



Parsons Nature Reserve Newsletter – November 2025 Edition

November has arrived with a long-awaited gift, the first real soaking rains have finally fallen across Parsons. Almost overnight, the bush has transformed, bursting back into life in a celebration of colour, sound, and renewal. The once dry landscape now shimmers with fresh greens, tender shoots, and the unmistakable scent of wet earth that signals the true beginning of summer in the Lowveld.

With the rains come familiar seasonal visitors: the Woodlands Kingfisher's vibrant call echoes through the trees once more, and various cuckoos have returned to fill the air with their distinctive songs. These migratory arrivals remind us how deeply connected this reserve is to far-reaching ecological rhythms.

Perhaps most heart-warming of all is the sight of the first impala lambs, tiny, delicate, and ever alert, keeping close to their mothers as they take their first wobbly steps into the world. Their presence is a symbol of hope and renewal, perfectly capturing the magic of this time of year.

As the sun sets and the sky blushes with evening colours, the chorus shifts to the Bushveld Rain Frogs and countless other species vocalising their gratitude for the rains. It is a soundtrack that stirs the soul and reminds us why this place is so profoundly special.

We are honoured to be custodians of Parsons Nature Reserve, an environment that humbles us daily, yet fills us with energy, inspiration, and a deep love for life and wild spaces. This land is more than a reserve; it is a treasure, a sanctuary, and a reminder of the priceless beauty of nature in its purest form.

Here's to a vibrant and life filled November at Parsons.



Photo courtesy of Vera Bower



November Wildlife Sightings

November arrived on Parsons wrapped in the scent of rain and new life, and with it came a tapestry of unforgettable wildlife moments, each one a reminder of why we love this wild corner of the Greater Kruger.

The **Regal Kudu** (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*) stepped into the spotlight early in the month, magnificent bulls adorned in their wide-spreading spiral horns. With the bushveld bursting into fresh leaf growth, these gentle browsers moved elegantly through the thickets, living emblems of wilderness royalty.

After the first rains, a tiny yet remarkable creature emerged: **Peter's Thread Snake** (*Leptotyphlops scutifrons*), feasting eagerly on termites. Almost invisible beneath the leaf litter, this delicate burrower is a specialist of the post-rain feast, a reminder that even the smallest species carry ancient stories.

On #37's trail cam, a whisper of shadow and stealth: an **elusive leopard** (*Panthera pardus*). Using a fallen tree as a lookout, the ghost of the reserve moved with fluid confidence. Sightings like these nourish the soul, fleeting, rare, and deeply humbling.

Both baby and adult **Leopard Tortoises** (*Stigmochelys pardalis*) have been seen journeying slowly across the reserve. Please keep a careful eye on the roads, these beautifully patterned reptiles can disappear into the grass with surprising ease.

One early morning, the **Broken Tooth Lion Pride** (*Panthera leo*) created the kind of roadblock we treasure, spread across the middle of the Granite road. Mostly nocturnal hunters with extraordinary night vision, lionesses lead the hunt with precision teamwork, while the males lend their power when needed for heavier takedowns.

The rains also brought out the **Giant African Land Snail** (*Achatina fulica*). These extraordinary hermaphrodites, though requiring a partner to mate, can lay hundreds of eggs in ideal conditions, nature's quiet abundance at work.



Photo courtesy of Vera Bower

Elusive as ever, the **African Civet** (*Civettictis civetta*) made a few appearances. Famous for producing civet musk once prized by perfumers, these nocturnal omnivores glide through the darkness with a masked mystique.



Journeys of **giraffe** (*Giraffa camelopardalis giraffa*) crossed the horizon often this month, silent silhouettes against stormy skies. Surprisingly agile, they can reach speeds of 60 km/h and defend themselves with kicks powerful enough to deter even lions.

Our land giants, the **African Elephant** (*Loxodonta africana*), have been everywhere, from the Olifants River to the northern corners of the reserve. Their trunks, containing around 100,000 muscles, remain one of nature's greatest marvels, capable of uprooting trees or delicately plucking a single blade of grass.

A jewel among small predators, the **African Wild Cat** (*Felis lybica*) blessed us with multiple sightings, rare, fleeting glances at a species that blends almost perfectly with the bush.

Down by the river, **Chacma Baboons** (*Papio ursinus*) and **Vervet Monkeys** (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*) have been busy with their usual chaotic, comical routines, adding a lively soundtrack to the riverine forests.



Photo courtesy of Brendan Marsay

Other general game, including **steenbok**, **common duiker**, and **plains zebra**, made their presence known throughout the month, each playing their part in the unfolding story of the reserve.

The skies too themselves seemed to celebrate November's energy. Migratory birds have exploded onto Parsons in dazzling colour, feathers flashing through the greenery, songs drifting on warm winds. The birdlife this month has been nothing short of spectacular.

And of course, November wouldn't be complete without the **Impala** (*Aepyceros melampus*) welcoming their newest generation. The ewes have begun dropping their delicate lambs, a true seasonal blessing. For the first few days, the newborns remain tucked away in thick cover, hidden from predators, before joining lively nurseries where play-fighting builds the strength and agility they'll rely on for survival. By four months, these little ones are confidently weaned and well on their way to becoming the heartbeat of the herds.

