

MAKUTSI SAFARI SPRINGS



November to March is the rainy season in the Bushveld, and Makutsi had an average rainfall of 500mm. This rain is important to help the animals and vegetation through the dry winter months.

March 2010



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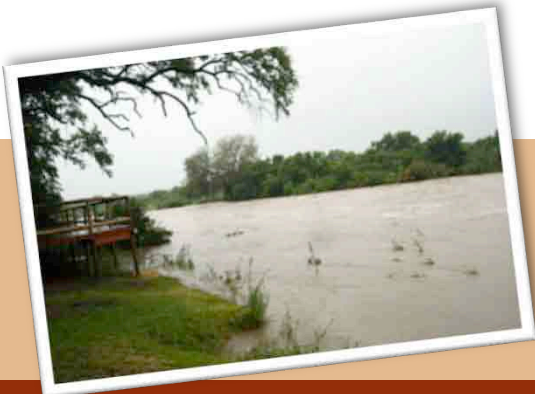
Dear friends of Makutsi,

From all the team at Makutsi we hope you had a fun festive season and have enjoyed the first few months of the New Year dreaming of South Africa! The new River Lapa deck was finished just in time for the festive season, and after a few hours of attempting to decorate the Christmas tree - A thick & thorny Acacia (with just a few scratches on the arms)- Christmas in the Bushveld was complete. Even though our guests were far away from home, we made sure they didn't feel like they were missing out on the celebrations, each guest received freshly baked German cookies and hand-made Swaziland candles.

To welcome 2010, dinner was set on an Open Acacia area about 2km away from camp, with an undisturbed view of the sun setting over the Mountains. To top the night off, all our guests were invited on an evening drive in search of the nocturnal animals, and finally finished off at the River Lapa in time to welcome in the New Year.

Makutsi River Runs Wild!

The summer rains finally hit at the beginning of February and the Makutsi River was bulging at the edges... The water came right up to the pillars of the new deck!





Community & Conservation

Never a quiet day on Makutsi...

January was a nice and quiet month on Makutsi, so we kept our Guides busy by putting them to work removing Alien plant species that constantly keep on introducing and taking over the natural habitat. Prickly Pears are just one example of an Alien species and by manually digging or burning these species it allows our Indigenous species more room to grow and reap the nutrients from the soil.

With great thanks to Mr Kevin Maitland from Australia, we were happy to deliver on his behalf a box full of Netball equipment (9 Netballs, 2 sets of bibs, 2 Nets, Rules & Coaching Manuals) to the local Balloon School. Thanks to his generosity these children will have the opportunity to use their

Netball courts and get the kids involved in outdoor activities.

Late in January we delivered some window frames and glass to another school in the tribal area, and in no time another classroom will be complete and full of smiling and learning kids.

Again, a big thanks to Mr Maitland as well as all the other clients who have contributed over the years in helping the schools in the tribal area.

Cheetah Research Project

Since the release of Tsavo in November 2009 we have had some incredible sightings and experiences for our guests. One special encounter was the first time Arusha & her 2 cubs came into contact with Tsavo. Luckily they were all really relaxed and showed no sign of stress.

This was the first time we truly saw how BIG Tsavo is in comparison to Arusha! Having all 4 cheetahs together is rare to see, as Cheetahs are solitary mammals and are not commonly found together unless it is mating season. A few weeks ago Tsavo was injured by what we think was a Warthog, he was left with a big red wound to his right leg. But today he is fat and healthy and eating enough for 3 cheetahs! The photo above is living proof of this.

Both cubs are growing so fast, they are now almost the size of Arusha. Over the last few months the cubs have been playing spirited games of stalking, pouncing, wrestling and chasing, this play is teaching them skills to hunt and survive in the wild. Generally at 18-22 months the cubs will separate from the mother and fend for themselves.





Pride of Lions

Lions are the most social of the cat family. They live in prides consisting of one or two males, several related females and cubs of different ages. Where-as Cheetahs & Leopards lead solitary lives.

Adult males can weigh up to 250kg & females up to 150kg and have a life expectancy of around 15 years.



Benefits of the Baobab Tree

The Baobab is called the Tree of Life with good reason. It is capable of providing shelter, food and water for the animals and human inhabitants of the African Savannah regions.

- The cork-like bark is fire resistant and is used for cloth and rope.
- The leaves are used for condiments and medicines.
- The fruit, called "monkey bread", is rich in vitamin C and is eaten.
- The tree is capable of storing hundreds of liters of water, which is tapped in dry periods.

Lodge Updates

The renovations to the kitchen and dining area are moving along swiftly. With the walls already done and roof going on this week we plan to have the new kitchen in use by April (Africa time). In the meantime all meals are being served in the River Lapa, with breathtaking views of the river bed and the mountains the background. And on a good day you can have the elephants visit... or even the cats, as mentioned below. Who needs TV, when you have wildlife at your restaurant!

With the summer rains coming to an end, we can happily look forward to the winter season, knowing that the dams are full and the animals have plenty of vegetation to feed on. Until next time, we will leave you with some stories....

Safari Sightings

February was such a great month for sightings from the new River Lapa deck, if you were not on a Game Drive and you had a free day, this was the place to be! One day near the end of February we saw 3 of the cats from the deck, less than 30 meters away, within 24hours!

- Around lunch time the female cheetah "Katswiri" was seen feeding on a young Kudu, east of the deck
- Late in the afternoon a sub-adult male leopard was spotted meandering through the reed in the river bed
- Before dinner was served, the whole pride of lions moved through the river, a few meters from the deck... Zero roaring and marking his territory

Kind regards from,

The Makutsi Team



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