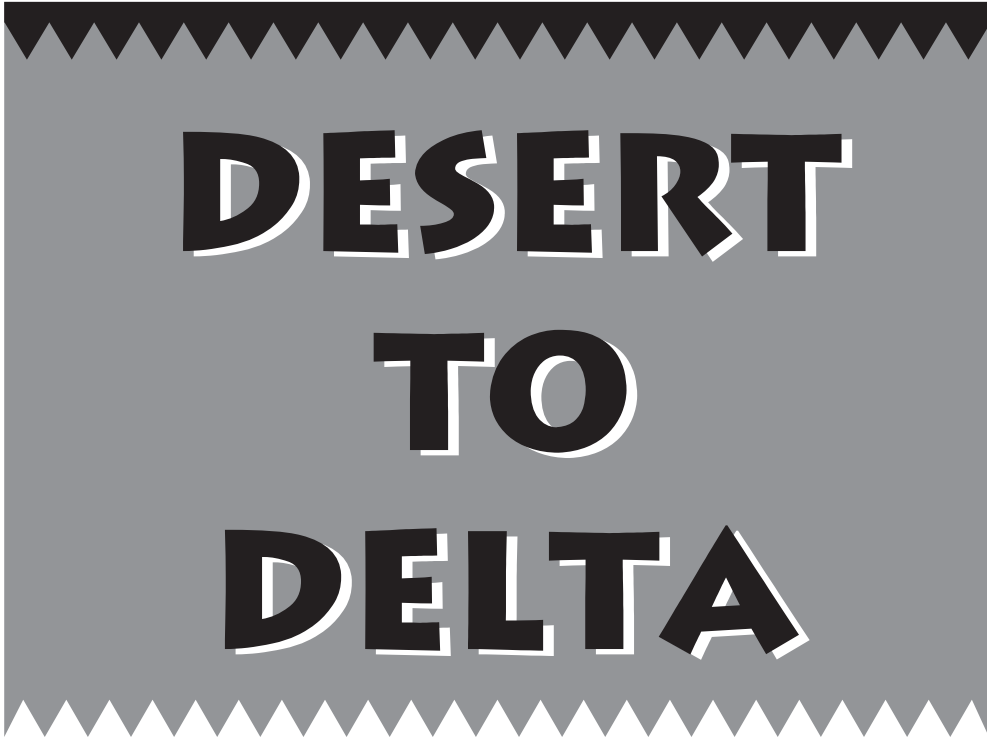




DESERT TO DELTA

BY STEVE AND CATHY HULBERT

Desert to Delta

PARIS

NAMIBIA

BOTSWANA

FULL MOON TO FULL MOON

JULY 26, 2010 – AUGUST 24, 2010

Namibian Stars

Air crisp and sweet, a cool fresh morning
The rising sun's pastel colors, desert's smell of sage

Time passes quickly, it turns to searing heat
The day becomes so hot, you know you're in Namib

Ever changing landscapes, majestic, large & grand
As far as you can see, they seem to never end

Such a harsh environ, life - giving coastal fog
Only the spirits, sun, wind & rain, touch this holy land

Desert, Dunes, ancient forests, fade into the shimmering light
Veld rolling down the other side, to the Skeleton Coast

There are a couple rivers, sinking into the sand
Stream beds turn to Oasis, for the desert adapted life

So diverse a people, the many tribes so proud
Elder's voices, died for us, freedom that long hard road

Red, orange rays of light, the sun begins to set
Golden honey grasses, close the day & start the night

The air turns cool, black skies come alive
There's nothing like, a Namibian night

Shooting stars never end, Orion, 7 Sisters, the Southern Cross
It's lighting up half the sky? My god, it's the Milky Way!

A full moon slowly rises, brightening up the sky
We're so lucky just to be here, under Namibian Stars

This is our third journey to Africa - once you've been there - you must go back! We couldn't be more excited - the hardest part is always saying goodbye to our dog Nick and Markus our horse. It all feels so right!

July 26, 2010

Packed and ready - off to SeaTac - non-stop to Paris - overnight flight. Arrive July 27th. Our driver Nick - at CDG Airport - great young guy. An hour trip into town - traffic – smog – a city is a city - it's been about 15 years since we've been to Paris. We thought a romantic layover - take a couple of days to relax - unwind - get in the right time zone. We have learned to do this on every trip to Africa. Nice hotel - checked in - had a massage - heavenly bed - then chill! Down a cobblestone street for dinner - at “Frenchie's” - a small unique restaurant.

July 28, 2010

Across the street outside our hotel window - a circus was going on most of the night. Still not in the right time zone - a little funky - finding our feet. Slept in the best we could. Got up to beautiful blue sky day - took a walk through Tuileries Gardens - down through the statues to the Louvre. Made a loop up through the shopping district - down to the Concorde - back to hotel. Lunch at Crillion Hotel Garden - off to Orsay Musee - impressionists Monet and the boys. Went down for an afternoon snooze. Dinner on Seine River - Yatches De'Paris - first class - great dinner - all the sites from a river point of view - the architecture - bridges – lights - people picnicking on the banks - music - fairs. A magical night. Oh, the sights of Paris - Notre-Dame - Bastille - Louvre - Palais De Justice Grand Palace with a turn around at the Eiffel Tower. It was such a beautiful night - when we landed we grabbed a taxi - spent another hour visiting the same sites by land - ended up at the Eiffel Tower at midnight - bewitching hour - the tower goes into an unbelievable light show - flashing white lights running up and down in time to classical music - with fireworks in the background - a huge crowd filled the Parc Du Champ De Mars. What a day and night in Paris. Back to the hotel and romance.

July 29, 2010

Slept in - still finding our time - long walk along the Seine - lunch with the locals on the sand in the Jardin Des Tuileries Gardens - Pasta, bread and wine. Over the bridge through Palace De' Nationals to Rodin Musee' - beautiful gardens - statues galore! Back to hotel - nap. Tonight our Paris fine dining experience – Le Grand Vefour Restaurant at the Palais Royal - where Napoleon - Dante - Collette - Victor Hugo - Jean-Paul Sarte all hung out. These tables had been ideological centers of influence throughout French history. Great dinner.

July 30, 2010

Departure day for Africa - got up late - took a long walk along Champ Elysees. Stopped for a sandwich on the sand with the locals in the gardens again. Afternoon walk on the west bank - nouveau art - music - fashion - shopping - back to hotel to pack. Late check out. Off to CDG Airport for 11:20 PM flight to Johannesburg. We're going to Africa. Oh Ya!

July 31, 2010

Arrive at Johannesburg International Airport 10:40 AM - on to the Westcliff Hotel. Stayed here on our last trip - both on way in and out. We love the place. Slept for a while - dinner with Russel Friedman - one of the founders of Wilderness Safaris - outstanding person - birder - book publisher - collector - visionary. He had become a friend while visiting the states doing the marketing road show - had dinner together at Paul's home in Bend, Oregon. He, Cath and I had a great night. What a way to start our adventure.

August 1, 2010

4:30 AM - early flight out of Johannesburg - to Windhoek, Namibia by small aircraft - on to Little Kulala Lodge - one of a kind camp in the heart of Namib desert - in the Sossusvlei concession - home of the Red Dunes - met Therize our guide - our first female guide - she was great - we loved her.

Upon arrival at camp we got some lunch - situated into our suite - took a plunge - then headed out on an afternoon game drive.

NOTE: At each lodge we began our conversation with our guide by telling - him/her that we had come with no expectations - we are not searching for any certain kind of bird or animal - we just want to go slow. Let the "Bush Karma" come as it comes. We wanted to learn as much as possible about the people & culture - environment - geology - biology etc - We especially love learning about tracking - prints - sounds - smells - visuals.

*A list of all mammals, birds, reptiles, etc. seen on game drives for the entire trip are on the final pages of this journal (pages 32 to 39.)

Our first night at Little Kulala was a special one - the unique natural beauty of Namibia. Very hard to put into words - it's not the big game you come to see - it's the environs - landscapes - bio-regions - vistas - coast - the specially adapted animals and birds - you start to realize what makes this place so special. That night we slept out on the roof of our lodge. That black night's sky - was the biggest I've ever seen. The stars - constellations - Milky Way - warm air - sounds - smell of sage - it just blew us away - what can I say? We slept out all three nights - actually had a luxurious suite below - air conditioned - magnificent king bed - luxury you wouldn't believe - but we couldn't come down! Great place to star gaze and make love. Namibian nights will forever be in our dreams.

