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Game Drive no 222 by Neil and Morag Hulett unit 45

Hi, Everyone,

Sunday we normally don't drive, but it's such a beautiful evening, we decide to pop over to hide, see if anything comes in. As we are passing idube, small herd of ellies coming into drink, then up kudu drive, a elephant bull, down the short cut and across to hide, except for the usual show off from the old hippo and a few impala about, nothing else about, then unit 72 calls in lion on the palm loop, turns out it's a lion, 2 lioness's and 3 tiny cubs, maybe 10/12 weeks old, we go along as it gets dark and have some good viewing, as they walk past, right in front of the landy, must say they look a little scrawny, and on our way home that same bull elephant standing right in the road, finally decides to move off and let us pass, home.

Monday 22 am, Heavy overcast to start, even a spit and spot, but by the time we get home mostly clear, game wise, fair amount of impala about, up kudu and we bump into the same bull elephant, but this time, he's a little further from the road, then down to the palm, no sign of the lion pride, but plenty of impala on both serengeti and warthog, we go south along the RWLR and off and round ians loop, a few impala, then across onto zozo hut road, plenty of impala and 2 rhino, on the open areas, we turn right on the single pylons, cross the palm and then along sable plains, impala, zebra, kudu and a small herd of wildebeest, nothing about at sable, we continue onto rhino and again impala, on the plains, and in the water a very large hippo, must have come across from the dam on klaserie. Up onto the 4 pylons and at link plains another 4 rhino plus a impala herd, we cross over, onto the road to sand dam and then left onto the road that skirts phone clearing and where it meets the old road to rhino, we bump into a lioness, hunting impala and zebra on the clearing, they spot her so she crosses back and one of the males comes out and joins her, they then disappear in the direction of the palm, we continue on through buff plains, nkhonkoni, sand and then along kudu and hide loop, plenty of impala about and zebra and wildebeest with them. We stop for breakfast at hide, watch a water monitor walking along the edge of the water, office and home. As I am typing the drive up, a large black mamba, 2/3 meters, slides onto the side deck, looking for lizards, no doubt.

Birds, plenty of white storks about at the moment.

Don't go far this evening, down towards the office and then back to idube, just impala, here and there, and all the while keeping an eye on weather, starts to spit, home, and for a short while comes down really hard and we enjoy a beautiful rainbow, and then a double one, and wonderful colours in the sky.

Tuesday 23 am, A partly overcast morning once more and the usual decision, rain no rain? we go and at the turn off for the short cut down to the palm, a bull elephant, standing in the road, we go north along the e/e, plenty of fresh sign of a lot elephant coming into the grootdraai, across the RWL and up the hill and near the top, 2 lioness lying in the road, Alastair & Marilyn and then Eric join us, they eventually get up and move off the road and down into the valley, we continue along towards jackal plains, then down to hide, plenty of impala about, chat to Rob & Monique (72) for awhile before going up towards nkhonkoni and on the plains, more impala, zebra, & wildebeest, then just before nkhonkoni, 2 rhino, along the drainage line, we go through buff plains, more impala, wildebeest and zebra and as we reach snake alley turn off we meet the rain, get nicely drenched, but we keep on for first rhino, again plenty of impala about, and the same over at sable dam and sable plains, we stay in this area and slowly it starts to clear, we then go up to wild dog and enjoy our breakfast, a small herd of impala at the water, we give the rain time to move on, and then we make for home, and just get in before another down pour arrives. These showers are sharp and sweet, but they drop quite a bit of rain and it keeps the bush wet and lush green. I measure 10mm. Good news.

Short drive, just along to hide, in time to catch a herd of elephant leaving the water, then up to Geoff's table where we meet Alastair & Marilyn, for drinks, they are off home tomorrow, beautiful evening, impala dotted about on warthog. home.

Wednesday 24 am, Another partly overcast morning, rain coming in from the east, but this time we wait till we are sure we wont get wet, so we only leave just after 6,30. As we reach the e/e, Alastair calls in the 2 lioness and 3 cubs on warthog, near the north end and not far from the RWLR. Alastair & Marilyn wait for us to arrive, as the only reason they saw them was because a jackal was standing in the road staring at the lion, they are under a thick bush and they have a kill, Rob & Monique and Eric arrive, so while we are watching for the occasional glimpse, Gus & Jill call in 4 cheetah, on the plains south of hide, turns out it's the mother and her 3 cubs, the cubs have certainly grown since we last saw them and all looking in excellent nick, they all move in under some bushes, hard to see, so we continue our drive, well there is so much general game everywhere, we don't go as far as rhino or sable, no need to, but stay in the north and there's so much about, impala in huge herds, wildebeest, zebra, giraffe, just fantastic, as Gus said, we've never seen so much game on Olifants, just a really special mornings game drive, home.

