

# emdoneni CATNEWS



JUNE 2015 - 23RD EDITION

*We urge you to please pray with us for much needed rain – the animals and the land are desperate for good rains! We are in a period of severe drought and have to feed the wild animals on the lodge grounds. (See story about the drought on page 2). Despite this hardship, we continue to make our mark as a lodge with a unique offering and great service standards. Read about the latest awards that we have received and been nominated for on page 3.*



*Michael*

## OUR AFRICAN WILD CATS

MICHAEL is clearly getting old, and spends most of his days relaxing with Grumpy always close at his side. There is no love lost between Michael and Khaya, who tries to torment him through the fence, but Michael simply gives Khaya a good talking to and moves off to have a nap.

GRUMPY is, of course, still living up to her name. She can still be seen soaking up the morning sun close at Michael's side until the morning tour, when the pair move to the trees or the leaf-litter to avoid any possible interaction with the people.

KHAYA, the young man, has had his enclosure invaded by Apple & Cinnamon. The three cats get on relatively well, however the two little ones do give Khaya a bit of a hard time, sometimes being a bit too playful and energetic for his liking, but he does get involved with the fun every now and then when he thinks no one is watching.

APPLE & CINNAMON have grown very quickly, and have become very adventurous. They love people, and do anything to get attention, including sneaking out of their enclosures and looking for the closest person to talk to. Because they are getting older, the decision was made to separate the brother & sister, so Cinnamon was placed together with Grumpy and Apple was left together with Khaya. However, Cinnamon seemed to miss his side-kick and found his way back into the enclosure with Khaya and Apple, so it's back to the drawing board for the Wild cats, as they are not making this separation process easy on us.



*Grumpy (photo by: Andre Pretorius)*



Emdoneni Lodge  
with cheetah project

*Touch the wild where the waterberry grows*

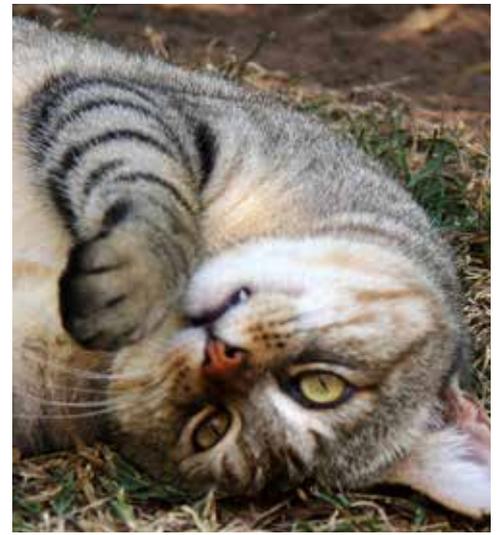
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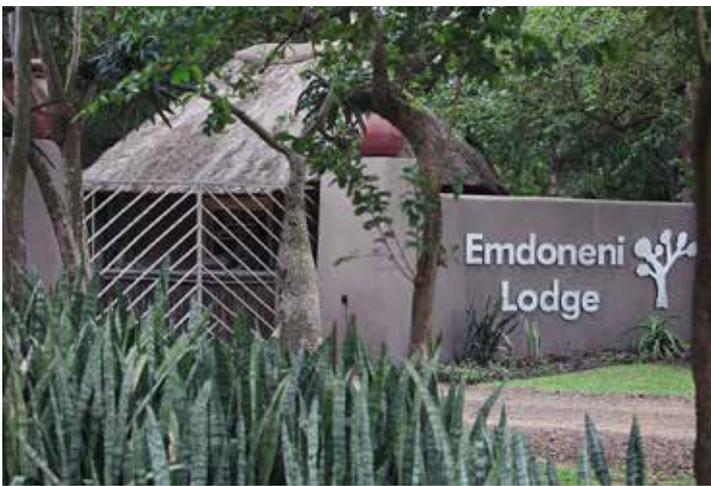
*Cinnamon*



*Apple*



*Khaya*



Please support our efforts by voting for us in the World Luxury Hotel Awards 2015. Votes will open on the 8 June to the 19 July 2015. Visit <http://www.luxuryhotelawards.com/listings/emdoneni-lodge> to cast your vote!

