



MESSAGE STICK

July 2011

JMA's Musings!

June has been a month of mixtures for us. We have had to face up to difficult times with airlines cancelling flights due to volcanic ash - not only within Australia but also delayed flights from South Africa. It has however only affected a few clients.

On the other hand we have had a very large number of clients travelling during the month and it has been great fun - and logistically challenging - to keep up with who is where and when!! However we have been very motivated by the phone calls and letters received from our clients both during their safari and then on returning. So I am going to indulge myself and place some of the (abbreviated) quotes here.

"Just wanted to thank you so much for organising our recent trip. It was absolutely wonderful ! We've spread the word about our wonderful trip and I'm sure we now have family members saving money to go and experience the delights themselves. We'll make sure we send them Destinations Africa's way. Hope to do business with you again some day soon." Megan

"Our trip to Africa heightened our senses immensely due to the animals, the people, the colours, sights, sounds, food and of course the potential of this exotic land- my camera couldn't click fast enough, there wasn't enough hours in the day, my eyes couldn't move around the scenes quick enough and at times not enough battery power in our cameras to capture it all! Back home a month now and as they say 'reality bites' and I am quite often finding myself lost in daydreams of our safari days or planning the next adventure. We had the best time ever - our photos have everyone talking about planning their own safari." Hannora

"Hugh and I have been saying to each other that our Kenyan holiday is possibly the best one we have ever had! We just loved it! The people, the animals, the safaris, the guides, the guards, the tent, the camp, the scenery, the 4WDs, the food, the service, Kenyan coffee, Tusker beer just amazing. We have taken thousands of photos.

We would like to congratulate Destinations Africa on your wonderful organisational skills - everything ran as clockwork. Guides, links, etc, all there when promised, luggage waiting for us at Giraffe Manor (what a gem!!), chatty Albatros Travel drivers (Morfett and then Godfrey), great Nairobi hotel in the Southern Sun although we did wonder if the stop/start traffic was ever going to let us get there!!

Words are useless to describe how we feel. It exceeded our expectations. We felt safe. We felt very spoiled. We felt privileged to be able to see that lovely world. We felt humbled listening to the little comments and stories from the guides about their own lives and dreams.

So we can only say thank you a million times for organising everything for us and for your prompt responses to emails, questions, etc. We were SO lucky we found Destinations Africa on the internet when we first decided to go to Kenya. PS Kenya was so good we almost forgot we had spent the previous week in Venice!!" Diane and Hugh

"I just wanted to thank you and the team at Destinations Africa for organising our trip over the last couple of weeks. We had a fabulous experience without any hitches or stress. At every stage we were met by friendly people who seemed intent on making us feel welcome and made sure we arrived safely at the various locations. The camps we stayed at were outstanding and we have brought back unforgettable memories. Thanks again for your professional guidance and assistance." Geoff and Annette

"The work that you have put into planning this for me is amazing. Even though my trip is still far away you treat me like it is just around the corner. Your customer service and professionalism is next to none. I work within the service industry and really congratulate you for your amazing service and attention to detail. If this is a prelude to what to expect from your company I am going to have one hell of a trip. I am looking forward to it now more than ever." Debi

As mentioned last month we have now finalised our 2012 **Hosted Pink Diamond Safari**. If you would like to join us then please contact me so that we can reserve your place. A concerted marketing programme is about to commence to Australian cricket fans and various corporate enterprises and I would like you to have an opportunity to enjoy this very special safari.

It has taken a long time an awful lot of planning, negotiating and discussion to finalise it as we have had to book out the lodges entirely for our small group! However it is now all in place and we invite you to apply.

Calling all Cricket and Wildlife Devotees

Destinations Africa are proud to announce that **John and Hilary Mitchell-Adams** will lead our "Hosted Pink Diamond Safari" from 8th to 22nd of August 2012.

Our exciting guests will be **Allan Border and his wife Jane**.



It is hard to think of a more influential figure in Australian Cricket, a man who did more to shape the game in this part of the world than Allan Border. Border, the battler, who through iron will, not only coerced greatness from himself but from those around him. In the space of five years, under Border's guidance, Australia won the world cup in India and brought home the 1989 ashes, beginning a dynasty against England that would last 16 years. Australia was on its way to extraordinary heights in no small part due to his actions and influence on the game. His outstanding service to his country, sport and community has been recognised through his Australian of the Year award in 1990 and being selected as one of the 55 inaugural inductees of the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame. Furthermore, his importance to the Australian cricket is recognised annually when the Australian player of the year receives the Allan Border Medal.

This is a unique opportunity to get to know the former Australian Captain and share the experiences of the very best wild life safari available.