August 2, 2010

Got up early for a beautiful sunrise game drive - then off to the famous Namib Desert - headed straight to the National Park - and the world famous dunes. Along the way - we spotted twelve Oryx - feeding out on a huge grass plain - at the base of "The Great Wall of China" dune - it was a huge dune - hundreds of feet high with a perfectly flat ridge (not pointed or curved.) We stopped - as we watched - all twelve Oryx started to move in every direction - in packs of three and four - they headed up the dune in criss-crossing patterns - each at different times - from different places. For over an hour we watched

this amazing scene. Oryx climbing this huge red sand dune - with a vertical angle you wouldn't believe. The group that started first was way out front - they slowed down – another group started off the other side - two other groups came off the grass plains late - all marching - climbing. Somehow they all met at the top of the ridge on the “The Great Wall of China” - exactly at the same time - an incredible moment - amazing silhouettes against the blue sky - only in nature! In a short moment they had all crested the dune - disappeared - gone.

The Oryx is Namibia's national animal - majestic - macho - beautiful - handsome - powerful. He is the most unique of antelope - due to his desert adaptation - and best of all he is known for his fight. All other antelope are known to be shy - they are prey for other predators - but not the Oryx - he will be smart and shy away - but in the end - if he is challenged - he will turn - look you in the eye - charge - and fight to the death. His power - size and long horns - make him a most feared challenger.

We couldn't believe we would experience something like this our first day - we took time to walk and talk in the desert sand - eventually heading back to our vehicle. Then off to the dunes for a hike. When we arrived it was high noon - the place was crowded - it was hot. There were hoards of tourists stopped at the entrance to the park... People had to park there - then hike in or be transported by these huge trucks into the dunes. We had a special permit that allowed us to drive in with our guide. We took a short hike - had drinks in the shade of a tree - drove back to camp - brunch - siesta.

Cathy has always had great “Bush Karma” - a keen eye on spotting game - on several occasions she has requested or said to the guide - (typically at Sundowners) - I wish we could see a ____?. Then all of a sudden that animal or bird would appear. Last trip to Africa - standing at Sundowners in the bush at Vumbura Plains - Cath says - “Oh, Russell - I wish I could see a Hyena” - I know they're not that good-looking but I really do like them. After a sip of wine - Russell turned around - there within ten feet of us at the back of the vehicle was a large spotted male Hyena. My favorite story of this karma was when Cath - at Sundowners again - went out for a “bush stop” - wouldn't you know

– three Sable antelope – two males & a female - appeared and approached - she slowly retreated and came back to tell us of her discovery - new friends - 3 beautiful rare Sables. This was not the first or the last time this kind of request or situation happened - sometimes it just took a little longer to unfold.

“Afternoon Game Drive - ”Night of the “Brown Hyena Ghost” - it was a very slow game drive so Therize picked a beautiful spot - up on the side of a boulder covered mountain that looked down over the honey grass plains. Planning an extended Sundowner - we parked up above in a sand-covered draw on the side of the mountain - huge boulders surrounding us. In this circular area below was a big beautiful Acacia tree. It looked like a sacred tribal meeting place - we took our shoes off - toes into the cold sand - explored the area and sat in a circle under the tree telling stories. In our conversation, Cath asked Therize, “I’ve heard there’s a unique Hyena around here - have you ever seen a Brown Hyena?” - she answered “ no, but they’re very rare and most beautiful.” We went back to the cruiser for our drinks and some food. We had a few sips of wine - then as we toasted - all of a sudden Cath says, “what’s that?” - down the hill - over there on our right? A shadow is slowly walking towards us - honest to God - it’s a Brown Hyena. We couldn’t believe it! Slowly, in the twilight - through the boulders below us - he disappears - we lose him. He reappears out from behind another rock - so beautiful - striped legs - a mane like a male Lion - changing colors in the late evening light. He finally makes it all the way up and around behind us. He stops at our sacred tree - smells - everything - everywhere we had been - slowly - oh, so slowly - he starts to climb up into the boulders on the mountain side. We lose him again - he reappears 50 -75 yards away - he stops in front of a cave - urinates - digs - rolls several times - a dirt bath - then he lays down like a sphinx! So powerful - so beautiful. We were totally stunned. We couldn’t talk - we just watched. He laid there for 15 minutes - not a move - then he stood up - looked around - slowly started to walk down through the boulders. No, he’s coming right toward us - he keeps coming down - it’s getting darker - the sun is setting. We’re frozen - speechless. We don’t move. When he finally stops he’s within 30 feet of us – Therize quietly asks us to slowly move back behind the vehicle. He steps to the left - lays down - no one moves

- he looks at us for a few moments - then slides between two boulders - up over a ridge - disappears - the “Brown Hyena Ghost” story is born - it will last forever.

It was dark now. We packed up the Sundowners - headed back to camp. The ride home was silent. No one spoke - blown away.

August 3, 2010

Therize says “we need to start before sunrise. I have a surprise for you this morning.” She explained she has a special - spiritual place - she wants to share with us. Without telling us she heads back to the Sossusvlei Dunes Park at the break of day. We hiked up over several dunes - out to a steep edge - down into the “Deadvlei.” - an ancient petrified forest. It was a very special place - dead petrified trees thousands of years old - a surreal out-of-body spiritual and visual experience - another world. Back to camp for lunch - plunge - read - sleep - love.

Afternoon Drive

We told Therize that we wanted to go on a slow lazy day game drive. She explained that up on a mountain top about two hours out - there was a beautiful grassland plateau where three Mountain Zebra had been in the past - but haven’t been seen for months. We said let’s go. Unique desert adapted Mountain Zebra. We hiked - searched - scanned - drove and drove - nothing – saw a few birds - then just as we started to set up sundowners - Cath spotted the three Mountain Zebra at the base of the mountain foothills. She did it again - Sundowners - back to camp - spent our last night under the Namibian stars.

August 4, 2010

Said our goodbyes at Little Kulala - we loved Therize - the staff and the desert! Out to a small gravel airstrip - flew back through Windhoek with a couple hop stops - then started our flight to the Skeleton Coast. It is impossible to put into words the incredible vastness - changing bio-regions - extended environs - which we flew over on our flight to the coast. The most beautiful landscapes you’ve ever seen - so barren - but ever changing beauty. For over two hours - we saw not a person - road - fence - piece of trash - power

pole - building - vehicle - I mean nothing. This camp is considered the most remote wilderness experience on the planet. There was no runway just a couple of flags and barrels to guide us to the air strip on a giant salt pan - next to a river bed where the camp was located. We were met by - camp managers - Trix and Willie - along with our personal guide Kallie. He was our favorite guide of the entire trip. He had grown up in the area - had been a guide for nine years - most knowledgeable on geology - biology - animals - weather - tracking - fishing – a strong, quiet & beautiful man. We loved him. We unpacked - had tea - then went out on a long drive to the top of a vast series of sand dunes - desert dunes - as far as the eye could see. To the west on the far edge there was a mist - you could see the faint color of blue - you could smell surf - the Skeleton Coast - Sundowners - back to camp - dinner - a long day.

August 5, 2010

We had made it known before coming that we wanted to have as many cultural and local experiences as possible. Kallie offered us the opportunity to visit the Himba people. He lived in the village of Purros when he was not working at the lodge. In the hills outside that town was a Himba tribal community - we took a two hour game drive to get there. On our way we saw an “opera” of Ostrich (meaning a large group of Ostrich) - then started to play the name game – naming the slang name for groups of game – a “tower” of Giraffe – a “murder” of Crow – a “parliament” of Owls – a “dazzle” of Zebra – a “crash” of Rhino – a “collision” of Cheetah – a “leap” of Leopard – a “troop” of Baboon – a “mob” of Mongoose – a “herd” of Elephant – and so on – we laughed all the way.

When we arrived in Purros I asked Kallie if we could stop to buy the Himba some goods as a gift for our visit. He took us to the center of the village to a clay building with tin roof - this was the local pool hall, bar and store - in the back of building was the general store - with shelves full of staples. We bought two bags of flour - two bags of sorghum - two tins of tobacco - headed out! When we arrived it was obvious Kallie knew the people of the tribe very well - they loved him - he made introductions - educated us to their tribal customs - we sat in their clay huts with elders - talked around the fire -

smoked - traded for local crafts - what a great day. We are so thankful for this opportunity.

