



SAFARI TELEGRAPH

SAFARI CONSULTANTS LTD JANUARY 2015

FOCUS ON ZAMBIA

A look at one of Africa's leading safari destinations

SELF-DRIVE ADVENTURES

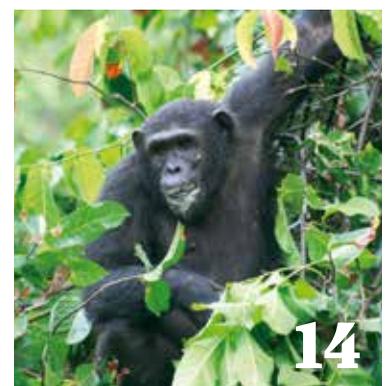
Exploring the magic of South Africa, Namibia and Botswana

OCEAN SAFARI

Snorkelling and Scuba-diving along Africa's majestic coastline

Contents

- 4 FOCUS ON ZAMBIA**
One of Africa's leading safari destinations
- 6 WHAT'S NEW IN 2015?**
From a beach-front spa to a camp in Namibia's wilderness
- 7 THE GREAT MIGRATION**
Predicting the movements of the 1.5 million migrating wildebeest
- 8 OUR TRAVELS**
The team report back from their African adventures
- 10 JOURNAL: TANZANIA**
From the Serengeti to the Kilimanjaro, a look at one of Africa's most diverse countries
- 12 SELF-DRIVE SOUTHERN AFRICA**
Experience the adventure of touring South Africa, Namibia and Botswana
- 14 MONKEY BUSINESS**
A guide to the charismatic primates of Africa
- 15 OCEAN SAFARIS**
A look at the 'big game' to be found in the coastal regions of Africa



NOTES *for the diary*

AS USUAL, WE WILL BE EXHIBITING AT:

DESTINATIONS London, 29 January to 01 February

THE SUFFOLK SHOW Ipswich, 27 & 28 May

THE BIRD FAIR Rutland Water, Oakham, 21 to 23 August

If you are planning to attend, please call in for a chat. We'll be delighted to see you.

The wildlife of Africa

CONTINUES TO IMPRESS, AMAZE AND INSPIRE

Welcome to our annual newsletter which comes at the end of a rather challenging year for Africa and the African tourism industry.

However, we are always looking to move forward and, after another successful year for ourselves, we do so with the certainty that game-viewing is better than ever and the performances of our suppliers continue to improve. Nothing makes us happier (or prouder) than to hear about the amazing experiences that our customers have had.

During 2014, we've travelled again across the length and breadth of the areas in which we specialise and you can catch up on where we've been in the 'Our Travels' section. We're proud that our first-hand knowledge of our product is second to none and we believe this makes a huge difference to the quality of the holidays we are able to provide you with.

We were disappointed to lose Oliver half way through the year as he decided to continue with higher education,

but are delighted that Fran is moving into sales and we welcome Eloise Britcher to replace her in our admin department.

Our Social Media marketing continues to grow slowly and we hope we are getting the balance right. Please remember our regular 'Photo of the Month' competition and if you want to follow us as we travel though Africa, please follow us on Facebook, Twitter, GooglePlus or YouTube.

If you're looking for that quick fix of Africa to escape the winter, take a look at three of the better special offers we have on at the moment which are featured on the back page. Other offers, latest African news, and our trip reports are updated regularly on our website safari-consultants.com so please do take a look when you want to revive your memories of the most captivating of continents, Africa.

As we look forward, we wish you the very best for the festive season and the year ahead.

Bill, Rob, Michele, Mary, Josie, Michaela, Roland, Fran, Eloise and Jane.



tinyurl.com/kkok8mk



twitter.com/safariuk



tinyurl.com/pld3aff



tinyurl.com/mdvx4ma

Focus on ZAMBIA

Zambia is one of Africa's leading safari destinations, with areas such as the Luangwa Valley, Kafue and Lower Zambezi being on every safari aficionado's list. But aside from the wildlife, it's also home to the spectacular Victoria Falls which it 'shares' with neighbouring Zimbabwe.

The Victoria Falls stretch 1.5kms across the Zambezi with the water falling around 100m into a narrow chasm and creating a spray which, during the peak flow season (March to August), can rise several hundred feet into the air. At this time, the Falls are a spectacular sight but difficult to see and appreciate from ground level – a perfect opportunity to take to the air by helicopter or microlight on a 'Flight of Angels'.

Once the water levels start to drop (July onwards), the extent of the Falls is more apparent from the ground and they are perhaps even more awe-inspiring. During this period, many of the adrenalin-pumping activities such as white-water rafting and jet boating are also operational, complementing those such as bungee jumping and white-water canoeing. Make sure you

also see the Falls from Livingstone Island, standing on the edge of the vast drop while the water rushes past you. Numerous excursion options are available, including lunch or high tea.

