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## Game Drive no 230 by Neil and Morag Hulett unit 45

Hi, Everyone,

Monday 24 am, The coldest morning so far, only 10deg on our deck, is this the start of the real winter? Crystal clear and then cloud moves in from the NW, making it a bit miz. We take the road to the river and just past unit 50, a very impressive elephant bull, not much along the river, the usual troops of both baboon and monkeys, then on parallel clearing the wildebeest herd, and impala, more impala on warthog and the jackal, all curled up asleep on the runway. We cross the RWLR and make for buff plains and nkhonkoni, just impala about, so over to sand and then up to the 4 pylons, and we find a large breeding herd of elephant moving slowly up towards lisbon, so we enjoy some really great viewing, very relaxed, we stop at the cross roads under the pylons and they are all around us as they move into the thick bush. We move onto big and then double, quietest part of the drive, just a couple of impala about, we continue up to star crossing, 4 zebra and through jackal plains for hide, and this is where we find most of the impala that are on Olifants this am. They are just everywhere, all the way down to the dam, fantastic sight. Stop off for our breakfast, notice a impala carcass, floating in the water, the croc is on the island and is showing no interest in it at this stage, then along the short cut for the RWLR and under the single pylons, a herd of 5 kudu, 4 cows and a bull, through the tunnel and at idube, 3 waterbuck. Thats the drive.

Tuesday 25 am, A stunning morning, crisp and cool, 10 deg once more, up kudu and all the way along the e/e to wild dog, just the odd impala, we move over to sable plains, and it's alive with general game, 15 zebra, one a brand new foal, still all wet and wobbly, masses of impala, 8 wildebeest, a giraffe, and 2 rhino. we move onto sable and enjoy a cuppa and the warm sun, plenty of impala all around, we then move onto rhino, and just before we cross the palm, we find one of the lion, and he is just leaving his impala and immediately 3 jackal are in and grab the scraps, the lion wonders down to the palm, walks a short way along towards the wallows, then turns round, cross the palm and we lose him in the bush near rhino, he calls and is answered from the direction of venice and away over towards wild dog by a third. We decide to have breakfast at rhino, in the hope that he will come into drink, no luck, but when we go up onto the 4 pylons, come on a large herd of elephant, slowly moving through onto the road for sand, we thake the link road, bump into more impala and a herd of 4 kudu. We find more elephant on phone clearing, then down to sand dam, and we find 20 wildebeest, 10 zebra and whole lot of impala, either at the water or grazing close by, we stop at the crossing and watch them come into drink, great viewing, we take the short cut for hide, round hide loop, impala dotted about, the carcass of the impala still floating about, doesn't look like the croc has touched it, then onto the office along the direct route, come a herd of 5 kudu, more impala, under the single pylons as well on the open areas, when we cross the RWL, pop into the office for post etc, then head for home, again plenty of impala on the flood plains and then finally a short way before kudu drive 2 beautiful bushbuck, hard to see with all the thick bush at the moment. Great drive.

Birds, immature martial and a gabar gos near rhino.

PM. We watch a small herd of elephant bulls, down at the river on the ON, the river is slowly but surely dropping and more and more rocks and reeds are

showing.

Wednesday 26 am, Another beautiful morning, we go up kudu over the top and down along the palm for warthog, a few impala here and there, at the bottom the airstrip, impala, wildebeest, zebra and the jackal, over the RWL and then along the single pylons till we get to zozo hut road, masses of impala about, plus wildebeest and zebra, so along zozo ext. across the palm and passed the wallows for sable, impala of course and also lots of elephant, by the windmill, rhino pan road and rhino walk, large breeding herd, decide to have a cuppa while we enjoy them. We continue across to rhino, impala, zebra and more elephant on the way, we take the road for sand and find plenty of impala and with them zebra and wildebeest on phone clearing, more impala on the open areas from sand to the 4 pylons. On Lisbon this morning very quiet, just a few impala at big, between the 2 dams and double, we stop for breaky on the wall and watch a lone elephant bull enjoying a jolly good mud bath, the croc is also on his little island and there are 2 hippo here this am, so up to star crossing, more impala and zebra, through jackal plains and down for hide, and like yesterday just impala everywhere all the way down to the dam, plus zebra and wildebeest, fantastic, from hide to the railway line road, bump to Mario, and after a chat through warthog once more, up parallel clearing road, again wildebeest, zebra and impala about then down glacier valley and along pels, when we get to the bottom of the pass, find baboon, monkeys, 5 kudu and a couple of waterbuck, nothing else, not quite as busy as yesterday, but still a super morning, home.