We have again been awarded the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence for the 4th year running! We thank all of you for your support and taking the time to make positive reviews.

## ACCOLADES & AWARDS

We are excited and very proud to announce that Emdoneni Lodge has been presented with and nominated for a few outstanding awards this year by independent organizations, who confirmed that our achievements in terms of service excellence to our guests are of a very high standard. These nominations have inspired us and confirmed that with hard work and commitment, anything is possible! We will continue doing what we do best – serving our guests and helping to make their dreams come true ...



### Luxury Classic Lodge of the Year – South Africa

The Luxury Travel Guide Awards represent the pinnacle of hospitality achievement, championing the best in their respective fields; therefore to come out on top is truly an achievement we are proud of. As winners of the Luxury Travel Guide Awards we were subject to the same rigorous assessment criteria, carried out by industry professionals.

## Siyabonga!

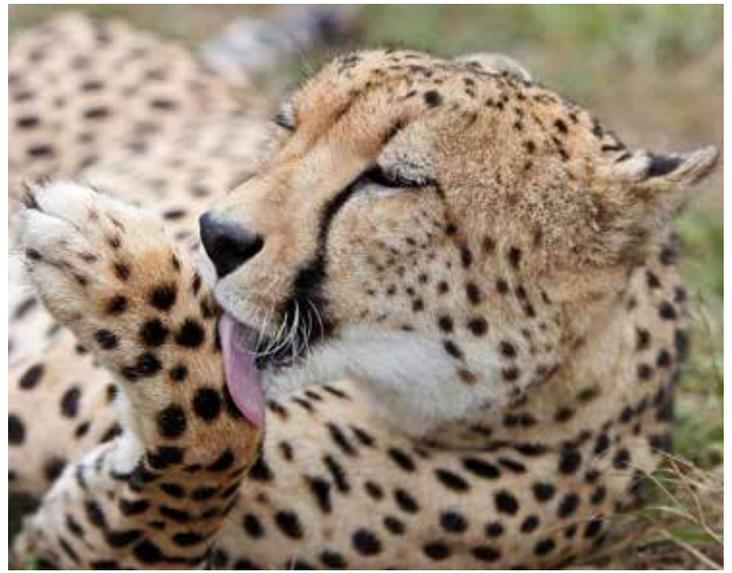
To ALL our staff – from the gate guards, receptionists, gardeners, guides, waitresses, housekeepers, barman and bar lady, operations manager and security – you are all absolutely amazing and we as owners want to salute you. We could not have done this without you!



*Emdoneni staff have a lot to be proud of.*



*Juba*



*Moya*

## OUR CHEETAH

JUBA has never really been a problem when it comes to interaction time, but these days all he wants to do is roll around in front of guests and stretch out to try and grab them playfully. So we let him do his thing, giving guests great photo opportunities. It might be our new cubs that are changing his personality because he is a lot more playful with his brother Moya these days, so it seems the brothers have been captivated by the presence of the two rascals next door.

MOYA remains the dominant male of the brothers but instead of constantly bullying his brother Juba, like he did in the past, he has got his eye on the two new female cubs. The boys watch Summer and Raine in awe as they run with what seems like an endless supply of energy. Moya will sometimes get caught up in the excitement and start to run up and down the fence, chasing the cubs, but much too soon he will give up and just sit and watch the games unfold.

SUMMER has come back from the vet, after an injury from playing too roughly with her sister. Summer is a bit

smaller than Raine now, but she has made a full recovery and takes no nonsense from her sister anymore. The pair still play boisterously together, and may forget their own strength sometimes, but they are young and oblivious to the fact that they are growing up fast.

Because they are growing so fast, SUMMER & RAINE are no longer confined to their cub enclosure, and have been let out to stretch their legs and enjoy the bigger space, which they are loving every minute of the day. The girls are taking advantage of their larger enclosure and play endlessly together – running, jumping, wrestling and chasing anything that moves! When it's time to rest and recharge with a nap, they can often be seen lying together in the shade, never too far away from one another.