From a wildlife perspective, Zambia's most famous safari area is the South Luangwa National Park which lies in the north-east of the country. Straddling the Luangwa River, this park has been synonymous with walking safaris since they were first started by Norman Carr in the 1970s. The Luangwa is a 'snaking' river, altering its course each year to create new oxbow lagoons (or dambos) which interlace the woodland. The general game-viewing is superb, but it is for the sightings of leopard that the park has such a fantastic reputation. Walking aside, game drives during the day and night, and the use of ingenious 'hides' also add to the safari experience.



The Lower Zambezi National Park lies on the northern bank of the mighty Zambezi, downstream of Kariba and almost opposite Zimbabwe's Mana Pools National Park. Here the river is wide and lazy, perfect for exploration by canoe or boat. The park is extensive, including the floodplains of the river and extending inland to encompass much of the impressive escarpment hills, providing a rich diversity of habitat.

The floodplains are wooded with acacia and mahogany trees and, during the dry season, teem with a wide variety of wildlife and birdlife. Hippos are





everywhere and crocodiles bask in the shallows. Herds of elephant, buffalo, kudu, eland, and waterbuck graze the sweet grasses or browse on the tasty albida pods. Lion, leopard and wild dog rest in the shade of the giant figs. Fringing the floodplains, the thicker bush shelters the shyer creatures such as honey badger, nyala and bushbuck and is interspersed with open vleis providing ideal walking country. The hills are rugged and exciting, offering spectacular views over the valley, looking east to the Mupata Gorge and, west, back towards the Kafue River confluence with the Zambezi.

During the late dry season (late August onwards), both white-fronted and carmine bee-eaters nest in the banks of the rivers providing a colourful spectacle to complete the impressive list of birds to be seen. A wide range of activities including canoeing, boating/ fishing, walking, day and night drives are offered by most lodges.

The Kafue National Park, one of the largest parks in Africa, lies a few hours' drive to the west of Lusaka. This is a vast wilderness, dominated largely by the attractive Kafue River, and its two perennial tributaries in the Lufupa and Lunga rivers, along its eastern flank, and the vast seasonal Busanga floodplains to the north-west. Aside from the Busanga, the habitat is primarily one of miombo woodland interspersed with open grassy

areas and riverine woodland. Over 490 bird species (including the endemic Chaplin's barbet) complement the impressive wildlife numbers including the increasingly rare roan and sable antelope.

Until recently, the park was difficult to access but with a major upgrade to the main road from the capital and a vastly improved network of roads within the park, Kafue is set to rise in popularity in the next few years.

Zambia also has a lot of other National Parks with more specific interests such as the remote Liuwa Plains near Angola (second largest wildebeest migration in Africa), Kasanka National Park (the amazing straw-coloured bat migration from late October to December each year and abundance of sitatunga antelope), the Bangweulu Wetlands (endemic black lechwe and the rare shoebill - see 'Staff Travels' section), and Lochinvar National Park (over 420 species of birds and vast herds of Kafue lechwe).

Few countries in modern day 'safari Africa' offer the chance to experience the 'old-style safari' of the mid-late 20C as Zambia. Amongst the modern lodges, which offer facilities just as good as the best in the rest of the continent, are those of the 'old-style' which offer the chance to experience the rawness of the real Africa. Zambia has an abundance of these, scattered through some of the best wildlife areas you can visit.



Left: Kafue buffalo

Clockwise from top left: Busanga hippo; Victoria Falls; walking in Luangwa; elephant in Lower Zambezi; carmine bee-eaters in Luangwa

Footnote

Around 1999, Bill and his wife Ruth travelled with a group of friends to the remote Liuwa Plains in western Zambia. Very little was known about the infrastructure of the area and they outfitted the safari entirely from Zimbabwe. Bill takes it up. "Having spent a few days at the lovely Sioma Falls, we travelled on to a small town called Senanga where we were stopped at a road block. The Sergeant on duty duly issued us with a fine of K54000 (about \$27) for failing to produce warning triangles (a legal requirement) for two of the cars. He wanted us to return to the police station, on the other side of the town, to pay the fine and get our receipt but we were keen to make the next town of Mongu before the bank closed at 2 p.m. A long discussion ensued, the upshot of which was that he would accept the money and we would collect the receipt 10 days later on our way back!!! Alas, as we pulled off one of the vehicles had a flat tyre. While we changed the tyre, one of the most remarkable things I have experienced in Africa happened. The sergeant returned with a hand written letter 'To whom it may concern' explaining that he, Sergeant So-and-So of the Senanga Police, had duly fined us the sum of K54000 for the failure to produce the two triangles, and that if we were stopped again, please not to fine us a second time!" This pretty much sums up the delight of Zambian people.

