



The Bush Telegraph

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*“Each species is a masterpiece, a creation assembled with extreme care and genius”
— Edward O. Wilson*

Wintery greetings from Klaserie Camps!

Ah! The beauty of the winter bush, where nature has chosen this special time to bring out some pretty spectacular moments, from what looks like a dry and dreary land: it is time for the aloes, impala & kudu lilies to flower, thriving on the lack of water. Bright splashes of oranges and pink catch ones eye and take ones breath away.

And let’s not forget the dusty air that fills one’s soul with happiness when the sun drops down for the day or the full moon rises for the night, dazzling the sky with striking colours.

We reached the middle of our winter at the end of June, and we have almost had no winter. There have been a handful of chilly days but the rest of the time, beautiful hot days, with temps in the late twenties. The morning and evenings are lovely and crisp, but no one huddling close to the fire to get warm.

Thankfully the Klaserie River is still flowing a little, nice to have some constant water.

The bush is incredibly dry again, going to be tough until the rains hopefully arrive later in the year.

Photo: Rachel Ong

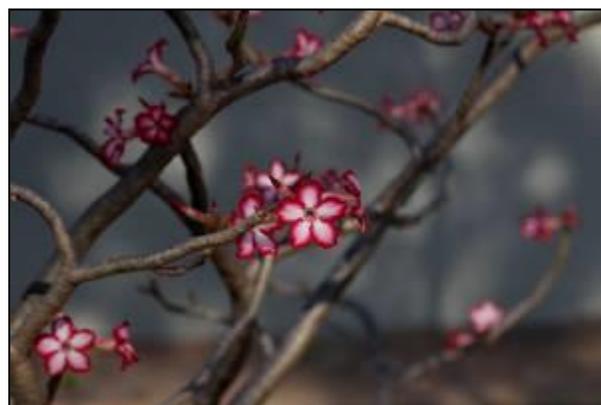
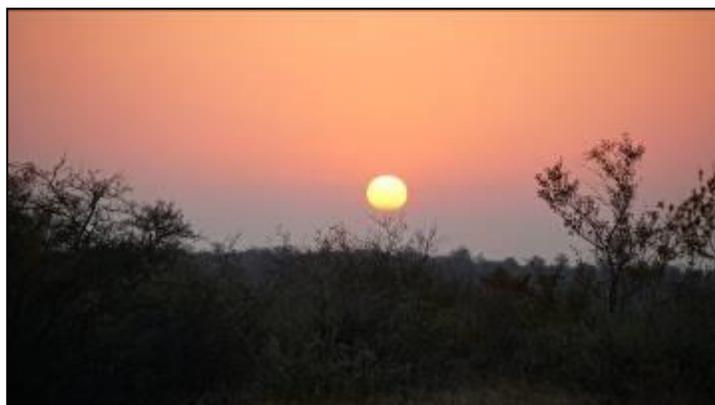


Photo: Gerda Niemann

Rainfall figures (mm)	Apr	May	Jun
2015 : Nyeleti	36	3	0
Nzumba	25.5	10	0
2016 : Nyeleti	0	26	0
Nzumba	0	22	0
2017 : Nyeleti	30.5	3.5	0
Nzumba	34.5	3	0

GENERAL GAME SIGHTINGS

Photo: Brent Phillips



Photo: Rachel Ong



Photo: Uellendahl Family



Wonderful general game sightings during the last quarter. Despite the conditions of the bush, with their food becoming less nutritious and scarce, the game is looking very healthy. We hope that this stands them in good stead for the next quarter tough time.

A warthog family are firmly entrenched moving between Kitara & Nyeleti for food and water.

The Nzumba, Dundee and Orec waterholes are frequented as a reliable source of water.

Photo: Jenny Sullivan



The sightings have been frequent and large in numbers too, especially with giraffe.

Hippo numbers in the Olifants River still remain very low and we have not seen any hippo in wild dog dam.

Some special sightings include African wild cat with kitten, honey badger and a variety of snakes.

BIRDING

Photo: Arlene Brown



Photo: Rachel Ong





Photo: Brent Phillips

It is the time of the year when all migratory birds have left the area. This in no way means we are starved for variety. The abundance of wonderful birdlife continues. In the last newsletter I wrote about the increased numbers of red-billed queleas. We have continued to see these large flocks of flurry throughout the property, as captured by Rachel Ong above. With the Klaserie River still flowing, the African Fish Eagles are still in the area of Nyeleti and Kitara. We also have a pair of beautiful saddled-billed stalks that frequent the riverbed and often seen right in front of Kitara deck. Ground hornbills have also been seen in the area.