We drove on down to the Hoarruse River bed - lunch under a big beautiful Acacia tree - Giraffe and desert Savannah Elephants visited while we ate. (Twelve Elephants with two babies.) Late in the afternoon we tracked two female Lions that had taken down an Oryx - resting on the river bank. (This was a very special sighting.) The night before Trix and Willie set up a computer and screen to show us a BBC documentary “Desert Lions” that was filmed near the camp - this show was about three special desert-adapted Lions - “Flip” a famous researcher of the Desert Lion had been here for 19 years - working to save this rare endangered species. It was only a few days before our arrival that the lone male Lion had been shot - killed out of the National Park Concession by a trophy hunter. The loss of the lone male was a giant blow to everyone and the gene pool. All that are left now are the two females and 2 young two year-old male cubs. The two females we located have not been seen since the death. We waited as long as we could - till sundown to see if they were going to eat - hunt - or move on - they didn't - we needed to go - we were still two to three hours out of camp. We started back and drove into the narrow canyon - a herd of Elephants blocked the road - no way around - stopped - blocked. Thirty minutes later and after several attempts - we made a final run down through the river bed and around. We arrived at camp in the dark - great day - great stories - great people (Himba.) What a day - Oh Ya!

August 6, 2010

The Skeleton Coast is world famous for its strong currents - coming down from the north Atlantic all the way along the west coast of Africa - down to the Cape - generating some of the most productive fisheries in the world. Early before sunrise we packed the cruiser with our fishing gear and headed for the Skeleton Coast to go fishin' - Kallie, Peter (assistant camp manager) Cath and I. The camp had a special permit that allows only guests to fish from what is known as Rocky Point. It was a long drive – the Skeleton Coast is famous for all the shipwrecks - whale carcasses - vastness - desolation - and beautiful landscapes. We got to Rocky Point - what a scene - big two-handed spey rods -

sardine for bait – you’d wind up slowly - load the rod – then launch it as far as you could - out into the broiling ocean. The surf was pounding – roaring - with ten to twenty foot waves rolling. The sky with its gray misty fog melted into the ocean’s metallic blue-green colors. The coastal “Life-Giving-Fog” is the term used to describe the moisture that comes inland every day from the sea - it brings life to everything in the desert - plants - animals - people - insects - everlasting for all. We were enveloped by this fog. Great time fishing off the point - mesmerized - you’d turn around - the coast line was fading into eternity - “Not a soul” - as far as you could see - very powerful. As always - women have the fishing luck. Cath quickly caught two Cape Cob - big 4 - 5 pounders. Beautiful fish for dinner - Cath (2) Steve (0.) Then finally I hooked one - a catfish? - not a good fish - gotta throw back - this was not good - new nickname “Catfish Steve.” Cath caught two more - what’s wrong - then it happened - a 24lb spotted shark landed - and released - “Steve Shark.” Now it was a great day.

Cath and I took a long walk on the beach alone - what solitude and beauty. Then we took off across the desert – this is when we really got to know Kallie – about his life - wife - family - music - (Herrero) Band – “Vaupamba.” We stopped at the top of a beautiful set of sand dunes. He and Cath hiked out to the top of a ridge - sat down - slid down the “Roaring Dunes.” It actually sounded like a 747 jet was flying right over your head - it’s the truth - roaring - rumbling - a five minute ride - out of this world - all the way to the bottom. As we continued on our way back to camp - Lichen fields as far as you could see pink - orange - green - brown - pastels - unreal. (The most famous Lichen study ever done was here out of camp.) Eleven Oryx with three babies along a river bed edge - Elephant tracks and his bed in the sand – you could see where he had spent the night – impressed into the sand – we learned how to measure how tall an Elephant is: you take the circumference of the Elephant’s front foot print – multiply by three and a half. That is the Elephant’s height at the front shoulder.

That night at camp was Boma night - held outside - big bonfire - dancing - local foods - drinking - music into the night - Kallie - Grace - all the staff. Big cold front moved up from South Africa and the Cape that night.

August 7, 2010

Morning walk with Kallie - web-footed Gecko - last day at Skeleton - hard to say goodbye. Fly out to Desert Rhino Camp - short plane hop to Palmwag Concession home of the famous Desert Rhino Camp and "Save the Rhino Trust Partnership" (SRT.) Since the 80's and near extinction of the Black Rhino - this organization has played a major role in bringing back the Black Rhino. Our guide, Magusto was on the same plane. He hadn't flown much - got sick as we landed - drove an hour to camp. We had come here to learn about the Rhino and go on a day trek to see if we could see a rare desert adapted Black Rhino. Barren environment and landscape - it felt like a moonscape. Small tented camp - rustic but great - rested - read - booked up on my Rhino questions.

Afternoon game drive - we took off out through the moonscape - visited watering holes - old stream beds. Oryx - Mountain Zebra - Dama Squirrel - Giraffe. Then we found Elephant tracks in the sand. Single male moving up the stream bed - fresh tracks - we tried to follow from the road guessing where he might go next. We caught a glimpse of him just as he rounded the top of a hill - we lost him. Driving further up the road that paralleled the streambed - we couldn't find him. Sun was going down - we stopped and hiked out to see if we could spot him. Still no Elephant - then in the twilight of sunset Cath sees the Elephant. We go back for a Sundowner - drinks and treats. Cath still scanning landscape with her binos - as always - Cath asks what is that? Magusto says "Wow, an Aardwolf"- one of the truly rare nocturnal - with a glass of wine in her hand - she did it again - we watch till dark - back to camp - dinner - what a good night.

August 9, 2010

Black Rhino Day - 5 AM wake-up call - still pitch black - the SRT trackers have been out an hour before us. Coffee - we're off on our trek - as the sun rises. It's a cold crisp morning - full-on long underwear - jackets, gloves - hats. A beautiful clear citrus morning sky - the radios start to buzz. The trackers have found Rhino tracks of a lone male. We race off bouncing over the moonscape landscape - for 30 minutes we follow

info from the trackers -7:27 AM he's spotted - "Don't Worry" is his name. He is a 20 year-old lone bull male. The trackers come over the radio - "He's 500 meters off the road a couple of miles ahead of us."

Magusto hits the gas - we're off like a rocket - bouncing - bounding - flying over rough - rough desert road. In about 15 minutes we arrive at tracker's vehicle just off the road side - a SRT tracker is waiting for us. We jump out with cameras and binoculars. Its tough going - trying to move quickly - trotting over a boulder field - group starts to break up - must stay in single file - up the hill we pause for the others to catch up. Down a ravine -in orange-brown morning twilight - against the clear blue sky - we can see him - far off in the distance with our naked eye - we race off - up over another hill - down through a ravine - there he is on the side hill - grazing on milk bush - a deadly poisonous plant - (it can range in size from small bush to giant house-size plant - tubular like a spaghetti cactus - you bend or break a tube - out flows a milky white fluid so poisonous that if a human touches it on their skin - it can kill.) A Rhino is the only known animal that eats it. Up ahead 200 meters - four SRT trackers are kneeling with binoculars - it's been a 20 minute trek. We slowly move into position with the trackers - stop within 120 meters - kneel and watch - photos and binoculars. Perfect morning light - slowly he turns - he's heard us or smelled us. Rhinos can't see well - maybe 30-40 meters - he's restless. He looks at us - takes a last bite - slowly turns and saunters to the top of the hill. He turns looks at us again - for ten minutes we watch - he's gone. Words don't come - we stand - turn - head back at a slow quiet pace. We get back to the vehicles - met with the four trackers from "Save the Rhino Trust." Have coffee - tea - biscuits and cookies. They give us a course on Rhino: - showed us how they collect the data - take photos – keep their last known GPS coordinates - explaining how they track the Rhino – reviewed their research documents on all twenty known Black Rhino.

ID Form – Used by SRT

Photos - single and group

Size - horn drawing

Ear Notches drawing

Name
Male/Female
Age
Feed
Body Condition
GPS position

They then work on range maps and locations. Plotting and organizing this animal's area and overlays if any.

It was 11:00am when we started to drive away. A Rhino trek can often take all day or many clients never see a Black Rhino. We were very lucky!

Back to camp - brunch - nap - read - hot shower - sleep.

Out for our final afternoon game drive - Mountain Zebra - Oryx - five female Kudu with two babies - Giraffe - Cape Hare and Steenbok. This was a unique and rare experience. We had studied up on the SRT history and their work with the Black Rhino. We're happy we made the effort to come. Good Night!

