

Singita



WILDLIFE JOURNAL
SINGITA SABI SAND, SOUTH AFRICA
For the month of April, Two Thousand and Twenty-Five

Temperature

Average minimum: 18.6°C (65.5°F)
Minimum recorded: 15.0°C (59.0°F)
Average maximum: 28.3°C (82.8°F)
Maximum recorded: 35.0°C (95.0°F)

Rainfall Recorded

For the month: 38.5mm
Season to date: 331.5mm
(*Season = Oct to Sep)

Sunrise & Sunset

Sunrise: 06:09
Sunset: 17:39

The month of April has been a constant reminder of what's to come, some cold temperatures have started to creep in, in the early hours of the morning and late evenings. A few of the more rare nocturnal creatures have also been seen for the month, a reminder how weather and temperatures play a huge role in the moments of certain animals. A late, heavy downpour of rain has settled the dust and meant that all of the territorial cats have had to head out and reiterate their territories on the reserve. Autumn is most certainly upon us - more moderate temperatures and more layers of clothing are definitely required. A fantastic time in the Lowveld to visit and experience the wildlife.

Here's an overview of sightings for April:

Elephants

- Elephants have been in and around the entirety of the reserve. Mid-morning and late afternoon visits to their favourite watering hole have provided guests with remarkable experiences and an insight into their lives away from the constant feeding. Some seriously impressive tuskeders have been seen dotted around the property too, their presence can make us feel so small out here!

Buffaloes

- Large herds of buffalo continue to frequent the south of the reserve. Some coalitions of lions giving them a hard time by trailing them in those areas. With the quality of good grazing disappearing fast their movement has increased.

Lions

- The Mhangeni Pride have been without one of their older lionesses as she has been seen mating with the Talamati and Nkuhuma males. The pride continues to hunt successfully in her absence. Subsequent to the last big rains we haven't found them all together.
- The Plains Camp males have been very vocal in the early hours of the mornings, making setting off for game drive and the anticipation of finding them rather exciting.
- The Nkuhuma sub-adults continue to fly under the radar and avoid confrontations with any other lions in the reserve.
- The Ximungwe Pride have been seen fairly regularly with the two, new, little cubs.

Leopards

- Thamba has been seen far east of his usual territory. With the younger Ntomi male frequenting those parts, Thamba is not all that keen to be around. Although we have heard the Ravenscourt male in the western sector has been pushing Thamba further east, out of his usually occupied territory.
- The Nkuwa female has been seen high up on the rocky outcrop not far from where we initially presumed her densite to be. She's been contact calling up there now, but we've yet to confirm her number of cubs. We search eagerly in the hopes of seeing the new faces!
- The Ntoma female has been seen on a number of occasions with suckle marks! Her behaviour towards vehicles has become far more relaxed too which is exciting, not nearly as shy as she has been previously.
- The Hlambela male, Xinzele female and the fairly unknown Rivala female have also been seen.
- The Tisela female and her two young female cubs have also ventured into Singita property a couple of times and have provided us with cherished memories.

Cheetah

- The Makatini family are still all four together. That cheetah has done phenomenally well to get all three of them to this age (over a year). She definitely seems to have the reserve and each of her next moves all figured out.
- The male cheetah also pops up unannounced in the south. He went missing in action after the big rain but has been seen on several occasions subsequent to that.

African wild dogs

- Wild dog sightings have been few and far between this month. The Othawa Pack have been seen only a handful of times. It is that time of the year when they start scratching around for a potential den.

Unusual sightings

- TWO separate sightings of pangolin have been recorded for the month of April! There's a special documentary on Netflix currently airing called "Pangolin. Kulu's Journey" – a really insightful documentary highlighting the trade and rehabilitation of these incredible species which we encourage you all to watch.
- An African civet was also seen in the clearings close to the lodge on the way back from game drive.

Bird list

- We have added 16 more species to the list taking the total to 269 birds. Purple heron and the purple indigobird being the highlights for the month.

