

Herewith the latest sightings report from Kwando: February 2009

The rain continues to fall as we move into February. Record levels of flood water are recorded coming through Mohembo into Botswana. Villages and camps in Shakawe on the Okavango River have been flushed out by the flood forcing many villagers to move back to higher ground. Kwando and Kwara concessions are bracing themselves for the incoming floods of the Okavango and Kwando Rivers due to the phenomenal rains in Angola this season.

Lagoon

Local predators have been preying on unconventional game this February! An aardvark was killed by lions towards the middle of the month giving us a rare glimpse (all be it a deceased glimpse) of this elusive night roamer. At the aptly named Cheetahs Plains some fortunate guests were treated to the bitter sweet show of three cheetah brothers killing a baby ostrich! Lions, leopards and wild dogs have all been spotted on a regular basis and all animals appear healthy and well fed.

Once again, large breeding herds of elephants have been spotted frequently along the Kwando waterfront to the guests delight. Plains game, in particular zebra and kudu have been abundant in February as well as some good sightings of the secretive sitatunga.

During a spotlighted night drive the rare serval cat has been seen on several occasions causing delight for guests and guide alike.

Lebala

Lebala has been an animal carnival this February with almost every flagship African species photographed in the area. Leopards stalking lechwe, wild dog on the hunt and two male cheetah preying on a red lechwe were among the highlights.

There was a power struggle in the lion community with the two dominant males challenged by three nomadic intruders. After a vicious contest the warring factions went their separate ways and it will be interesting to see if the intruders return next month.

Large breeding herds of elephants lead the best of the rest with other attractions including giraffe, zebra, the rapid tsessebe, jackals and pythons.

At night we have seen an interesting array of nocturnal species such as the African wild cat in hunting mode along with Africa's largest rodent, the porcupine and hyena on patrol.

Kwara and Little Kwara

Kwara has been witness to a successful cheetah mother with five cubs this month. The mother and cubs were seen crossing a local bush track in addition to sightings of the three cheetah brothers heading towards the beautiful flood plains around Tsum Tsum.

The buffalo herds that were being found in such abundance last month have moved on for the time being but lions continue to populate the area.

Birding has been excellent of late with a fine array of water birds and waders in the area. Keen ornithologists have been treated to Kori bustards, Secretary birds and Saddle Billed Storks.

Nxai Pan

Impressive cloud formations have typified the coming of daily rains this month with the desert landscape transformed to its most beautiful.

Migrations of zebra have aggregated with springbok, wildebeest and gemsbok in the areas close to camp attracted by the rich new grasses brought to life by the rains.

Evidence of a visiting herd of buffalo was found around the airstrip recently in an area not normally associated with this species.

Not surprisingly with such an abundance of game around there have been plenty of lions to report around camp. Two iconic black maned lions of the Kalahari welcomed guests with persistent roaring by a local Baobab tree and a female with four cubs was seen in the same area.

Maun

A local kayaker was almost upended by a young male hippo close to the Old Bridge at Matlapaneng. The same hippo has been residing in the deeper pools around Maun and enjoying its green pastures this month.

Another resident had an unexpected visitor in his lounge when a specimen of the much feared Black Mamba species was disturbed into entering the house and taking up residence behind the TV. After much broom swiping and furniture removal the beautiful snake was persuaded to go back outside where it climbed up a palm tree.

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