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Game Drive no 218 by Neil and Morag Hulett unit 45

Hi, Everyone,

Monday 18 am, Overcast once more, find the 2 wildebeest bulls at idube again. Up kudu, a lone giraffe and along the e/e to the top of the airstrip, from here down to warthog. Across for buff plains and nkhonkoni, then down to hide and we continue up to sunset and the star crossing. Plenty of impala about, but nearly all are tucked away in the woodlands and this is how it goes for most of the drive. On buff plains a family of jackal, parents and 3 pups, we find the herd of wildebeest on the klaserie cut line, just as we take the tamboti link, passing back through big, a large herd of impala are coming into drink. Take ingwe ext and the klaserie cut line for rhino. Janine calls in a lion at sable, we head that way and as we come up on the 4 pylons road a herd of 8 elephant cross ahead of us into klaserie, we find Janine at the wallows. The lion was at sable, then walked along the short link road for rhino, then into the bush, so Janine waits at the wallows, we circle around, past sable dam and back along the link road, and when we come round we first spot the lion who is following a lioness down to the wallows, they disappear into the riverine, so we continue our drive back to rhino. Take the old road through to vetsak, again impala dotted about, warthog and home, just up from the house the 2 klipspringers, dart across the road ahead of us.

Birds, Brown snake and a pale phase tawny, both on tamboti loop, and the bateleur eagles at their nest, but they have so few sticks, quite sure if they lay an egg, it will plop straight through, we shall see.

As far as idube, some impala, then 5 magnificent kudu bulls come in to drink, thats it.

Tuesday 19 am, Clear morning for a change, well we drive most of Olifants, just impala everywhere, more concentrated around hide, sunset, jackal plains and the double dam area, added to this, wildebeest herd, then 3 herds of zebra. On the way down to hide from jackal plains, 2 rhino and 6 elephant bulls at double, one of the bulls in particular, very impressive. Then we take the road from hide to the office, we bump a herd of breeding elephants. On sable plains another bull elephant, and more zebra & wildebeest. Then down to big, of course impala and the wildebeest herd, just general game everywhere. We bump into Mario, with so much game, what are they eating and we really need some rain very badly.

Two interesting spots, one, we find a herd of impala, all staring at something in the bush, turns out to be a beautiful big civet, this at 7,30. Then along the old road between big and double, some birds making a noise in a dead tree, right near the road, and sure enough we find a huge black mamba, checking out all the old holes in the tree, the birds mobbing it all the time. Finally it comes down and disappears into thick bush. Have taken a shot, any good will include it in the letter. Finally on the flood plains on the way from the office for home, 4 little piglets, seems mum has been taken, she's the one with one broken tusk, anyway they were all down on there knees, eating away, hope they survive. Thats the drive, going to be a hot one today.

This evening, we pop down to the river, impala, baboons, waterbuck and a couple of giraffes.

Wednesday 20 am, Into Hoedies, so no drive, and this evening very windy, we stay home.

Thursday 21 am, A windy overcast night, no rain though, and there's a light breeze still blowing as we set off on our drive. The 2 wildebeest bulls, near idube, seems they have moved in permanently, then along to the refuse, top of airstrip and down to warthog, plenty of impala about plus a herd of zebra on the clearing under the table. Then buff plains and nkhonkoni, and we find one of the lion, just in the open on buff plains, every now and then gives us roar. Brian & Claire join us, we then take the road past nkhonkoni, sand and along kudu loop for hide, plenty of impala about, in the open areas and the woodland. Stop for a cuppa at hide, before taking the road up to jackal plains, more impala and 3 giraffe. At star crossing we head up for the cutline road with rusermi and just below the dam wall, find a breeding herd of elephant, just moving into rusermi, but when we go onto the wall, they circle round and come into the smaller dam, 3 tiny ones amongst them. Brian & Claire join us and we do a lot of catching up, they only arrived on wednesday. To the office and home. Mario says the 4 piglets are down to 3. home.

Pop along to Hide this evening, meet Brian & Claire there, they've already spotted the lion, 4 lion and 1 lioness, the mating pair???????lying in all the rocks down the spill way. The other 3 on the east side of the dam, all doing what lion do best, sleeping. Janine, then Simon & Ashley, and finally unit 69. all arrive and park on the east side. One of the lion comes out and lies in the parking area, then as it gets dark they all give us a few serenades, finally leave Brian & Claire with them, home.

Friday 22 am, Another overcast morning, really heavy clouds about, but they just wont drop their rain, we got a few spots. Game wise, pretty quiet, impala where ever we go. Wildebeest on the plains towards nkhonkoni, we search around but no sign of any lion. 2 rhino at double, a lone elephant bull at big and the herd of 16 wildebeest, still 2 calves with them. Then along the 4 pylons another 2 rhino, and down around sable and rhino, impala. some wildebeest along the palm, we go up the single pylons and stop for breakfast at warthog, impala, wildebeest and a herd of zebra come into drink, plus 3 jackal. Office and thats the drive.

Birds, black chested snake eagle, with wings wide open, enjoying the warm sun, on the single pylons.

No drive tonight

Saturday 23 am. An absolutely cloudless sky to start, what a change, as we pass idube, find the 2 wildebeest bulls, lying in the parking area. Up kudu and along the e/e and down to warthog, a few impala. We continue along the RWLR and off for hide, impala, a couple of jackal, and wildebeest around the dam. We take first hide loop then onto kudu loop for sand, near sand lots of lion tracks heading for hide, so check out sand, plenty of impala so back to hide. Search around, no luck, decide to go up jackal plains. Near the top find 2 lion lying out, see us coming and move into thick bush. onto double, just after star crossing, we bump into a huge herd of impala, stop for a cuppa, on the sand. 2 rhino appear from the smaller dam and come round, walk right in front of us before heading off in the direction of that brown ivory. onto big, a few impala about so we move up to natural pan, very little water left here, but still there's a herd of impala and a large troop of baboon at the water, notice that two of the baboon are each missing a front foot, from across the river perhaps???

Then along 4 pylons for rhino, and close by a herd of elephant, plenty of tiny ones and also very impressive bulls, they cross into lisbon, looks like they are heading for that large dam in klaserie. Over to sable, impala all about, a couple of giraffe and 2 more coming into drink. Up snake alley through buff, impala, zebra, and home.

We leave home at 5, still 37deg. on our deck, at idube, impala, 5 kudu bulls and the 2 wildebeest bulls. Over to hide, a bull elephant comes into drink, the Makare's find the 2 lion up on jackal plains, they have moved out into the open, we go up, and then they get up and move slowly down toward hide. We go back and park with Brian & Claire, but apart from some roaring, sounds like 3, they don't show. Eventually by 8, no sign home.

Birds, a special sighting while sitting at hide, waiting for the lion, 2 black crowned night herons chasing each other around the island.

Sunday 24. Once more overcast but very humid. 3 Shots, the black mamba, ellie bull, after a good mud bath, and one of the wildebeest herds, at big. You all take now,

Roars & Trumpets, N&M.....



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