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## Game Drive no 217 by Neil and Morag Hulett unit 45

Hi, Everyone,

Monday 11, No drive today, into Hoedies, monthly shop and then we met Ron & Cindy for lunch, both looking very well.

Tuesday 12 am, Once more overcast and a cool breeze from the south, tries to clear, then clouds over, and we even get a bit of fine drizzle, this lifts, but it remains overcast. Idube pan, a dozen impala rams, up kudu and over the top onto the palm, through the tunnel for hide, under the single pylons, impala, a troop of baboons, still all huddled up on the pylons, and in the dry little stream, 2 rhino, are lying asleep on the sand, move onto hide. A few impala about, take the road for nkhonkoni but decide to go onto sand, more impala, so up to the 4 pylons and then north along the 4 pylons and in at sunset. Sunset plains, all the way down to wards hide, is teaming with game, impala in numbers, just everywhere, add to that, zebra, giraffe, warthog and the herd of wildebeest, just a really great sight. Finally move on up to star crossing and more impala and a small herd of elephant, 6 in all, a very tiny one amongst them, they cross ahead of us and move down towards double, we take the cut line road for double and are in time to catch a buffalo herd, about 40 strong, just leaving the water. Stop for a cuppa, while we watch them grazing, continue onto big, and at the dam, plenty of impala about, plus the wildebeest herd, 4 calves looking fine. We take the old road up onto the klaserie road then left and back through tamboti link, quietest part of our drive, we pass big once more, then left along engwe drive ext, and south down the klaserie road for rhino pan, impala all about, couple of giraffe at the palm crossing for sable, more impala around the dam and at the end of sable drive, near the single pylons, another very large herd of impala, 3 giraffe, the wildebeest herd, 6 zebra and warthog.

Single pylons, then along the zozo hut road for the RWLR, again impala, we then take lans loop, drop into the palm and come out at the bottom the airstrip, impala and across on warthog more impala, the third herd of wildebeest, one calf remaining here, 2 giraffe, pair of jackal, home.

Birds, brown snake on the single pylons, the pair of bateleur eagles trying to build a nest in that knobthorn, just short of big dam, and a flock of Amur falcons fly over us, heading south.

Beautiful evening, so we pop over to, first hide, impala about and a troop of monkeys, and the hippo of course, who first shows off how wide he can open his mouth and what big teeth/tasks he has, then rolls on his back with all 4 feet sticking up in the air, he repeats this a number of times, very impressive, but I mean, what a show off, we give him a polite round of applause and move over to warthog, plenty of game about, impala, 3 kudu bulls, 4 giraffe, couple of jackal, and 6 zebra, plus the herd of wildebeest, so much general game about and a rhino bull arrives for a drink, home.

Wednesday 13 am, It's cloudy once more, with a cool breeze from the south, first up, an unusual sighting at idube, we find 2 wildebeest bulls, standing in the parking area, watching something down at the trough, not happy at all, we can't see anything, maybe it slipped away when we arrived?? Anyway they move off and we stay for sometime, but nothing shows, so over to warthog, a bit quiet, then along the RWLR, around lan's loop and back and along the zozo hut road, and when we get to the single pylons, impala everywhere, a couple of jackal, and a zebra herd, the wildebeest herd at the dam, all present and correct, and while watching them, a lion calls down along the palm, we get a brief glimpse before he disappears. We move onto rhino, impala and 3 giraffe, up the 4 pylons, impala, impala, impala, cut in and past sand, the same. Head for big, at natural pan, 3 rhino, then down at big, couple of small ellie herds come into drink. Again impala all about plus the wildebeest herd, along to double, and up to star crossing, then through jackal plains and down to hide, impala, zebra, giraffe and wildebeest. To the office, post, fuel, and then home, couple of kudu doe's drinking at idube.

Birds, white and yellow billed storks on warthog, the pair of bateleur at big, a tawny eagle, near hide, plus a great view, at star crossing, of a buffy pipit. We watch, a african harrier hawk, fly up to the top of one of the pylons, and get into a large red billed buffalo weavers nest, the owners not very impressed, couldn't see if it got anything.  
No drive, windy and unpleasant.