August 9, 2010

Travel day to "Mombo." It was an early rise - "Nick-O" a Wilderness pilot had flown in last night so he could take us out at sunrise. We were up at 5:00am - breakfast - an hour drive to airport for a sunrise take-off - we were the only passengers on the small single engine cub. Slow two-hour flight from Palmwag to Windhoek - it was beautiful. A wonderful day to fly - "Nick-O" gave us an outstanding aerial safari education along the way. At Windhoek we boarded an Air Botswana jet - flew to Maun, Botswana. The flight departed two hours late because four Namibian Air Force F-15's had landed in Windhoek. They took over the place. Everything and every flight stopped. Nothing moved until they had refueled and had taken off - off to protect the Namibian air space.

Everything in Africa is huge! The flight to Maun was three and a half hours. When we landed we recognized the airport. Yes, it had grown over the last three years since our last visit - but still the same small customs - passport entry - baggage claim area - a 20x30 room with a metal bench along one wall for incoming bags. We were met by Chico - a Wilderness rep who explained that Map Ives (Paul Swart's brother-in-law) who heads the entire Wilderness Safaris Environmental Department in Botswana and his assistant - Kai Collins - were unable to meet us due to our plane's late arrival. We were whisked away to our flight to Mombo Camp. Just before departure Map and Kai's office assistant came to meet us - she apologized - explained they were not able to come and discuss their programs with us. She was beautiful. We jumped on a small twelve passenger twin prop - off to Mombo.

Mombo Camp is considered Southern Africa's premier safari camp - bar none - especially for big game! A five-star camp - in the absolute best game area of all Southern Africa - if not all Africa. It's expensive - but worth it. It's where you meet anyone and everyone. They'll come for a one or two day safari on their private jets - Italy, USA, Russia, and Japan. The rich and famous - gourmet food like no other. Unbelievably beautiful lodge and rooms. We were met at the airport by Gordon - camp manager - then off on an afternoon game drive.

Mombo immediately lived up to its reputation. Because of our late arrival they had a separate driver take us out to meet our guide - Moses. If you can believe it? We had known Moses from King's Pool Camp on our last visit in 2008. He knew Odi and the "Border Boys." He had come to Mombo as a top wilderness guide a year ago. We hooked up immediately. Red Lechwee by the banks of the swamp - spotted Hyena - Giraffe -Tommies - at sunset a pride of 14 Lions - the "Sausage Tree/Moporota Pride" This pride once had 34 Lions. Eventually they split into two prides - the other became know as "The Breakaway Pride." We spent over an hour with them - then on to Sundowners.

In camp that evening a resident herd of Elephants strolled through - they knew right where the Date Palm trees were - just outside the common-area restroom. A huge female comes over to the tree - rolls her trunk right up onto the trunk of a huge tree - she shakes it so hard - it starts swaying back and forth - dates fall to the ground - they slowly eat the treats - leave a few for Baboons – all while a lady is locked in the loo and can't come out!

That night we had a fantastic dinner - drinks - off to bed with bush babies - (hot water bottles under the covers) - it was still cold.

August 10, 2010

It was so cold in the morning- that ponchos - blankets - hot water bottles - long underwear - gloves - hats - were all part of the package. Every layer was necessary – but by the end of the morning drive you'd have stripped them all off.

Morning Drive

Giraffe

Zebra

Wart Hogs

Kudo

Baboons

Elephant Herds

Mongoose

Red Lechwee

Found the “Sausage Tree Pride” - spent time - the action never stopped - back to camp.

Lunch - rest - snooze.

Afternoon Drive

“Mombo Dog Day.” We start by driving out to the airstrip where we had landed. There is an unusual four year-old female Wild Dog that lives there. She had either separated or become lost from her pack. A year and a half ago she was seen alone and wandering. The

guides believe that because of the Wild Dog's social life and needs - she somehow befriended and adopted an orphaned family of three Black-Backed Jackal pups. She raised the pups - fed them by regurgitating food - then eventually taught them how to hunt. This is the first ever known situation like this - everyone was astounded - she was creating new habits and traits - between the two species. She's very smart - great hunter - a great mother - just to keep the three pups alive in Mombo - with all the Lions - Hyenas - with so many predators. A truly amazing story!

This was also a special experience for Cath and me because we had planned this safari around "Wild Dogs." We had never seen one. They are one of Cath's favorite species - very rare - near extinction. We plan each of our Africa safari's around one species that we study and learn all we can about them. This journey was Wild Dogs. Well - wouldn't you know - our first Wild Dog sighting ever - was this rare female that has broken all the rules! We stayed with her and the pups for some time. It was really something special.

From there we drove on - large male Kudu following female in heat - Tommies - Zebra - Giraffe, etc. Three female Lions - later a male Lion alone with Red Lechee half-eaten - Civet Cat on the way back to camp. Great day.

That night in camp Simon and George - a research team from Wilderness gave a special slide presentation on Rhino. They had flown into camp to do research for the Botswana "White Rhino" project. This project is one of the great conservation success stories in South Africa. Rhino had been hunted and poached to total extinction in Botswana. With funding from the Wilderness Trust and leadership from a great team - that included the Botswana government, private sector support and Wilderness Environmental staff - they set out to reintroduce the White Rhino in Botswana. They started eight years ago with zero Rhino. Today the numbers are in the thousands - they are now attempting to reintroduce the very rare Black Rhino.

August 11, 2010

Up early - on our walk to breakfast there were three Hippos and a small herd of Water Buffalo - Wow! The morning drive started with - Wildebeest, Vervet Monkeys - Elephants - Zebra - Impala - etc. Then we suddenly came upon five young male Lions. From the "Breakaway Pride" - hidden lying in tall golden grass - with large extended bellies. A hundred feet away was a half-eaten carcass of a huge adult male Giraffe. It was quite a scene - there must have been 30 or more Hyenas feeding on the carcass - Black Backed Jackals circled in the outer brush - finally to complete the picture standing on the ground were 20 - 30 Hooded and White Backed Vultures - the smell of death! Last night the Lions somehow managed to bring down this enormous Giraffe - then eat all they could - have to stop sometime! That's when the Hyenas moved in - the Jackals and Vultures are waiting their turn - Moses told us this scene might go on for 2 to 3 days because of the Giraffe's large size. But when it's over there will be absolutely nothing left. All of a sudden one of the Lions slowly gets up and heads towards the carcass - what's going to happen? Lions and Hyenas often times fight to the death over a kill - he moves in - growling - snarling. All the Hyena move away slowly - then they start to come back and surround the Lion. He's covered in blood from his previous night's feast - it's an amazing showdown. Hyenas slowly keep coming - they keep trying to take a bite of the Giraffe. Then he would charge - they retreated. This chess match took some time - but in the end - they were all eating off the same carcass. This is not supposed to happen - Lions and Hyenas are arch enemies! But because there was enough for everyone - they shared this huge carcass. By the time we left four of the five Lions and several Hyenas were all on the kill together.

Over the radio Moses gets a call. The boys from Wilderness Rhino Research team (Simon and George) made contact with the male Rhino "Sargent" and his harem. We take off on a race to the Rhino. The wildest one hour bush drive I've ever been on. Bouncing - sliding - dusty - flying - ass kickin' ride! We finally spotted their vehicle - they lead our cruiser into the thick bush - stump jumpin' - crashing down trees - over big boulders - they stop. There he is - "Sargent" - a male bull (nickname: "the one who is restless") - well known for his attitude - he also loves charging vehicles - people -

anything that moves or that he can smell. He's sleeping - on the other side of some brush is his brother and two females and their two babies - all are sleeping? We're about 30 meters downwind. Moses says don't move - we watch in silence - for about 15 minutes. We then try to pull around the other side of the Rhino crash - for photo op with the right light. We slowly creep around - "Sargent" stands up - he's a monster - he slowly starts walking towards the other three Rhinos - in our direction.. Then he snorts and stops. Moses says: "Don't move - stay quiet - "he charged me last time we saw him." He must not like Moses - he starts to charge! Moses kicks the Cruiser into gear - we fly away as I'm hangin' off the back seat - taking some great photos.

