

## Monthly Sightings Reports - August

### Kwara

World-class game viewing all round this month at Kwara. Every day seems to provide more and more predator sightings. On one such morning two Lions were seen abandoning a Baboon carcass only for an opportunistic Leopard to stealthily creep into view and take the kill up a tree. It is possible that the Lions stole the Baboon from the Leopard in the first place as it is rare for a Lion to catch the primates.

Fifteen Wild Dogs have been moving in and out of the area looking for game – it is likely that they have a den site deep into the Mopane forest well out the way of Lions and Hyenas. The successful Cheetah mother is still going strong with her fast growing four cubs and she has been seen trying to teach them the art of the hunt. At the moment they are still somewhat clumsy and it may be several more months before they are able to successfully hunt for themselves.

Elsewhere, excellent sighting of small mammals such as Honey Badgers and Serval and a whole variety of aquatic birds who are relishing the flood water such as Slaty Egret, Wattled Crane and Saddle-Billed Stalks

### Lagoon

The Lagoon Wild Dog den is providing guests and guide alike some wonderful moments with the nine puppies growing up fast and experimenting in play fighting and early attempts to hunt insects around the den. The adults are still working hard to feed the youngsters and themselves. They are out almost daily to find sufficient food. Towards the end of the month the dogs decided to move the den site closer towards the camp not far from Zebra Pan. The exchange was made quickly and picked up equally as quickly by the excellent Kwando trackers. Another month or so and the youngsters should be ready to start learning to hunt for themselves with the main pack.

Large herds of Buffalos and Elephants are migrating in and out of the area around Lagoon Camp and Kwando Airstrip to find fresh water and relief from the great thirst weather of August.

A young male Lion was spotted with porcupine quills imbedded in his neck from an overbold attack on the giant rodent. He certainly learnt the hard way that the Porcupine defence is not to be taken lightly.

Elsewhere, a fascinating sighting of a African Hawk Eagle killing a Swainsons Francolin was observed. With the giant eagles superb eye sight and soaring power the only defence the Francolin has in cover and on this occasion this was not sought out quickly enough.

### Tau

The Tau resident Leopard has been located on several occasions this month and its call is a regular sound as guests drift off to sleep at night. Tau is the Setswana word for Lion and Tau Pan has certainly had its share of the large Cats this month. Some lucky guests were treated to mating Lions for some days close to the camp and even luckier guests got a view of two Lions on foot during a Bushman cultural walk. The Lions just as interested in the people as they were in them but eventually after sniffing the air they strolled off down the hill. Elsewhere, Cheetahs and Brown Hyenas have been seen on the pan interspersed with large amounts of desert plains game such as Gemsbok, Springbok and Red Hartebeest. Keen ornithologists have been treated to a great variety of birds in the Tau area in this dry season. Pale Chanting Goshawks, Secretary Birds and Kori Bustards are amongst the favourites regularly seen.

### **Nxai**

Another beautiful month in the Pans has produced some memorable wildlife experiences at Nxai Pan Camp. A solitary tom cat Leopard has been seen wandering in and around the camp at regular intervals. The water hole in front of the swimming pool has been relieving the thirst of such varied animals as bachelor herds of Elephants, large journeys of Giraffes and clans of Hyenas. On Nxai and Khama Khama Pan the two Cheetah brothers have been seen hunting Springbok while in the woodland it is the Impala that are the food of choice for the rapid predators. Four Lionesses were followed by a party of Nxai guests stalking a Gemsbok but luckily for the desert antelope a close by Impala spotted the giant cats and sounded the alarm call.

### **Lebala**

The three brother Cheetahs that repeat guests will know so well have been spotted several times again this month. On one occasion they were tracked hunting Impala during the day not far from the old airstrip. On another a successful kill was made on the small Steenbok antelope. Leopards and Lions have also been common visitors to the Lebala area. The two dominant males are often sighted patrolling their territory or lazing under thick-canopied trees. Huge breeding herds of Elephants are now dominating the Lebala floodplains now that all of the Mopane pans have finally dried up in the forests. The Elephants have migrated to the permanent waters and can often be seen swimming and drinking in the water channels. Night drives have also produced some interesting sightings – hunting Wild Cats and Serval are often seen stalking close to the floodplains providing wonderful photographic opportunities for guests!