The cubs are growing so fast, and are enjoying all the attention of their adoring public. Summer & Raine love people, and really seem to enjoy human interaction, although they are typical girls, and especially seem to love all the shoes and bags the people seem to be presenting to them as play things. These two young cubs are loved by everyone and their human parents love to spend quality time with them.



*Summer*



*Raine*



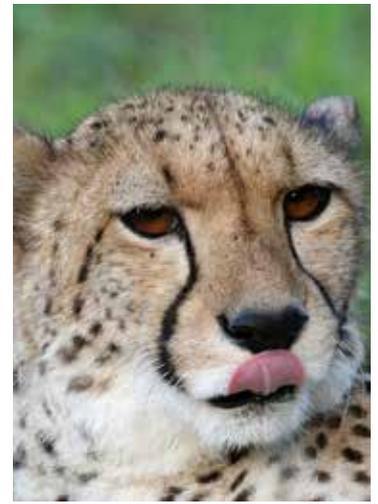
*Skye*



*Shadow*



*Autumn*



*Zera*

SKYE & SHADOW are still together in their big camp. They seem to enjoy each other's company as they are always near each other. These two cats truly do not like to interact with human. They will only appear at their gate during feeding time, receive their food and then promptly disappear again. They are healthy and fast approaching the size of the older males, Juba & Moya. They like to be left to their own devices but will tolerate us when we need to go into their enclosure.

AUTUMN and ZERA are both still at Cheetah experience outside Bloemfontein.

ZERA keeps to herself and avoids any physical contact with the males. We miss her so much but are considering her release. Many attempts were made in the past to find a suitable home for her but one has to be extremely careful that she is correctly relocated to give her the best chance of survival. The searching will continue until we find a good small reserve for her.

AUTUMN is having a ball in Bloemfontein. She has become quite a 'flirtatious little lady' amongst the cheetah boys at Cheetah Experience. Crossing fingers... She has produced beautiful babies once so why not twice? We will keep you all updated!



*Storm on arrival at Emdoneni*



## INTRODUCING STORM!

Our little angel finally arrived! It was with great excitement that we welcomed him to his new home.

On the 15th of February 2015, our only fertile female cheetah, Autumn who is currently with Cheetah Experience on a breeding loan, gave birth to two beautiful babies - a girl and a boy. Four days later, she gave birth, once again, to another healthy fat little boy! We were in awe! According to our loan agreement, we had the opportunity to keep one male for our project for breeding purposes, as our numbers are very low with strong breeding males. We feel very blessed to have this little male, whom we decided to name Storm.

Update on Storm from owner, Cecillie Nel:

"Storm finally arrived at Emdoneni and is currently with us in our house, as he is still very much 'afraid' to be alone. He sleeps next to our bed at night in his basket and follows me like a puppy. I love him as if he is my own child. He listens to my voice and misses me when I am not around him. This makes me feel incredibly special and wanted again, as my boys are at the age when it is not cool to kiss Mom good bye at school or in public (very sad). Storm will be visiting the project during school holidays to meet the public.



*Bar-One*



*Ruby*



*Lulu*

## OUR CARACAL

BAR-ONE is still doing very well, and remains to be a real favourite of the public due to his sheer size. The people that come to the project think that Bar-one is probably one of the laziest caracals, but he may have just become cat wise, jumping for his meat on certain occasions, but most days it will be more like a half attempt. At the moment he is limping quite a bit, due to the fact he is extremely persistent when covering his female Lulu, when she in season, and she will only tolerate so much.

Old lady LULU is doing very well for her age, still putting up with Bar-one's nonsense, but only sometimes. We're not too sure if Lulu will successfully produce another litter due to her age, and the bad luck we had with her with the last two litters. However, she has been covered, so let's keep fingers crossed and see what the outcome will be.

MAX is one of the cats that leave a lasting memory for people, as he is one of the oldest males on the project and so he still feels the need to impress guests with

his jumping capabilities. He and Popeye are perfect together, spending most of their day in close proximity of each other, with Max stretched out on his back, absorbing the morning sun.

POPEYE, the female caracal, is still doing very well and despite the fact that she only has one eye she goes on with her day like all the other cats on the project, even impressing us with a jump every now and then. Popeye is an amazing mother and has done very well in producing and looking after her litters in the past. The little kitten from her last litter is doing extremely well and is already half way to walking through the gates to freedom.

