



# The Bush Telegraph

Volume 29: Jan - Mar 2017

*"It is, surely, our responsibility to do everything within our power to create a planet that provides a home not just for us, but for all life on earth"*

*- Sir Richard Attenborough*

Belated greetings from our little piece of paradise!

Photo: Rusty Hallam

Summer has passed us remarkably quickly and we are easing into Autumn.

In January and February we experienced some hot & sticky temperatures, as well as high humidity from some good rainfall that we had from the end of last year and during Jan and Feb. This rain assisted in bringing the bush flourishing back to life, it has been a while since we have seen the bush so lush and bright green.

Unfortunately lower than usual rainfall before and after these months meant that the bush is once again looking dry and it might be another tough winter ahead.

We only received just over 50% of our annual rainfall for the season again.

Due to good rainfall in other areas, we have been able to enjoy the river flowing again, and at times nice and full.

It is already very dark at 5am now, where a few months ago it was bright sunshine.

The mornings and evenings are dropping slightly in temperature.



Rainfall figures (mm)	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>2015</b> : Nyeleti	8	36	3
Nzumba	1	86	12
<b>2016</b> : Nyeleti	4	17.5	68
Nzumba	5	10	55
<b>2017</b> : Nyeleti	59	60.5	8
Nzumba	46	52	3.5



Photo: Gerda Niemann

## GENERAL GAME SIGHTINGS

Photo: Dieter & Karin Burgert

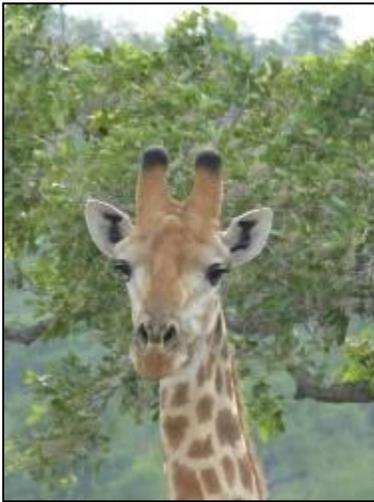


Photo: Raf de Borgher



Photo: Gerda Niemann



Photo: Jenny Sullivan



Our general game sightings were still consistently good during the beginning of the year. But there were a couple of occasions, especially when a change in weather was moving in, that general game literally were nowhere to be seen, and when weather had settled again, they came out by the numbers again. A large herd of Wildebeest were seen on the Nzumba airstrip quite regularly. We also had frequent sightings of African Wildcat, including one with a kitten. Sightings also included a shield nose snake and ground hornbill. The hippo numbers in the Olifants River have increased slightly.

## BIRDING

Photo: Jenny Sullivan



Photo: Arlene Brown





*Photo: Donovan*

Our birding season was awesome. With the rains came an abundance of insects which in turn resulted in a lot of bird activity.

With the river flowing in front of Kitara and Nyeleti, the Fish Eagles were a regular sound to be heard.

The highlight of the season was the return of vast numbers of Red-Billed Quelea. They have been very low in numbers over the last couple of seasons due to lack of food.

This year, they had the most incredible nesting site at Dundee View in an area of Knobthorn and Purple Pod Cluster Leaf trees. It was unique and unforgettable experience to sit quietly in this area and watch the frenzy & hear the noise of nest building activity, with Raptors not far off waiting for an opportunity to prey on the chicks. We also enjoyed large flocks flying past in front of the camps.

Its time again for the migratory birds to head north.

## BIG GAME SIGHTINGS



*Photo: Bumper Graham*

Sadly, the year has started off with an alarming increase in rhino poaching within the KPNR, as well as OREC and surrounding reserves.

This has shocked us all hugely and the endless tireless fight of our wardens & anti-poaching teams continue with all earnest.

Our sightings are still good on all properties, however from the middle of January, we are not seeing the resident bull in front of Kitara & Nyeleti anymore but he is still in the area seen at Hot Spot and surrounds.

**We thank you for keeping this information confidential**



*Photo: Jenny Sullivan*

Hyena sightings have increased nicely, with almost every group of guests getting to see these wonderful creatures.

Sightings have been on all the properties, as well as neighbouring properties.

A new den was found again at the beginning of the year on Bataleur Drive on our OREC property, but they moved off from there to a new unknown site.



*Photo: Gerda Niemann*

Our wild dog sightings have increased nicely, with 11 sightings Jan-Mar.