Thursday 14 am, Cold and overcast once more, even a little rain during the night, a divided drive this morning. Up north, around hide, sunset, jackal plains, very little about. but from sand dam south, buff plains, down to sable and rhino, masses of impala, wildebeest, zebra, giraffe and warthogs. Down to big, more impala, a herd of elephant & 3 rhino, as well, we continue onto sable, the herd of wildebeest, but they seem to be short of 2 calves?? We stop in at Geoff's table and there's plenty of impala, on both warthog and the airstrip, plus zebra and the wildebeest herd. home.

Beautiful evening, we go across to hide dam, what a good move this turns out to be, as we arrive, a couple of rhino, then up on hide loop, close to where we park, 3 lion, lying flat out under a bush, we leave them and park back at the dam. 3 different herds of elephants, come into drink, plus zebra and plenty of impala. Around 7 head for home, through warthog and plenty of game all about, impala, wildebeest, zebra, home

Birds, Martial eagle in that dead tree, as you turn left for the parking, just finishing off what turns out to be one of the gypo goslings, they are now down to 5, will include a pic. Then 3 kingfishers, giant, malachite, and pied, all busy fishing, a thickknee with 2 chicks, on the island, 2 yellowbilled storks, woods and greenshank and of course the heron, really super evening.

Friday 15 am, A stunning morning, not a cloud to be seen, the mountains though, still very hazy. First up the 2 wildebeest bulls at idube, very relaxed this time round, we take kudu then along the e/e to the top of the airstrip, down to warthog, plenty of impala, at the bottom of the runway and over on warthog, added to that wildebeest. Along the RWLR, spot 5 giraffe, then baboon on the single pylons and a couple of rhino in the dry river bed. When we get to hide, we are met by an extraordinary sight, there are hundreds of impala everywhere. Around hide, sunset, along kudu loop, jackal plains, some grazing others coming down to drink, with them are zebra, a couple of giraffe, and a little later elephant, just an unbelievable sight. Buff plains also has a fair amount of impala, but today noticeably quieter down around rhino and sable, there are impala, wildebeest and zebra on sable plains, but nothing like up north, we have breakfast at rhino, and watch the eclipse, thanks to Janine for letting us know, just a small quarter, had our special lenses to watched it. Back along the 4 pylons, more elephant, through sand and hide, the impala have dispersed some what, home.

Birds, dark chanting gos near nkhonkoni.

This evening we pop over hide, and enjoy some good elephant viewing, a couple of herds come into drink, nice bit of interaction between 2 young bulls, who while testing their strength, ended up plowing through the water, onto the island, then back again, the one falling over in the water, good stuff, home.

Saturday 16 am, Heavy overcast, looks like it might even rain, we set off anyway. Up kudu then north along the e/e and then across to hide, well there's plenty of game about, but no where near the numbers of yesterday. impala, wildebeest, zebra and when we pass through hide. Later in our drive, there are 11 giraffe, just below the spillway, we find a fair size herd of elephant, under the 4 pylons, moving towards natural pan, then down at big, we stop off for a cuppa. We park on the east side and watch as 4 different herds of elephant, coming into drink, about 60 in all, and each herd is met at the far corner, by a pair of rhino. Despite quite a bit of intimidation from the elephant, especially the bulls, the 2 rhino stand their ground. Interesting bit of interaction between the two. From here along to double, very large herd of impala, along the way then past double, up to the 4 pylons, down through jackal plains, impala, zebra and wildebeest on the plains and then up to Goeff's table, where Janine meets us for a very enjoyable breakfast, home.  
No drive.

Sunday 17 am, Day off and once more heavily overcast and Hey, all of one mm, in the gauge. The pic of the martial eagle, you will notice it has a black ring/band on it's right leg, Roy Sarkin has very kindly put it on the web, so we will see if anyone responds to it. Will include a couple of pic's. You all take care now.



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