bumped into at the parking area in the north as they crossed the road. The next day it was like Nambiti never even had any elephants as nobody could find them. Hopefully with the matriarch collared sightings will increase.

BFE has been very mobile and sightings have been frequent. When we ran into him on the 20th on Idwala Access, it was clear that he was coming into musth.

Predators...

The Braakfontein cheetah males have almost done it again. On the 22nd, the two boys were spotted sneaking up behind a herd of Impala and Zebra. Days before a very young foal was seen with the herd and it wasn't long before the boys also took notice. They managed to trip the foal, but the stallion and mare came right back at them and in the chaos we lost visual of the foal and the cheetah. All this action just outside Idwala's fence!

The 4 cheetah cubs have been seen frequently and have provided excellent sighting opportunities. They tend to walk on the roads and along the fenceline. Sightings have mostly been in the south in areas such as Little Serengeti, Woodlands and Southern Plains. Most other cheetah sightings have been far and in between, as were sightings of the lion pride.

Natie from Esiweni Lodge reported seeing a young leopard from their lodge on the 18th. It was seen playing down at the river among the reeds, possibly left there by its mother while out hunting. Watch this space...

The hyena clan was seen at the northern parking area, the night of the 12th. They however disappeared like ghosts in the night never to be seen again.....

Other news...



Rhino sightings have been plentiful in the northern part of Nambiti and especially in the area of the Braakfontein Plains. Buddy and the Phinda sub-adult bull were seen together on a few occasions.

This young male Nyala was seen briefly on Nyala road. A sighting well appreciated!



Weather report...

Average minimum temp – 7.9°C

Average maximum temp – 21.6°C

Rainfall – 36.8mm

The morning of the 27th was the coldest morning with a minimum temperature of 2°C and with that we had proper frost. Fire season is therefore well on its way.

Greetings

General Manager

Lourette Bredenkamp

Cell phone: 078 803 5545

Fax: 086 567 6578

Email: gm@idwalalodge.co.za
info@idwalalodge.co.za

Website: www.idwalalodge.co.za