



Annual Report

Animals on the reserve

GAME COUNTS

It's been a busy year with Game Counts and with the added benefit of Interns we have continued to send out 3 vehicles on the allotted routes.

MONTH	COUNT
Dec 2021	2158
Jan 2022	2169
Feb 2022	2039
Mar 2022	909
Apr 2022	1574
May 2022	1429
Jun 2022	1537
Jul 2022	1440
Aug 2022	1519
Sep 2022	1634
Oct 2022	1744
Nov 2022	2171
Dec 2022	2648

We have seen an increase of just under 500 animals since Dec 2021 – as you can see the numbers dip in the middle of the year this is due to the cold and the browsers starting to head into the bush.

NEW SPECIES RECORDED FOR THE YEAR INCLUDE:

BIRDS: Maribou Stork, Lilac Breasted Roller, Green (striated) backed Heron, Swainsons Spurfowl

INSECTS: Gaudy Grasshopper, Dragonfly yellow veined widow,

PLANTS: Round Konana, Golden Everlasting

AND a KZN river crab



Animals on the reserve

Species	Dec 2021	Dec 2022	Highest number recorded in a game count this year	Babies Recorded on Dec Game Count
Blesbok	59	88	105	22
Common Reedbuck	11	13	20	1
Duiker	11	12	37	0
Eland	14	124	124	6
Giraffe	41	38	46	6
Impala	380	465	486	90
Kudu	459	561	561	23
Mountain Reedbuck	10	23	23	0
Nyala	73	75	78	5
Red Haartbeest	78	73	73	17
Warthog	306	344	344	106
Waterbuck	47	66	72	2
Wildebeest	292	269	324	8
Zebra	337	481	481	35

What has been interesting this year is when the babies started...

Eland decided to drop early in the year whereas the Wildebeest have only just started dropping now hence the reduced numbers of babies for the December count.

Our continued aim is to increase the bulk grazers which is currently Eland and Zebra – with little news on our Buffalo permit the biggest bulk grazers we would like may not happen for a while!

With the introduction of 13 Bushbuck and 80 Blesbok this year the figures are enhanced and the amazing news of our ostriches initially having 11 chicks have lost only 2 and now they are the size of turkeys more difficult for the predators to catch!



Animals on the reserve

OTHER NEWS...

MONTH

Jan 2022	Leopardess and 2 cubs spotted.
March 2022	2 Female Wild Dogs joined us (Marbles & Smudge). Leopard captured in Community and taken to Phinda.
May 2022	80 Blesbok released on to the Reserve.
June 2022	Management Team started to sort the bee hives out and enlisted the help of Bushveld bees ending the year with 3 healthy hives. 11 Bushbuck delivered. Biaza Award for Conservation in the Field with our Wild Dogs from 2021.
August 2022	Eel chaps came again to continue with their surveys and in October to finish their studies on this visit they caught a 10.2kg barble.
Oct 2022	11 Ostrich babies born – they have only lost 2! Contact established at the Giraffe Conservation Foundation who we will be working with going forward to assess the giraffe species in the area. Liwonde pack of Wild Dogs killed by poachers (ones we looked after in 2021).
Nov 2022	Received the bee hive removed from the Lodge and put in their new position. 2 new Camera traps received; one donated the other from Intern merchandise sales.
Dec 2022	3 Male Wild Dogs joined us from Somkhanda they will eventually go to Manyoni maybe January 2023. We now have 42 confirmed giraffe ID kits completed and 15 leopard kits – these are ongoing as we are still missing a few pictures and animals. We spotted Blue Cranes on Ithala with 3 chicks.



Animals on the reserve

RHINO

Ambalo gave birth to a bouncy baby boy on 26th April, both are still doing well, but she hid him so well in the first 3 months we often wondered if he would make it. Her daughter Madikazela joined forces with Baluleka (Scarface) and Mr T and they are all still together now. We are still choosing a name for him – we just don't have the right one yet!

BUFFALO & CHEETAH PERMITS

Despite several visits from Ephraim and Ezemvelo we are still no further forward on this, again the fence permit paperwork has gone in twice again this year and we are still waiting for an accurate permit! We now have the details of the Indunas to sign the neighbor's agreement to get in Buffalo and Cheetah and despite us contacting them they are still not willing to meet – we will keep chasing in the New Year



On the reserve

RAINFALL

Despite 2021 recording the highest rainfall since 2001 this year has been a Guinness Book record year. We have figures dating back to 1959 of recorded rainfall and 2022 beats all these. This is why both Sully & Elworthy flooded, we have eroded fenceline and roads which all need a lot of love and attention in the first quarter of 2023.

YEAR	RAINFALL	YEAR	RAINFALL
2000	787	2013	547
2001	867	2014	534
2002	740	2015	477
2003	319	2016	461
2004	770	2017	707
2005	845	2018	776
2006	733	2019	728.50
2007	564	2020	833
2008	618	2021	852.50
2009	543	2022	1212.25

There are no figures for 2010 – 2012



On the reserve

SECURITY AND POACHING

2021

No. of times fence stolen	No. of fence poles stolen	Fence metres stolen	Snares	Poachers in no dogs
7	89	30m	11	11
Poachers in with dogs	Damaged fences by animals	Animals taken	Incursion attempts	Poaching dogs killed
24	45	21	43	4

2022

No. of times fence stolen	No. of fence poles stolen	Fence metres stolen	Snares	Poachers in no dogs
6	0	419m	13	39
Poachers in with dogs	Damaged fences by animals	Animals taken	Incursion attempts	Poaching dogs killed
58	74	49	153	14

Quarter 1 we lost 370m of fence since then they have taken less and less, however incursions especially with dogs increased massively in the second half of the year with a large number of animals taken.

