

The Snake, the Mongoose and the Eagle

On the late afternoon in January 2003, we enjoyed a thrilling sighting of seven Dwarf Mongoose attacking a large Mozambique Spitting-Cobra. A single mongoose would rush in and attempt to bite at the snake, quickly rushing away into the refuge of a hole as another mongoose took advantage of the distracted snake and launched another attack.

The snake appeared to be coming off worst and was bleeding from the neck when suddenly a Brown Snake-Eagle swooped down and snatched a Dwarf Mongoose, flying off with the small mammal dangling from its talons.

Mishak Nyawo

White Rhino Mating

While watching a group of four White Rhino on 3 December we realised that the oldest cow in the group must be in oestrus as she was receiving close attention from an adult bull.

We watched for about twenty minutes before the bull managed to mount the cow. The two stayed coupled for about 30 minutes, with the cow showing some signs of fatigue from the weight of the bull, before he dismounted. For much of the copulation the bull had been harassed by the cow's calf. After the bull had dismounted he was then actively prevented from approaching the second adult cow in the group by the cow with which he had mated.

*William Mhlabane, Isaac Mkhathswa
& Wilson Mahlazi*

Lion Cubs Battle Intestines, Buffalo, Leopard and Tree Monitor

Over 2002 we have been lucky enough to witness the growth of the three Lion cubs in the Bongani pride. In October, for instance, the mother was watched as she demonstrated to the cubs how, in typical cat fashion, to bury the stomach and internal organs of a Greater Kudu bull that she had killed for them (IM).

On another occasion in September we were following tracks of the pride when we became aware of the threatening growl of the Lioness. We retreated to fetch the Land Rover and after relocating her realised that the presence of a fresh Wildebeest kill had contributed to her firm warning. As we watched we heard the clatter of rocks on the slope above and spotted an aggressive Buffalo bull chasing the three cubs straight down the hill (WM & SN).

Another close escape occurred when the three cubs were lying about 30m from the mother in the early evening. They heard something in the long grass and ran back to mum. The Lioness investigated the sound and found a female Leopard who she then chased for some 100m (WM)!

The three cubs, aged just over a year, also investigated a Tree Monitor while their mother lay and watched them. By growling loudly and aggressively whipping its tail the monitor managed to intimidate the cubs and eventually escape relatively unscathed (GT).

*Isaac Mkhathswa, William Mhlabane,
Sifiso Nkosi & Gideon Twala*