We take a slow drive back to camp for brunch and nap. Just as we get near camp Moses spots something in the branches of a tree. We stop - pull out the binoculars. There sleeping in the shade of a tree is the most beautiful Leopard I've ever seen. Her name "Lecadima" - it means "Lighting" in the local tribal language. She is probably the world's most famous Leopard as well - she starred in the film "Eye of the Leopard" - Ms. Hollywood. She has eaten half an Impala that she stashed in the tree above. We spend some serious time with her as she sleeps - she never wakes - we head back to camp. Can't really explain what a powerful day this had been. This is why Cath and I just keep coming back - this is Africa! Some days you may see only the beauty of the landscape - endless fenceless horizons - not a building - or a piece of trash - no asphalt - no cars - or noise - just the environment - only Mother Earth - the way God made it! Or like today you see the big "5" on one morning drive at Mombo:

Buffalo

Lion

Rhino

Leopard

Elephant

You just never know - but each day is special - a priceless moment in time. This is my Sunday school - My Church - My God - Amen!

August 12, 2010

Water Buffalo in camp again as we walk to breakfast - then as we were eating an Elephant herd crosses the channel - surrounds the entire camp - we can't go out on the game drive till they leave - an hour later.

Off to find "Lecadima" - We stayed with her for two hours while she lay sleeping - she had moved her kill to another tree in the night. You could see the drag marks left in the dirt. Moses says "let's go, we'll come back to check on her later." Wow, she is beautiful!

Out to the Giraffe carcass - now nine Lions - Hyena - BBJ - Vultures are all still working!

On our way back to camp - we stopped to check in on "Lecadima." While we were gone she had actually hidden herself in a Warthog hole - 2 feet wide about 3 feet deep - we don't know how far this den goes back into the side of the hill. We finally figure out why she's hiding there - we see a massive troop of Baboons - far off in the distance - crossing the salt pan - she keeps peaking her head out of the den - to check out the Baboons.

*Note: Baboons and Leopards are not friends. A troop of Baboons can take down a Leopard or steal its kill. Please go to my website www.stevhulbert.org - read the story of "Moltopi." One of the most intense experiences I've ever had in the bush - it is now being replayed before our eyes.

I couldn't believe it! The Baboons kept coming - a small juvenile Baboon climbs the tree over our head and spots Lecadima - the alarm call goes out! Woo-Woo-Woo-Yak - the entire troop goes into action. Lecadima hears and sees the chaos - she retreats into the den - she's gone - we can't see her? The Baboons surround the area - climbing into all the trees - but they can't see her now - the little one that saw her can't believe it - she's not there - all the other Baboons are puzzled. They wait and wait. We wait and wait. Lecadima could protect herself from inside this hole - but if she came out early she'd be dead! Moses finally says - "she's the smartest Leopard I've ever known - she'll stay in

there till nightfall if she has to - the Baboons will have to retreat to their trees at sunset - because the Lions and Leopards hunt them at night.” (I prayed that she would be safe and come out alive.) “We’ll check back on her this afternoon.” We headed back to camp for brunch and siesta. After lunch Cath and I went out on a birding “Bumble” with Gordon and Tanya - the camp managers. Great birds and a huge Water Monitor Lizard.

Afternoon Drive - Nice and easy - peaceful - slow - birds - regular game. Went to explore a new part of island - we spotted a lone female Lion far in the distance - something was different - strange - her color - she was totally covered in mud - it had dried into a black-caked cover - her eyes and a white patch on her chin (goatee soul patch) was all that shined through on “The Black Cat!” She was slowly trotting - in one direction with a purpose.

For 30 minutes or more we followed her at a distance - continuously - trotting - why? Where’s she going? - through thickets and marsh - all alone in this rough terrain. Then suddenly we lose her. She was just there - we tracked in a circle - no tracks? She’s in an area of brush we could not penetrate - she doesn’t come out. Moses thinks she may have cubs? They’re known to hide and move cubs often to protect them. We finally find her behind a giant log - lying on the ground - in thick cover. There’s a dark hollow in the log - suddenly out pops four of the cutest - fuzzy little lion cubs you’ve ever seen! Approximately four months old. Two are suckling - two are jumping around - fighting each other - biting her tail as she whips it back and forth. The sounds the cubs made - the games they played. You could feel how happy they were to see their Mother and get a meal. It was unbelievable. We watched for two hours.

Earlier in the day Cath had asked Moses - are there any Cheetah in Momo and the Moremi Reserve. “Yes, only one, he hasn’t been seen for over a year and a half - he’s very elusive - a loner.” If you know Cheetah - they must make their own kill and eat only fresh meat. Moses says, “We don’t even know if he’s still alive.” Then that afternoon on our drive back to camp - a call comes over the radio. Yes, the Cheetah has been spotted - we race out to his location. We spent an hour with him in the golden light – a sunset

with the world's fastest animal – "Duma." This was our last night - what an unbelievable way to finish Mombo.

On our drive back to camp we were totally blown away - we stopped to check on Lecadima - to see if she is still in the cave? Dead or alive? We found her high in her tree – sleeping - waiting for darkness - so she could hunt again. The end!!! Mombo Rocks!!

August 13, 2010

Nice peaceful morning - our last in Mombo. Breakfast - birds - our goodbyes to staff. Gordon took us to the airstrip. Off to Zarafa Camp.

Upon landing, we were met at the air strip by the camp manager Stuart - studious - a great guy. He received his MBA in Johannesburg - did a paper on Elephant habitat - very interesting. A ten year aerial photo study of the woodlands of Botswana to evaluate the damage Elephant populations have caused. They found that there was the same amount of habitat today - it had just moved to different locations?

I must say Zarafa was the most luxurious camp. Huge open tent with fireplace - indoor heater - outdoor baths. The staff was outstanding! There were only four tents with a maximum of eight guests. Out of this world luxury - but not the best game. After unpacking - cooled off in the plunge pool - took an afternoon nap - as we slept - a herd of Elephants surrounded our tent. Later we met Steve our guide and Anton (a Russian photographer) that rode with us - great guy. Owned upper-end steak house restaurants in Moscow - wild Ruskie! We went out for an evening drive - Croc's - Hippo's - Bush Babies - Spring Hare. As we stopped for our Sundowner on the edge of the Savuti Channel - Cath looked across the channel - Wild Dog - we couldn't believe it! The Duma Tao pack was hunting - first one dog - then another running between the bank and the edge of the woods. Suddenly - two or three more dogs were chasing a large female - using the water as the trap! We jumped in the Cruiser and gave chase - finally lost them - but Wow! Our second Wild Dog experience - a pack hunt.

August 14, 2010 - Zarafa

The food - the people - the place - great! But as far as big game - could be considered slow. We headed out on our morning game drive with Steve and Anton. We had two great drives this day - but only the basic game - Zebra - Giraffe - Elephant - Impalas - etc. So with such an exclusive camp - other guests were upset - no big game - Lion or Leopard. But as we said before - once you start to expect game - special experiences - they don't come - end of day we got to see two Roan Antelope and a huge herd of Buffalo.

August 15, 2010

Had our one opportunity to visit the local "Wild Dog" pack "Zibadianja." The Selinda concession and Zarafa camp have been very protective of the pack - nine adults and nine new pups that are 32 days old. They recently lost their dominant female and one adult. A very fragile situation. The entire species on brink! We drove to their known den in a huge termite mound. It had not been used as a den since 2005 - but they never forget! They move the den and pups continuously - to stay away from their predators - Lions - Hyenas - and Leopards - we watched from a distance of 60 meters - for an hour. The pups all came out of the den playing - fooling around. Returning adults came back from a successful hunt. They regurgitated food for the puppies. Just starting to eat meat - some were still suckling mother's milk.

It was a special morning. We came to see Wild Dogs – Wow did we!

We finished the morning with an on-the-ground "bush walk" - that's right - out of the vehicle - it's a great experience - a true "Safari" with a guide carrying a gun - walking in the bush - where big game had been seen - it was exhilarating – up close and personal. We tracked three Roan - saw a Hammercock nest - Kooran Feather - Dragonfly, etc.

Afternoon Drive and Fishing

Big Croc at base of a termite mound - three great male Kudu - as we drive down to the Zibadianja Lagoon - for fly fishing on the Linyanti River. Tess - Steve - Cath and I boarded a large pontoon boat.. Fishing for Pike and Breen - great sunset.. When we landed and docked the boat - we were taken to a special surprise bush dinner - it was the best - incredible setting. An ancient forest of Leadwood trees - they surrounded us - the camp fires created a mystical - magical sea of light and shadows. Long tables of white linen table cloths - fine china – excellent wine - wonderful food - music and dancing!

