



ORGR BUSH TELEGRAPH

THE July 2020 EDITION



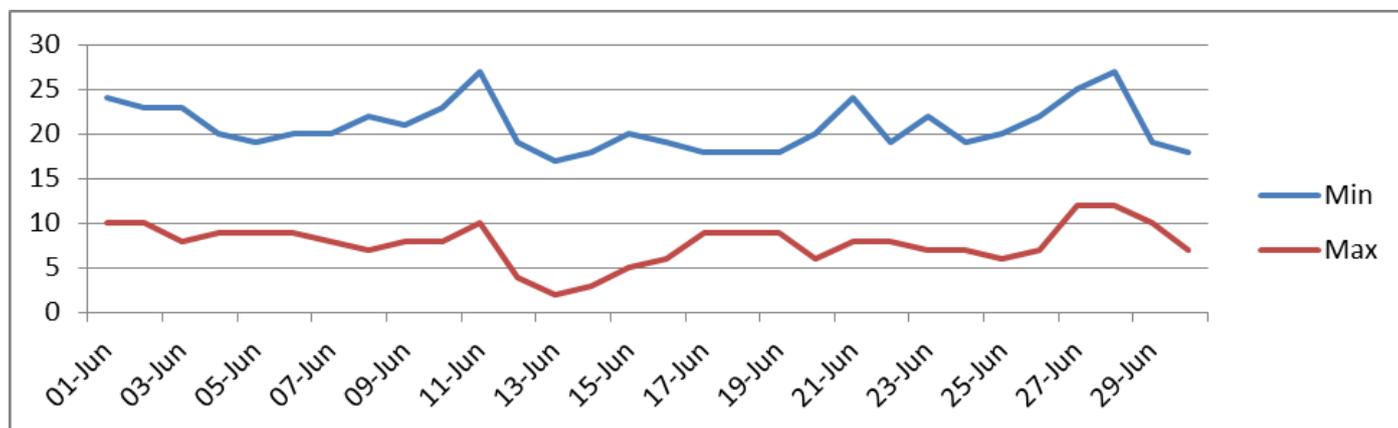
Dear Olifants Community

Hello Olifants family, we hope you are all well and are staying safe. June has been a wonderful bushveld winter month and it's good to see the reserve busy again after certain lockdown levels have been lifted. We have seen a surge of members arriving onto the reserve last month. The reserve is still in fantastic shape with plenty of available grazing to pull through the driest months of the year. South Africa is currently experiencing the peak of the Corona Virus pandemic with 300 000+ confirmed cases. This pandemic shall pass in time and Olifants River Game Reserve will always be here as a getaway for us all to escape the madness of the "Real" world!