RUBY is the youngest female in our project. Despite the fact that she has a disability Ruby still exceeds to impress us during feeding time with her jumping, or rather climbing skills, as she loves to climb to the top of the fence and then jump for her meat. She is by far one of the most attractive caracals on the project with her beautiful rusty red coloured coat and aqua blue eyes. She catches the attention of guests all the time.



*Max*



*Pop-Eye*



*Cara*



*Diego*



*Diego jumping*

CARA is a young female caracal who is new on the project. She loves hissing at people and takes no nonsense. I suppose because she is new, she doesn't know where she stands yet with the other cats. She is quite a greedy cat as well, always eating first because she likes to jump up and snatch the food while Ruby is half way up the fence trying to show us her climbing skills. Cara got her name from the special lady who donated her to the project. We decided to name her Cara as well. Her parents were tame but she was kept wild with her brother, who was released earlier this year. Cara will be kept for breeding purposes and will soon be put in with Diego.

DIEGO catches the attention of the guests because of his colouration, his frosty coloured ears, his blue eyes and his extremely long legs, which have him holding the title for the highest jump to catch his meat on the end of a stick. He loves hissing at people during feeding, but maybe he is just trying to make conversation at dinner time. We find that from time to time he likes to stalk unsupervised kids, freaking their parents out and giving everyone an idea of what their mentality and capabilities are. As guides, we love it, because it puts kids and their parents in check before we head over to meet the cheetah. Cara with her wild nature will make the best partner for him – we cannot wait to see what the future will tell!



*Emdoneni in summer after good rains, March 2014*



*Emdoneni during winter drought, June 2015*



# WILDLIFE IN DANGER AS RIVERS DRY UP

Extract Sept 2014 By Tony Carnie, Independent Newspapers

As drought tightens its grip in Zululand, conservation staff in the Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park have started digging up dry river beds to help wildlife reach underground water.

To make the situation worse, fodder for antelope and other grazing and browsing species was in short supply as nearly 45 percent of the 96 000 hectare park had been burned in controlled fires in anticipation of spring rains that were yet to come.

The flow of water in the Black iMfolozi River has all but dried up, sparking calls for the neighbouring Zululand Anthracite Colliery (ZAC) mine to halt or reduce its water abstraction until the drought breaks.

Park manager Jabulani Ngubane said that although the shortage was not at crisis levels yet, he predicted “big problems” for wildlife if the park did not get good rains by mid-October. “We started digging into the Black iMfolozi and other dry river beds to help animals reach water.

“Although we have been in this situation before, the park is very dry. We also completed several controlled burns in anticipation of early rains so animals have had to graze and browse in other parts of the reserve.”

African Conservation Trust’s Paul Cryer, who spent nearly 20 years as a wilderness trail guide in iMfolozi, said low winter flow was generally due to poor rain.

However, the catchment area of the White and Black iMfolozi rivers had been damaged by increased siltation over the past decades, and the increasing abstraction of water for coal mining, timber plantations and domestic use would exacerbate problems. He said some animals were more sensitive to drought, especially recently weaned white and black rhino calves, because for the first time in their lives they were entirely reliant on an adequate supply of good drinking water to digest food.



## DROUGHT BRINGS COMMUNITY TO ITS KNEES

Extract from the Zululand Observer April 16, 2015

While Zululand is struggling in the grips of the worst drought in recent history, prayer meetings have been scheduled by various churches in Empangeni to join hands in prayer for rain.

The effects of the drought are being felt throughout the community and farmers are suffering owing to the lack of irrigation allowed. Currently, farmers are being allowed only 30% of their normal irrigation rations, while residential areas are also being restricted. As a result, farm workers are feeling the negative effects as many have been sent home, while others are working shorter weeks.

‘If the Goedertrouw dam reaches 30%, farmers in the area will have zero water to irrigate,’ said Chairman of the Felixton Crop Growers Association, John Readman. ‘Should the drought continue it will be a disaster. Some growers could lose everything.’