The bitter-sweet jaw-dropping sighting was when a few of the Dundee Pride set up an ambush with the pack of dogs in the riverbed just upriver from Nyeleti, and killed one of the dogs – it was a heartbreaking rare sighting that left all our guests & guides with mixed emotions.

Our OREC warden thinks that the pack are moving onto our OREC property as they are seen close to Balule Pan more frequently and he has seen that the alpha female is heavily pregnant.



*Photo: Bumper Graham*

Due to the larger rainfall in other areas and therefore better grazing areas, the buffalo sightings have continued to drop considerably.

We had one sighting in January, then only again in the middle of March and end of March.

Sightings were in the areas of Nyeleti and the Olifants River.



*Photo: Hallberg family*

We are still seeing fantastic and regular sightings of elephants ranging from lone bulls to breeding herds, throughout our properties.

There have been some experiences of aggressive lone bulls, giving some charges.

The breeding herds have been mostly relaxed, making for some special sightings.



*Photo: Shaun Taylor, Moriti Safaris*

Our lion sightings have been excellent.

The Dundee Pride have definitely split into smaller groups from time to time to be able to sustain themselves better, but remain one pride with the 2 males remaining.

We have not seen the full pride together for a long time.

We have had some incredible sightings of the females and smallest cubs in front of Kitara on the other side of the river in late Jan and early Feb.

The Balule Pride has also been seen quite regularly.

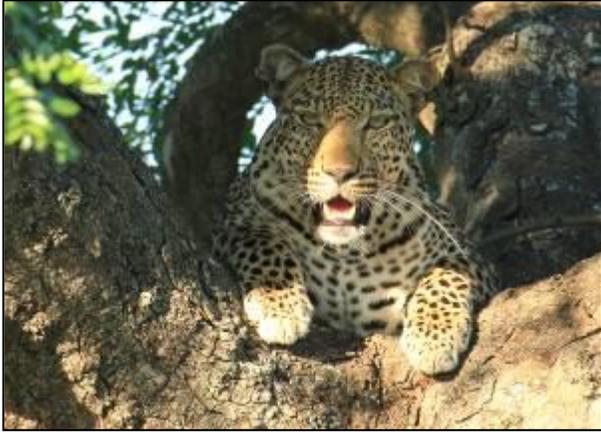


Photo: Arlene Brown



Photo: Shaun Taylor, Moriti Safaris

We have had 11 different leopard sightings Jan-Mar.

In Dec I wrote that we had a sighting of leopard mating.

On 24<sup>th</sup> Feb, Wiseman came across our resident female with one cub – she was incredibly nervous and not happy to have been seen and whipped the cub away in seconds.

At the end of March, she was seen again by Werner on gamedrive with two cubs – that is so exciting.

She is still very nervous with them and sightings are quick.

A female was also seen on a neighbouring property, as well as our resident male at Dundee.

## ..... MAKING MEMORIES

### **My Africa**

*Africa is a lady. She's like that first crush. The very first one which is also the one you never really get over. The one that grabs you, shakes you, sometimes turning you into a beast - the one where she can have her way with you. And she does, every single time.*

*Once Africa and the bush are in your veins, there is no letting go or getting out. You yearn for her. She can surprise you around each and every corner - if she wants to. Or, she can torment you around every turn. She will do with you as she pleases - because no matter what she does or delivers - she knows your love for her is forever, once she shared a piece of her. You can spend years in her company and still be amazed by her every day.*

*She makes you feel complete and empty at the same time. You want to cry from sadness and joy all at once. Her beauty knows no end or limits and can be so simple and yet so intriguing.*

*She's the one that got away. And every time you get to experience her presence one more time you want it to last forever. She doesn't even have to show you the best she has to offer - just being in her presence is enough.*

**Africa** - such a small, word. However, it's more than a word. Come and experience it. You'll find yourself.

*I look forward to spending time with her again.*

Gerda Niemann

(Moriti Safaris Photographic Safari, Mar 2016)



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### **Photos:**

Thank you Arlene Brown, Rusty Hallam, Gerda Niemann, Shaun Taylor – Moriti Safaris, Raf de Borgher, Jenny Sullivan, Bumper Graham, Dieter & Karin Burgert, Donovan ..... for sharing all your fantastic photos with us – much appreciated!

Gerda – thank you so much for your amazing article – we really appreciate it!

Please feel free to share your pics with us; we would love to include them!

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