THE WEATHER REPORT

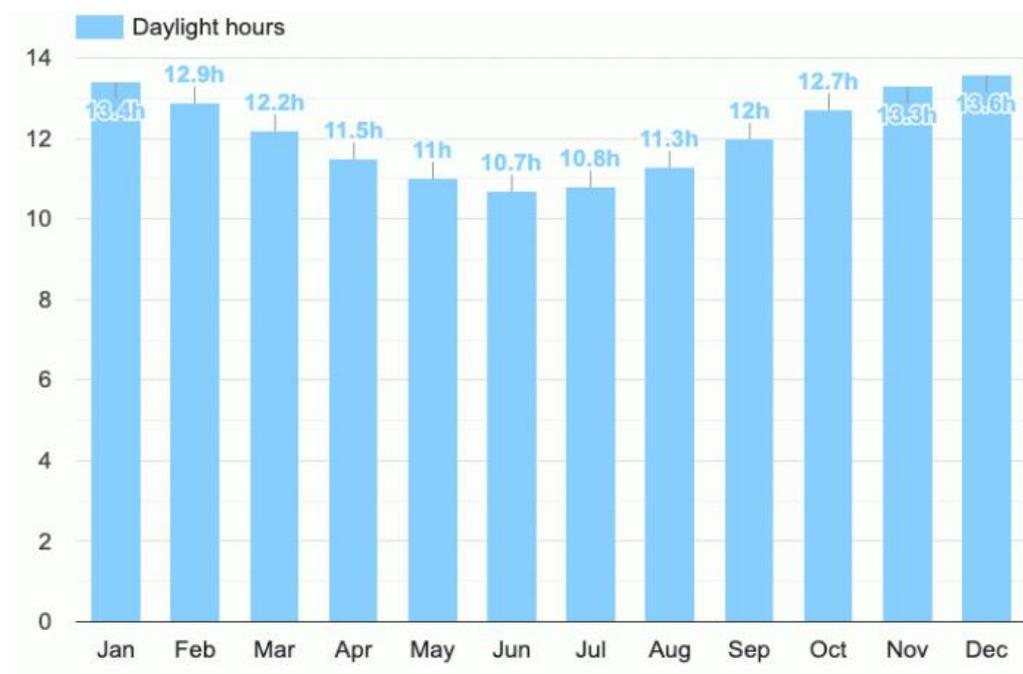
June/July is mid-winter in southern Africa. We have experienced a few cold fronts coming through but our winter has been mild as one would expect in the eastern Lowveld. Daytime maximum temperatures averaged around a comfortable 22°C whilst at night 8°C is normal.

June Temperature Graph



The forecast for July is much the same as the weather experienced in June, dry conditions, clear blue winter skies with moderate days, and cool evenings. We are expecting a few cold fronts to pull through the country this month, so make sure you come prepared when going out on those early morning game drives.

We are over the hump of mid-winter with our daylight hours increasing steadily as we move towards spring in a few months. Average daylight in July: 10.8h



The month with the longest days is December (Average daylight: 13.6h). The month with the shortest days is June (Average daylight: 10.7h).

OUR NIGHT SKIES FORECAST - July In a nutshell...

Moon

Date Time Phase

05/07 06h44 Full Moon
13/07 01h29 Last Quarter
20/07 19h33 New Moon
27/07 14h32 First Quarter

Moon – Earth Relations

Perigee: 368 400 km on the 25/07 at 06h54
Apogee: 404 200 km on the 12/07 at 21h27



Sun- Earth- Moon relations

Penumbral Eclipse on the 5th of July (starts at 05h07, reaches mid-eclipse at 06h30 and ends at 07h52)

Planet Visibility

Jupiter and Saturn in Sagittarius visible in the evening sky and at dawn
Mars near Pisces visible at dawn
Venus near Taurus visible at dawn
Mercury near Gemini visible at dawn
Dwarf planets: Pluto reaches opposition on the 16th of July
Asteroids: Pallas (Asteroid 2) at opposition on the 15th of July

Meteors

June Lyrids: 11th to 21st of June; 16th – maximum
theta-Ophiuchids: 8th – 16th of June; 13th – maximum

Some easy to identify bright stars

Antares: red supergiant in Scorpius
Arcturus: red giant in Boötes
Spica: brightest bluish-white star in Virgo
Canopus: yellowish-white star in Carina
Altair: a white star, brightest in Aquila
Regulus: blue-white star and the brightest star in Leo
The Pointers: Alpha and Beta Centauri



LOWVELD INSIGHTS

The real economic value of Greater Kruger National Park

A 2020 study has revealed the considerable economic contributions of the Kruger National Park and the surrounding “contiguous reserves” that together compose the Greater Kruger National Park (GKNP). The study is a joint effort between researchers from the University of Florida and South African National Parks (SANParks).

In considering the public, private, and community-owned components as a whole, the study attributes different values in financial, social, and political domains to each. The researchers suggest that the GKNP should be considered as a whole when working towards management frameworks and policies. The private reserves, while constituting only 12% of the total land area, were responsible for over 60% of the total employment, tax and GDP contributions. Conversely, the Kruger National Park accounts for almost all domestic visits, performing a vital political and social function.

