

NEWSLETTER – May 2021

What a wonderful Summer season we had here at the lodge!

The rainy season started early and continued right through the whole Summer (which is not entirely what we are used to...)

The cloud formations were spectacular and all the moisture in the air created a “Sun Ring” - which in itself, is rare to see but absolutely amazing.

Dew drops in the early morning on Orb-spider webs, makes you stare in amazement at the technique and beauty of their creations which one does not normally notice.



Summer also brings us “Baby Animals”.....

There is nothing that makes guests go: “Aww, look how cute...”, like a baby animal.

Impalas and Blue Wildebeest babies were the first to arrive and were surprisingly happy to pose for lots of photos on game drive.

A lot of animal babies are different colours to the parents, mostly for camouflage – as some parents leave their young hidden whilst grazing and will return to their offspring later. Other babies are the same colour, like the Impalas – this helps them blend into the masses of adults and that way they stand a better chance at survival.



Obviously, at the lodge, one of our biggest highlights of Summer is: “Christmas!”

Celebrating Christmas (COVID-style of course) with our guests, was very special and intimate for our staff and very different to previous years. But everyone had an amazing time with great food, macaroons and Christmas crackers.



But Summer is not all about the baby animals, it creates a wonderland of flowers and fungi – if you are prepared to look at the smaller, more intricate things out there.....



With the abundance of wild flowers, herds of Eland came out to enjoy this delight. Eland are the largest antelope in the world. It is easy to hear them coming as their knees make a very distinct “clicking” sound as the tendon move over the bone while bending.



Birds have returned from their Winter homes and some have taken up residence around the lodge, especially the Weavers and Swallows.

Above is a photo of the Lesser Masked Weaver as well as the Southern Masked Weaver with their respective nests above them.

This shows that even they look very similar – there are vast differences on closer inspection.

They use different parts of grass to weave their masterpieces and the Lesser Masked Weaver has longer entrance to their nests. Obvious differences to the birds are the colour of their eyes and the black mask around the face – i.e. the Southern Masked Weaver has a reddish eye and their mask stops just above the eyebrow.

Our guests were lucky enough to find this Blacksmith Plover nest, hidden between rocks and twigs.

Camouflage is absolute key for survival in nature and by having eggshells that look similar to the rocky surrounding, helps this mother protect her nest when she goes foraging.



Even in the unsure times, everyone at the lodge went above and beyond to make Valentine's Day special - from hand-painted placecards, candle-lit dinners to romantic turndowns in the rooms. Our chefs put their heart and soul into creating warming, decadent food like the Roasted Tomato & Basil soup with parmesan crostini and the Strawberry macaroons with berry-champagne jelly cubes.....



Lions in Madikwe have always been providing our guests with great photo opportunities, but it is always great to find newborn cubs barely visible through the tall grass as mum moves them to a new location. Our ranger, Stewart, were lucky enough to find this treasure with his guests on game drive.



These cubs are very lucky to have the dominant males as their fathers - as these males defended not only their territory, but their females and cubs with the upmost strength and ferocity against any intruders.

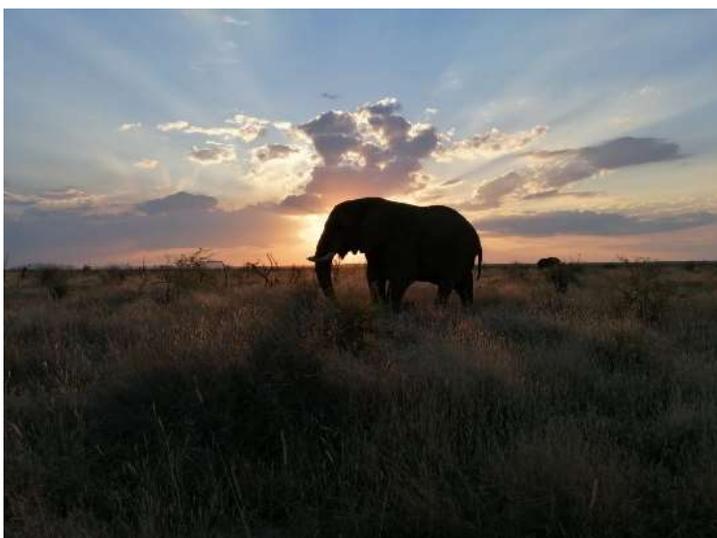
As we slowly moved into Autumn, the air changed to slightly cooler in the early mornings and late evenings – prompting everyone to pull a blanket or two out of storage. However, this time of year creates the most spectacular sunrises and sunsets.