For more information, visit safari-consultants.com or call 01787 888590

"Few countries in modern day 'safari Africa' offer the chance to experience the 'old-style safari' of the mid-late 20C as Zambia"

WHAT'S NEW FOR

2015



new Life's a beach

Saruni Ocean, situated on Msambweni beach on the southern Kenya coast, is set to open this month to wide acclaim. The lodge and spa will cater for 36 guests in seven beautifully designed houses comprising 18 air-conditioned

suites which will appeal to couples, families and small groups. It should prove to be a good addition to the other exclusive beach retreats along that coast.



new In the wilds

Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp lies in the heart of one of Namibia's most beautiful wilderness areas, on the confluence of the Palmwag Concession, Hoanib River and Skeleton Coast National Park. Set on a plain between the rugged mountains, the camp accommodates up to 20 guests who explore the amazing region on extended excursions, including into the Skeleton Coast National Park itself. To enhance the exclusivity, access to the camp is only open to 'fly-in' guests but even those doing a self-drive holiday should consider

visiting this camp for at least 3 or 4 nights.

Anabezi Luxury Tented Camp has opened in Zambia's Lower Zambezi National Park. Set on the banks of the Zambezi in the much quieter middle section of the park, the lodge is built on raised wooden decks and walkways and has eleven luxury tented suites with glass sliding doors leading to a furnished deck and private plunge pool. The area around the lodge is particularly attractive and productive for wildlife. A wide range of activities are available. A smaller, more rustic, sister camp is planned for 2015.

new Serengeti developments

At last we've had some developments in the Serengeti which open up new regions. Namiri Plains is a new 16 bed tented camp in a remote section of the eastern Serengeti, which for the last 20 years has only been open to researchers. The area is renowned for its predators, especially lion and cheetah, and with the closest camp at least 45 minutes away, this is an ideal choice for those wanting to experience the Serengeti away from the busy areas. In keeping with the wilderness appeal, the accommodation is simple but comfortable with lots of spatial awareness through open gauze windows and en suite flush loo and bucket shower. Game drives are complemented by guided walks.

accommodation suites, complete with fans, 'evening breeze cooling systems' within the mosquito nets, en suite facilities (bath, indoor/outdoor showers, separate loo) and a minibar. The lodge is built amongst the boulders overlooking a rocky gorge of the Arugusinyai River. Day and night drives, walks and cultural excursions are available, but although it will offer total exclusivity, it remains to be seen how good the game-viewing (especially for predators) is over an extended period.

Alex Walker of Serian has also announced that he will be moving his delightful eight bed seasonal camp from the Kusini area in the south to the Lamai wedge in the north to cover the migration season there from July to October.

Mwiba Lodge is the first luxury lodge in the southern Serengeti. Actually, it's on a private 51000 acre concession south of Maswa and has eight tented



new Easy travel

Zambia and Zimbabwe have apparently signed a deal to have a single visa for both countries which will certainly save travellers a lot of time and inconvenience when moving from one to another. Really good news for those visiting the Victoria Falls area who may wish to see the Falls from both countries – they certainly offer different views.



THE GREAT *Migration*

Few people who have an interest in wildlife will not have heard about the great wildebeest migration which travels annually around the vast Serengeti ecosystem. It is, after all, perhaps the most impressive wildlife show on earth. As with most natural phenomena, predicting where the vast herds will be at any one time is not easy, particularly when local weather conditions play such an important role in whether they move on, or stay, in a certain area. However, there are certain times of year when we can be pretty sure that there will be vast numbers of wildebeest to be seen, if not all the 1.5 million which travel across the open plains.

Let's start the cycle at the beginning of the year, when the herds like to be on the nutritious short grass plains of the southern Serengeti. They gather here to calve around the end of January and into February, all the new-borns appearing within a period of three weeks or so as an in-built defensive mechanism to limit the impact of predation. Talking of predation, this is really a

bountiful time for the lion, cheetah and hyaena which hunt the plains.

Sometime towards the end of March and into April, with the grass supply greatly reduced and the rut in full flow, the 'beests' are on the move, heading towards the permanent rivers which cut through the central and northern regions of the Serengeti. The red oat grass here is significantly longer than the species of the southern plains so it's just as well that ahead of them are the 250 000 odd zebra who prefer to graze at that higher level.

The long rains of April and May are spent around the central Serengeti and into the Western Corridor. It will take a further six weeks before the herds reach the Mara River in the northern Serengeti, when the onset of the dry season will force them to keep close to the permanent waters.

Depending on local conditions, the herds will continue to move northwards eventually going through 'immigration and customs' to reach Kenya's Masai Mara, perhaps the most famous wildlife region in the world. Here



they will remain until sometime in late September or October. Just why so many of the herds risk their lives trying to cross the Mara River is a mystery as they could quite easily walk around, but it certainly enhances the wildlife experiences of those watching and adds to the spectacular drama.

On leaving Kenya, they once again start the journey back down to the southern short grass plains arriving in time to 'fatten up' before the arduous calving period.

When designing itineraries for those who wish to see the migration, we are always very careful to suggest camps and lodges which are best suited to giving you the chance to see this wildlife extravaganza.



