

Who's calling the shots at the feeding place

It is very interesting to watch all of the different animals and even different animal species gathering at the feeding locations on the Estate.

Who's the boss? Where do the different animals fit into the hierarchy of getting food at the feeding place? The animals that frequently gather around the feeding places are mature kudu bulls, immature kudu bulls, kudu cows, young kudu bulls, male warthogs, female warthogs and young ones, guinea fowl and baboons.

The first animals to start feeding after the feed has been put out in the various containers are the guinea fowl, followed by mature kudu cows, young kudu cows and young kudu bulls. The baboons are the next to arrive followed by the mature kudu bulls, the female warthogs and the last to arrive are the male warthogs. When a mature kudu bull arrives at a feeding container it takes control and is in every sense of the word the 'boss'. When a baboon arrives at a container it will chase off the kudu cows, the young kudu bulls, the immature kudu bulls, the female warthogs and the little ones. The same goes for a male warthog arriving at a feeding container. Usually male warthogs are careful and will avoid baboons at the feeding location, simply because of their numbers, but when a single baboon and a single male warthog come face to face at the feeding container the warthog will usually call the shots.

Once all the different animals of the various species have arrived the hierarchy at the feeding location are the following: mature kudu bulls, male warthog, baboon, immature kudu bulls, adult female kudu cows, young kudu cows and young kudu bulls, and at the bottom of this hierarchy, the female warthog and young ones along with the guinea fowl.



In the July 2012 issue we featured a picture of and an article on a buffalo cow and a calf that were sold for R20 million rand on a game auction. In the beginning of September a new record was set when a buffalo bull was sold on an auction held at Bela-Bela. The bull, Horison (above), is four years and ten months old with a horn spread of over 53 inches. It was sold for R26 million rand and this is officially the most money ever paid for a wild animal in South Africa.



The previous record for a buffalo bull sold on an auction was R18 million rand. This particular bull, Senatla (right), had a horn spread of 51 7/8 inches.

With spring in full swing and summer approaching, the cycle of a new generation being born is once again experienced at various locations on the Estate.

In the vicinity of the big traffic circle three new crowned plovers started their struggle for survival. Not long after they were born, two of the chicks disappeared. The remaining one is still going strong. In the vicinity of the power sub-station another pair of crowned plovers had two young ones.



On the north western side of Nwanedi Crescent a pair of Spotted Dikkop or *Burhinus capensis* (picture) decided to invest in offspring.

The nest was discovered on 14 September and it had only one egg. These birds prefer to breed in open or lightly wooded landscapes where there are areas of bare ground and the grass and forb cover is short. The eggs, usually two, are laid on the ground with little or no scrape being made and will hatch after 24-29 days. The Spotted Dikkop is mainly nocturnal but will occasionally feed during daytime on heavily overcast days.

Closer to the end of September two waterbuck bulls engaged one another in a fight over territory and for the right to breed with the females. The fight turned ugly when one bull, in all probability by accident, stuck his horn into the eye socket of the other bull.

The penetration of the horn into the eye socket not only resulted in the animal losing its eye but the suspicion is that the injury caused bleeding and pressure inside the skull. This resulted in the waterbuck losing the ability to see with the other eye that wasn't injured in the process. Three days after the altercation the waterbuck bull died.



During the middle of September a concerned resident called on the wildlife management team and reported that a very weak warthog was seen in the vicinity of Sandspruit Street. The wildlife management team found a female warthog that was very lean and with an obvious health problem. The team decided that the best solution was to put the warthog down.



A post-mortem revealed that the warthog had ingested a plastic bag and in the process the bag clogged up the digestive system to such an extent that very little digestion could take place in the small intestines. This was the direct result of the warthog loosing condition and eventually it did not even have enough energy to get around anymore. It is a well known fact that parasites, in this case fleas feeding on blood, would increase tremendously and target an animal that

goes into distress like this particular warthog. Everywhere on the warthog's body blood stains could be seen as the warthog tried to rub the area's most affected by the fleas against trees and rocks. In addition to being in a bad physical condition, the flea situation resulted in unnecessary blood loss. The combination of these factors resulted in the warthog's health going downhill to the point of no return.



The wildlife management team would like to request the tenants living on the Estate to put their rubbish bags in a rubbish bin or wheely bin, and to move the rubbish bin or wheely bin to the sidewalk on Tuesday mornings only, when rubbish removal takes place. By doing so the warthogs will be less likely to get hold of and eat the rubbish and plastic bags put out for collection. Some tenants place their rubbish bags out on the sidewalk on Monday evening already; this is not allowed and during the night the warthogs and nocturnal animals tear the bags open.

WHAT'S LURKING IN THE DARK?



At night when most of us are asleep the nocturnal animals on the Estate come out to feed.

These pictures were taken by a trail camera on a game trail located on the southern side of the Estate in the wildlife area. The African civet cat or *Civettictis civetta* (below) occurs all over the northern and eastern side of South Africa and into the countries north of us. Their colouration is mainly grey, black and white. This animal, although it is called a cat, is in reality closer to the dog family. They cannot climb trees and are usually found in areas with good brush cover and along well watered areas. It is therefore not uncommon to find their tracks along the tamboti storm water canals and the dam area located on the Estate. Civet cats are considered omnivorous and will feed on wild fruits, insects, mice, frogs, reptiles, birds, large spiders and even carrion if this is available.

The preferred fruits include species like Marula (*Sclerocarya birrea*), Raisin bush (*Grewia* spp.), wild fig (*Ficus* spp.), buffalo thorn (*Ziziphus mucronata*) and Guarri species (*Euclea* spp.).

The Small-spotted genet (*Genetta genetta*) or Kleinkolmuskejaatkat (above) is widespread all over Africa. It is a short-legged species with an elongated body and a white-ringed tail which is about the same length as the head and the body. The body is spotted. Genet cats are proficient climbers and often hunt for birds in trees. They will also feed on insects, mice, small reptiles, frogs, scorpions and will occasionally eat fruit. A hollow tree trunk seems to be the preferred hide-out.



For information on property sales contact:
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We would like to hear your story!

Should you have an event or story you would like to share, please send us your photos and a few words to **wildlife@lantic.net**

From your Wildlife Management Team