August 16, 2010

Last night while we were sleeping - we thought we heard the ouf - ouf - ouf of Lions? When we stepped out of our tent that morning for breakfast - we found Lion tracks - big ones. Two large male Lions - they had walked right through camp - right up to our front door. They were the ones we'd been looking for the last two days. We jumped in our vehicle - tracked them out to the Mopane thickets. We couldn't find them - Steve got out and tracked on foot - he finally found them - they were camouflaged in the tall grass - two big beautiful male Lions - so powerful.

When we got back to camp we found that the staff had made us a special lunch – for our departure all of the staff came out to sing and dance with Cath and I again. It was an incredible going away party - we rocked! What an end to Zaraafa.

I gave Steve my shirt. He liked Botswana Blue - he drove us down to the bridge to make our transfer – next stop - Duma Tau.

We met Moses (another Moses) our new guide. We will spend five days at Duma Tau. We came to see and learn about the Wild Dogs. When we arrived at Duma Tau we were met for the standard introduction by Gideon - Mia - Gabby and Abbey - all camp managers. Duma Tau has sixteen lodges and is the largest camp we stayed at on this journey. The biggest surprise of the entire trip was that Map Ives and Kai Collins flew into camp that day to spend time with us. Map has been the Wilderness organization's

environmental specialist for over a decade. He lives in Maun, Botswana and grew up with his family in South Africa. We have never met anyone like Map - his bush knowledge - street smarts - tracking abilities – botany – geology - history – etc. - Map was one of a kind! He’s lived it. He is brother-in-law to Paul Swart our friend and travel guide from Bend, Oregon – who put this safari together for us. Kai on the other hand - was a young very intelligent guy - just finishing his PhD - wildlife research specialist on Wild Dogs. Within the last year he had come to work with Map at the Wilderness Safaris Company. Without us knowing - Paul had arranged for them to come out to Duma Tau - spend a day with us to track the Wild Dogs. Map was going to spend the afternoon - Kai would stay for an extra day.

It was an unbelievable opportunity to be with the research experts that track and know all the dogs. We took off on an afternoon drive with Moses - Map - and Kai. We were with the best of the best. Every flora/fauna - botany - geology - bird - bug - animal - tracks. We stopped - talked - learned it all.

Back to camp. Had dinner with Map (really an old hippie) Kai (the clean green grad) Both loved rock and roll and we got to be good friends - find out they both are staying for two days, Oh Ya!

August 17, 2010

Map and Kai gave us an incredible tracking lesson on how to read the “Morning Newspaper” - the messages that the animals left last night – tracks - scat - scent - pasting - aerial (above ground – ex. broken branches) - track toward the sun - light reflects - keep in mind time and weather conditions - so if a strong wind or rain storm came by at 9:30am you can see it in the track - temperature effects - sand stays compacted longer in cold temperatures and gets loose in hot temperatures – etc.

Kai brings out the Wild Dog tracking equipment - we start seeing dog tracks - then it happens! - The L.T.C. pack (Linyanti Tented Camp Pack.) Twelve adults - five puppies eleven weeks old - sleeping in a grove of trees - all never sleep at once - some stay awake

as sentries to keep watch over the pack. The pups are playing - the sights - smells - sensations - all unbelievable! After spending a couple of hours with the dogs we moved on. (Earlier this year Cath and I donated a tracking collar to the L.T.C. Wild Dog Pack through the Wilderness Trust.) Came back for brunch then headed out.

Afternoon drive - we quickly came upon two male Lions and their mother. Their father was "Silver Eye" (blind in one eye) - he and his brother Alto are famous - they are the boys that had fought and taken out the "Border Boys." We saw the "Border Boys" on our last safari at Kings Pool. The story goes that at different times the "Border Boys" would swim back to their original home across the Linyanti River to Namibia. Some had been killed by farmers. Then "Silver Eye" and his brother Alto came in - fought and killed the remaining "Border Boys" and took over the pride. As time passed they added two more litters of Lions to their pride. For unknown reasons Silver Eye and Alto left the pride - they had not been seen for over four months - some believe they may be dead - the pride has been disrupted for months.

We drove on and didn't see much until we headed back to the camp for dinner - then out of the blue - we spotted the L.T.C. pack - in the middle of a hunt - dogs were circling us. First, we'd see one or two dogs giving chase - trying to bring down an Impala - then all of a sudden another group of dogs were chasing a Kudu. This went on until dark. It was a Wild Dog Day! It was the most amazing day with Map and Kai - telling us stories - identifying each dog - pup - matriarch - family association - and relationship - Duma Tau.

August 18, 2010

Map couldn't get out on the morning plane - so we got to share another day with him. Moses - Kai - Map - Cath - and I on a morning drive - we started with a great Elephant experience. Down at the channel two massive herds - we sat in the middle of the Elephants for an hour - 40 to 50 Elephants surrounded us - a gray massive elegance - silent beauty - abundant life down at the channel - Zebra - Waterbuck - Kudu - Impala - Birds - and Baboons all along the banks.

On the way back to camp Kai pulls out the dog tracking equipment - beep - beep - beep - the dogs are close - we find them resting and sleeping. They had a kill last night - Impala - everyone's full. We hung out with them for an hour - then back to camp - brunch and nap.

Final afternoon drive with Map and Kai - straight out to the L.T.C. pack. They are still sleeping - resting - pups playing. Then within the first 30 minutes the dominant male stands up - trots off - the matriarch follows - then one by one each dog stands looks around - starts to trot in the same direction. The last two dogs bring the pups along. Suddenly we see two dogs behind us chasing a female Kudu. The L.T.C. pack goes into action. In a semi-circle the pack drives the Kudu down towards the channel - we follow - like an incredible ballet - the dogs surround the Kudu - chase her into the swamp at high speed. The Kudu bounds into the water - she hides in the reeds. Using the channel to trap prey is a standard practice of dogs. All the dogs - 10 of them - stand barking along the shore running back and forth. Eventually one at a time they go lay down - then again jump up - go to the water's edge knowing the Kudu's still there. This time the Kudu won.

August 19, 2010

Map and Kai returned to Maun. We start the day with a morning game drive with Moses - out to find the L.T.C. pack - but word over the radio from the Kings Pool saying they have seen the entire pack passing north past their camp - many miles away. The dogs are gone. We head to the Deadwood area to look for Lions. Instead, we come upon a huge male Leopard lying in the sun - out on a huge downed tree leaning out over the Linyanti River. You just never know what you're going to see next in the bush.

On the drive back to camp - Mother Lion and two males - resting in the tall grass. Then the mother raises slowly moves off over 200 meters - into a hunting crouch - sliding - stalking - slithering through the golden grass - stopping at a termite mound. She then launches into full speed chasing a Red Lechwe all the way to the water. She misses the

kill - it was all in slow motion. She goes back to the boys - meets - greets - touches noses - licks - rolls - they fall asleep for the afternoon.

Back to camp - swim - read /sleep, etc.

Afternoon Game Drive

Down to the river two herds of Elephants enjoying a mud bath - drinking - blowing dust - rolling in the mud - hot sunny afternoon. Then 30 - 40 Red Lechwe come leaping out of the thick bush at the river's edge - into the reeds - slow motion bounding Lechwe - across the entire river - beautiful reflections. A Bateleur Eagle on the ground - at the edge of a wetland drinking - Water Monitor Lizard - a mob of Banded Mongoose - a herd of Waterbuck. We took a break for Sundowners - then on our drive back to camp - three "ghosts" Lions - sleeping on the warm sand of the bush road - we almost ran into them - we stopped a meter away - they slowly rose - looked into the headlamps - yawned then turned around - sauntered into tall grass and disappeared in the darkness. Ghosts of the night! When we got back to camp we heard Leopards calling into the night.

August 20, 2010

Our last day in Duma Tau - Morning Drive.

Almost felt like we'd seen it all - asked Moses to go slow - birds - bush - no rush - just let it come - Steenbok - Kudu - Elephants - Zebra - we then found Leopard tracks - which led us to his outline in the sand where he slept. Down to the river - Spotted Hyena - Elephants at the channel - back to camp.