The Safari will cover 14 days and include some of the finest game lodges in South Africa and Botswana as well as a visit to the famous Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe. You will enjoy the most exciting game viewing available in these countries as well as only the very best

of accommodation, service and transport. This Safari will be of our Pink Diamond Class which means only the best of everything.

We only have availability for **seven (7) couples** so reserve your place early!

The cost of **A\$21,000 per person sharing** is inclusive of all accommodation, meals, drinks at meals, drinks at lodges, activities, functions, game drives, park fees, internal flights, charter flights, gratuities and portorage - in fact all costs from arrival in South Africa to departure from South Africa! The only extra will be your personal spending money and visas.

Flights from Australia cannot be included because of varying requirements of individuals however we have been able to negotiate an excellent price from South African Airways (code shared with Qantas). We can also arrange for any extensions, before or after the safari, that clients may want - e.g. Cape Town.

A full detailed itinerary can be seen by opening the link below:

<http://wetu.com/Map/index.html?itinerary=74ef0eac-fdaa-4fd9-a3b7-de9ad8922546&cl=1>

Contact me for further information and payment details.

News from Savanna.

With acknowledgement and thanks to Paddy Hagelthorn and the Savanna Team

The highlight of the week was something a little different... On Wednesday evening, we witnessed a spectacular Total Lunar Eclipse! The weather was perfect, and the show started just as we sat down for dinner in the boma at 20h30, and was fully eclipsed about an hour later. The next lunar eclipse to match this one will only be seen here again in 2015!





This week we have also been spoilt with some great sunrises, especially on the cold mornings when the mist gathers in the valleys!





The wild dog viewing has continued this week, with the pups getting bigger and bolder by the day. When the adults are around, the licence is given to run around and one can already see the 'fighting' for dominance starting within the pups. Mid-week the dogs suddenly decided to move den, and for a few days, they moved to a den closer to Savanna. This allowed us more frequent sightings of them, and at one point, the adults took the pups on an excursion to Nkombe dam. After letting them run around for a while, they returned to the den before going on the late afternoon hunt. Unfortunately, they did not stay in that den long, and it seems the time has come for the pups to start their nomadic life with the adults. They moved off our concession going east, but hopefully they will not stay away too long...



Metsi seems to have separated her two cubs, with the more skittish one being seen briefly near Mackenzie Airstrip a few times, and the more relaxed one much further north. We had a great view of the more relaxed cub as he waited in a marula tree for **Metsi** to return. While sitting in the tree, a noise south of him grabbed his attention,

and a large elephant bull came out of the thickets toward his tree. The bull eventually walked directly under the cub, and at one point it seemed that the cub considered jumping on its back for fun, but wisely decided not to!





We had a rare sighting of all five Ximungwe females together just outside Savanna Camp. They have been split for some time now as they have been having cubs, so it was great to see them all together again.



It did not last too long, and the next day we found three of the females with the two older cubs finishing off the remains of a sub-adult impala. One female had managed to secure the last scraps and was defending them from the rest of the pride with aggressive growling! At one point she took her prize and moved further off to finish it in peace, which allowed the cubs to search for scraps where the kill had been. They managed to get a few bones to chew on for their efforts!



The Mapogo headed further east than they had for some time, and apparently got into a skirmish with the new coalition of four younger males which have established themselves east of our concession. This forced the ageing Mapogo brother to return to the centre of their territory, before relaxing and resuming their territorial patrols and vocalising! Fortunately, they managed to get away from the fight relatively unscathed, with just a few scratches and bruises to show for it.



The young rhino calf mentioned a few weeks ago is doing well, and her very relaxed mother allows us to get great views of it, as she is so unperturbed by the vehicle's presence.



Tlangisa has made a welcome return to the southern parts of our concession, and as usual, is providing great sightings. On two occasions we spent almost 45 minutes with her as she moved through very thick brush looking for anything to hunt! Every so often she would climb onto a termite mound to use as elevation to assist her in her search, allowing great photo opportunities. Being exceptionally opportunistic, she suddenly darted off, leaping into the air and through a bush, and came out with a grey-headed bush shrike which she caught mid-air! These little snacks keep them going when finding larger prey proves difficult!