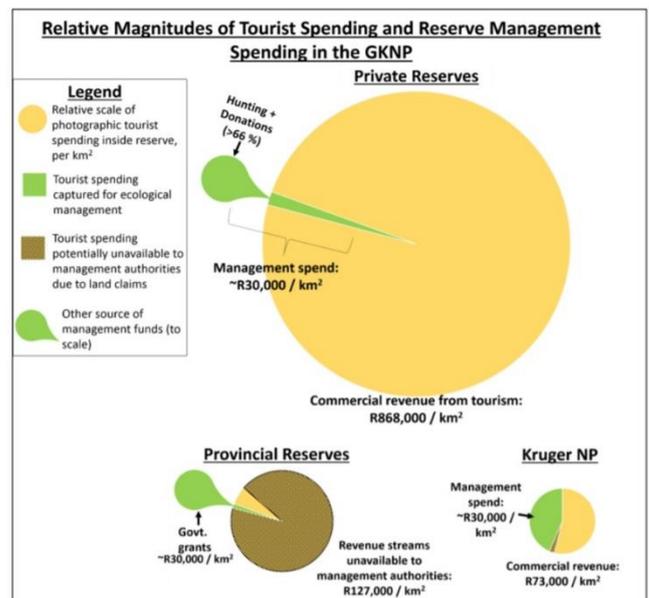
Across the total 22,686km² (23 million hectares) of the entire open system, there are close to 8,000 beds and some 700 different camp and lodge sites.

As a general rule, the Kruger National Park itself is oriented towards budget self-catering options, while the private reserves tend to cater to more luxury, high-end safari experiences. For the study, anyone living within 50km of the GKNP boundary fence was considered to be “local”, which equated to approximately 2.9 million people, including many in semi-rural and socio-economically disadvantaged communities. The study reveals that from a period between 2016-2017, there were

3.5 million bed nights and day-visits to the GKNP, of which 35% on average were foreign tourists. As would be expected, the highest visitation by far was to the Kruger National Park itself, while the provincial reserves (Manyeleti Nature Reserve, Letaba Ranch Game Reserve and Makuya Nature Reserve) accounted for only 1% of the total visits.

Magnitudes of tourist spending vs management funding

Of the estimated R5.8 billion trip-related spending in South Africa by GKNP photographic tourists, all but R0.9 billion (which went into travel costs) was received in the local area. The total number of people employed in the GKNP equated to around 10,388, with R1.17 billion spent on wages and salaries in one year. In terms of both tourist spending and employment, the surrounding private reserves accounted for the majority. In total, the GKNP contributed R2.6 billion to South Africa's GDP for 2016/17, including R975 million in tax revenue. When accounting for chain multipliers and



induced spending of wage-earners, this contribution could be considered almost tripled to around R6.6 billion to the national economy.

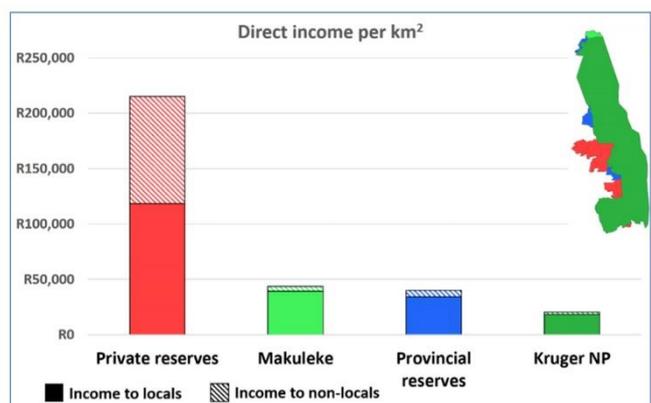
Considered as an overall system, 80% of funding for reserve management of the GKNP is generated by photographic tourism, but this does not apply evenly across the surrounding private reserves. While in the National Park visitor fees go directly into covering conservation costs, the private reserves rely primarily on a levy system charged to commercial operators. The report suggests that resistance to levy hikes has resulted in managers of the private reserves having to seek alternative funds from donors and consumptive tourism. In some of the private reserves, consumptive tourism and trophy hunting account for up to 80% of the management income. In contrast, the provincial reserves are almost entirely reliant on public funds.