Birds, Brown snake on single pylons, bateleur at palm crossing to rhino pan, harrier hawk near hide dam. and of course the guineafowls are once more back into huge flocks.

Thursday 27, Away for the day.

Friday 28 am, Beautiful morning once more, the valleys and the Olifants under thick mist, which soon clears away, on the way way up kudu, find a herd of 4 kudu and some impala, right along the e/e for the top of the runway, listen out for any lion calling, zip, so down to warthog, plenty of impala on parallel clearing and 4 jackal asleep on the runway, the wildebeest herd near the dam on warthog, we cross at vetsak and make our way along to nkhonkoni, impala of course dotted about on buff plains, all quiet at the water, so across to sand, impala and we take kudu loop, more impala and near hide, we count 11 giraffe, feeding out on the plains, round hide loop and then up to jackal plains, just masses of impala in this area at the moment, we count 150 in just one of the many herds dotted about and more on sunset plains, through star crossing and down the cut line for double, both hippos are here at the moment, onto big along engwe drive, the odd impala about, in fact pretty quite on Lisbon at the moment, so up to the 4 pylons and south for rhino, spot a elephant breeding herd, slowly moving towards the pylons from the Lisbon side, further along more impala, couple of large herds, plus a herd of 20 zebra and up towards phone clearing more elephant and a lone rhino bull, very little around both rhino and sable, but we find most of the game on the open plains along zozo hut road, impala, zebra, wildebeest and a giraffe, then along the RWLR through warthog, more impala about. then along the palm, a warthog, kudu bull, and at idube, troop of baboons and impala.

NOW, for those of you who don't get Mario's news letter, 3 new exciting roads have been put in, so to make it easy to picture where they are, imagine you are at rhino and you take the road for sable, when you get to the Tee junction, you can either go left, cross the palm to Sable, or you can go right, now if you go right you will find the start of the new road almost immediately off to your left. This now closely follows the palm on the north bank all the way to the junction, --- end of zozo ext. / the bottom of snake alley and the cut line. You get excellent views into the palm, we actually found 2 elephant bulls along here. Next, cross the palm loop here, then pass the wallows and right for sable, you will then find the next road feeding off to your right, on the south of the palm, this takes you round that wooded koppie and joins the old track that takes you back up to the road to sable. A concrete table etc, much like Geoff's table, has been built under a large Schotia tree. The road goes round it, so you wont disturb anyone there. The third road is on the zozo hut road, from the single pylons, take the road for the RWLR, soon after you leave the open areas and move into the bush, you come on the water course, you turn left towards the palm loop, cross the palm and come out directly opposite the road from Ian's pan and loop here you meet the RWLR. Sure these additions

and changes are going to prove very popular.

Saturday 29 am, Around 12 last night a strong wind gets up from the south, bringing with it partly cloudy conditions, still a strong breeze this am, but we go driving anyway, now one would have thought, what with the cold wind blowing and overcast conditions that there wouldn't be much about, Wrong --- besides the impala, what else did we see, 3 cheetah, are lying up on sunset plains, a couple of jackal, are there as well, plus wildebeest, on sunset down towards hide dam, across the way on hide loop, more wildebeest and zebra, more wildebeest at sable dam, & below the wall at big, as well as warthog, then elephant at double and more crossing the 4 pylons road, south of the sand crossing, zebra at sable and on the zozo hut ext and 5 giraffe. There is just general game everywhere, At around 8, we meet Mario up at the parking on sunset plains. A new loop will be made that takes you into sunset parking, otherwise you will by pass it on the 4 pylons road, all the way up to star crossing and double. The idea here is that people who are parked at sunset wont be disturbed by cars driving past right behind them. A very good idea. While chatting with Mario, we asked him if any names had been suggested for the 2 new drives, apparently not yet, after mentioning a few names Mario suggested Mashatu Drive the road along the palm between rhino and the wallows passes a very beautiful Mashatu or Nyala tree,(Xanthocercis Zambesiaca) so why not Mashatu Drive?? we think that's perfect.

Sunday 30, Cold overcast and a slight drizzle, thats the lot for the week, you all take care now,

Roars and Trumpets, N&M....

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