September and October were the worst months for incursions with us finding a lot of kids along the fenceline trying to come in, then in November we shot 7 dogs in one incident, since then it has been quiet including Christmas and New Year.

An increase in snares but these were all at Barambas corner which is adjacent to Mdekane's, section the chap who works for Vickers was snaring on our side, we contacted Vickers who warned him he would lose his job if he continued and since then we have found no more snares!



On the reserve

MAINTENANCE

MONTH

Jan 2022	<p>Flooding at Sully, deeper trenches dug.</p> <p>Started to dismantled buildings around Marks to collect stone for improvements to Ranger Cottage eventually finished in November.</p> <p>New Workshop structure up at Marks side.</p> <p>Rondavel & Rondavel bathroom build at Sully started completed in March</p> <p>Fence spraying several times.</p> <p>Sue moved to Durban we collected all her items for distribution around the Reserve</p> <p>Gravelled Boma road.</p>
Feb 2022	<p>Removed bees from Ranger House Mark's side.</p> <p>Received our new wood chipper – very exciting.</p> <p>Despite a bigger trench, Sully flooded again.</p> <p>Major work done on Elworthy electrics following the floods as water got into the main lines.</p>
Apr 2022	<p>Elworthy flooded again and new trench put in has not flooded since, devastating floods in Durban leave many homeless.</p> <p>New grader arrived.</p> <p>Upgraded the Canvas on the Game Viewer – now nice new seats.</p>
May 2022	<p>Cut perimeter fire breaks.</p> <p>Work started on recovering pumps from the river once it had reduced enough for us to get to them.</p> <p>Anthony and Amanda moved their office to the Sunroom which is much nicer.</p>
June 2022	<p>With the help of Writtle University the Hide was removed from the Rye Field ready to be moved to a new spot in 2023.</p> <p>Mark started work on building his new workshop to store equipment and tools, completed in August.</p> <p>Started to burn perimeter fire breaks.</p>
July 2022	<p>Water Tanker rolled have bought all items for tanker now need to assemble.</p> <p>Completed Fire Breaks.</p> <p>Was dry enough to now build the Sully retaining wall which seems to have stopped the rain getting into the house.</p>



On the reserve

MONTH

August 2022	<p>New gate installed at the Rye field for access to the river.</p> <p>New Solar pump installed at Energiser field.</p> <p>Foundation laid for new Diesel tank Mark side and installed in September.</p> <p>New road to Sully built so Quantum can get up to the House but unfortunately needs more work to allow this.</p> <p>Redid the floors with stone in the teachers rooms at Sully, looks much better.</p>
Sep 2022	<p>4 Foot & Mouth Wheel washes started and completed in October.</p> <p>Mark painted the roofs of his house.</p>
Oct 2022	<p>Old cattle reservoir Marks side given a makeover so it can store water.</p> <p>Lightening strike on the top of Ithala caused a run away fire.</p> <p>Block burns continued.</p> <p>A new shaded area and bench built by the Interns at Papleni Dam.</p> <p>Work started on the staff bathrooms at Elworthy and finished in November.</p> <p>New merchandise room painted, new shelving etc completed in November.</p> <p>Mark started work on extending the Bushcamp.</p> <p>Old oil tanker converted to a trailer for the Interns to use for their equipment.</p>
Dec 2022	<p>Thatch roof completed on Bushcamp.</p>



Interns

We hosted 67 Interns at Sully this year which included groups from Writtle and East Coast universities. We replaced Geo with Cam as he was leaving to go to Switzerland, recruited Nicky an ecologist and also Laura joined us as a Student Intern Coordinator – who achieved a distinction for her work on UmPhafa. We moved Tiny the resident cat at Elworthy up to Sully for some much needed cuddles!

The program has developed over the year with new activities being included specifically the mini-biodiversity surveys which incorporates monitoring and researching insects, butterflies, tick load, veld conditions, Water quality etc. Feedback has been positive with just a few niggles being reported. Comments about their accomodation has been very positive since we did the upgrade in the later part of 2021



Staff

MONTH

Feb 2022	Austin Field Ranger left & new Ranger Senzo arrived.
Mar 2022	Sithembiso left, Bhukumuzi started. New drones arrive and being used in the field.
April 2022	Lindo joined the team. We joined the Game Rangers Association giving benefits to our Rangers if injured on duty.
May 2022	Head Ranger, Mark & Anthony received training on Cmore a new Security App. Training done with Maintenance team on new brushcutters, chain saws, wood chipper.
June 2022	Trained Rangers on basic First Aid that hadn't done the full course yet. The most exciting news that we were being donated 12 pairs of Jim Green shoes which should last the Rangers a few years.
August 2022	Sphelele left us for Cape Town. Poachers took a camera trap and destroyed it / Nhlaka 2 joined us as a new Ranger.
Sep 2022	Colchester Zoo Director, Rebecca Moore, visited for a week and saw her first leopard in 17 years!
Oct 2022	2 Australian parabats spent the morning training some of the Field Rangers in arresting and tracking techniques. 2 x new Field Rangers joined us.
Dec 2022	The year has seen 3 Field Rangers leave and 5 new ones join us. Recruited a new Student Intern coordinator to start in January – Luhan. Recruited a new Intern coordinator as Nicky leaving in January – Rickus. 8 disciplinaries done through the year resulting in 3 suspensions for a month. Alice one of the Interns donated a suitcase full of toys, books and pencils which we gave to the children of the staff for Xmas – they were delighted.