The presence of the Kruger National Park served as a powerful catalyst for the growth of a large and vibrant economy in the surrounding area, with substantial conservation, social and economic benefits as a result. The provincial reserves, however, are struggling with several challenges including poor infrastructure, high wage bills and low funding, as well as claims by neighbouring communities on the existing revenue streams. These issues, combined with weak governance and a lack of accountability at provincial and community-level could undermine the entire system, say the authors.

The system's most significant capacity for institutional resilience comes through the diverse functions each component offers, something that will be particularly relevant during the current COVID-19 pandemic (which occurred after the compilation of this article). Importantly, the researchers call for an extended approach in assessing the value of each component of the GKNP and, given that their approach has yielded a much larger economy than previously thought, this needs to be taken into account for high-level strategies. Though the private reserves generate the most revenue, their relationship with the national park is symbiotic; it allows them to capitalize on the brand as a whole, creating a public-private mosaic.

The study concludes that the “partnership in the Greater Kruger National Park between private reserves and the national park is key, not only for branding but for stabilizing the system's high-performing economic engine with political and cultural ballast.”

Direct contribution to	GDP R 2.6 billion
Total contribution to	GDP R 6.6 billion
Direct tax revenue	R 1.0 billion
Total tax revenue	R 1.5 billion
Employment created	10,388 jobs
Wages & salaries	R 1.2 billion
Private reserves	± 60% of
revenue/jobs	
Total bed nights/day visits	3.5 million



THE GAME DRIVE

We are at the peak of the game viewing season on Olifants River Game Reserve. Sightings have been fantastic with some very special encounters including Caracal, White-Headed Vulture, Secretary Bird, and a very rare sighting of a Leopard devouring another Leopard at Rhino Pan.

Although Leopard cannibalism is rarely reported, it is known to occur and probably happens more frequently than we think. In this case, it was the dominant male Ananzi taking out a younger male. Male Leopard territories are fiercely fought over and protected and this is a way to ensure the younger male does not grow too big and become a threat to Ananzi's territory. We suspect that Ananzi was also responsible for the fatal wound inflicted on a younger male around Hide Dam last year.



Lion and Leopard viewing have been world-class and the Wild Dogs have also made a few appearances during the month.

Elephant numbers are slowly increasing with the season changing and these graceful beasts congregate along permanent water sources.

The grasses on the reserve have help up very well this season providing an abundance of grazing which means the Zebra and Wildebeest numbers on Olifants have remained good. Buffalos have also moved through the reserve which is a great indication.

Rose Clark from unit 39 sent us this incredible pic of a crocodile feeding on a carcass inform of their unit. Incredible to see a huge croc like this in action.



CONSERVATION MATTERS

SERENGETI PLAINS EXPERIMENTAL GRASS PROJECT

The project has been heavily grazed by Impala and, the lesson learned is that it's almost impossible to exclude them unless there is a significantly higher fence around the area, We have decided to remove the electric fence as the impala were easily jumping the barrier to access the new grass shoots. When walking through the



prepared blocks, one can clearly see that there is new grass present where they previously were not. We suspect the seed bank is restored by our efforts and expect to see new grass grow during the next rainy season. The new grass on the project will grow and mature at the same time as the surrounding veld which will make Serengeti a little less attractive to herbivores. The impala only started eating the new grass shoots when the rest of the reserves grass started turning yellow in March.

PREDATOR & GAME CENSUS

It's that time of the year again; Balule will be conducting the Reserve wide Predator and General Game census as part of our commitment to the APNR and Great Kruger National Park. The predator census will take place next month in August and the aerial game count is planned for September.

