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[Game Drives](#)
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## Game Drive no 221 by Neil and Morag Hulett unit 45

Hi, Everyone,

Monday 15 am, During the early part of last night, a short violent storm rolls over us, leaves us with 10mm and quite a bit of damage here and there. Every thing crispy clean once more this am, on the way up kudu, Alastair calls in a lion and 2 lioness at the top of red duiker, but by the time we get there they have moved into the bush, but we find a elephant bull near the refuse dump and then another half way down the runway, plenty of impala on warthog, we move over to hide, not much about so we take the road up to jackal plains, find a couple of rhino and then at star crossing, big herd of impala and large troop of baboons, still up in the pylons, except for a few impala nothing else about at either double or big, we decide to take the tamboti link then north to beacon bend and back along the rusermi cut line to the 4 pylons, we then go down the sunset road and come across a very large impala herd and a herd of 24 wildebeest, 19 adults and 5 calves, great we then continue through sand and over to nkhonkoni, plenty of impala about and then back to warthog for breakfast, before heading for pels, and find it very quiet along the river, home.

Tuesday 16 am, Claire & Morag off early on a birding morning, me, back into Hoedspruit.

Claire's last night, so we join her up at Geoff's table, for a light supper. Some one calls a leopard along the railway line at warthog, but in spite of lots of alarm calling, by both impala and the wildebeest herd, no one can find the leopard again, anyway a most pleasant evening, their few weeks here have just shot past. Not sure why, but maybe because we are up on the hill and Claire on the river, we hardly have a stink bug, but Claire has thousands in the landy and at the house when she gets home.

Wednesday 17 am, Beautiful morning, high cloud making a very beautiful sunrise, but as the morning goes on, heavy cloud moves in from the west. A fairly quiet drive this morning, impala here and there, we catch a elephant herd just leaving double dam, 5 giraffe along the 4 pylons, on link road (our new name for that road that links the 4 pylons road to the road from sand to rhino), and a further 4 giraffe near unit 1, plus the 3 little piglets are still going strong. Meet Claire at hide, and watch a monitor lizard come down to drink at the spillway, then wish Claire a safe trip home, leaves for the states today. and thats about the drive.

Birds, the pair of bateleurs are making slow but steady progress in building their nest, one was on the nest, making sure every stick was in the exact right spot, and there are plenty of guineafowl about with lots of chicks of various ages, great.

Stay home, thunder and lightening about, might even get some rain.

Thursday 18 am, Well we get the edge of a storm, and it rains on and off through the night, so we end up with 10mm, great, just keeping things wet.

No drive this morning.

This evening we pop across to warthog and then along Pels, very little about, impala on warthog and the runway, and along pels some monkeys and a great view of a Purple crested Turaco.

Friday 19 am, A few spits and spots of rain during the night, 2 mm in the gauge, cool overcast morning, breeze from the south, take the road down to the office, then along the RWLR and off for hide, as we cross under the single pylons, look south and some way along, there's a herd of elephants crossing - heading in the direction of warthog, we head that way but they have already disappeared into the thick bush, we continue on and as we come onto buff plains, we meet another herd of elephant, all very relaxed, moving towards the single pylons, we go on down to nkhonkoni, impala dotted about the place, then over to sand and we find plenty more impala, we take kudu loop for hide, where we stop for a cuppa and while sitting there we suddenly hear baboons barking up on the 4 pylons/jackal plains area, we go that way and find the 3 lioness's and the cub, they have killed a baboon, the one lioness, who look likes she is lactating, is the only one eating, the other 2 and the cub, just lying about, the cub does try to sneak in but is warned off in no uncertain manner, we leave Eric with them the baboons are all well up in the pylons, all very unhappy, much barking while they watch what is going on, we continue our drive to double and big, very little about some impala and a couple of warthog and jackal at big, so back through sand and there are more impala, zebra and wildebeest about, we go along through sunset, more impala and past where the lions were, moved off, down to the office, post, fuel, home.

Birds, the bateleur nest does not seem to be going well, no birds there this morning, the first time we pass through sand, along kudu loop, the immature martial eagle comes off the ground with a lizard of some sort in his talons, takes a stand in a dead tree and starts feeding, the next time we come through sand one parent martial is there(The one with the ring on her right leg ) and a beautiful pale phase Tawny, when the youngster flies off, with what's left of his kill the tawny gives chase and mum?? who took off and has been circling overhead comes over in a shallow dive and sees the tawny off, nice bit of action. A harrier hawk on swimming pool road.

No drive this evening.

Saturday 20 am, Shall we, shan't we, cold and overcast, with a little blue here and there and a strong wind

blowing, well we are up, might as well go, first up, at idube, 3 lion, 2 lioness and a sub adult lion, all lying near the trough, these are the lion from ON ( Eric calls them the river pride) anyway 2 zebra come in from the road for a drink, stop in the parking area and are not sure what's at the trough, the lion lying just behind it, then suddenly from the bank on the left, 3 hyena come running in and a short and very aggressive confrontation occurs, mostly from the hyena, with the lion chasing off the hyena, Eric bumps into them on the road below idube, we go back to idube, having lost sight of the lion and the hyena running off into thick bush, after awhile we continue our drive and we haven't gone far when we pick the lion up walking down the road, they are hunting but have no luck, so we leave them with Eric and continue up kudu, over the top, through the tunnel for hide, don't go far but around hide, jackal plains, sunset, plenty of impala, mostly just on the edge of the woodland, to stay out of the wind, we go along kudu loop and on the plains, large herd of impala, 5 zebra and 18 wildebeest and 4 calves, all growing up fast. More impala around sand and then over to nkhonkoni, where we are in time to catch a herd of 7 elephants, drinking at the dam, more impala on buff and then over to warthog, impala and a couple of jackal. Home.

No drive this evening, we meet Alastair, Marilyn and Ron & Cindy at 3 Bridges Restaurant for a very pleasant evening, 3 Bridges is on the road from Hoedies to Phallies, at the Olifants River, part of Sleepers.

Sunday 21, Warm sunny day, lots of puffy white clouds about. Going to include 4 shots of the same lion, 2 taken last october and the other 2 yesterday. Hope he's not chased off by those other 5 because he looks like he could be a great pride male in time. You all take care now.

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



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