Our travels

THE TEAM REPORT BACK FROM THEIR AFRICAN ADVENTURES



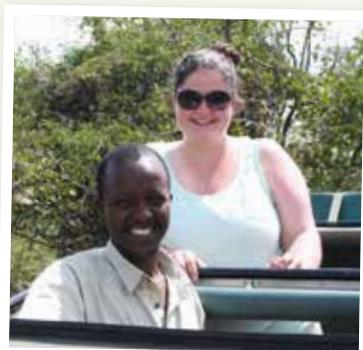
Bill

The Bangweulu Wetlands covers a vast area of more than 1 million hectares of north-west Zambia and is a designated RAMSAR (important wetland) site. The area stretches from the accessible seasonal flood plains of the south-east through the inaccessible central swamps to the open waters of Lake Bangweulu in the north-west. It is the seasonal floodplains which are of most interest to visitors as they are home to vast herds of the endemic black lechwe (*Kobus lechwe smithermani*) and the rare shoebill (*Balaeniceps rex*) which, with a bit of luck, can be seen in good numbers. The seasonal floodplains lie between the Lukulu and Lulimala rivers, themselves 'swampy' seepage points into which the shoebill retreat as the floodplains dry. From March to August, however, the area is inundated with water creating a habitat similar to that of Botswana's Okavango. During this time, travel is restricted to the traditional mekoro, a dugout also used by the vast numbers of fisherman who descend onto the watery wilderness to fish its fertile waters (once the floodplains dry, the intricate details of their fishing traps are easily seen and are the focus of an interesting discussion).

"It is the seasonal floodplains which are of most interest to visitors as they are home to vast herds of the endemic black lechwe"

Fran

I have certainly had a whirlwind first year in sales at Safari Consultants, fitting in numerous trips, so much so that Bill is beginning to wonder when I'm actually going to start the work! My first trip took me to the northern Serengeti and the Masai Mara in June, where I was overwhelmed with the massive open plains, the big cats around every corner and the warm and genuine welcome from every camp we visited. In August, I combined a trip to see my family near Cape Town with a week on safari in the private reserves bordering the Kruger. I had my first sighting of wild dog and spent an amazing morning with a large male leopard as it hunted in the Sabi Sands. In November, I joined Mary in Tanzania visiting the Selous and Ruaha National Parks. It was interesting to see the wilder, less busy side of Tanzania, in comparison to the more developed and 'rather crowded' north. The boat cruises in the Selous were a special experience, and our tent being surrounded by ten bull elephants in Ruaha was certainly one of the standout moments of my year. To cap it all off, as the newsletter goes to print, I'm off on one more trip to Zanzibar and northern Tanzania, visiting Tarangire and Lake Manyara national parks, the Ngorongoro Crater and the southern Serengeti. Check the website in the New Year for my trip report.



Jane

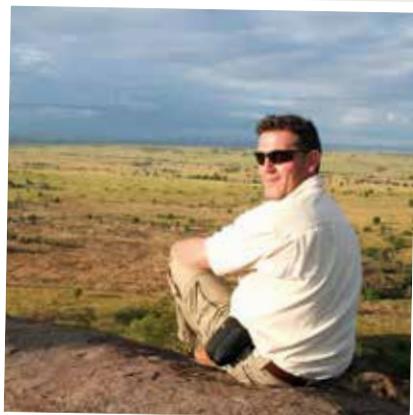
The focus for my own safari this year was another week-long trail ride in Botswana with Limpopo Horse Safaris – our fifth since 2002! Has it changed over the years? Yes, softer pillows and duvets, a swimming pool at the base-camp and wildlife that allows you to get much closer. But that aside, there is still the same great scenery, good guiding and superbly schooled horses (no worries about how your horse will ride – if you provide Louise with an honest précis of your ability, she always finds the perfect match). Returning to some of my favourite African haunts with friends was lovely – such places have a special magic. The inspiration, as if I needed any, was to create a special birthday celebration for my husband Graham, and a 10th Wedding Anniversary safari for some Irish friends whom we first met on their honeymoon. To set the scene, we enjoyed a close-up encounter with elephants within 20 minutes of setting off in the saddle, and it continued from there with many evenings catching up around the bush fire. One challenge that makes travelling to Africa so daunting is that it is such a big continent with a bewildering array of options. Our trip included specialist bird-watching at Mapangubwe, a cycling safari at Mashatu and walking at our own pace at Leshiba Wilderness. I also looked at a couple of new operations and spent a bit more time on the east side of Mashatu Reserve. We were rewarded with black eagles circling no more than 10ft above our heads. Think about what you would like to experience – it's all out there waiting for you!