The predator count will involve calling up predators during night call ups for counting. This is the same method used last year and was very successful. No predators will be darted during this operation; it is purely for counting purposes. The counted predators will be added to known lion numbers to get an accurate view of the current population on the reserve.

Last year's predator numbers were as follows:

Lion – 115, Hyena – 69, Leopard – 55 , Wild Dog – 31,
Black-Backed Jackal – 19, Cheetah - 2



SECURITY REPORT

June has been quiet from an incursion and poaching perspective. The Anti-Poaching measures employed by our dedicated team of field rangers, coupled with the dehorning last year have paid off with no Rhinos being lost this year so far on Balule. We are aiming for an incident-free year. We have installed gum poles and chains to formally close our northern boundary during the full moon period. The boundary, which stretches from Office Crossing along Red Crested to the 4 Powerlines and further along the Imberbe cutline to the Klaserie boundary, will be closed for a week each full moon cycle to assist our APU in detecting any incursion quickly and easily.



Based on the great experience we have had running our 10 Camera Traps through the artificial intelligence systems of WPS, we are now rolling out more camera assets through the reserve to further strengthen our fight against Rhino poaching. An additional 40 Camera traps will be added to our current network. These units will be set up in the field throughout the “poaching hot spots” on Balule, including areas in Doreen, OREC and MRNR to our south. The funding for these Cameras will come out of the ORGR Anti-Poaching fund, the Balule Community and Anti-Poaching fund as well as our neighboring regions, who will contribute towards the Cameras based on their properties. Balule Nature Reserve will also be donating R50 000 towards this project which is greatly appreciated. The goal is to have the 50 strong camera network up by the end of August. Thank you to all the members who have generously donated to our Anti-Poaching fund, without you this would not be possible. Our Field Rangers have had the opportunity to receive some specialized first aid training from an organization called Wild Response. The organization specializes in trauma first aid training for Field Rangers who work in the anti-poaching field based on Special Forces training from the US Military. The two-day course exposed the team to potential injuries and techniques to save lives in our bush environment. This training was all done at no cost to us at all.

BALULE SNARE SWEEP

In recent weeks there has been a substantial increase in the number of animals being caught in snares. Most often these are cable snares and are made of similar cable to those removed from animals within Balule and Klaserie. It appeared that these animals were being snared somewhere between the tar road referred to as the “waterboard road” and the boundary of the KNP.



A meeting was held with all interested and affected parties and it was decided to perform a “snare sweep” operation in the area outlined below. ORGR sent our APU unit led by Callan to represent Olifants, and do our part to remove these harmful snares. Based on the evidence found, snaring is taking place on a large scale within the operational area. Serious wildlife crimes are being committed. In addition to the numerous animals being killed, many animals are also suffering severe injuries due to the type and number of snares.

The results of this operation were impressive.

- A total of 95 snares were removed from the operational area.
- The majority of these were operational cable snares.
- These cable snares are identical to the ones removed from several elephants, lions, hyena, and buffalo in the last 3 months by Balule, Klaserie, and the PNHF.
- The snares were concentrated in particular areas or “hotspots” as can be seen on the image below.
- A total of 6 camps and 1 hide were located.
- 2 of the camps have evidence of copper thieves and subsistence snaring.
- The other camps appear to be dedicated to poacher camps.
- Remains and body parts (some fresh) of the following species were located: Hippo, Waterbuck and Impala (several).
- Poachers are targeting both large and medium-sized species.
- Snares are well crafted and strong.
- Knives and other poaching paraphernalia were located, logged, photographed and bagged.



REACHING OUT

An enormous thanks to our members for their incredibly generous response to the Balule Outreach Trust Covid-19 appeal. The funds raised have enabled the Trust to provide money for much needed food parcels, masks and sanitization products, to several organisations within our local Communities.

