

Short Notes and Interesting Sightings



5924

Interesting Mammal Observations at Tau

Wild Dog have learned to use the perimeter fence as a trap into which they chase their prey, with **Greater Kudu** and **Waterbuck** often being captured in this manner. **Warthog** are frequently taken, with two piglets observed being captured just before sunset at 18h30; the piglets put up a brave defence, squealing loudly, which attracted a group of six **Black-backed Jackal** to the scene. Prey recorded by Wild Dog during the year were **Greater Kudu** (adults and calves), **Impala**, **Blue Wildebeest** (calves), **Warthog** (sows and piglets), **Red Hartebeest** (calves), **Mountain Reedbuck** and **Aardvark**.

There are about 30 **Spotted Hyena** at Madikwe, in two clans. One clan consists of animals translocated from Etosha Pan in Namibia, and the other from animals moved from Skukuza in the Kruger National Park. The two clans avoid one another, and no clashes have been observed. A **Common Zebra** foal was run down and killed by a pack of seven hyena (PCB:5/98), and two were seen to chase and harass a male **White Rhino** (PCB:4/98). A den was found in the hills of the Rant van Tweedepoort.

Brown Hyena are often seen after dark, but in winter they are also active until 7h00 and after 17h00. A pair were seen mating at 20h00 (BdB) and a den is suspected in the rocky kloof known as the Amphitheatre. A **Spotted Hyena** was seen to chase off a **Brown Hyena** once (SL) but no aggressive interactions have been recorded.

A **Black-backed Jackal** was seen to capture and feed on a **Yellow-billed Hornbill** (JT:8/98) and another attempted - but failed - to crack open an **Ostrich** egg (PCB:9/98).

A male **Lion** captured a **Waterbuck** calf of two to three months, but took over 30 minutes to kill its victim; a second male was not

permitted to approach (PCB,GH & GL:3/98).

Caracal were seen to hunt and prey upon **Crested Francolin** (GH) and **Helmeted Guineafowl** (NdL), and were observed foraging for charred lizards and rodents on recently burned areas. An unaccompanied, malnourished **Caracal** kitten was observed calling in a distressed manner on Pipeline Road; there was no response and it seemed to have been abandoned or orphaned (PCB:8/98).

An adult **Pangolin** was found dead, having been electrocuted on the reserve's perimeter fence (Lee Still:7/98). An adult **Aardvark** was observed sound asleep outside its burrow at 9h30 on a winter's day; it was clearly enjoying the warm sunshine after a cold night, and rolled over unconcernedly with no apparent fear of the vehicle (PCB&NdL:6/98).

Four **White Rhino** and a single **Black Rhino** were seen wallowing together at a small pan at 17h30, with no sign of any aggression or competition (NdL:3/98). The two species were also seen drinking peaceably in each other's company at Construction Dam (GL:6/98). A gathering of 22 **White Rhino** were seen together on the northern plains (GH:1/98).

A herd of 15 **Blue Wildebeest** confronted a pack of 11 **Wild Dog** which had pulled down a female **Greater Kudu** at Tshukudu Dam, at about 7h30. The wildebeest snorted and stomped as they advanced towards the pack which then formed a front, with pups at the rear. After some backing off and rushing forward, the dogs eventually retreated from the dam and abandoned the remains of their kill (BdB,NdL&JT:10/98).

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