Rob

The earlier part of the year saw me focusing heavily on the Serengeti – Mara ecosystem in northern Tanzania and Kenya. Over the course of two separate trips I travelled from the Ngorongoro Highlands and Lake Eyasi in the south, through the central, western and northern Serengeti plains to reach the private Mara North, Olare Motorogi and Naboisho conservancies which border the Masai Mara in Kenya. There is no doubt that these plains offer some of Africa’s most incredible game-viewing and it was good to remind myself just how amazing these regions are. I especially enjoyed the more exclusive sections – Loliondo and the Ngorongoro Conservation Areas in the southern Serengeti, the beautiful northern Serengeti early in the season before the wildebeest arrived, and the private Masai Mara Conservancies, which these days offer a far more exclusive game-viewing experience than the camps inside the official Mara Reserve can offer.

Later in the year, I spent time checking out popular coastal options, with a lovely family holiday in Mauritius and a slightly more adventurous exploration of Mafia, Fanjove and Zanzibar Islands, off Tanzania. Of particular note was the very remote and little known Fanjove Island, a genuine desert island experience far from any other form of tourism. Whilst on Mafia, I snorkelled for whale sharks but unfortunately was the only person over those few days not to see any.

I’ll need to go back!



“The gorilla trek was a highlight and we had a thrilling opportunity to view these incredible creatures at close quarters.”



Mary

This year my travels took me to the quieter parts of East Africa, plus a short trip to South Africa. In March, I returned to Kenya and, after a brief stay in Amboseli National Park, I headed north to the beautiful Laikipia escarpment and Meru National Park. The variety of accommodation styles and activities, the two days spent walking with Kerry Glen from Karisia Safaris were a particular highlight, plus the superb game viewing reinforced my view that this region can easily be visited as a standalone destination as well as in combination with the Masai Mara.

A quick trip to Cape Town in May saw me attend the inaugural We Are Africa conference, an excellent forum in which to receive updates from many of our suppliers and to hear about new developments. I then spent a few days driving along the picturesque Garden Route visiting several of our favourite guesthouses and lodges which, as ever, provided a warm and friendly welcome. Last month, I was back in East Africa visiting the Selous Game Reserve and Ruaha National Park, both wonderful wildlife and wilderness areas which offer beautiful scenery, proper wild Africa, big game viewing and very few visitors!

Michele

Rwanda was first on my travel list this year and included the Parc des Volcans, Lake Kivu and Nyungwe Forest. The gorilla trek was a highlight and we had a thrilling opportunity to view these incredible creatures at close quarters. The drive to Lake Kivu takes in some of the most spectacular scenery I have seen in Africa whilst Nyungwe Forest is enchanting and, although the chimp trekking was extremely strenuous, it too was an exhilarating and rewarding experience. I love returning to Zambia and my trip in June included the central Kafue, Lower Zambezi and my personal favourite, the Luangwa Valley. The variety of activities in the Kafue and Lower Zambezi were memorable. These included game drives, walking, boat cruises, canoeing, picnic breakfasts, and a spot of fishing! The game-viewing in the Luangwa never fails to disappoint. During my visit, I witnessed four different leopards, wild dogs, and lions.

A night at Chikoko, a walking trails camp, was brilliant with the emphasis on wilderness with no roads or other tourists in sight!

Finally, in November, I returned to Botswana where I travelled to the beautiful Makgadikgadi Pans, vast Central Kalahari, Linyanti and Okavango Delta. The scenery, sunsets, sunrises and infinite sky of the Pans and Kalahari were mesmerising. In the Linyanti we enjoyed some exciting big game viewing and encountered both lions and wild dogs on the Selinda Concession. The Okavango was as magical as ever, a pristine wilderness I always feel honoured to visit.



Journal TANZANIA

Taking in Africa's highest mountain, Kilimanjaro, and wildlife-rich parks such as the Serengeti, Tanzania has been a firm favourite for years. The team share their experiences.

Bill - RUAHA

Since I first travelled to Ruaha in the mid-1980s, it has been my favourite park in Africa, let alone Tanzania. In those days it was, at best, a two-day drive from Dar es Salaam. You accessed the park via a hand-operated ferry across the Great Ruaha River and it was like entering another world. Dominated by majestic baobabs, the park was largely void of tourism and the game-viewing was superb – there was something to see at almost every

turn. As for the bird life, one of my abiding memories is seeing (and hearing) a few hundred migrating yellow billed storks ‘dropping’ out of the sky as they descended to feed along the river bank.

Today, scheduled daily flights allow easy access to this diverse wilderness, but it’s still not a ‘busy’ park and the wildlife viewing, particularly from July to October, is still superb. Ruaha, one of Africa’s truly great wildernesses.

