

Monthly Sightings Reports - May

Kwara

Kwara is home to a new Leopard cub after a month old animal was spotted with its mother several times over the last few weeks. The pair are still understandably shy and defensive but lucky guests at Kwara have still managed to get some spectacular shots of our newest addition.

The rising flood water into Kwara lagoon has reached almost all the way up to the fireplace enabling guests a close up view of wallowing Hippos and basking Crocodiles.

An abundance of plains game is congregating in the area now that the distant pans have dried up. Zebras, Buffalos, Impalas and returning Elephants have all been observed by the camp.

Lagoon

The Lagoon pack of fifteen Wild Dogs has been a regular site again this month. The female is heavily pregnant and expected to give birth some time late in June or early July. The search for the den site continues into June.

A fortuitous sighting of a caracal was recorded close to Johns Pan while on a night drive an African Civet was seen hunting a feeding on a millipede.

May has also been a productive month for Cheetah sightings. Three brothers who are resident in the area were followed and they managed to kill a sub adult Impala.

Tau

A very interesting conflict was witnessed recently at Tau Camp. A Brown Hyena was found with a Jackal in its mouth close to Tau Pan. It is unclear whether the Jackal was killed by the Hyena or if it died by some other cause.

Elsewhere, four Lionesses led a successful hunt on a Gemsbok (Oryx) close to the camp which was witnessed by some lucky guests. The rare Cape Fox was also seen. This tiny omnivore is roughly the size of a cat and is endemic to the Kalahari of Southern Africa. In Botswana it can only be seen in the Central Kalahari where Tau is situated.

As winter kicks in the Kalahari has been transformed into a golden paradise as the old grass has faded for the year. Water has dried out in most areas leaving a stark landscape occupied by only the most hardy desert animals.

Nxai

An extraordinary few days of late rain has given new life to the pans giving resident Elephants, Springbok, Wildebeest and predators welcome relief from the

draught. Zebras have been sited leaving the Boteti River and heading back out into the pans – almost unheard of at this time of the year.

Two cheetah brothers have been a regular site on the main Nxai Pan. They are consistently stalking Impalas and Springboks. The quiet winter nights are disturbed only by calling Hyenas and ‘the cry of the Kalahari’ Jackals.

Botswana’s biggest eagle – the Martial’s Eagle killed a Red Billed Francolin and proceeded to prey on it on a tree close to the swimming pool at the camp.

Lebala

This May we have found two packs of Wild Dogs in the area. The first, numbering seven, were hunting Impala south of the airstrip but missed and failed. The second was a group of twelve animals that were seen at various intervals throughout the area. Both groups seem well fed and females are pregnant. Elephants have been returning in large numbers to the permanent Kwando channel by Lebala from the backcountry and Mopane woodland now that the pans have dried up.

Breeding herds and bachelor groups are a common site in and around the camp.

Some interesting Lion Hyena interaction took place on the floodplains when a Lioness was spotted running away from three Hyenas one evening.

Hundreds of Buffalos have moved through Lebala mating and mud bathing as they go followed by countless Cattle Egrets and Oxpeckers.