Some Bush Stories to follow, as well as the Images for the April Gallery.

The life of a dung beetle

Article by Luke Abbot

If you ever find yourself on safari and spot a small beetle doggedly rolling a ball of dung across the dirt, don't look away—watch closely. You're witnessing one of Africa's most remarkable little workers in action. The dung beetle might not be much to look at, but it's a master of survival, navigation, and environmental clean-up, all rolled into one.

These beetles spend their days tracking down fresh dung using an extraordinary sense of smell. Once they've found their prize, they shape it into a near-perfect sphere—sometimes up to 50 times their own weight—and start rolling. It might look random, but there's purpose in every push. Some males even use these dung balls to attract females, showing off their strength and determination. If all goes well, they bury the ball, the female lays an egg inside, and the next generation hatches into a ready-made meal of dung.

What's even more impressive is how they find their way. During the day, dung beetles steer using patterns of polarized light in the sky—something invisible to us, but clear as day to them. And at night? That's when things really get incredible. Certain species actually use the Milky Way as a compass. They'll climb on top of their dung balls, do a little orientation dance, and then set off in a straight line, guided by the stars. It's the only known case of an insect using our galaxy to stay on course.

But it's not all about astronomical orientation. These beetles are key players in the ecosystem. By burying dung, they return nutrients to the soil, improve its structure, and even help reduce greenhouse gases like methane. They also help control parasites by quickly removing waste from the environment. In short, they're nature's clean-up crew.

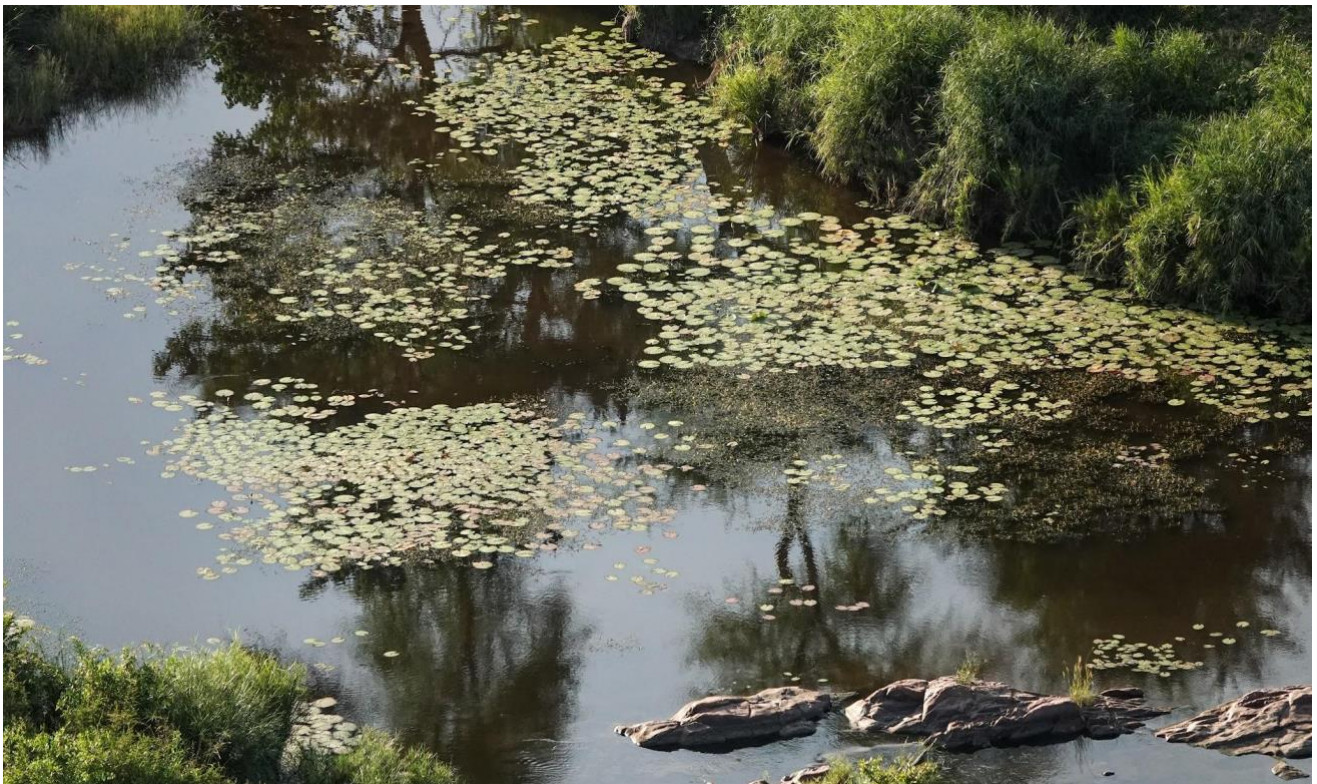
So next time you see one of these determined little beetles at work, give it the respect it deserves. It's not just pushing dung—it's playing a small but vital role in the health of our planet, all while following the stars.



