



MESSAGE STICK **December 2011**

JMA's Musings!

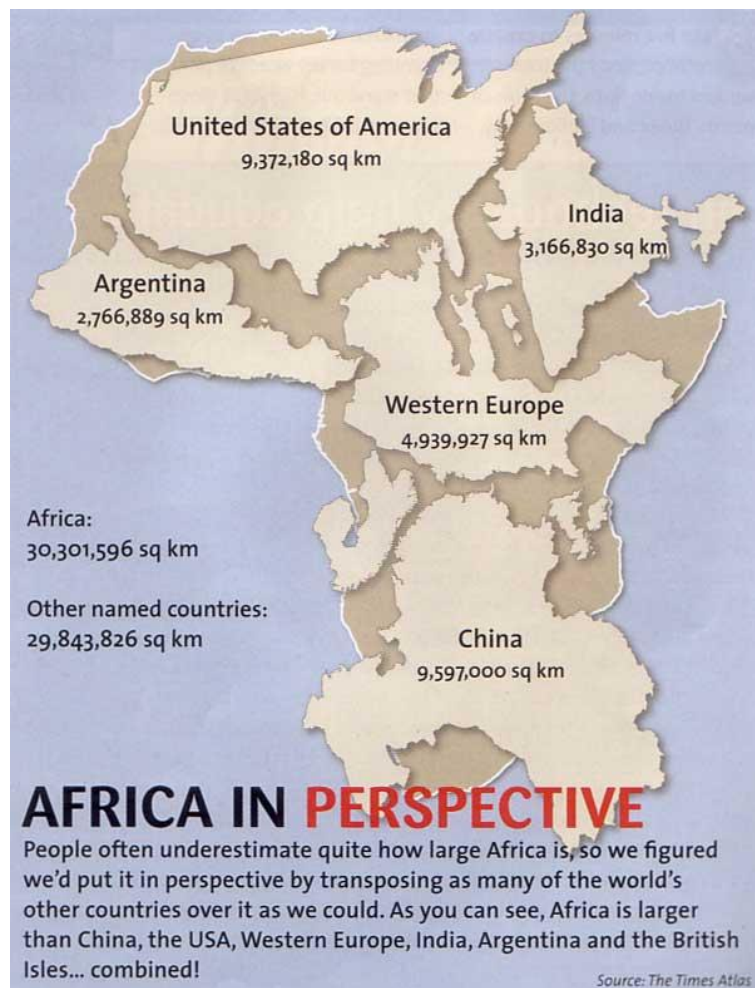
We often have to field requests from clients who tell us that they have got 14 days to safari in Africa and would like to see the following:

Gorillas, Masai Mara, Serengeti, Ngorongoro, Victoria Falls, Okavango Delta and the Big 5. Then a day in Cape Town would be nice before heading home. Exaggerated? Well, no!! Most people have absolutely no idea just how big Africa is and so we thought that we would send this out this month. This map (below) illustrates very effectively just how much larger the continent is than most people think. Perhaps those of you that have not been to Africa will understand why we so often have to manage our client expectations downwards as far as the number of countries they can reasonably visit. Their expectations however are usually exceeded by the experience that we ensure they have. Have a good look at the map and see what I mean!

Poaching is an ever increasing problem in Africa. There are many reasons - Rhino horn for deranged men in Asia - mainly China, exquisite skins from Leopards and Lions, body parts from Lions, Leopards and other animals for so called medicinal purposes and then finally antelope and other animals such as Elephant killed for "bush meat" - dried meat that is then taken and either used by the poacher to feed his family or sold to others. Whatever the reason thousands upon thousands of animals are killed or maimed annually by some of the most horrendous methods. Snares made from loops of wire are particularly insidious and cruel and the animals suffer greatly before either dying of asphyxiation, thirst or blood loss or finally killed when the snare is checked. I encourage you to get involved whenever you can by supporting organisations that try and get some semblance of control back. Most game reserves have anti poaching units as do some

government agencies. This increase in poaching activity is even encroaching upon reserves that we use frequently.