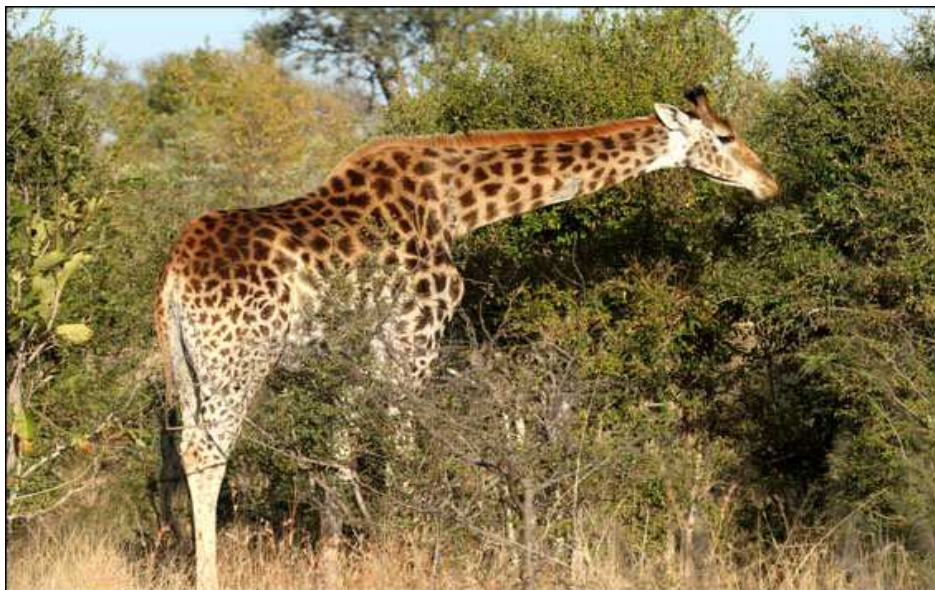
One evening she had a scrub hare kill in some very thick bush near Mackenzie Airstrip, and the Kashane male walked past within 30 metres of her without seeing her! Fortunately he walked past her, and carried on with his patrols.



Hlabankunzi has also been pretty scarce this week, but we did have sightings of her over a few days when she killed a male impala just south of the Sand River. She never took it up a tree, and fed on it for a day and a half, before a hyena found it and robbed her of the kill.



The giraffe viewing has been relatively good this week, and we had an interesting sighting of a female eating from a Tamboti tree. Although this is not unheard of, this tree has poisonous latex, and only certain species feed on it.



The hippo at Georgie's dam was present on a number of days this week, and as usual, gave us some great displays in the early afternoons.

Lesser Bush Babies are not all that common in our area, and so we were very excited to get a great view and some photographs of this small primate. It is only about 22 cm long, but can leap up to 5 metres! They are nocturnal hunters, and feed mainly on insects and small arthropods, but also utilise tree sap and gum.



As we pass the shortest day in the year, we look forward to the days lengthening and warming up, and to sharing these experiences with you all again next week.

News from Governors Camp - Masai Mara

Disneynature's African Cats

Disneynature's latest film **African Cats** has just been released in the United States. Filmed in the Masai Mara the team began their shoot from **Governors' Camp**.

The film follows the lives and adventures of Mara a lion cub, Sita a cheetah mother of five boisterous cubs and Fang a male lion defending his pride from outside males and his sons.



African Cats was directed by Keith Scholey (Big Cat Diary) and Alastair Forthergill (Earth). Narrated by Oscar winning actor Samuel L Jackson the film has received widespread praise. The Los Angeles Times movie review stated that African Cats was "a visually and aurally stunning film that brings viewers up close and very personal with several "big cat" families - as well as a dazzling array of other safari-esque species" Added to this the makers Disneynature are working with African Wildlife Foundation to preserve an important wildlife corridor outside Amboseli National Park in Kenya. Donating a percentage of ticket sales and opening week revenue to the project. The [Disneynature website](#) has plenty of information with downloads, educational information and stories about the main characters.

The Truth About Lions

The release of African Cats comes hot on the heels of another big cat documentary, the **Truth About Lions** which was released in two parts in March in the UK by the BBC. Governors' Camp hosted the film crew for the Truth About Lions documentary and the famous Marsh Pride of Lions were the stars of the show.



lion cubs courtesy of Chala Cadot

Warren Samuels one of the BBC's team had the following to say about the choice of location; "we could have gone anywhere in Africa to find a pride of lions and film them to match the behavioral science that we have gathered from leading lion experts, but the Musiara Marsh stood out as being one of the prettiest locations to film lions in and the Marsh Pride were the obvious choice as the films main characters, as they are so well known by audiences worldwide."

We hope you enjoy watching the Big Cats of the Masai Mara in African Cats and the Truth About Lions and hope to welcome you on a Governors' Camp Collection safari to see the action live out on the great plains of Kenya's Masai Mara.

Destinations Africa has a tremendous relationship with the Governors Group of Camps and we recommend them whenever we have clients visiting the Masai Mara.

The End!

Well that is it for this month.

Happy Safaris!

John

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