Blue water lilies (*Nymphaea nouchali*)

Article by Lucy Stoffberg

The blue water lily is a captivating flower to see in the slow-moving rivers and pans of the Lowveld. Contrasting with the harshness of both the environment and the animals at times, the delicate water lilies create a surreal image of tranquillity.



But if you look beyond the sky-blue petals, you find a bizarre pollination strategy. When the flowers first open and some stamens are bent in the middle, the flower is in its male phase, allowing insects to visit safely. The next day, the flower opens again, but this time the stamens are fully bent back, revealing a pool of liquid at the centre. At this stage, if an insect enters to collect pollen, the slippery stamens cause it to slip into the liquid. The flower then closes around the insect, which often drowns. Despite this, the flower is not carnivorous—its purpose is not to consume the insect. Instead, the pollen that the insect had collected from other flowers is washed off the insect as it drowns.

Once the hapless insect's pollen has been collected by the flower's inner surfaces, the blossom reopens and releases the dead or alive insect. It's a hauntingly efficient system—one that ensures cross-pollination while highlighting nature's often ruthless ingenuity.

This strange dynamic between beauty and brutality is part of what makes the blue water lily so intriguing. It reminds us that nature is rarely as gentle as it appears. Even in a serene wetland scene amongst the delicate lilies, evolutionary strategies play out with quiet, calculated precision.

The water lily doesn't just survive in the Lowveld—it thrives, by turning even a fleeting visitor into a vessel for life's continuity.

A drive to remember

Article by Sipho Sibuyi

My tracker Law and I would like to share a special moment from one of our afternoon game drives. We were out with guests, parents and two children, who were excited to explore the bush with us.