Jane - KILIMANJARO

Standing on the roof of Africa is an amazing experience, but not one for the faint-hearted and not always pleasurable at the time! Reaching the top of Kilimanjaro requires a high level of physical fitness and mental determination, rather than technical ability. I first climbed the mountain in 1990 and have enduring memories of a high-speed descent down the steep scree in an arm-lock with George, chief Guide. My second ascent in 2006 was still

“Once you’ve stood on the summit, flying over the glacier-topped mountain will never be the same again!”



very tough but I was better prepared as I had been trekking in the foothills of the Ngorongoro Highlands, then up Mount Meru beforehand. 'Kili' was a delight. If you're hit by medical or weather problems (I "enjoyed" the heaviest snowfall in years, which meant great photos but other trekkers were struggling with snow-blindness), that's when you'll be glad you chose the right trekking company. Once you've stood on the summit, flying over the glacier-topped mountain will never be the same again!

Fran - SELOUS

It is the waterways and lakes of the Rufiji River system which makes the Selous Game Reserve such an exciting safari destination. Pottering around Lake Tagalala on a small pontoon while eating a delicious three-course lunch and watching an African fish eagle swoop down and retrieve his own meal in front of us, and turning off the motorboat engine and paddling silently down the Rufiji in the epic setting of Stieglers Gorge are just two experiences of why the Selous captured my heart.

The choice of activities available is unusual for an East African safari. Choosing between a boat cruise, an afternoon of fishing, an educative bush walk or a game drive, is wonderful, but so too is the authentic wilderness feel, the lack of visitor numbers, and the sheer scale of the Selous that adds to its appeal.

Rob - MAHALE AND KATAVI

Mahale and Katavi are places that epitomise exclusivity and adventure, two aspects of travel I value highly. The scenery of the Mahale Mountains is simply incredible, where tumbling forests collide with the crystal clear waters of Lake Tanganyika. To enter the darkness of the forest and meet, literally face to face, a large family of chimpanzees, is an unforgettable experience. Katavi, by comparison, is big game wilderness with a rawness and beauty that is also very special. Here you get lost in time as it's a place where huge herds of buffalo and elephant still roam across the plains and you can drive all day and not



Left main:
Overlooking
southern
Serengeti.

Clockwise
from top left:
Young male lion,
Ruaha; hippo pool,
Katavi; cheetah
selecting lunch;
Jane on the
summit of Africa;
Selous sunset

encounter many other travellers. If you enjoy wild, natural places away from the crowds, try these two!

Mary - NORTHERN SERENGETI

Before my return visit to the northern plains of the Serengeti last year, I had forgotten just how beautiful they are. Rolling hills, rocky kopjes and the meandering Mara River provide a picturesque canvas onto which the wildlife drama plays out. From July to October, the plains are full of restless wildebeest following the smell of rain and crossing to and fro between Tanzania and Kenya's Masai Mara.

The resultant river crossings are of course spectacular but it is the mere presence of so many wildebeest that makes the game viewing so good. Predators are attracted by the easy pickings and thereafter the scavengers will arrive to clear up the scraps; a

perfect demonstration of the role each species has to play in the eco system and fantastic sightings for the guests!

Michele - TARANGIRE

Tarangire is one of the lesser known parks in Tanzania which is probably why it's my favourite! Very picturesque, it hosts a wonderful variety of habitats including savannah, woodland, riverine grasslands, and swamps in the south-east. My particular favourites are the giant baobabs which dominate the undulating countryside. There is a good diversity of animals and, if you are an elephant lover, the park is fantastic for large herds, particularly in the dry season. It also has an exceptional bird count, with around 550 species so far recorded.

For more information,
visit safari-consultants.com
or call 01787 888590

Self-drive SOUTHERN AFRICA

Explore on your own terms through
South Africa, Namibia and Botswana



Main: through
Mount Cedar.

Right top: Jane
driving through
Mapungubwe in
Limpopo Province.

Right bottom:
Local self-drive in
Namibia; endless
road through
Namib, Namibia



If you ask any really experienced Africa traveller, especially someone who has lived or worked in Africa, they will undoubtedly have some great stories of self-drive adventures they have enjoyed. Whether it is civilised touring around South Africa's Western Cape, or bumping across the desert in Botswana or Namibia, self-drive always creates experiences. From spectacular scenery and magical wildlife sightings, to memorable people and places, the ability to travel where you want to offers a different dimension to any holiday, and you can do so without the hassle of having to drive on the 'wrong side of the road' (all countries in East and Southern Africa drive on the left).

However, self-drive comes in different guises. In South Africa, by far the most developed and sophisticated of southern Africa's nations, self-drive is very common for foreign visitors. Roads are mostly tarred and in good condition, vehicle numbers outside major towns are far less than we are used to at home, and you can even make use of satellite navigation systems. Away from the core safari regions, South Africa offers general touring in a similar way to America, Australia or New Zealand. In order to see the sites, access places of interest and even just go out for dinner in the evening, having independent transport

“South Africa has incredibly varied scenery, from dramatic mountains and rocky coastlines to picturesque wine country and harsh desert, and most self-drive holidays will allow you to explore at your own pace.”

is convenient and cost effective.