I was appalled to read a report recently that the newly elected/appointed President of Zambia released 673 people (many poachers) serving time in jail with the message - "if you want to kill Impala for food then go for it". It is also reported that he has disbanded the Zambia Wildlife Authority and so the anti poaching units will no longer officially exist and harangued them for placing the welfare of wildlife ahead of that of the human population by stopping the human population from killing wildlife. Two of them were recently shot while on anti poaching duty. Go figure where this will end!



I also was most disturbed to read that Dr Douw Grobler, who was the chief veterinarian of Kruger National Park and famous for leading the translocation of large numbers of Elephant and other wildlife from Kruger National Park to new areas across Africa, had been arrested for allegedly aiding in the poaching of Rhino for their horn. I was even more concerned to see the large number of people who immediately condemned him long before he has appeared in a court of law to have the charges heard and either proven or not. He has been considered guilty and chastised before anything has been proved. Whatever happened to the presumption of innocence? I hope that he is innocent because

- if not - then it is indeed a very sad day for the preservation of Rhino. Let's keep an open mind until we know for certain what actually transpired!

Finally can you please like www.facebook.com/destinationsafrica so you can learn about our great company!

News from Savanna,

With thanks and acknowledgement to the management, Paddy, Neil, Patrick, James, David and Greg at the lodge.

Summer has arrived in full swing during the past two weeks, and we have reached temperatures of 40 Celsius (104 F) on a number of days. The confirmation of summer has also arrived, with the first sightings of the Woodland Kingfisher and impala lambs being reported. We were fortunate recently to enjoy a young lamb discovering the potential of his legs for the first time, racing around with great delight, jumping and stotting as if there were no tomorrow!



With the searing heat during the middle of the day, the buffalo herds which have lingered on Savanna's property frequent the water holes in front of the lodge, providing constant viewing for our guests from their suites.

On one particular afternoon, we were treated to four elephant bulls swimming at Dam 5, enjoying the cool water, and then afterwards having a fantastic mud bath. Many animals are enjoying these mud baths at the moment, as they serve to deter biting insects, as well as keeping the animals cooler for longer, while the wet mud slowly dries.



The elephant herds have also been seen frequently, with some very small calves present in most of the herds. It is also fantastic to see how relaxed these gentle giants are around the vehicles, considering the various ages of the young!



The lion viewing has continued to be exceptional and, early in the week, we found the two young Ottawa males close to Savanna, watching a large herd of buffalo. The herd moved off, and the males followed for some time during the morning, but did not get close enough to try anything. They eventually lay down in some shade to avoid the heat of the day.



Ironically, later in the afternoon, the herd of buffalo came back, unaware of the lions' presence, and would have walked right on top of them, had it not been for a narrow, deep gully between them. Again, the lions did not seem too interested in the herd, and eventually moved off, past a dam where they had a long drink.



As mentioned last week, the Mapogo males are still walking huge distances, and on one occasion, two of them walked from our northern boundary, through the whole concession, to just north of our southern boundary, where it was their turn to have a look at the buffalo herd... Unfortunately for them, the wind changed and gave away their position, allowing the herd to gang up and chase them off!



Viewing of the female prides has been just as spectacular, with the main group, the Ximungwe pride, being seen most often. Three of the females with the four cubs have been together the whole time, and some stability seems to be coming back to the pride. Having spent some time in the north, they have returned to the southern sections again, concentrating for a while around Mackenzie Camp. We found them in the clearings, with three of the males, offering a spectacular sighting out in the open, before going down to the pan to drink.



They headed north again a few days later along the Boulders drainage line where, with some unusual energy levels for this time of year, they chased and played for some time, even climbing a tree in front of our Land Rover!



The three Ottawa females also made an appearance for one day, before heading north and east again. The three young females, now just over four years old, are unsure of themselves, and are avoiding the Ximungwe pride rather than challenge the position of boundaries at this stage.

The Wild Dog were seen briefly during the past two weeks but, as always, provided great viewing while they were here! They covered ground in their characteristically rapid fashion, and were in and off our concession in a short time, but not before killing and finishing off a young male nyala!