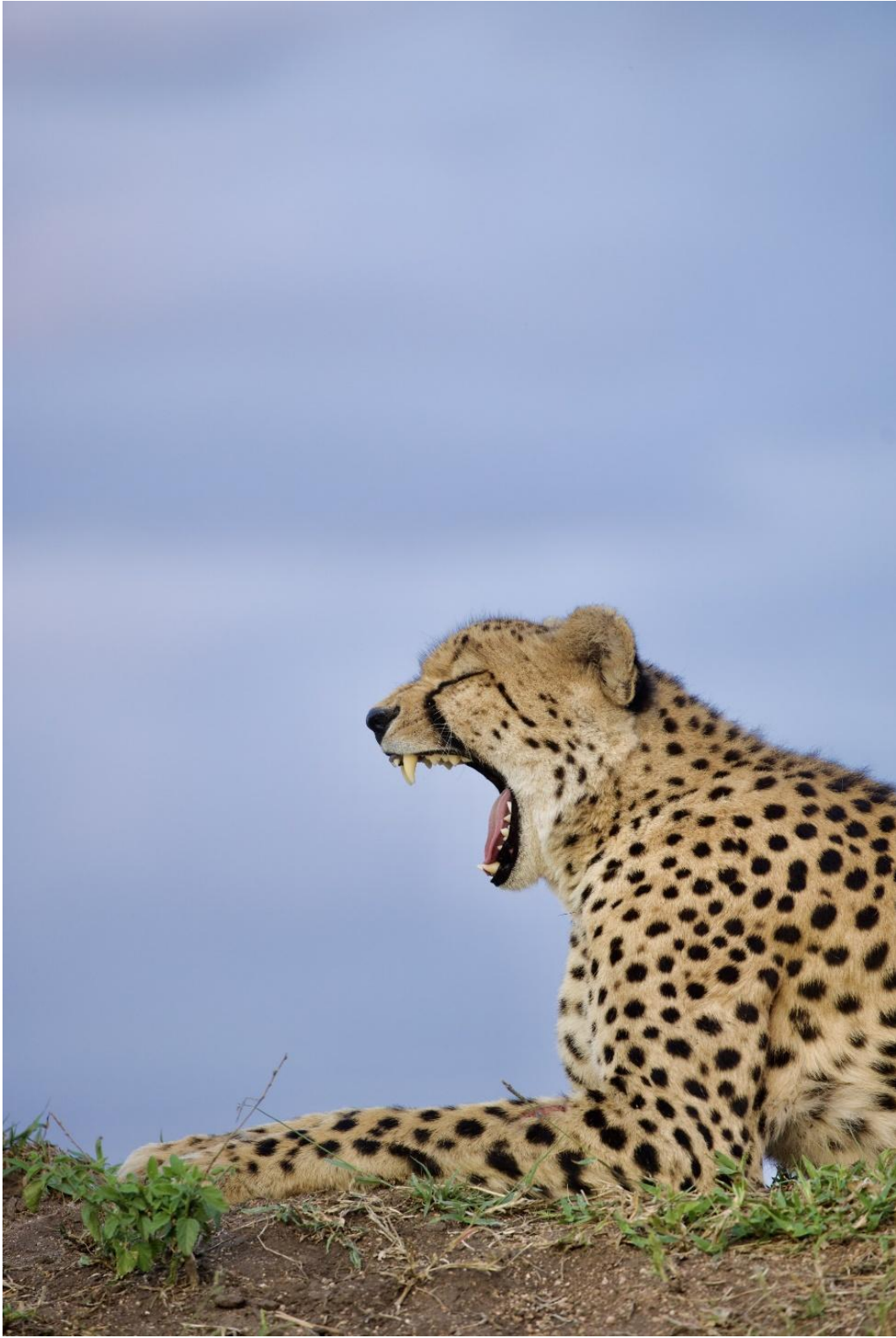
The sun was bright as we left the Ebony Lodge. As we drove, Law, spotted a large bird flying high in the sky. One of the children also noticed it. We decided to follow the bird in the direction of the Singita airstrip. As we approached, the bird began flying lower and eventually perched on a large dead leadwood tree.

It was a brown snake eagle. As it landed, we used our binoculars to get a closer look. We noticed something hanging from its beak - a long green tail. It turned out to be a green snake, possibly a boomslang, as the guests pointed out it didn't have the black spots like the spotted bush snake they had seen earlier.

