



OCTOBER 2018

ZAMBEZE DELTA ECOLOGY

Holistic Ecological Research Project



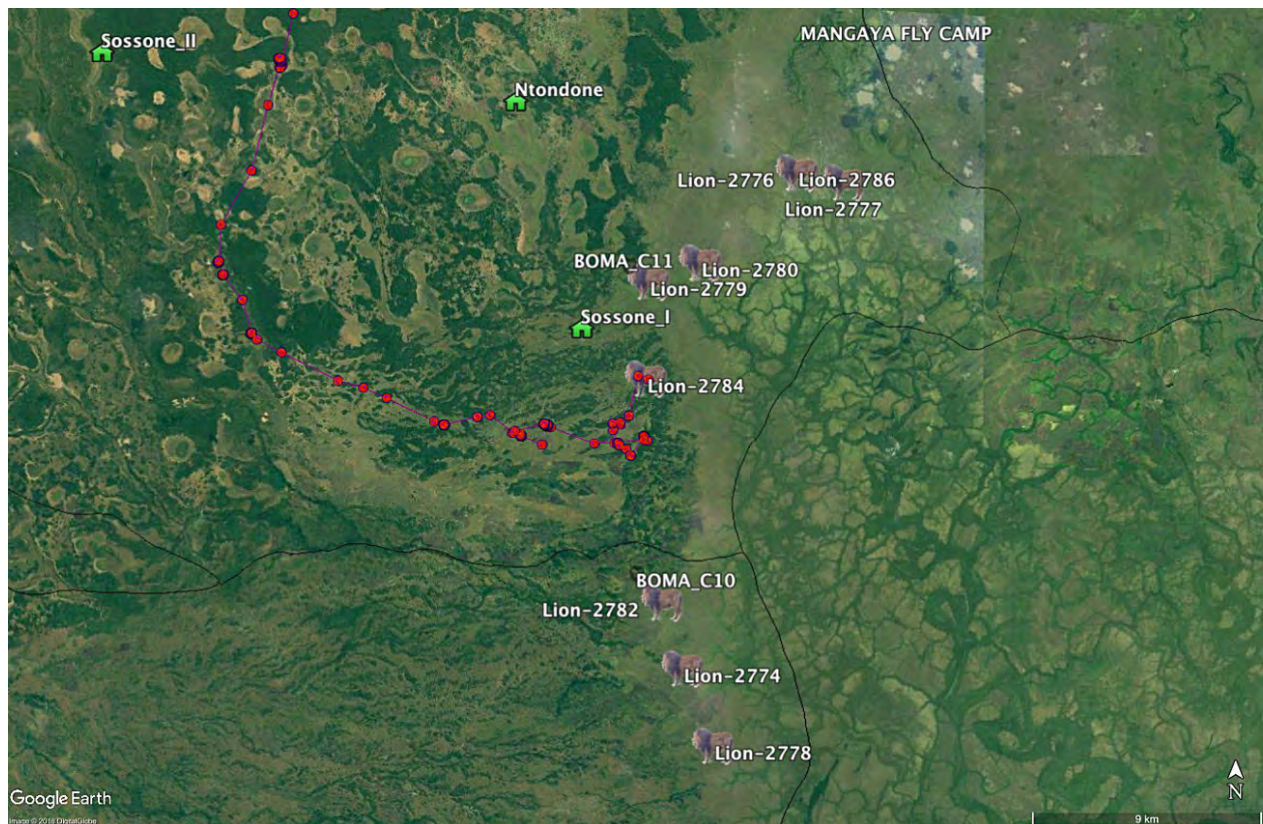
DR Byron du Preez

MONTHLY RESEARCH REPORT



THE PRODIGAL LION RETURNS HOME

October was a very easy month from a lion management perspective, and very interesting on the research side as the cats start to settle into rhythm. The highlight of the month was obviously the return of the Prodigal Lion (collar 2784) dubbed ‘Nhazua’ (*in honour of Mark’s late tracker and community elder – as this particular lion checked in on all of the local villages during his voyage*). Nhazua has colonised the area to the north of the Coutada 11 floodplain, where he has a very distinctive core that is centred near Mangaya, from which he ranges frequently but always returns to an area of approximately a hectare in the crook of the river.



The Prodigal Lion’s return to the floodplain (track marked in red). He has since colonised the territory around Mangaya to the north. The rest of the collared lions are starting to stake out recognisable territories along the floodplain



EMERGING SPATIAL & SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

At the end of October 2018 it is now nearly 3 months since the first lion reintroductions back into the Zambeze Delta ecosystem. The dynamics of the species, in terms of both their spatial and social relationships and interactions, are still very much in the fluid state, and these will become ever more interesting as we collect more data – however even now there are clear patterns forming:

Lioness 2774 is the only cat that never leaves Coutada 10, though she often associates with lionesses 2778 and 2782 who spend the majority of their time in Coutada 11 floodplain. Lions 2780 and 2785 (*representing 3 males and 2 females*) have colonised the central area of the Coutada 11. Lioness 2776 and lion 2786 (*and their sister*) have taken the area to the north east, near where Nhazua 2784 has since settled. Lionesses 2777 and 2775 (*faulty collar*) are essentially our first swamp cats that have used the papyrus to great effect for both hunting and shade. Lioness 2779 is a loner, but she is always in fantastic condition and clearly doing well for herself.



The Boys are Back: the C11 flagship-pride reuniting on the plain



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#24LIONS