On the leopard front, interestingly, Kashane has not been seen all that much, and there has been more viewing over the past two weeks of the Day One male. He is starting to fill out very nicely, and is in magnificent condition. He is also moving about more, and has been seen hunting impala down in the south, mating with Metsi in the central regions, as well as being found on one occasion much further north than normal.



Very little has been seen of Metsi or her two cubs, except for one occasion where we had a great view of the relaxed male cub. He is also slowly gaining more confidence, which was evident in the way he tested this by hissing at the vehicle!



Tlangisa has been her usual reliable self, providing us with some of the best leopard viewing over the past two weeks!

Sightings of Hlabankunzi have also been frequent and, with the birth of the impala lambs, the hunting techniques of most of the leopards have suddenly changed. As young impalas are relatively easy to catch, it is not necessary to be as cautious with stalking, and most energy is just put into finding the prey. This means that the leopard are walking fairly briskly, noses to the ground, following the scent of the impala, in the hope of flushing out a youngster hidden in the undergrowth.



Later in the week, we had another fantastic view of the large herd of buffalo coming down for a drink at Treehouse Mackenzie Dam. This remains one of the most impressive sightings to have 500 or more buffalo milling in the clearing around a waterhole!



Unbelievably, we have had another sighting of the rare and seldom seen pangolin. We have now seen eight pangolin in just under two months on our concession which, for those of you who have been to the bush frequently, is quite unheard of! Long may it last!



Once again, we end this week's blog with some photos of the smaller and seldom seen species which inhabit our Savanna. These are the Black-chested Snake-eagle, Square-tailed nightjar, a Flap-necked Chameleon, and one of the many dragonfly species found here in summer.



As summer continues, and we near the end of the year, we hope to see many of you back here enjoying the magnificent beauty of Africa...

GOVERNORS CAMP COLLECTION LAUNCHES GOVERNORS' AVIATION

We are delighted to announce the launch of *Governors' Aviation*, a flight service using both our existing Cessna 206 and a newly imported Cessna Grand Caravan aircraft. This makes The *Governors' Camp Collection* the only safari operator in Kenya and Rwanda able to offer both Cessna Caravan flights and accommodation in house.

We will be offering daily flights from both Wilson Airport in Nairobi and Loldia House direct to *Governors Camp*, Masai Mara. The aircraft will also be available for private charters within the region.



To mark the launch of *Governors' Aviation* we are introducing a Special introductory offer for 2011.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER FOR 2011

Book flights on *Governors' Aviation* in combination with your accommodation at any *Governors' Camp Collection Kenya Property* and receive a discount on your accommodation rates. This offer applies to bookings made from the 10th November 2011 for bookings from 10th November 2011 - 30th June 2012. For these special offers, please contact jma@destinationsafrica.com.au.

This offer is limited to the capacity of the aircraft, and is offered on a first come first serve basis, once the aircraft is fully booked the offer will not be extended to other bookings. Please check availability and rates with us before confirming. The discounted rates apply to *Governors Camp Collection Kenya properties* only. Normal contract rates apply for *Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge* bookings. Additional terms and conditions apply to flight bookings and are available from our office.

* On days when the aircraft is fully booked at the time of confirming your reservation with our office, the special offer of discounted accommodation rates will not apply.

* On days when our aircraft are not flying, and we have confirmed flight bookings for you we reserve the right to re-book all or part of the flights on Safarilink / Air Kenya, and the special offer will apply in these circumstances. It may also be possible that you fly one way on our Cessna Caravan and one way on our Cessna 206.

For flight rates, discounted contract rates, flying safari packages and terms and conditions please contact us jma@destinationsafrica.com.au.

As this our December edition we at Destinations Africa wish you all a blessed Christmas with family and friends, safe journeys and then a truly great New Year. Lets all wish for greater understanding of our wonderful wildlife heritage and the end to all poaching and thus the preservation of Rhino and other endangered species.

The End!

We hope to see you travelling on safari next year. Get your bookings in now!

Cheers.

John

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