‘Currently we are having the lowest rainfall figures since 1934,’ continued Readman. ‘The average long-term rainfall between 2000 and 2014 had been 950mm a year, compared to 1 051mm average between 1934 and 2000.’





*Spotty*



*Cenessa*



*Sheila*

## OUR SERVAL

SPOTTY hasn't changed much, and still spends most of her day high up in the tree. To date she is still very happy avoiding all human interaction and doing her own thing. She would come down for the odd drink of water when no one is around and will wait politely on her branch when it comes to feeding. She loves to show guests how agile servals can be when she catches her meat, which is thrown to her from a couple of meters away, and then she'll pose for a good couple seconds with the meat in her mouth, allowing guests to capture some great photos of her, as if she knows that most of the time she is invisible when longing in the canopy of the tree.

CENESSA is another female serval born at the project; she has grown up so fast. She is still the smallest female on the project when it comes to the serval, but her attitude definitely makes up for it. She used to be alone but has now been shifted to the large enclosure for breeding purposes along with Spotty and Noah, who we can tell is having a hard time getting close to her. Cenessa is definitely the boss in their enclosure at the moment, because she's living up to the saying that dynamite comes in small packages.

*Noah*



NOAH is a male that loves to spend his day resting in the longer grass of his enclosure. He still loves to hiss at people, but we tell them he is just trying to make conversation because most times you're not even close but you can hear him talking to you from the other side of his enclosure. In the early mornings and the evenings after feeding you will find Noah giving the females a headache, chasing them up and down trying to start a family. The girls give him a run for his money but he's not showing any signs of giving up.

CASSIDY is a favourite cat for many visitors when it comes to interaction, due to the fact that he is such an affectionate boy. He loves chasing anything and everything that moves, loves jumping over his new thatch grass and from time to time he will show guests how good he is at climbing trees. This cat has grown up so much since he has been here and is now the right size to be introduced to a female that's not going to boss him around the enclosure too much. At the moment we have put Sheila in with him so again, we will be keeping our fingers crossed, and let's see what he can manage with this old lady!



*Cassidy*



**Mafuta**

SHEILA is fine - we were hopeful at one stage that she would produce a litter, (as we saw Noah cover her), but apparently he didn't manage to get the job done properly. So at the moment she has been put together with one of our younger males, Cassidy. If you were wondering, you'll be happy to know that Sheila is still quite loveable and is forever approaching guests to show some affection. We still remember the day Sheila arrived at the project, she was a real tough girls with a cheeky attitude. The rest of the crowd really managed to calm her down and taught her some lady-like manners.

MAFUTA, the young male, is well, having just been moved into a bigger enclosure. In the past he was kept out of sight from the public, as he was one of the cats that we thought of possibly releasing due to his wilder nature, also being the oldest of the litter (Cassidy & Cenessa). Now an affectionate cat, he prefers to do his own thing, entertaining himself throughout the day. And yes, he still lives up to his name by always being the fattest cat on the project – some things never change.

Jane unfortunately died in April. It was a sad day for the project. After an autopsy done by the vet, she died of kidney failure. Jane was born in 2003 and had a good life at the project. We miss her daily.



**Jane**

## NEW CAT ADOPTIONS

### January 2015

In Loving Memory of Meg	Rain / Summer	Life
Family and friends of Megan Parry & Matt King contribute towards Raine and Summer		
Laura Hieb	Cassidy	One year

### February 2015

Kailee Adams	Summer	One year
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### March 2015

Andrew & Fran Johnston	Cassidy	Life
The Thompson's	Lulu	One year
Carin & Jadine O'Neill	Pop-Eye	One year
Carole Hills	Michael	One year

### April 2015

Gareth & Ybella Davies	Max	One year
Zac Sebastian Luke Jensen	Max	One year
Keren, Kathie, Magery & Sue	Apple	One year

### May 2015

Leslie Greenberg	Max	One year
Mia Fernandez	Summer	One year

### June 2015

Budge Family	Bar One	One year
Import It All - Ruzika Verryn	Michael	Life time
Sue Chappelle & Jenny Greene	Apple	Life time
Leney & Rigard & Wian Loots	Storm	Life time



*Newcomer Storm, with her first set of adopted parents, the Loots family*