

# MAKUTSI SAFARI SPRINGS



Since the start of November we have already enjoyed over 400 ml's of rain. With all the green grass in camp we have had some regular visitors – the Impala kindergarten and several Warthog families with up to 6 piglets each, a favorite with most guests.



January 2011

## Latest updates

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## Christmas & New Year in the Bushveld.

From all the team, we would like to wish you Happy New Year and hope this year brings you much happiness.

Here on Makutsi we celebrated Christmas in the River Lapa with plenty of delicious food. To bring in the New Year our 60 guests were driven in a convoy of Land Rovers to an open Acacia area where the Drakensberg Mountains framed the backdrop. Sorry, but no fireworks in the bush as we don't want to scare the animals, but the sky opened up with a clear night for stargazing.

For 2011 we have a few projects that we are planning to work on, and we will keep you updated as we get going;

- Roman bath
- Renovating bungalows
- Renovating our staff quarters
- Continuing building on the School in Bismarck, Tribal Village

## Last & first sighting.

This Chameleon was our last sighting for 2010 & the first for 2011. He was found in a bush trying to camouflage into the background.

One interesting fact is that the Chameleon has raised, independently moveable eyes, which means they can see almost 360 degrees, except directly behind them.





## Safari Sightings

Typically winter offers a more diverse game viewing experience due to the lack of water in the waterholes and the sparse and dry landscape. Whereas the rainy season makes game viewing more challenging due to the lush green environment & ample amounts of water throughout the reserve. However this November and December has proven that any time of year can offer you memorable & rewarding game drives. There is no bad time to come on Safari!

### ⌘ Rhinos seen mating

Karl was out on the reserve checking the water levels in the dams, when he came across 4 female Rhinos making their way towards muddy Felix dam for some serious wallowing. They were closely followed by a male Rhino attempting to mate with one of the females, trying his best to impress her. Unfortunately she was too quick and ran into the water to get away. Here is a great picture of the male trying his best!



### ⌘ Battle of the Python

During a late afternoon game drive Natalie came across some lions at Kudu dam. They seemed very preoccupied; something was really of great interest to them. Shortly thereafter Natalie discovered that two snakes were fighting close by the lions, a Snouted Cobra vs. a Python, and the lions were enjoying the show. The Python managed to wrap itself around the other cobra and began strangulation. Nobody managed to see who won, but what a great mixture of wildlife together.

### ⌘ All on a morning game walk

At 6.00am Derrick started his walking safari on the northern side of Makutsi, where he and his guests were pleasantly rewarded for the early morning start. During the 3-hour walk, on an open Acacia area, they saw 21 Giraffe, several herds of Zebra & 3 Rhinos all together! Suddenly a Wildebeest started making a warning call - time to investigate. About 70m away was Tsavo, our male Cheetah, in the open area with wide eyes and a hungry stomach.

*Congratulations to Derrick, who also won "Ranger of the year" from Karongwe Game Reserve in 2010!*







### Southern Masked Weaver

- ☞ The ultimate selection of the mating is up to the female.
- ☞ The male weaver constructs delicately and expertly woven homes, which is meant to attract passing females.
- ☞ If the nest is not up to the female standards she will move on to find a new nest & mate, while the male will destroy the current nest & rebuild in hope of finding a mate.



### Red & Yellow billed Oxpecker

- ☞ Generally found with medium to large mammalian herbivores; such as Impala & Rhino.
- ☞ Main role is to clean the herbivores of blood-sucking invertebrates (ticks), preventing in blood loss and spreading of disease.
- ☞ Also provide an early warning system (by flying up noisily) when predators are near, Herbivores react to oxpeckers alarm calls.

## Cheetah Adventures *Lost and found again*

It's that time again (generally every two years) when we need to change the tracking collars on our Cheetah in the north, and for the first time, to treat the female with a birth control implant.

In recent years it has been challenging for us and Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) to find good reserves for the offspring. It is important that this is managed carefully, in order to improve their blood line and to prevent inbreeding among the cats.

One afternoon on a research drive our ranger found signal for the male cheetah. When he and the guests went in on foot they discovered all four cheetahs together; Arusha, Tsavo & cubs, along with behavioral signs that the two adults were mating. The two cubs were relaxing close by, keeping a protective eye on their mother (or staying out of the way of the male). Here we also noticed that the battery on Arusha's collar was completely flat; no wonder we had trouble finding her lately. We needed to put a new collar on her as soon as possible, the fun part would be trying to find her again once she separated from Tsavo!

A few days later our vet, Dr Peter Rodgers, came out early to change the collar on Tsavo (successfully), and at the same time we sent a team of 4 rangers out on foot & by land rover to track the female and her cubs.... No luck!

Three days later one of our rangers was on a walking safari, and found all four together again! One last call to the vet and we successfully darted the female, changed her collar, gave her the birth control, captured the boys and found a good home for them in the Kalahari!

As Tsavo and Arusha mated before she was treated with the contraception, we are not sure if she will fall pregnant or not - but we will keep you updated.



*Kind regards from,*

**The Makutsi Team**

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