

## **Monthly Sightings Report – April 2009**

Excitement has mounted this month with incoming flood water trickling its way into the floodplains of western Kwara concession. The water will continue to rise and we are expecting the flood to arrive at Kwara some time in late May.

With the coming of the annual floodwater will be the customary migration of various bird species to feed on the newly arrived fish and insects and thirsty mammals arriving from the surrounding desert.

### **Kwara & Little Kwara**

Guests and guides alike were treated to a sighting of the seven male Lions of Kwara this month. The incredible coalition were seen feeding on a Giraffe kill they had made earlier that week. It is rare to see all seven Lions together as one or more often split off from the main group. If you want to know more about this record breaking group there is an article about them in the March edition of Africa Geographic.

A female cheetah in Kwara is having a very successful spell as mother to five cubs. There is a high mortality rate in young cheetahs but these siblings were sighted throughout April and are growing stronger by the day.

Elsewhere, a huge African Rock Python was seen on an island close to Kwara – larger specimens are very rare indeed and this one could quite easily ambush a small antelope such as a Steenbok or Impala.

A pack of fifteen Wild Dogs was seen close to an abandoned Bat-Eared Fox den and herds of Buffalo have moved back into the area with the coming of the floods.

### **Lagoon**

Lagoons famous Wild Dogs have been active over the last few months with several exciting sightings for guests staying at the camp. The pack was seen hunting Impala close by the cut line and one of the females is pregnant. Denning should commence in May and we are determined to find it and await the new pups.

Huge herds of Buffalo are migrating back into the floodplain areas as the Mopane pans dry up. Following them, as always, are Lions. A pride of Lions that disappeared five months ago has settled back in the area and we have had plenty of sightings of them.

An interesting sighting was a male Leopard who was also seen feeding on a Buffalo. Buffalo is not usually prey for a Leopard who prefers smaller antelope such as Impala or young Wildebeest.

## **Tau**

One of our guides had an interesting wake up call this month when he stumbled across a Leopard by the kitchen one morning. To the relief of all, the Leopard was equally as surprised and ran off!

Tau provides a perfect landscape for Cheetah and they have been in abundance this month close by the camp. The open plains provide the cats with excellent views for scanning for prey which in this area is more often than not the nimble Springbok.

We have had excellent sightings of iconic desert animals such as the Gemsbok, Brown Hyena and Red Hartebeest making Tau a truly unique safari experience.

## **Nxai**

Lions have been in abundance this month at Nxai Pan. A male and female were seen mating close to our waterhole and guests have been treated to a series of territorial displays by resident males. Roaring in the mornings and evenings along with urine spraying and testing on bushes are fine examples of territorial behaviour.

The waterhole has also been visited by Elephant Bulls recently providing a photographic spectacle for guests in camp. Some individuals are in musth, meaning they have extra levels of testosterone and become aggressive towards rivals and members of other species. Giraffes and even Doves have been chased away by these aggressive individuals.

Elsewhere, we have had good sightings of the charismatic Honey Badger and the elusive Bat-Eared Foxes and two male Cheetahs were sighted close to the historic Baines Baobabs.

## **Lebala**

Some extraordinary game viewing has been seen in Kwando's Lebala camp this month. Lions, Cheetahs and Leopard have all been consistently seen. However, our Wild Dogs sightings have been extra special this month. Females are now pregnant ahead of next months projected denning season starting but that hasn't stopped the dogs hunting at their usual extraordinary speed. Guests have been treated to a successful Impala kill west of the camp in which the skilled hunters ambushed the young antelope in some open woodland.

A group of Lebala guests were delayed going to their tents one evening. However, it wasn't housekeeping that was to blame but a breeding herd of Elephants that were feeding throughout the camp. All ended peacefully though as the Elephants bypassed the swimming pool and decided to drink from the river instead!