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Game Drive no 223 by Neil and Morag Hulett unit 45

Hi, Everyone,

Monday 1 March 2010 am, A crystal clear morning, the full moon sinking in the west and the sun popping up over the eastern horizon, not a cloud to be seen and crispy cool too, winter just round the corner, but by the time we get home, lots of puffy white clouds coming in from the east with a cool breeze First up on the runway, 2 lioness and the s/a cub walking up to the top, following them the 5 jackal, about opposite where the refuse dump is the lioness move into the bush and we lose them in the thick bush, we go round and hope they will come through and have ago at all the, impala, wildebeest, and zebra, on parallel clearing, no luck. We bump into Alistair & Michelle McKenzie, some time since we last saw them, so catch up on some news before we continue our drive, down to warthog once more, impala dotted about, so across to nkhonkoni, the 2 hippo still there, we take the road up through buff plains, plenty of impala, zebra, and wildebeest, down snake alley then right along zozo ext left along the single pylons over the palm and back along sable plains, a few impala about but when we get to the dam there's just masses of game at the water, impala, zebra and more wildebeest, just great, we then move over to rhino, first along the river road, opposite rhino pan, up the 4 pylons and into rhino, decide to have breakfast here, then back onto the 4 pylons and then along link road, and on the plains, more impala, with a herd of zebra plus wildebeest. We join the road down to sand and then along kudu loop for hide, as usual lots of impala about. We call by the office and then home.

This evening when we got in, this is the SMS I sent to Shirleen, elephant x7, rhino x2, buffalo x2, and lion x 3, plus plenty of general game, and we never went further than warthog and the airstrip.

Tuesday 2. We are away today, we go out the ON gate and just outside the gate, we find a large herd of buffalo, about 50 odd, interesting.

Long day, stay home, and a hot wind is blowing, not pleasant.

Tuesday 3 am, Once more a partly overcast morning, wind from the south and we even get a light shower, take cover in the garages at the top of the airstrip. A fairly quiet morning game wise, impala, wildebeest & zebra around sable, another large herd of impala near the single pylon also on sable plains, impala, wildebeest at big, there don't seem to be any calves with them. Check out the Bateleur nest, not good, maybe the strong wind last night didn't help, but looks as if it's about to fall out of the tree, no sign of the 2 birds. Then at double, natural pan and on the RWLR we find elephant. The herd near double, quite large with tiny babies, the same for the ones near natural, but just some bulls on the RWLR, we go up through the tunnel for wild dog, but nothing about, we take the e/e for home, find 4 kudu, near the turn off to the look out, then down red duiker, a couple of giraffe, impala, onto the river road, 3 hippo, and baboons, home.

This evening pop down to warthog, plenty of impala about and we count 5 giraffe as well. Watch 3 jackal trying very hard to get themselves a baby impala, end result impala running all over the place as they try this herd then another, no luck while we there.

Wednesday 4 am, Cool overcast morning, with misty rain, we delay leaving, wait for it to clear, no chance we stay home, no need to get wet for the third time.

Pop down to warthog again, but besides some impala, all quite, home early.

Thursday 5 am, Scattered showers once more, so we stay home. In the evening, the McKenzie's and Cesare's join us for dinner, really super evening, Alister & Michelle, off home tomorrow.

Friday 6 am, Well, overcast once more, we get a bit of fine misty rain, then it sort of clears up, elephant on the e/e near Bevs Bench, impala on warthog, the same up at sunset plains, we stop for a cuppa, and count 150 impala as they come out of the bush, a troop of baboon join them as well as a herd of 21 zebra, we leave out double and big and head south for first sand, all quite, then down to rhino, a wildebeest bull and a lone impala, on the plains, so across to sable and at the wallows, big herd of impala, as well as a herd of zebra and wildebeest, then at sable dam, a very large herd of impala around the water. along sable plains, more impala, we cross the palm and then along the zozo hut and find another huge herd of impala, just before we go into the woodlands, along the RWLR and off at warthog, where we stop and enjoy our breakfast, impala, 3 giraffe come into drink, and then down at the start to the palm drive, another large herd of impala plus the wildebeest herd, along the palm, few impala, office, post, fuel etc, home.

On the way up kudu we are just in time to see a dark chanting goshawk, a really beautiful & large bird, dive into the grass and come up with a Stripe-bellied Sand Snake, clutched in it's talons, takes a stand in a marula tree, has the snakes head and just behind doubled over a few times, in one talon, the rest just hanging down, eventually flies off with it's prize, then along to warthog for a short while, the usual general game about, plenty of impala, wildebeest, zebra, giraffe and a couple of jackal, but no sign of any members of the big Five, home.

Saturday 6 am, It's overcast again, think we have had one clear morning, this week, lots of heavy clouds about, no rain though, up kudu and then down the short cut and through the tunnel along the RWLR, then off at vetsak for nkhonkoni, plenty of impala and the wildebeest herd plus 3 giraffe on warthog, things a little quieter on buff plains, notice there is only one hippo at the dam, we move on to hide and at the top of the clearings, impala, zebra and a couple of giraffe, a few impala around hide, we take the road up to jackal plains, plenty of impala, wildebeest and zebra, up near the top, not much around double so we move over to big and we are in time to see a Gabar gos, catch a dove, on the wing, just amazing, then just before the dam, the herd of wildebeest all lying in the road, we count 12, but looks like all the calves are gone, pity, stop for a cuppa and watch the hippo, we decide to take engwe ext up to the klaserie road, and start to see more and more vultures, till there are just dozens in all the dry trees about, we see hyena and jackal, but no lion, the kill is just too far in, in that dry river course that feeds into big, anyway we spend sometime there, a lot of the vultures go down, but then are chased off, we finally go back to hide, in the hope that some of the lion may come in to drink, suddenly some impala start blowing and instead of the lion, a leopard appears, he's hunting, has ago at a flock of guineafowls, what a racket, the impala all bolt off, we lose him, find him, gone, we head for Geoff's table for our champs breaky, watch impala, giraffe, on warthog, and 3 elephant at the bottom of the airstrip, mum with her 2 calves, one very small, and as we leave, the 2 dagga bulls come into drink, home.

We decide to go across to the big dam area, see if we can find those lions, no luck, but on the way plenty of general game about plus, a herd of elephant at hide, 3 rhino at sand, 6 rhino near natural pan, and 3 more, between double and star crossing, 12 in all, super stuff, home.

Birds, Have to tell you the Bateleur's nest, or whats left of it, is just about to fall out of the tree, pity because it was close enough to the road to be able to watch them raise their chick, maybe next time.

Sunday 7, Sunday, starts off clear but by 8 has clouded over once more. Be great if we could get some more rain, before winter, starting to dry out especially down around rhino and sable, autumn already here. Two pic's the hippo in nkhonkoni, taken by Morag and a waterbuck bull, very impressive horns. Thats the lot for the week, you all take care now.

Roars & Trumpets, N&M...



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