

Singita



WILDLIFE JOURNAL
SINGITA SABI SAND, SOUTH AFRICA
For the month of August, Two Thousand and Twenty-Five

Temperature

Average minimum: 14.3°C (57.7°F)
Minimum recorded: 08.0°C (46.4°F)
Average maximum: 27.6°C (81.7°F)
Maximum recorded: 38.0°C (100.4°F)

Rainfall Recorded

For the month: 0 mm
Season to date: 331.5mm
(*Season = Oct to Sep)

Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise: 06:23
Sunset: 17:35

August has been a hot dry month! We have experienced temperatures just under 40°C and it feels like summer is already back in full swing in the Lowveld. The Sand River continues to trickle along drawing in wildlife in all shapes and forms. Our environmental team have been busy with their 'block burn' fires to simulate natural fires by lightning and potential external sources. These trigger ecosystem renewal by clearing dead vegetation, releasing soil nutrients and enabling the growth of new, fire-adapted plants, leading to a process of long-term landscape rejuvenation. Ensuring these fires don't run wild, firebreaks are put in place by the team months before. There's already new growth in these areas that offer nutritious grazing for a lot of the mammals. Crisp, cooler mornings still offer guests the opportunity to grab their favourite warm drink and set off before the

sunrise to sit, reflect and enjoy the sight and sounds of the bush as the sun creeps up over the horizon. There's a distinct yellow and red starting to fill the canopy in the distant landscape, flowering knob-thorn and weeping boer-bean trees adding that splash of colour to the winter hues.

Elephants

- Elephants can be seen throughout the day. Typically congregating in and around the Sand River now that the temperatures are as high as 38°C! Fairly large groups of askaris and elephant bulls have been seen fairly frequently in the southern parts of the reserve, and there are some notably large tuskers in these groups.

Buffaloes

- The large herd of buffalo frequent the permanent water sources both north and south of the Sand River. They create rather dramatic scenes in the dead of winter when they race to waterholes kicking up large clouds of dust.

Lions

- The Mhangeni Pride have been moving throughout the property, mostly trying their best to avoid the Nkuhuma and Talamati males, but have also been seen together with them on two separate occasions feeding on buffalo bulls.
- The Plains Camp males can be heard roaring most nights and early hours announcing their presence. It is physically challenging to try and find them because of how large their territory is but they have been seen on a handful of occasions. One memorable sighting of them was with their buffalo kill not far from the lodges, and the Othawa Pride with the two really small cubs were present!
- The Othawa Pride have been a challenge to find, walking great distances at night and placing themselves in tremendously thick and inaccessible areas.
- The Nkuhuma sub-adults were seen chasing the Mhangeni Pride off a buffalo kill, not before the Nkuhuma and Talamati males chased them away!
- Other lion sightings for the month include the Ximungwe lionesses. They seemed to have 'adopted' one of the small Othawa cubs but have subsequently abandoned it.

Leopards

- The Nkuwa female has sadly lost her female cub. The Ntomi male leopard found them all feeding on an impala, and he rushed in and killed her, sadly. The Nkuwa female continues to frequent the area around Castleton with her young male cub. Guides Matt and Dan witnessed her go from fast asleep to plucking an impala out of the air in a heartbeat!
- The Thamba male has been sighted frequently. He had a face-off with the Hlambela male across the river, and he has also been seen sporadically around the reserve, highlighting just how big his home range is.
- The Tisela female and her two sub-adult females have been seen more and more to the west of the lodges and we are hoping that either of them starts calling that area their home.
- The Rivala female has also been seen west of the lodges, a leopard who enjoys the limelight and often shows off climbing trees and posing eloquently.
- Other leopard sightings includes the Ntoma female mating with the Thamba male. The Nottens male and Xinzele female have also been seen.

Cheetah

- The Makatini cheetah family made a cameo appearance in the south of the reserve for a number of days before disappearing again. All three sub-adults are looking strong and healthy.
- The male cheetah has been hiding in plain sight. We often find tracks of him but he avoids being spotted!

