

Leopard Cub Mortality

A young female leopard, usually seen along the Mxabene drainage line, has been seen on a number of occasions leading her 2 cubs (3 months old) to kills and to new den sites. Both the mother and her cubs are incredibly relaxed in the presence of vehicles, which has made for fantastic viewing, however this July morning was different. We found the mother early on drive. She seemed to be calling her cubs and we thought we were in for a fantastic treat. All this excitement came to an abrupt halt when only one cub responded to its mother's calls and on closer inspection we found that the second cub had been killed by a Spotted Hyena sometime during the night. The mother then plucked the fur from the dead cub before moving away as she called.

Darren Myers

Leopard Voyeurism

On the night of 18 May the Short Tail female Leopard was located after following up on Bushbuck alarm calls. She was not accompanied by her two very young cubs and was clearly agitated. Moments later the reason for her agitation became clear as the 3/2 Northern female emerged from a thicket. The two squared up to each other with lots of snarling and spitting and for a while they were lost in the thick riverine vegetation. When they emerged they were approximately 20m apart. At this point the 3/2 Northern female disappeared into the riverbed below but re-emerged with the elusive Pale Face male where after the two mated 6-8 times in the next hour with the Short Tail female looking on.

Oliver Sinclair

Rhino Bull kills Hippo Bull

One dead Hippo bull with two puncture wounds - one under his chin and one in his neck. Were it not for some great track interpretation, we may never have found out what happened! On the night of 16 November, about 2km from camp and over a kilometre from the nearest water source, a fight ensued between a Hippo bull and a White Rhino bull. The tracks in the ground outlined where the fight took place and the blood trail showed where the first blow from the Rhino's horn was delivered. The Hippo died about 50m from where the fight took place. The Rhino tracks followed the road away from where the fight took place and the road was littered with scent markings from the Rhino. The Hippo carcass has since been scavenged by close to 100 vultures, a clan of Spotted Hyena (including pups) whose den is 200m away from the kill and a pride of Lion.

Londolozi Rangers and Trackers

White-tailed Mongoose Bullied

Early evening just after sunset in November a pack of about 20 Banded Mongoose were seen in agitated pursuit of a single White-tailed Mongoose. There was much vocalization in the form of high-pitched chirping from the smaller species, while the larger White-tailed Mongoose was silent. The troop of Banded Mongoose did catch the fleeing White-tailed Mongoose and there was a short scuffle lasting only a second before the bigger mongoose managed to escape into a drainage line.

In another late afternoon encounter at approximately 18h30 a few Buffalo bulls were seen to chase a single White-tailed Mongoose from within a herd of about 300 of the bovines. The mongoose fled at full pace through the herd disappearing over the horizon.

James Grubwell