These beautiful sunrises and sunsets provide, even to the novice photographer, a prize-winning photograph.

With the change in season, comes the colour-changing leaves and grasses which pose as stand-in subjects in the absence of animals.

Although, they are perhaps not quite as spectacular as an Elephant silhouette crossing the open grasslands.





Our female Cheetah and her cubs are doing extremely well. Three out of the original four cubs have survived so far and are well on their way to adulthood.



Autumn is also time for Easter.

The staff at the lodge pulled together again to create a beautiful day with something for everyone – with family-style lunch platters to chocolate Easter egg-decorated dinner tables glowing with candles and fairy lights.



The weather played along, providing a warm Autumn evening and we had a magical dinner under our Leadwood trees (“Motswiri” in Tswana – the local language) at the outside dining area.

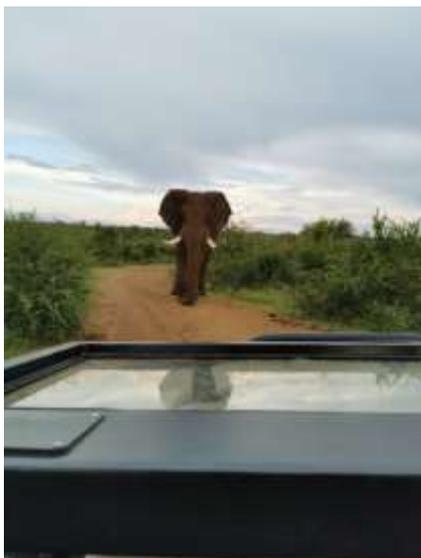
Big five sightings are always a hit, but the general wildlife around the Park is amazing this time of year.

The guests were able to see Zebras, Giraffe, Blue Wildebeest together with Big Five like Buffalo and Elephants.

With water decreasing around the Reserve as Winter creeps closer, waterholes are becoming a good opportunity to catch some of these animals out in the open.



Just like ordinary people in the city, we out here in the bush also experience “road blocks” and “traffic jams” as well as the occasional “buglar elephant” pretending to feed next to the security gate – waiting for a chance to come inside if the gate is left open.



Our lodge waterhole has also had increasingly more activity as it gets dryer out in the bush and natural water is becoming limited.



We have a variety of critters around the lodge and if you are lucky, one of these might move around for you to see.

The Giant stick insect blend well into the dull colours of Autumn and Winter. They can grow to measure the length of your hand to your elbow and resembles dried twigs as camouflage.



Occasionally, you see large Gecko's come out at night to catch mosquitoes and other insects around the lights.

We are still unsure as to the correct identification of the above Gecko, but the closest we could find, was the Walhbergs Velvet Gecko.

This one in the above photo was bigger than a man's hand.

Our Chefs are on a constant drive to create more and more exciting dishes with local produce.

As most of the people in today's environment are becoming more conscious about eating healthy, our Chefs are creating wonderful dishes with more healthy ingredients without losing the taste and quality thereof.

They cater for most kinds of dietaries and create dishes that make the person with special dietary requests, feel as if they are eating exactly the same as all the other guests



As most of us are going through this difficult time of COVID-19, why don't you take a small break from all the worry and hustle & bustle of today's life.....



Come and relax in the tranquility of Motswiri lodge, with birds singing in the trees above the pool, animals drinking and splashing in the waterhole, Rangers that go the extra mile to show you amazing animal sightings to the warm, roaring fire waiting for you in the Main area upon your return and a glass of sherry just ready to sip.



Our staff are waiting to greet you with a warm facecloth, a refreshing drink and warm, friendly smiles (even though they are hidden behind our masks)

Book now with our friendly Reservation ladies and enjoy a relaxing few days away from it all – alone, as a couple or as a family.....

Warm bush greetings
The Motswiri Team

+27 11 363 3587

reservations@motswiri.com

www.motswiri.com