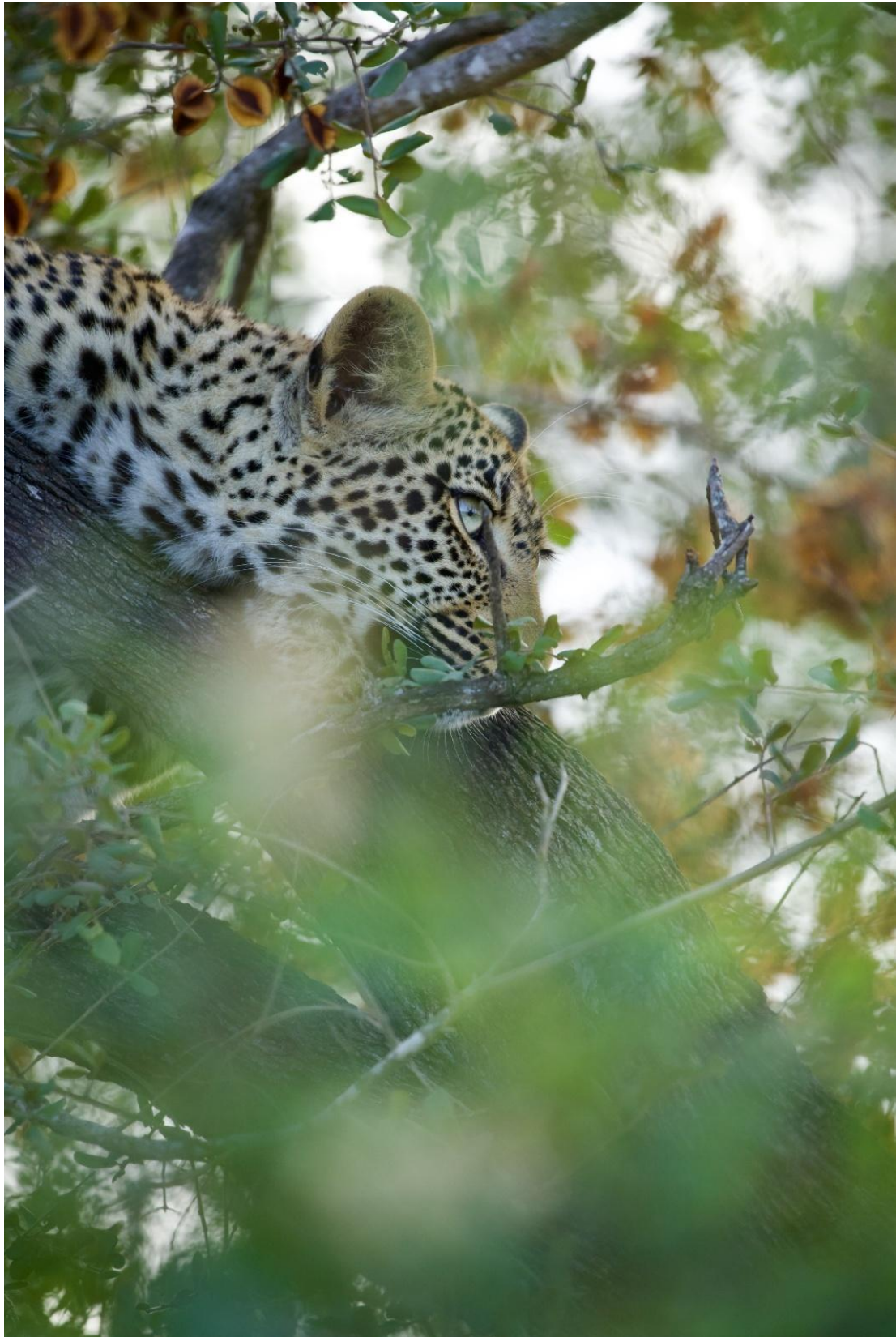
We watched in awe as the eagle finished eating the last part of the snake. The children were thrilled - it was their first time seeing a bird of prey feeding, especially on something as dangerous as a venomous snake.

Brown snake eagles have scaly, featherless legs, which help protect them from snake bites. They are known to hunt venomous snakes like boomslangs, black mambas, and vine snakes.

It was a highlight of the day for the young reptile enthusiasts, and a moment we were all excited to witness.



A male cheetah starting to show signs of life. Image by Matt Durell



A young leopard watching a hyena pass by from the comfort of a high perch. Image by Matt Durell.



A winter wonderland! Image by Lucy Stoffberg.

Classic leopard in tree pose.



Awe and wonder.



Sundowners.