South Africa has incredibly varied scenery, from dramatic mountains and rocky coastlines to picturesque wine country and harsh desert, and most self-drive holidays will allow you to explore at your own pace. Where South African holidays are more orientated towards wildlife viewing, the use of a self-drive becomes less necessary. However, it is possible to drive through many of the country's National Parks, most notably the Kruger and the Kgalagadi Trans-Frontier, and this is arguably the best value way of seeing the wildlife of Africa (albeit you still need to be sensible when in the presence of big game).

If this all sounds a bit relaxing and not quite adventurous enough for you, then perhaps a self-drive through the wilds of Botswana or Namibia would be more appealing.

With scenery being a major part of any Namibian holiday, this country is also a classic self-drive destination. Driving conditions on gravel roads can be challenging, but route finding is not difficult despite the huge distances sometimes involved. Namibia is known for its 'space' and beautiful desert scenery, and driving through these regions can be an utterly amazing experience. Whilst taking a 4x4 vehicle and a tent is entirely possible, most visitors are able to travel by saloon car and stay in pre-booked accommodation along their chosen route. At each destination (including areas like Etosha), it is often possible to join guided tours or activities, allowing

travellers to access the best places and benefit from local guiding, whilst still essentially driving themselves around this wonderful country. It is this flexibility throughout Namibia that makes self-drive such an attractive proposition.

However, for a truly intrepid self-drive adventure, look no further than 4x4 self-driving and camping through Botswana's wilderness regions. This is genuine adventure travel, driving through thick sand, negotiating elephant herds you meet along the way, and camping in the wilderness with all your supplies carried with you. It's an advantage to have had some 4x4 experience before, and you need to be able to change a tyre using a hi-lift jack, put up your own tent, cook for yourself on an open fire, and have an idea of how to behave around dangerous wildlife (or be willing to learn fast!). However for those willing to take on these responsibilities and potential hardships, an incredible adventure awaits, and the stories and memories you come home with will last a lifetime.

Whatever style of self-drive journey you choose, there is a sense of independence and achievement in driving through Africa. You see sights you would otherwise miss and you gain an appreciation of the scale of the landscape. There is satisfaction each time you arrive at your destination, and that cold drink at the end of a day on the road is particularly welcome.

For more information, visit safari-consultants.com or call 01787 888590





smaller primates such as colobus monkeys to supplement their more normal diet of fruits and berries. Although chimps can be viewed in a number of forests throughout Uganda (Kyambura Gorge, Budongo and Kibale in particular) and Rwanda (Nyungwe), two of the best places to view them in the wild are Gombe Stream (of Jane Goodall fame) and Mahale Mountains, both in western Tanzania on the shores of Lake Tanganyika.

Other notable species of primates which can be seen on safari include Golden monkeys in the Virunga Volcanoes of Rwanda (a great combination with gorilla trekking in the same area). These monkeys are beautiful and charismatic, and great fun to watch.

Surely one of the most stunning species is the Colobus monkey. Most common are black and white colobus, characterised by their streaming white hair, which can be found in groups of up to 400 individuals in the Nyungwe Forest of southern Rwanda. Less often seen are Red Colobus, found along the shores of Lake Tanganyika and, rather strangely, in the Jozani Forest on Zanzibar. Other species that can be seen include blue monkeys (also called Sykes'), red-tailed monkeys, the ground-dwelling L'Hoests', and of course vervets and baboons.

Bush-babies (lesser or greater galago) are small nocturnal species commonly seen on night drives across Africa, whilst of course the lemurs of Madagascar might warrant their own article. Madagascar is a hugely interesting island and the variety of lemurs is astounding. From the diminutive Mouse lemur to the largest of all, the Indri, the lemurs of Madagascar are unique. Ring-tailed lemurs are social and great fun to watch, black and white ruffed lemurs with their bright orange eyes are simply stunning, whilst the dancing Verreaux's sifaka will amaze you as they move across the ground on their hind legs.

One of the key factors regarding most primate viewing is that it invariably requires you to be on foot, but that certainly adds to the whole experience.

MONKEY BUSINESS

There is nowhere else on planet earth where you can see such an array of mammals as you can across the savannah plains, woodlands and waterways of Africa. We often limit our thoughts of these to elephant, hippo, lion, giraffe, and zebra, but some of the continent's primates are equally impressive and should be included.

Largest of Africa's primates is the mountain gorilla, found primarily in the high altitude forests of Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Led and protected by incredible 'silverback' males, gorilla families can grow to 40 or 50 in number, though between 10 and 20 individuals is more usual. To sit and watch them in their natural habitat - the adults feeding or grooming each other, the youngsters playing or swinging precariously on vines - is a truly magical wildlife experience.

In order to do so however, you need to be able to trek through wet forests, up and down steep slopes, and through thick vegetation, but invariably your efforts are well rewarded.