Parsons in November has been alive, radiant, and full of wonder, each sighting a reminder of why we cherish this land, its creatures, and the wild stories it tells.





Wardens Report



Magical Parsons

RAINFALL

46,0mm rain recorded for the month. Total for the season (July 2025 to June 2026) – 92,2mm.

SECURITY/SAFETY

- Routine snare sweeps around houses and lodges.
- Regular radio tests done on Monday and Friday mornings.
- Parsons is an active member of Mica Farm Watch and does regular patrols.

ORIENTATIONS

- PNR Mpala x1 new guide, Hilltop x1 guide and No14's contractors
- Members are asked to contact Joe when they are next down to do a refresher orientation so that they are aware of the new rules that were adopted at the 2024 AGM. Only a handful of members have done so to date.

ROADS

- Graded Internal Access Road – Sopies Hoogte to Emosheni
- Dragged tyres/metal-frame.
 - Access Road Elephant Alley to Gate x1 and Internal Access to No59
- Filled in potholes on External Access Road – Nyoka Kop and Goat's Hill
- Blocked off unofficial stopping points on Game Drive A – Nyalaberry tree

GENERAL

NON-PROFIT COMPANY

- Vehicle assets are being transferred to PNRPOA
- Please Note! ADFIN will be closed from 12th December 2025 to 5th January 2026. Please contact Joe if you require month end figures of gate entries for payment purposes.

BUILDING / CONSTRUCTION

- **#38:** neighbours and interested parties were invited for inspection of the site where a new house



is to be built – no one attended

- **Gate:** Screening clearance obtained from Environmental Impact Practitioner. In-house construction has started, and we are establishing foundations

FESTIVE SEASON

- We wish all members and staff blessed good wishes for the upcoming festival season. If you are traveling – please do so safely.

Woodland Kingfisher: Signalling the onset of the wet season



The arrival of the **Woodland Kingfisher** (*Halcyon senegalensis*) in Parsons Nature Reserve is a deeply anticipated event, heralding the summer rains with its explosive and truly unusual call, a cascading, high-pitched trill described as the "sound of summer" that resonates throughout the reserve, far from the typical riverside haunts of other kingfishers.

Why we love them:

Stunning Appearance: The bird is a true visual delight, with vibrant turquoise-blue plumage contrasting sharply with its crisp white underparts and striking red and black bill. This beautiful colouration makes it a favourite among birdwatchers and photographers.

"Sound of Summer": Its loud, high-pitched, trilling call is iconic and widely recognized as the definitive sound of the summer rainy season in Southern Africa. Hearing this call evokes strong feelings of nostalgia and joy, signalling the return of warmth, abundance, and new life to the bushveld.

Unique Behaviour: Unlike many other kingfisher species, the Woodland Kingfisher is primarily a "dry-land" hunter, preying on insects, small reptiles, and amphibians far from large water bodies. This unexpected habit is fascinating to observe.

Territorial Displays: During the breeding season, their elaborate territorial and courtship displays, involving flashing their white underwing linings and blue wing panels, are captivating to witness.

Ecological Importance: By consuming large numbers of insects and small vertebrates, the Woodland Kingfisher plays a vital role in controlling local populations, which contributes to a balanced ecosystem and a healthy environment.



Cultural Significance: In many African cultures, the bird is a symbol of rain and fertility, its arrival often coinciding with the onset of the wet season.

The Humble Dung Beetle



As the first rains bless the parched earth of Parsons Nature Reserve and the Greater Kruger area, a spectacular and vital drama unfolds beneath our feet. This is the moment the humble dung beetle emerges in force, a true superhero of the savanna whose tireless work is essential to our delicate ecosystem.

With passionate zeal, these incredible insects get to work, rolling spheres of dung at astonishing speeds, driven by a life-sustaining mission. The region is home to around **78 different species**. Among these are "rollers" like *Scarabaeus zambesianus*, "tunnellers," and "dwellers," each playing a unique role in turning waste into fertile soil. The "rollers" are a marvel, using the sun or moon as a compass and sometimes burying a single dung ball many times more than their own body weight in a single night. This remarkable activity not only cleans the landscape and reduces flies but also improves soil quality and seed dispersal, proving that even the smallest creature holds immense power and importance in the great circle of life.

Please look out for the humble, hardworking dung beetles and avoid driving over them; **they are crucial to the Parsons ecosystem!**

And finally: Respect, however, does not start and end with the guides. It starts with each person who encounters a wild animal or enters a wilderness space. (Follow the link for a jaw dropping look into modern human behaviour)

[Selfie safari crisis as social media drives dangerous, unethical wildlife tourism](#)

Proverb: "A bird that flies off the earth and lands on an anthill is still on the ground." – African proverb

Meaning:

A minor elevation or promotion without true substance or fundamental change is not real progress or an actual rise in status.

With heartfelt thanks and warmest wishes,

Parsons Nature Reserve