BIG GAME SIGHTINGS



Photo: Rusty Hallam

Hyena sightings have increased nicely again. There is also a lot of vocal activity at night almost every night. There was a new den site found on Thompsons, which was amazing for viewing. Timbila also reported a new den site on their property.



Photo: Rachel Ong

We are still enjoying great lion sightings on a regularly frequent basis. If I look at the sightings sheets, most of our guests have seen lion during their stay, most being of the Dundee Pride with their cubs. The Dundee Pride are still splitting and joining, but we have not seen a permanent split and another coalition form. We have not, however, seen the two males for a while. The Balule Pride have also been quiet in their presence. There is a new male that is seen periodically. Werner and our guests at the end of June, had the rare privilege of seeing the lion hunt and kill an impala.



Photo: Jenny Sullivan

Sightings remain good and most guest enjoying numerous sightings, throughout our properties. We have frequent sightings of 5 rhino between Nzumba and Dundee. Sadly there is no good news to report on regarding poaching, no reprieve in the rising poaching numbers.

We thank you for keeping this information confidential



Photo: Lina Cheeseaman

We had sightings of the pack of 14 wild dogs towards the end of April, and again towards the end of May. Towards the end of June, a pack of 4 were seen. There are rumours that they are denning on a neighbouring property.



Photo: Uellendahl family

Once again our ellies are not failing to disappoint us, with regular sightings throughout our guests' stays. Lots of breeding herds, majority of which are really relaxed. There are also sightings of bulls, most of which are relaxed



Photo: Brent Phillips

The large herds of buffalo have not been seen since the bush has dried out again and we believe they have moved on south to where they had better rains and therefore more food.

Whilst we are not seeing herds or even dagha boys when driving between camps like we usually do, most of our guests have enjoyed sightings ranging from small breeding herds to dagha boys.



Photo: Rachel Ong

From the middle of May, we have welcomed some regular sightings of leopard at Dundee, Thompsons, Timbila and Orec.

The female and the young male, seen a couple of times, are incredibly relaxed with the vehicle.

We also had an awesome sighting of a female walking past the fence at Nyeleti in broad daylight.

BUSHTHOUGHTS by Gerda Niemann

A friend once made the statement:

“Why go on a game drive more than once? If you’ve been on one you’ve been on all of them, right?”

I realised that, naturally (and thankfully) everyone is different. I have made the mistake to think that all people from South Africa loves nature and the sight of any of our beautiful wildlife gets us all excited. Well, this is not the case. Over the last week I started longing for Klaserie and remembered my first visit where I realised this.

On my first trip there were two friendly, young couples.

I was surprised that they preferred not to accompany us on all the game drives.

The one mentioned: “Gone are my days of chasing the big five.”

I thought about this on those particular few days as we drove around. I understand his point, I mean, there are so much more than the big five. I’d love to see a pangolin, perhaps a birth or even a close encounter with a python. And, yes, I also understand (vaguely) my friend’s statement about the “been on one been on all”, but, for me, it is about how it makes me *feel*.

Whether I see 7 lion prides or even ‘just’ a small herd of impala grazing.

When I am there, on that vehicle, driving around, seeing nothing and everything, I am happy and content. So, for me, and I believe most Klaserie lovers, it’s not all about the big five. It’s about experiencing the intense heat, watching the clouds form late afternoon, hearing distant roars, watching the klipspringer mastering the boulders, your head turning towards the sound of the fish eagle’s cry, being amazed at how quiet an elephant can move through the bushes. Game drives and safaris are about this and more. I respect my fellow South Africans who yawn at the sight of a giraffe, but I do believe, that you do not choose Africa, she chooses you.

And, thank goodness I can say she chose me!

Although I did not get to see the big five on my first trip to Klaserie, I went again. And...I’m going again next year. So, as I am longing for Klaserie during these cold Free State days, I think about my visits to Klaserie.

I’d love to go on a game drive again, chasing the big 5 or not.

Gerda Niemann

(Moriti Safaris Photographic Safari, Mar 2016)



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Please write in our on-line guest book, your feedback is much appreciated!



For those of you who would like regular updates on exciting happenings and aren't already on our Facebook, please "like" our Klaserie Camps page. We look forward to seeing you there!



We are on Instagram, so for all the Instagramers out there, please follow us and keep up to date on the wonderful photos we share .
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thank you for taking the journey with us down memory lane of our last 3 months in our little piece of paradise!

Photos:

Thank you Lina Cheeseman, Arlene Brown, Rusty Hallam, Gerda Niemann, Jenny Sullivan, Uellendahl family, Brent Phillips & Rachel Ong for sharing all your fantastic photos with us – much appreciated!
Gerda – thank you so much for yet another wonderful article – we really appreciate it!

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

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