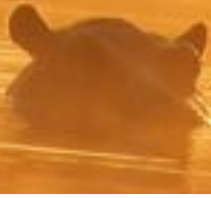


MAKUTSI SAFARI SPRINGS



August 2009

Dear friends of Makutsi,

Warm greetings from the South African bushveldt! Although winter on Makutsi has been generally pretty mild this year, we had a two-week cold spell that kept the toughest of our guests shivering, and destroyed some of the beautiful flowers in the garden. Now the smells and sounds of spring are starting to come, and the days are warm and the mornings still fresh. Game viewing this season has been truly exceptional, offering rare encounters, and the lush gardens of Makutsi have once again drawn the animals into camp to graze.

After being closed for 3 weeks in June, Makutsi welcomed its first guests into the newly renovated reception. Around camp we are also busy building new, spacious bathrooms on the river's edge to replace the existing structure next to the restaurant. Once these new bathrooms are functional, the restaurant will be extended towards the pool. The Hatari Camp on the north side of Makutsi Reserve has also been renovated, the tent has been removed and now there is a permanent shade structure, which allows guests to sit and relax even more comfortably, and the tall viewing deck over the reserve and the Drakensburg Mountains allows you to truly become silent in your surroundings!

Having seen the success (and good taste) of our first vegetable garden, we now have a second, even bigger one, to keep our guests happy and healthy. Overlooking the Drakensburg Mountains, all the vegetables are grown seasonally and each night at dinner you will be served fresh vegetables from the garden ranging from carrots, tomatoes, potatoes, cabbage, spring onions, zucchini, squash, cauliflower and many more.



Not only have we been busy renovating within camp, but Makutsi has also been continuing their support in the local Sekororo Tribal Village by providing building supplies, funds and our own staff to build a new wing to the school. The foundation of this wing has been completed and soon we will commence with the walls. Thank you again to all of you who have helped make this happen.

With our newsletters from the bush some will bring new life, some will bring excitement and for others, it brings grief. Sadly we have lost our male cheetah, Shumi, on the northern side of Makutsi Reserve. For those of you that were fortunate enough to have spent time with Shumi, we have to now remember his beauty, strength and grace, as well as his complete relaxation around us visitors. A leopard killed Shumi in June 09, he lived to the age of 6 and produced 2 litters on Makutsi, but most importantly he allowed us to educate our guests on cheetah behaviour and the importance of conserving these endangered species.

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Even though Shumi is not a part of the Makutsi family anymore, he left us, and Arusha (our female cheetah), with two cute and courageous cubs. We are excited to continue our Cheetah research program with our guests as the cubs are now 4 months old and are becoming more and more relaxed, allowing guests to get a close and personal experience with these stunning creatures. It is still too early to identify the sex, but we will be sure to keep you posted as the months go on.

Finally, we will leave you with some of our rare and exciting encounters in and around the Makutsi camp....

A group of guests were returning to Makutsi Camp from an afternoon safari to be welcomed back by three lion cubs playing with two large porcupines next to the dinner lapa. The following evening the same encounter took place, but this time in the riverbed in front of the lapa! The sound of the porcupine quills rustling as the cubs approached will be a lasting memory for those fortunate to witness this rare encounter.

Secondly, in the last four weeks there have been sightings of the very rarely seen Pangolin. This scaly anteater is nocturnal and spends most of its days curled into a ball, and ventures out in the evening to scavenge for food. Poaching for illegal wildlife trade and habitat loss has made these incredible creatures one of the most endangered groups of mammals in the world!

In the last week there have also been sightings of a new baby rhino on the northern side of Makutsi Reserve, possibly 3 months old. We look forward to seeing more of the mother and her young on future drives.

Lastly, word of our healthy mineral spring water has apparently spread on the reserve. Recently one of our resident male leopards, Shiluweni, was spotted early morning relaxing in the window of our roman bath. After securing the area, we made sure that some of our guests had the chance of seeing him whilst still around camp. Leopards are masters of camouflage and move silently through the bush, making them hard to spot when in the wild. Having Shiluweni around camp meant that our guests could appreciate his beauty up close.



We hope you have enjoyed the update from this beautiful part of the world, and look forward to sharing some more news with you in the near future.

Regards from the Makutsi Team