African wild dogs

We have had two sightings of wild dogs for the month.

- The first was a brief view of the Othawa pack of 11 wild dogs before they ran off into the western sector to their den. We hear the puppies are running with the adults so we hope the month of September brings more sightings of them.
- The second sighting was of one wild dog that chased an impala into a waterhole. Upon exiting the waterhole the wild dog caught the impala!

Unusual sightings

- A newborn giraffe! Guests sat in awe as a small calf found its feet for the very first time, albeit a bit wobbly!
- Danelle had an amazing sighting of a relaxed civet on her way back to the lodge one evening.

Bird list

We have added four more species to the list this month, taking the total to 284 birds.

- Lizard buzzard, white-breasted cormorant and secretarybird were the highlights for the month.

Some Bush Stories to follow, as well as the Images for the August Gallery.

Some mornings in the bush unfold like an epic wildlife documentary, and today was exactly that! The adventure began with the discovery of fresh lion tracks. Not long after, we found two magnificent males from the Nkuhuma–Talamati coalition, resting peacefully in the early glow of sunrise. The scene was serene, but the impalas calling in alarm to the south suggested something more was unfolding.

Leaving the lions behind, we drove a short distance only to find the road completely blocked by an enormous herd of buffalo, at least 400 strong, across our path. Carefully weaving through them, we suddenly heard the unmistakable rasp of a leopard nearby.

And there he was: the Thamba male, lying confidently atop a termite mound. But the drama was just beginning. Over the radio came news that the Makatini cheetah female and her three sub-adult cubs were moving straight toward the leopard!

We watched in anticipation as Thamba noticed the cheetahs. Intrigued, he approached to investigate. One brave cub spotted him first, growling shrilly to alert its mother and siblings. In a rare and tense display, the cheetah family grouped together, hissing and growling at the much larger leopard in an attempt to defend themselves.



Thamba, easily double the size of the cheetah female, seemed utterly unbothered. He circled the group, sniffing the ground and even checking nearby trees as if expecting to find a hidden kill. Of course, cheetahs cannot hoist their prey into trees as leopards do, and eventually, realizing there was nothing to gain, Thamba lost interest and moved off.

With the immediate threat gone, the cheetah mother quickly led her cubs away to safety.



What made this morning truly remarkable was not just the drama itself, but the sheer diversity of wildlife we encountered in such a short time. It is rare to see lions, buffalo, leopard, and cheetah all in the space of a single drive — let alone within such close proximity to one another. Normally, sightings of this magnitude unfold over the course of several safaris, not just a single morning.

Within just a few hours, we had witnessed the power of lions, the presence of buffalo, the stealth of a leopard, and the courage of a cheetah family. These are the kind of mornings that remind us why the African wilderness is so magical — unpredictable, raw, and utterly unforgettable.

Sunrise to sunset

Article by Greg Heasman

As a new day begins another one ends, and what a privilege it is to get to witness the beauty of this everyday event. I have been a guide for many years now and one of my favourite things to watch is a sunrise and a sunset. None are the same and there is always a different beauty with each one.

On early morning drive it's always great to get out there at first light just before sunrise and find a good high-rise position to sit in silence and watch a new day unfold. Birds are chirping, lions are roaring - it's the sounds that capture before the sights. Then as the golden light hits the blades of grass everything around you is lit with signs of life.

