

First Black Rhino in 20 years

Whilst on our way back to camp after morning game drive on 23 August, we came across a rhino bull at the southern end of the airstrip, looking very agitated as it thundered through the undergrowth on a recently burned area. As I turned to my guests to tell them there was a White Rhino ahead, Jeremiah's voice (a few octaves higher than usual!) yelled out, It's black! It's black! The first Black Rhino sighted at Londolozi in over twenty years! Still doubting ourselves, we followed the animal, running fast towards the airstrip, and called other rangers to the area. The rhino then turned south and vanished into the undergrowth before anyone else could get to verify it had been there. After a few minutes of frantic searching, James Gradwell and Renius Mhlongo found it well south of the original position, heading fast south. But they, and the tracks left behind, confirmed that this magnificent and rare animal was once again traversing the property after a long absence! What is probably the same animal was seen again in the south of the property by Cliff Green on 3 October.

Angus Hart & Jeremiah Hambana

Cheetah Dispossessed by Vultures, Marabous and Ground Hornbills

A female Cheetah and a single cub were feeding on their Impala ewe kill. After about 25 minutes a few Bateleurs descended. The Bateleurs were soon followed by a horde of White-backed and Hooded Vultures, a single Lappet-faced Vulture, two Marabou Storks and four Southern Ground Hornbills, all of which scavenged from the carcass together. This was all too much for the Cheetah which retreated to watch their prey being plundered.

Londolozi Rangers



Brave Defence by Water Thick-knee against Buffalo

On a late November afternoon while watching a herd of approximately 300 Buffalo drinking at one of Londolozi's central dams, our attention was drawn to a pair of birds vigorously displaying to the approaching bovines.

It was a nesting pair of Water Thick-knees. With wings splayed they tried to revent the Buffalo from destroying their clutch of camouflaged eggs or chicks (unseen to us) on the bare ground. Their vigorous protests, with wings outstretched, attracted the interest of a couple of cows that moved in to investigate the nesting area.

The birds tried attacking the Buffalo with pecks to the nose but this did not appear to deter them. After about two minutes the Buffalo left the birds in peace but we could not determine whether their eggs or young had been harmed.

*James Gradwell, Renius Mhlongo
& Tony Painter*