Our main beneficiary, South African Medical Expeditions (SAME) has received 550 three ply washable cotton children masks and are distributing food parcels and sanitary products from the After School Child Care Centre in Sigagule Village to between 40 and 60 carefully selected families a week, providing food for over 500 people every month.



The Trust has also provided funds to two other NGOs for Covid relief. Nourish, which has used the money to manufacture and distribute 2000 cotton masks to children in various primary schools in the region, and the Maseke Drop-in-Centre for food parcels being distributed to families within the Maseke community. Funds have also been appropriated to the Apostoliese Geloofsendig Kerk van Suid-Afrika (Apostolic Faith Mission Church) in Phalaborwa for distribution of much-needed food parcels to poor people in the community that they serve.



The South African Medical Expeditions (SAME) Foundation continues to bring "hope for each new day". SAME assists an average of 110 children every day with two meals worth of instant porridge. Also provided are edible vitamins and fruit. Local lodges, private entities and contributions from ORGR assist with these purchases. Recently SAME was the recipient of 2 tons of Instant Porridge from the Load Star

organization. This donation will get them through to September. Those in the greatest distress receive comprehensive food parcels. Unfortunately, the SAME kitchen will not reopen until South Africa has passed the COVID peak which is predicted to occur in September.

SAME is grateful for the many donations of clothing, blankets, beanies, gloves, shoes, hand-made masks, stationery, sports equipment and non-perishable foods from ORGR members and many people have gratefully received these items. SAME is considering reopening the education side for grade Sevens to assist them in making it through their final year. However, they need to consider the health of both the SAME team members as well as the many extremely vulnerable families that daily come to the Centre.



N.B. NEW ORGR WHATSAPP OUTREACH GROUP

Should any members wish to join the new ORGR WhatsApp Outreach Group, please contact Susan Harwood on 0832282546 and request to be added. This group is being formed as a way for like-minded members to be notified of needs that arise within the surrounding communities – and share ideas for donations to uplift those less fortunate than ourselves.

This group may appeal particularly to those who wish to help in any way possible - including knitting/crocheting, putting together hampers for Christmas, purchasing stationery for learners, donating gently worn or new seasonal clothes, books or stationery and/or non-perishables.

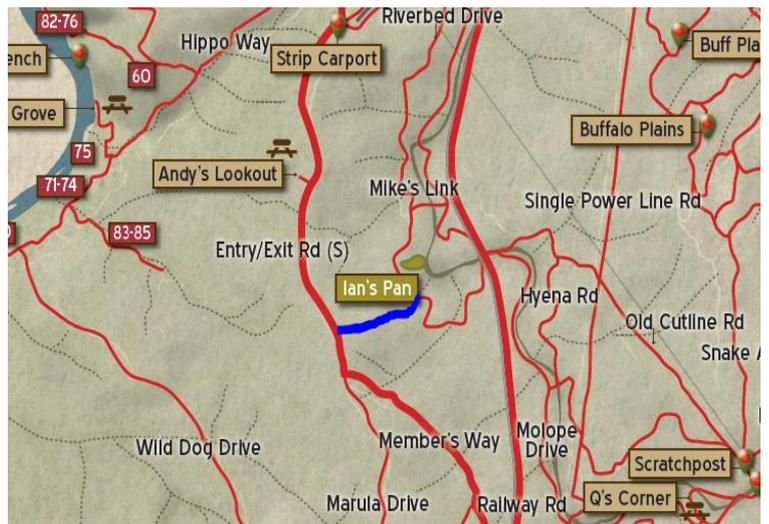


THE MEMBERS UPDATE

ROADS

The road network is in great condition. We managed to grade the railway road to Hoedspruit in June and will be dragging tyres in July to manage the Corrugation we are experiencing with increased traffic.

We will be installing a short link road between Entry/Exit and Ian's Pan. This will allow for quicker access to the Palm loop when you find yourself up on the ridge. The 500m link road is indicated in blue.