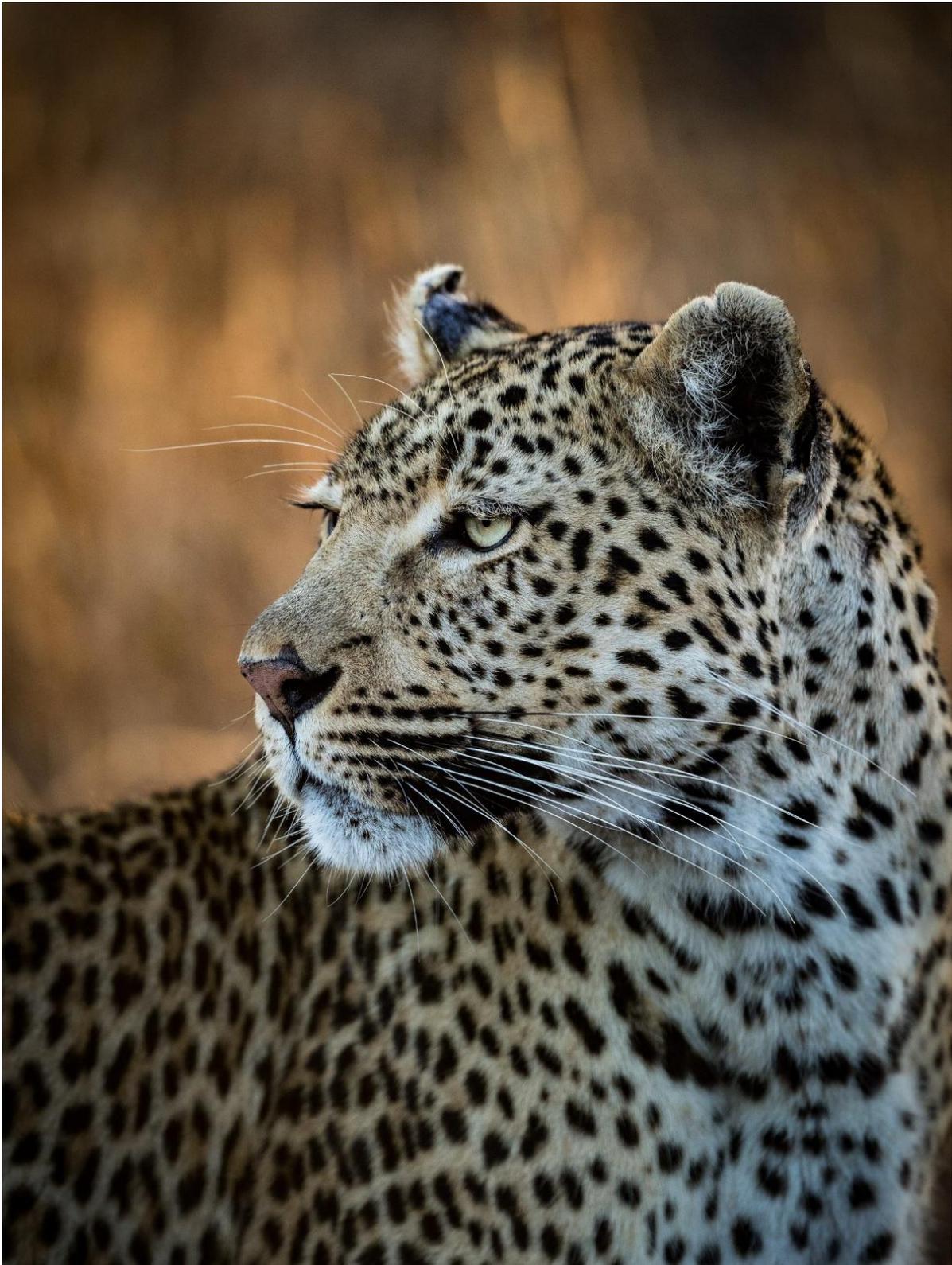
For five minutes of silence and a little patience there is no doubt that you will be rewarded with serenity and a feeling that will give you the drive to see another day pass. It's a gift to be able to witness such beauty every day - not only does it set the tone, it puts you in the right headspace for the day ahead.

As the day passes by it may feel like a long one or it might feel short, but if you finish it how you started it'll end on a relaxing note with the sunset. The sunrises and sunsets change throughout the year with clouds, smoke on the horizon or rain in the air. I encourage you, wherever you are, to take the time to appreciate life on Earth and the privilege of being able to witness the sunrises and sunsets.





August Gallery



The Nkuwa female posing in the golden hour light. Image by Andrew Taylor.