Afternoon Game Drive

We came around a turn through a grove of trees - saw a Mother Giraffe in distress and then three Lions that had stolen a baby Giraffe carcass from the Hyenas. We spent an hour with the. From there we had a slow easy drive - waiting for sunset and our Sundowners. A call over the radio "The Channel Boys" have returned - they had been seen crossing the Savuti Channel. Another guide had seen the five brothers - all sons of "Silver Eye" - all originally part of Duma Tau pride. They had not been seen for over a

year. All were three years old and had been driven from the pride by Silver Eye. They had returned tonight somehow knowing Silver Eye was gone. They have come back to reclaim the pride - rightful heirs to the Silver Eye legend and his legacy. Five of the most beautiful young male Lions we've ever seen were resting on the banks of the channel. It had taken us over forty-five minutes to drive to their location. All the way - Moses was telling us - the story of Silver Eye and The Channel Boys - The Border Boys reborn! (Please visit www.stevehulbert.org to read the poem – “The Border Boys”)

In the red and orange hues of the setting sun - the story unfolded - the Channel Boys had come back to carry on the genes of Silver Eye - their father. The spirit of Silver Eye guided his sons back home to take back the pride. What a way to end our days at Duma Tau. As we drove back to camp in the darkness there was only moonlight and silence.

August 21, 2010

We said our goodbyes to all the camp managers and staff. Five days was the longest we'd spent in one camp. They had become friends.

We had already heard from guides at Kings Pool that they had seen “The Channel Boys” moving north through the thick Mopane forest. On our drive to the airport with Moses we told stories about the Border Boys - Silver Eye - and the Channel Boys.

We took off for Vumbura Plains. Cath and I had picked Vumbura Plains as our final camp. (It is the only camp we've ever come back to.) It is a very cool avante garde African safari lodge. We knew we wanted to spend our last two days here just to chill - write - read - relax - come back. We love Vumbura Plains (Room South 7) – must come back again.

That afternoon we settled in. Took a plunge - brunch - a nap. Picked up by our guide S.T. – he took us out for a moroko (dugout canoe) journey through the swamps - very quiet - peaceful - the little things - low and slow. Beautiful sunset – reflections on the water. Back to camp - dinner on the deck of our room - romantic night under the stars.

August 22, 2010

While we were with Map and Kai they had told us about a very special “Sable” research project being conducted at Vumbura. Mike Hensman was the research specialist - he was living there at the camp - he had been working on this project for the last year and a half. Somehow they contacted him - he met up with us at breakfast that morning - invited us to go out with him to learn about the project and see the Sable - Wow!

We took off with S.T. our guide at the wheel and Mike by his side. Mike's a great guy - his girlfriend was flying in that afternoon - he hadn't seen her for a long time - he was in a good mood.

In our discussions along the way - he explained to us how he grew up in Zimbabwe with his family. They had owned a huge farm and over a thousand hectares as a game reserve. His father did research with Elephant communication and sub-sonic sound. He is now working in Nigeria finding land mines with Elephants - incredible story. Mike then explained how they lost it all to Mugabe's reparation - taking “the family farm” which had been in the family for generations - giving it to Mugabe's cronies - under the guise of giving the land back to the people - they had to leave everything and run for their lives. They did rescue eight of their Elephants - transported them all the way across South Africa - where they have started Elephant training and life again.

Within a half hour we came upon a herd of twenty Sable - we waited - we watched. They eventually made their way down to a water hole for a drink. Mike explained his research and work - locating ranges with GPS - understanding their eating and mating habits, habitat study, etc. (see Sable fact/info sheet at end of journal.) Great experience with Mike. Back at camp - brunch - plunge - read - write - sleep.

That afternoon was our final game drive with S.T. and a new couple - newlyweds - on their honeymoon. Eddie and Regina from Mexico - young and in love - kissing - holding hands - first time in Africa. Regina shouts!! Stop the truck - S.T. points - a Hornbill! Pictures - Wow? Eddie's on fire! We don't say a word - we just enjoyed the afternoon.

At the end of the drive - we gave them our extra set of binoculars so they could enjoy rest of their safari.

For our final night the camp set up an exquisite bush finale Sundowner - they invited all the guests of camp - bar - food - animals - our last sunset - beautiful. Back at the lodge - they had set up a private dinner again on our deck. Full moon - bright orange - romantic finish to our journey.

We woke at 5:24 am - packed - coffee - off to airstrip - Maun - to Johannesburg Airport. International wait - security - non-stop to Atlanta all night flight. Hot Lanta to SeaTac - drive home. We were so happy to see Nick - Markus - Olympia, Washington and the USA!

ANIMAL LIST

Steenbok

Springbok

Black-Backed Jackal (BBJ)

Cape Fox

Oryx

Spotted Hyena

Brown Hyena

Mountain Zebra

Burchell's Zebra

Rock Dassie

Chacma Baboon

Giraffe

Elephant

Lion

Cheetah

Vervet Monkey

Black Rhino

White Rhino

Aardwolf

Dama Dik-Dik

Cape Hare

Gerbel (Bushveld)

Ground Squirrel

Mountain Squirrel

Tree Squirrel

Impala

Red Lechwe

Warthogs

Banded Mongoose

Slender Mongoose

Dwarf Mongoose

African Wild Dog

Leopard

Greater Kudu

Hippopotamus

Roan

Blue Wildebeest

Civet

Tsessebe

African Buffalo

Sable

Scrub - Spring Hare

Lesser Bush Baby

Honey Badger

Waterbuck

Large Spotted Genet

Duiker

Reedbuck

AMPHIBIAN

Lots of Frogs

REPTILES

Water Monitor Lizard

Crocodile

FISH

Spotted Shark

Cape Cop

Catfish

BIRDS (180)

Acacia Pied Barbet
African Pipit
African Crake
African Darter
African Fish Eagle
African Green Pigeon
African Grey Hornbill
African Jacana
African Marsh Harrier
African Morning Dove
African Open Bill
African Palm Swift
African Pygmy Goose
African Red-Eye Bulbul
African Sacred Ibis
African Scops Owl
African Wattled Lapwing
Amethyst Sunbird
Arrow-Marked Babbler
Bateleur
Bearded Woodpecker
Bennetts Woodpecker
Black Crake
Black Heron Egret
Black Stork
Black-Backed Puffback
Black-Crested Prinia
Black-Chested Snake Eagle

Black-Collared Barbet
Black-Crowned Night Heron
Black-Headed Heron
Black-Winged Stilt
Blacksmith Lapwing Plover
Blue Waxbill
Bokmakierie
Bradfields Hornbill
Bronze-Winged Courser
Brown Snake Eagle
BruBru
Burchells Starling
Cape (Black) Crow
Cape Cormorant
Cape Glossy Starling
Cape Sparrow
Cape Turtle Dove
Cape Wagtail
Cardinal Woodpecker
Cattle Egret
Chestnut-Banded Plover
Chestnut-Vented Titabibler
Collared Pratincole
Comb (Knob-Billed) Duck
Common Fiscal Shrike
Common Ostrich
Common Sandpiper
Common Waxbill
Coppery-Tailed Coucal
Crested Barbet
Crested Francolin

Crimson-Breasted Shrike
Crowned Lapwing Plover
Darked-Capped Bulbul
Dickinson's Kestrel
Double-Banded Sand Grouse
Double- Banded Courser
Dusky Sunbird
Egyptian Goose
Emerald-Spotted Wood Dove
Familiar Ghat
Fork-Tailed Drongo
Glossy Ibis
Golden Weaver
Goliath Heron
Great (Eastern) White Pelican
Greater White Egret
Greater Blue-Eared Starling
Greater Flamingo
Greater Honeyguide
Green-Red Billed Woodhoopoe
Green-Backed Heron
Grey Go-Away Bird
Grey Heron
Grey-Backed Camardoptera
Grey-Backed Sparrow Lark
Hadedda Ibis
Hammerkop
Hart Laubs Babbler
Hooded Vulture
Jamesons Fire Finch
Karoo Chat

Kori Bustard
Lanner Falcon
Lappet-Faced Vulture
Large-Billed Lark
Laughing Dove
Lesser Kestrel
Lesser Masked Weaver
Lilac-Breasted Roller
Lesser Striped Swallow
Little Bee Eater
Little Egret
Little Grebe (Dab Chick)
Long- toed Lapwing (Plover)
Ludwig Bustard
Magpie (Long-Tailed) Shrike
Malachite Kingfisher
Marabou Stork
Marico Sunbird
Martial Eagle
Meve's Long-Tailed Starling
Meyer's Parrot
Monteiro's Hornbill
Mountain Wheatear
Namaqua Dove
Namaqua Sandgrouse
Orange-Breasted Bush Shrike
Osprey
Pale Chanting Goshawk
Pale-Winged Starling
Pearl-Spotted Owl
Pied Crow

