

MAKUTSI SAFARI SPRINGS



December, 2009

Dear friends of Makutsi,

A big welcome to the rains of summer! The long awaited rain has approached and the dry landscape is now turning a magnificent green, combined with the rich red of the Coral Tree. With over 250 ml of rain the Makutsi River is flowing once again.

With rain settling in the bird sightings have been truly enjoyable, we even had our first-ever sighting of a Woodlands Kingfisher on the Northern section of the Makutsi Reserve. The last weeks we have also been lucky to see our first baby Impalas, Wildebeest, Warthogs, Kudu and Jackal settling into their new habitat.

Those of you that have been to Makutsi will be able to appreciate the strict walking times, mainly due to the high activity of wildlife around dusk and dawn. Especially the predators had a great time coming into camp to check what is on the menu, with all varieties of antelope such as Impala, Duiker, Bushbuck and Njala feeding on the green lawns.

During October, the following were just a few of the sightings we managed to witness:

- A male Cheetah lingering around the breakfast lapa, digesting his Impala kill
- A Leopard kill next to our laundry, and later observing this leopard relaxing on a tree trunk in the river
- The whole lion pride hunting in camp, and our game drives trying to follow and observe
- Savannah (resident cheetah on the reserve) and cubs successfully hunting near our petrol pump and afterwards enjoying their meal as if the camp belonged to them

Some more exciting news from the Cheetah Research team: we have released a new male cheetah called 'Tsavo', named after the largest National Park in Kenya and the infamous pride of Lions from the same region. Tsavo is one powerful Cheetah with a shoulder height of 85 cm, a body length of 214 cm (including tail), and a face the size of a soccer ball. On his first day of release, a group of guests on a game walk with Dave were fortunate enough to watch Tsavo hunt for the first time, the speed and grace of this Cheetah is phenomenal. Look out Arusha and cubs... Tsavo is now on the reserve! We will be sure to keep you posted on his adventures.



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With a few productive months behind us, we have been able to complete the new toilets for the restaurant and pool area. The finishing touches to the garden outside are being made, but the interior is ready for use. We have followed a similar theme from our other rondavels, incorporating the outside environment within the new toilet block. Some of the small unique features are the natural boulders as seating, old petrified trees as the sink basin feature, as well as a shower for freshening up after your swim in our Mineral Pools.

This month we have also started the construction of our new timber viewing deck overlooking the river and mountains in front of our River Lapa. Soon we will be able to offer our clients an additional, spectacular viewpoint to watch the sun set over the Drakensburg Mountains, with an all-important gin & tonic in hand, to go down with the sun!



On a sad note, we would like to dedicate this month's newsletter to Robert Mabunda, one of our most loyal employees for over 30 years, who unfortunately passed away in September. Robert was as much family as employee, and for those that had the privilege of meeting him on Makutsi will remember how much of a kind, smiling and warm person he was. From a young age he dedicated his time into looking after the herd of Makutsi Brahman Cattle, to working on the farm along with general maintenance, and last but not least, our reliable driver who safely picked up and dropped off our guests at the airports. Robert will always have a place with us here on Makutsi.

Finally, a friendly reminder for all those avid soccer supporters, Makutsi are pleased to mention that our rates will stay the same over the June and July 2010 Soccer World Cup. So happy selling and let the games begin!

From all the team at Makutsi, we wish you a merry Christmas and a New Year full of excitement.