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Game Drive no 228 by Neil and Morag Hulett unit 45

Hi, Everyone,

Monday 10 am, Beautiful morning, most of this mornings drive spent on the runway, we are just at the refuse dump when we hear the 4 jackal start yapping madly on the airstrip, so around we go and here they are. Not far from the top, all facing the bush, we ease down as quietly as we can and we find a leopard has just killed an impala ram, we can see where he/she has killed it on the runway then dragged it through the grass, over the road and to the edge of the bushes, unfortunately we are too close, so after pulling the carcass a little further in disappears behind the impala, I give Mario a call to ask if we can move back onto the airstrip, to give the leopard more room, no problem, but it doesn't help, by this time, Eric has joined us and then unit 21 & Uli & friends from 51 arrive. While sitting waiting we can hear lion calling off towards nkhonkoni and more along zozo hut area????? Finally the one jackal gets braver and braver, and ends up feeding on the impala but the leopard makes no effort to chase him off, we all finally leave and we continue our drive, further down the runway we find more impala, wildebeest, and zebra, we decide to go along the RWLR and then off along the zozo hut road, of course impala here and there and at sable dam 9 zebra, then across to rhino and along to sand, on the way find another 5 zebra and plus plenty of impala, stop off for our breakfast then the short cut to the RWLR, through the tunnel and home.

This evening pop along to see if we can find the leopard, find her/him lying behind the bushes in the open, but as soon as I call it in, gone. On the way home, at the top of kudu a herd of elephant, don't like coming on Elephant at night, a- they don't really like spots and b- you're never sure where they all are, so we just ease through them quietly and head for home.

Tuesday 11 am, Beautiful morning once more, at idube, we can see by the tracks that a lot of elephant have been into drink, we then follow their tracks, droppings and broken branches, all the way along the road to the office, but they leave the road at the mica turn off and even though we back track back along the e/e, we cant find them, so down the short cut, tunnel and onto hide, we go back towards the office on the direct route then turn right for the 4 pylons and then turn down through jackal plains for hide, impala about, but not the numbers we have been seeing them, plenty of single rams about and tight herds of females with their attendant ram, we stop off at hide for tea, spot both the croc and hippo and then first one small herd of 7 elephant comes into drink and they have no sooner left than a herd of 15 come into drink, Eric arrives, we watch them till they have moved back into the bush before taking the hide and then across to sand, where we find more impala and 4 zebra coming into drink, we take the road for big, impala and 4 giraffe around the dam, and while we enjoy our breakfast another herd of 15 elephant appear on the wall, couple of really tiny ones with them, they walk all the way along to the western corner, drink and disappear as silently as they have come. We continue down to double, on engwe drive and at the link, where those wallows are, 11 zebra and 12 wildebeest, a few impala at star crossing, plus 4 jackal, then straight down to the office for fuel and past, home.

Birds, along the river course, between big and double, near the link, first a pearl spotted owlet and then in a large knobthorn, 2 magnificent Giant Eagle Owls, being mobbed by a whole lot of different birds.

Wednesday 12 am, Windy and cold, cool breeze from the south, most of the game tucked away in the woodlands, we should have stayed tucked up in bed, anyway, besides the impala, wildebeest on warthog, the plains near hide and sable plains, a s/a elephant near hide, can hear the rest of the herd in thick bush, but we can't see them,

then on way from sand to rhino, another herd of elephant, but we can only see 4 this time, many more in the thick, can hear them feeding, we also find a couple of kudu along snake alley and zebra on sable plains, not very pleasant out so home early. Birds, another pearl spotted owlet, on the vetsak road, and a black shouldered kite at warthog.

Thursday 13 am, Cold cloudy morning, not that pleasant out but away we go, up kudu and the short cut, along the palm loop for warthog, herd of impala on serengeti, then as we arrive on warthog we bump into Andy & Pat, have a short chat before we continue round on the circular drive, we spot some impala, a giraffe and 3 wildebeest, who are trotting along parallel to the railway line, we are trying to find the rest of the herd and we spot them up across the RWLR, below the table, so I'm not watching the road ahead that carefully, suddenly on Morag's side, a leopard leaps across the road right in front of us, still can't believe I didn't hit it, trots over towards the parking area, watches us for a bit before going down to where the old water hole used to be. Andy & Pat return but are too late as is Eric, I know there are lots of owners who are lucky enough to have leopard lying around their cars for ages, unfortunately we aren't so lucky, another quick but enjoyable view however, looks like the same female with the kill on the runway. While sitting at warthog waiting for the leopard to show, we hear calling off towards, buff plains???? We continue onto buff plains, plenty of impala and zebra about on both buff 1 & 2 we take the old road for rhino but turn left through phone clearing and sand, more impala and a couple of jackal, then at sand and along kudu loop for hide, more impala and a couple of giraffe. Andy & Pat are having breakfast at hide and we join them. The hippo appears from around the island and comes over to his favourite spot, that old dead tree, under the water, and so for the next couple of hours he entertains us with his antics, how wide he can yawn, what huge teeth I've got and he brings up his branch and makes like it's a periscope at one point it actually gets stuck on his teeth and it takes him awhile to get it off, all very amazing. Hans & friends arrive down the road from jackal and are just in time to see him come out the water with the branch in his mouth, so from where they are they think he might have grabbed the croc, anyway all good fun. Then the heavy dark clouds start to drizzle so we make for home. Birds, pair of African Hawk eagles hunting guineas at Geoff's table

Friday 14 am, Beautiful clear morning, the temp on our deck for the last few days has been around 15 or so but this am down to 10 deg, winter coming, not a very busy drive, to start while still cool, very little about but as it warms up, more and more general game about. Our drive takes us up kudu down to the palm and through the tunnel for hide, some impala about then up to jackal plains and down the cut line for double and across to big, just a few impala about, we have T,C&R at big, lone giraffe walks by, we continue up engwe drive and down the klaserie cut line for rhino, see a herd of zebra and a couple of herds of impala, more impala on the 4 pylons road, the same around rhino and sable, and then along the zozo hut road, 2 herds of zebra, more impala, and a family of 6 warthog and a couple of jackal, stop off for our breakfast at warthog, plenty of impala about then along the palm, we find 5 giraffe, home.

Saturday 15 am, Another great morning, the river and valleys shrouded in thick mist, beautiful as we looked down on it all, another morning of besides the impala we saw, and I can almost add to that elephants as well, they are everywhere this am, at the top of kudu, around spaghetti junction, down at the palm near warthog. Eric calls in more elephant on the road from hide to jackal plains and we bump into more on the vetsak road to buff plains, then Eric calls in 2 lion at big and by the time we get there they have moved off in the direction of tamboti link, luckily we find them close to the road, they move off and lie down not far from the road. So what else did we see, a couple of herds of zebra on buff plains 2, more zebra and wildebeest up at star crossing, a giraffe below the wall at double and a couple of jackal on sunset plains and more zebra on hide loop and as we come into hide find some more elephant, then up to Geoff's table for breakfast. By the time we leave a breeze has come up from the south and it soon clouds over, thats the drive.

Sunday 16. Cold, windy and overcast, might even rain, in fact it has started to rain, anyway thats the lot, you all take care now,

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

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