OCCUPANCY

June Occupancies have been phenomenal. It seems everyone needed a "Bush Fix" after the extended lockdown. It was great to have the busy buzz of members on the reserve. We peaked at 36 Units in residence during the last week of the month.

June 2020					
	Occupancy	No of Units		Occupancy	No of Units
Week 1	10%	8	Week 3	28%	23
Week 2	20%	17	Week 4	31%	26

FIRE RISK

We would like to remind all members of the current risk of fire on the reserve as we head into the driest months of the year. August is also traditionally quite a windy month which adds risk factors. Please ensure you properly extinguish all open flames at the end of an evening with water or using your fire cover ensuring all embers are dealt with accordingly.

GAME DRIVE ETIQUETTE & PROTOCOL

We have noticed that there has been some unnecessary off-roading at certain sightings over the recent months. Members are reminded that this is unacceptable and can be damaging to our environment. We urge our community to please report any off-road driving to management; members who are found off-roading may be liable for a fine.

The sharing of sightings and the use of the radio is a very important aspect of the Olifants experience. Please ensure you share your sightings with our community so we can all benefit and adhere to the radio protocols to ensure smooth sightings management. We have had a bizarre case

of an unknown member calling in false sightings recently; this behaviour is not welcome and counterproductive.

Finally please ensure you remove all of your bush toilet paper from the bush, we are seeing bundles of toilet paper at various location throughout the reserve. Please remind your guests when nature calls, to leave only wet patches.

MADRID POWER CABLE

A portion of the old cable that runs between 69 and 74 has been burning out at least once a month over the last 4 months. This is still a length of cable that was not replaced when the majority of the cable was upgraded a few years ago. We now need to replace this cable to ensure we have a reliable electrical supply to Madrid. Two cables of 600 meters each will be replaced, this work will take place in July.

CLASSIFIEDS

Unit 83 and 78 have recently been sold and is no longer on the market. This leaves only a 1/3 share of Unit 54 on the market. Please contact the office should you require any further information.

COVID-19 RESERVE UPDATE

South Africa is now moving into the peak of its infection rate and it is a time for us all to be extra vigilant to avoid spreading the virus unnecessarily. We now have approaching 400 000 confirmed cases in the country with all corners of our land impacted. Limpopo currently has 2381 cases. Please ensure you wear your masks in all public places on the reserve and when dealing with any staff or visitors. We still are practicing social distancing of 2 meters and have sanitization station at all public places.

We have adapted our Housekeeping protocols as follows:

Booking for all Housekeeping requirements need to be emailed to office@olifantsreserve.co.za – Please note for administrative purposes we cannot take telephonic or WhatsApp bookings. There will be a 7 day exclusion period for all members arriving on the Reserve; this will apply to all in residence maid services as well as office visits. Once members have been on the Reserve for 7 days and do not show any symptoms, in-residence Housekeeping services and Office visits will be allowed, with the following regulations. For the next 7 days, no contact with the Housekeeping staff, i.e. you will be required to out of your unit while the housekeepers are there. This will then allow for the recommended 14 day period and safeguard both members as well as staff.

THE LAST WORD

STAFF PROFILE OF THE MONTH

Jane is one of our Housekeeping Magicians! She grew up in the small village of Makuva in the Ginyini district of Limpopo. She is the eldest of 4 children. She used to work for Working for Water in their alien invasive plant control projects before joining the Olifants team. She is married to Ronald and joined him at Olifants in 2002 as a Houskeeper. They have three children together, 2 girls aged 21 and 8, and a Boy of 13. When she is off she enjoys tending to her house and garden and her favorite past time is catching up on all the gossip with her sister who is also her best friend.

Jane forms an important part in our Housekeeping team and is meticulous in her detail when servicing the units. She is an incredible asset!

That's it from us all at Olifants River Game Reserve.

Stay safe and stay in touch.

Catch you on Sunset plains for a Sundowner!

All the best, Nick and the ORGR team