This evening, down to check on the 2 lioness's and the 3 cubs, they are still with their impala kill, then we move over to hide, in search of the cheetah, no sign of them but when we take hide loop, find plenty of vultures about waiting in various trees, on sunset plains, after some careful searching, without any luck, we stop off at the

parking on sunset, and while sitting there, enjoying the perfect evening, we hear lion calling down towards double, we wait for him to call again, then move up to the corner with our cut line with Rusermi and a few minutes later he calls again from down at double, we find one lion lying on the wall, turns out it's the guy we darted awhile ago, he doesn't stay long but heads off in the direction of big, and we head back towards warthog, catch a last look at the family, before heading for home, and as we leave warthog, where the palm loop drive starts, herd of elephant, having a wonderful mud bath in the 2 mud wallows that have formed there, home.

Thursday 25 am, Once more a partly overcast and cool morning, we find 2 rhino on the short cut clearing down at the palm, but no sign of the lion this morning, move over to hide and sunset plains, plenty of vultures about, but we can't find the cheetah, then Eric finds them on the plains between kudu loop and the road to nkhonkoni, close to the spruit so difficult to see, we can see only see 3 of them, and after Eric and Rob, Monique and family leave, some impala come fairly close, and one of cheetah has ago at them, no luck, but we still only see 3 of them and one of them is limping badly, anyway they settle in long grass and we continue our drive, plenty of impala about of course, zebra and giraffe on sunset, the more zebra near sand and thats about the drive. This evening we check out the hide area, once more, for the cheetah, no sign, plenty of general game about, end up at warthog, plenty of impala, wildebeest and zebra about, bump in to Hans, Utte and their friends, before heading for home.

Friday 26 am, Partly cloudy once more, pretty slow drive to start, impala on serengeti, and few more on warthog and wildebeest and zebra on the runway, nothing around the hide area, but when we get to jackal plains, out of the long grass, springs one of the cheetah and the next second we enjoy some really great viewing, as the 4 of them chase each other all over the place, just special, so good to see them all OK. We leave them with team from 72 and move down to double, no game about but as we leave the dam near the brown ivory tree, a huge shindig from a flock of guineafowl, and we eventually spot the immature martial, trying his best to get one, they move further away and we lose sight of them, onto big, impala and wildebeest, then at sand more impala and we take the road to rhino, passing through phone clearing, more impala, giraffe, zebra and wildebeest, a few impala around both rhino and sable dam, but along sable plains, plenty of impala, more wildebeest and 3 different herds of zebra, when we turn onto the single pylons road, find plenty of tracks of a herd of buffalo, by the signs they have all slept on the kink, just before you cross the palm, we follow the tracks but they move into the bush, north of the zozo hut road, we go round and up snake alley, then back along buff plains, but no luck, decide to have one last shot and we go back down the single pylons and then back to the RWLR along the zozo hut road, no sign. Now when we stop at the RWLR, on the other side of the tracks, a herd of impala are staring at something, we cross over and here are the 2 lioness and the 3 cubs, all lying under a bush, fantastic, it's amazing how your general game give the predators away, gets very hot, home. Birds, the martial plus the pair of hawk eagles, on ians loop.

Pop down to check on the lions, as we get there, bump into Eric & Sandy and Hans, Utte & friends, the lion have moved off, so as we turn to go elsewhere, down comes the rain and by the time we get to warthog, we are drenched once more, see a small herd of elephants coming into drink, but we make for home.

Saturday 27 am, It's overcast again, with a cool wind blowing from the south, we go up kudu and then along the e/e and off at the top of the airstrip, just masses of game about, around the runway and on parallel clearing, impala, zebra, wildebeest and giraffe, plus 6 jackal, then on warthog plains more impala and a couple of jackal, we go along the RWLR for ians loop, the Tenderini's call in 2 lioness on the airstrip, hunting the impala, so back we go and are just in time to see them for a short moment, before they move into thicker bush, by the air sock. We continue our drive and on buff plains we find the 4 cheetah, lying up under a bush, they seem to be settled so we move onto nkhonkoni, and there's a rhino having a good mud bath and there are 2 hippo as well, we take the road up through buff plains 2 and there's just game everywhere, impala, giraffe, wildebeest, zebra, just fantastic, we continue on for rhino and on phone clearing even more impala, zebra, wildebeest and 3 rhino, then around rhino pan, a herd of impala, we move over to sable and all quiet, but on sable plains, a mating pair of lion, then another lion appears out of the watercourse below sable and finally another pair of mating lion, further along sable plains. We make for Geoff's table for our champs breakfast and we can see the 2 lioness, long side the runway, and finally at idube, 5 zebra at the trough, home. We stay home.

Sunday 28, Well thats the lot for the week and what an excellent week it has been to, Olifants, as Morag said, "Is really humming at the moment" so if you've got a couple of days free, pack that trusty 4x4 and head east for big 5 country, you'll never see Olifants looking better, you all take care now,

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

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