The most popular gorilla trekking destination is the Volcanoes National Park in northern Rwanda, where Dian Fossey famously habituated and

befriended a family of gorillas, leading to the film 'Gorillas in the Mist' (you can visit her grave in the forest next to her long-since-dilapidated research centre as a sideshow to the gorillas themselves). The mountain gorilla has been on the endangered wildlife list for many years, but the good news is that numbers are increasing due to the protection of habitat and the anti-poaching patrols which gorilla tourism finances. Far from encroaching on the gorillas by entering their forests to see them, we as tourists are actually aiding their survival. If you enjoy wildlife and haven't been to see the gorillas yet, try it!

While gorillas tend to get the lion's share of 'primate' attention, many people who have experienced both gorillas and chimps in the wild will argue that chimpanzees are equally impressive to observe. They are arguably more active, and they certainly seem to have a much more complex social order. Large chimp families have an obvious 'political structure' where the senior males jostle for position in the hierarchy, and the dominant male needs to continually 'manage' his alliances. Chimps are incredibly strong and can be ruthless too and, being omnivores, they will hunt and eat



Clockwise:
black and white colobus, Nyungwe; golden monkey, PNV; gorilla silverback, PNV; chimp, Mahale; baboon, Lower Zambezi; black and white ruff lemur, Andasibe

"While gorillas tend to get the lion's share of 'primate' attention, many people who have experienced both gorillas and chimps in the wild will argue that chimpanzees are equally impressive to observe."

OCEAN SAFARIS



Manta Rays congregate in limited areas along the East Africa coast, but one of the key regions is Inhambane in Mozambique. You'll need to scuba dive to see them.

The Sardine run occurs in June/July each year off South Africa's Eastern Cape heading up the 'dolphin coast' towards KwaZulu/Natal. During this time, millions of sardines are forced inshore by the main predators (dolphins, sailfish and tuna) which pursue them relentlessly.

Dolphins are found along the whole coast of East and Southern Africa, and around the Indian Ocean Islands. Snorkelling with dolphins is possible off Kenya, Mauritius and Zanzibar. Although not hard to see, dolphins are always such a pleasure to encounter, whether you are on a boat, snorkelling or scuba diving.

Turtles are found throughout the Indian Ocean and there many nesting beaches where it is possible to see them and even witness hatchings. Some of the best include South Africa, Mozambique, Madagascar and the Seychelles.

For more information, visit safari-consultants.com or call 01787 888590

When we talk about wildlife safaris in Africa we naturally focus on land mammals and images of leopards lounging in trees, elephants lumbering across the plains and monkeys swinging through the canopy. However, the coastal regions of Africa hold a huge array of fascinating natural life. Here are a few examples of the 'big game' that can be seen at sea. Snorkelling and scuba diving is available in all the Indian Ocean islands and along the mainland coast, from Kenya in the north to South Africa's KwaZulu/Natal in the south:

Whales – Southern Right whales calve off the south coast of South Africa from late June through to November offering some of the best whale-watching in the world. Humpback whales can be seen off the coast of Mozambique and Madagascar between August and November. Whales are visible from both the shore or from a boat.

Whale Sharks – one of the ocean's most beautiful and almost mystical creatures, whale sharks can be seen along the coast of East Africa, in particular off Tanzania's Mafia Island between November and February, and at various places in Mozambique, including Inhambane. Whale sharks are usually seen whilst snorkelling.

Sharks – Great Whites are found in high populations off the South Africa coastline, and 'cage diving' from Hermanus offers the chance to see these impressive predators up close and personal. Other sharks are prevalent throughout the Indian Ocean, and it is possible to see good populations of grey reef sharks off Mozambique and the Seychelles, and ragged tooth sharks along the KwaZulu/Natal coast of South Africa. With the exception of the cage diving, it is usually necessary to scuba dive to see them.



Above:
Shark diving off Gansbaai;
Southern right whales in Walker Bay, Hermanus

"Southern Right whales calve off the south coast of South Africa from late June through to November offering some of the best whale-watching in the world."



Don't miss out...

SPECIAL OFFERS

See safari-consultants.com for full details

Botswana
SAVE NEARLY 20% (£1340)
on this superb 10 day safari visiting the Kalahari and Okavango from just £5545.00 per person.
TRAVEL JANUARY TO MARCH 2015

Southern Tanzania
SAVE £825pp
and explore the Selous and Ruaha for a week.
Prices from just £3735.00 per person.
TRAVEL JUNE TO NOVEMBER 2015

Kenya
Masai Mara private 'bush house' stay. Enjoy 6 nights on the famous plains from just £2840.00 per person, each of four (£3160.00 pp for two),
SAVING OVER 15%
TRAVEL JANUARY TO MARCH, JUNE TO NOVEMBER 2015. BOOK BY 31 JANUARY



SAFARI CONSULTANTS LIMITED
Africa House, 2 Cornard Mills, Mill Tye, Great Cornard, Suffolk, CO10 0GW
tel: 01787 888590 email: info@safariconsultantuk.com
web: www.safari-consultants.com