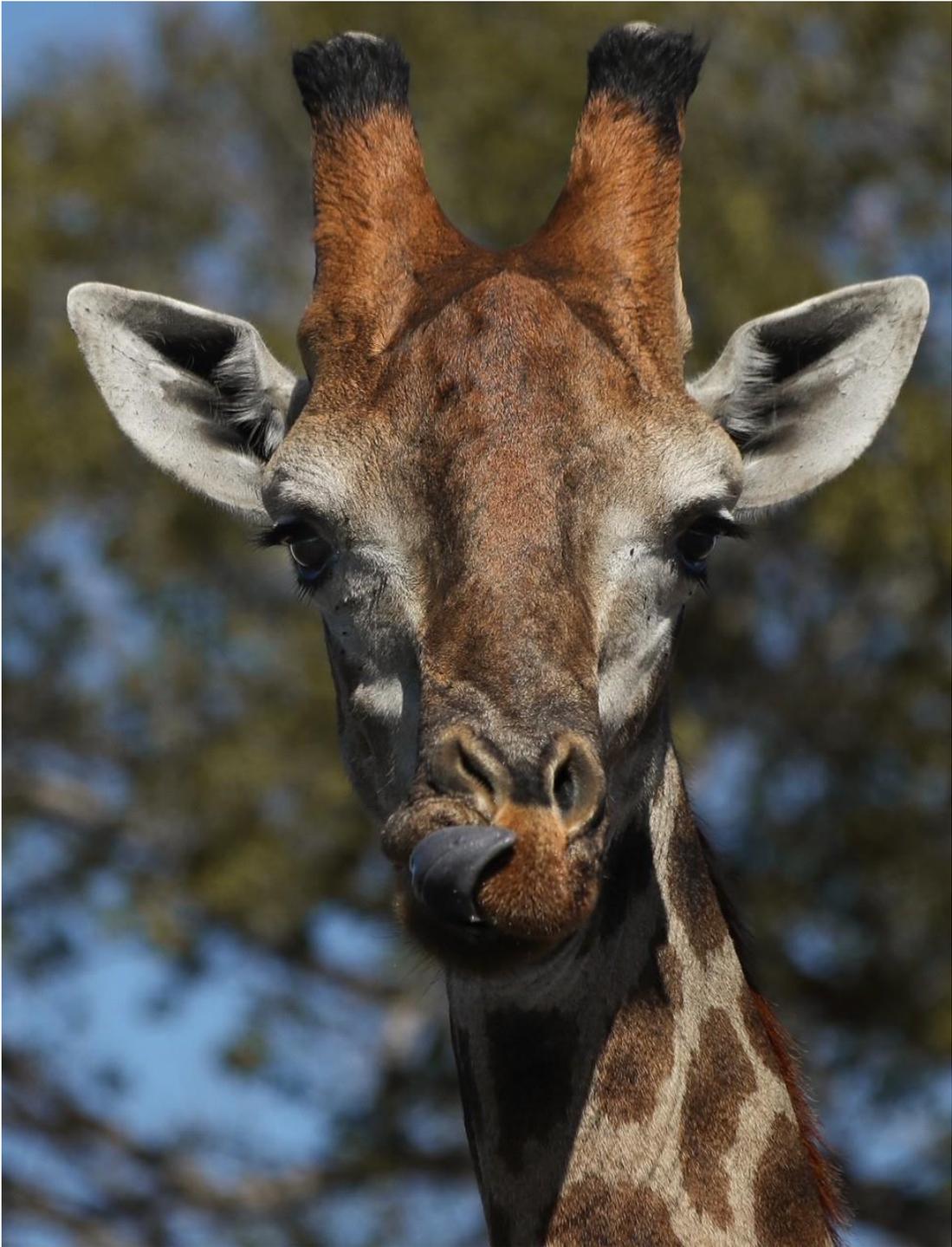
The headline Image! A male cheetah at full sprint. Image by Marc Bowes-Taylor.



The Hlambela male leopard perched up top a termite mound. Image by Matt Durell.



The Plains Camp males on patrol. Image by Marc Bowes-Taylor.



Giraffe portrait! Image by Marc Bowes-Taylor.