Pied Kingfisher
Red-Billed Buffalo Weaver
Red-Billed Francolin
Red-Billed Hornbill
Red-Billed Oxpecker
Red-Billed Quelea
Red-Billed Teal
Red-Crested Korhaan
Red-Faced Mousebird
Reed Cormorant
Retzs Helmet Shrike
Rock Martin
Rufous-Bellied Heron
Rufous-Eared Warbler
Ruppells Korhaa
Saddlebilled Stork
Scaly-Feathered Finch
Secretary Bird
Senegal Coucal
Shikra (Little-Banded Goshawk)
Slaty Egret
Small Button Quail
Sociable Weaver
Southern Grey-Headed Sparrow
Southern Ground Hornbill
Southern Masked Weaver
Southern White-Crowned Shrike
Southern Yellow-Billed Hornbill
Spur-Winged Goose
Squacco Heron
Starks Lark

Striped Kingfisher
Swainsons Spurfowl
Swallow-Tailed Bee Eater
Swamp Boubou
Tawny Eagle
Temmincks Courser
Terrestrial Brown Bul
Tractrac Chat
Tropical BouBou
Verreauxs (Black) Eagle
Verreauxs (Giant) Eagle Owl
Whiskered Tern
White-Backed African Vulture
White-Backed Mouse Bird
White-Bellied Sunbird
White-Breasted Cormorant
White-Browed Coucal
White-Faced Duck
White-Fronted Bee Eater
White-Headed Vulture
White-Tailed Shrike
White-Browed Sparrow Weaver
Wood Sandpiper
Yellow-Billed Duck
Yellow-Billed Egret
Yellow-Billed Stork
Zitting Cisticola

An African Safari

◆ STEVE AND CATHY HULBERT ◆

July 31 to August 23, 2010



SPECIALLY PREPARED BY

Natural Migrations

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

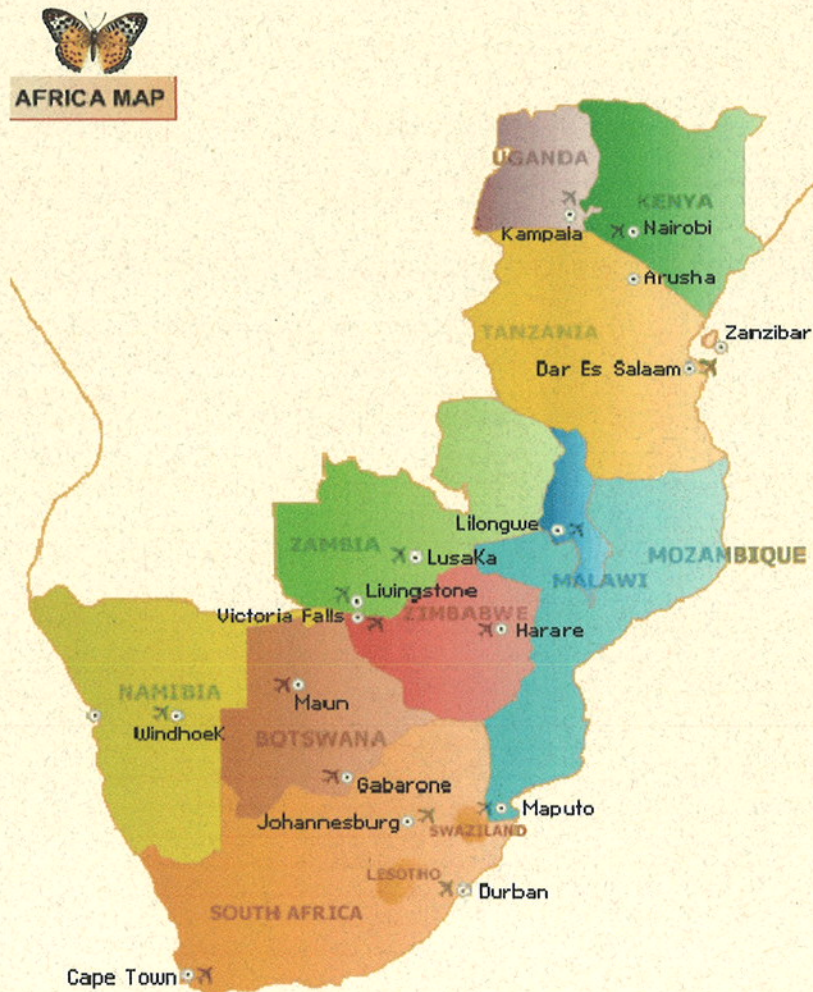


WILDERNESS

S A F A R I S



DATE	YOUR ITINERARY AT A GLANCE	COUNTRY
Jul 31 – Aug 1	Westcliff Hotel, Johannesburg	South Africa
Aug 1 – 4	Little Kulala Lodge, Sossusvlei	Namibia
Aug 4 – 7	Skeleton Coast Safari	Namibia
Aug 7 – 9	Desert Rhino Camp, Palmwag Reserve	Namibia
Aug 9 – 13	Mombo Camp, Okavango Delta	Botswana
Aug 13 – 16	Zarafa Camp, Linyanti Region	Botswana
Aug 16 – 21	Duma Tau Camp, Linyanti Region	Botswana
Aug 21 – 23	Vumbura Plains Camp, Okavango Delta	Botswana





Welcome to Southern Africa!

Dear Steve and Cathy,

We are delighted that you have chosen this beautiful and diverse area as your holiday destination.

Natural Migrations has selected **Wilderness Safaris** to arrange your journey, a reputable company that has been in operation for over 25 years and specialize in designing and planning itineraries in this region. Wilderness Safaris also owns and manages a number of exclusive camps and lodges within Southern Africa and the Seychelles, some of which are included in your itinerary (Little Kulala, Skeleton Coast, Desert Rhino, Mombo, Zarafa, Duma Tau and Vumbura Plains Camps).

Please note that if arriving in the country on an international or regional flight, you will need to proceed through passport control, collect your luggage and clear customs, before being met by a Wilderness Safaris representative or continuing with your onward arrangements. If arriving on a domestic flight, please collect your luggage first before being met by the Wilderness Safaris representative or continuing with your onward arrangements. The vouchers/tickets you will receive from the Wilderness Safaris representative are proof of payment and your booking confirmation. Please present the vouchers to the respective establishments on arrival.

For your information, the recommended check-in times for domestic scheduled flights is 1 hour prior to departure. For regional and international (except the USA) scheduled flights check-in time is 2 hours prior to departure and for flights to the United States, 3 hours prior to departure. Please present a Passenger Itinerary Receipt and valid passport/s as a form of identification when checking in for flights.

We trust you will return home renewed and that Africa's allure will tempt you back again ...

Have a fantastic trip!

All the best,

The Natural Migrations Team

SAT JUL 31: WESTCLIFF HOTEL, JOHANNESBURG (1 night)

On arrival at OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg (**under own arrangements**), after clearing customs and immigration formalities, you will be met by a Wilderness Safaris representative who will hand over your travel documents and air tickets. You will be assisted to your private road transfer to the Westcliff Hotel for 1 night luxury accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis. Extras direct.

WESTCLIFF HOTEL

Check in:	Jul 31
Check out:	Aug 1
Accommodation:	Luxury room
Included:	Breakfast



The magnificent **Westcliff Hotel** is an elegant retreat situated in Johannesburg's most exclusive residential suburb. The hillside setting with sculpted gardens and opulent accommodation evoke a bygone era of leisure and refinement in one of the world's most vibrant cities. This gracious property offers a wide range of superb amenities, including an intimate restaurant, convivial cocktail bar and lounge. The estate boasts two heated pools, the most notable being the infinity pool on the Pool Terrace, with a bird's eye view of the Johannesburg Zoological Gardens below. The all-weather tennis court turns an ordinary game into

something special, particularly if playing at night under floodlight. As Johannesburg is located some 6000 feet above sea-level, this is a case of playing tennis a mile high - literally! With magnificent views, the well-equipped gymnasium is available to all guests. A personal trainer can be arranged upon request. The Camelot Spa at the Westcliff provides holistic care for the skin and body with a variety of advanced therapies. The manicured gardens cascade down the rocky hillside and are testament to its award-winning landscaping and maintenance by a team of resident gardeners. Gorgeous roses, flowerbeds and lush greenery abound, making their home amidst charming cobbled pathways, courtyards and soothing water features. The hotel is a short drive from the many shopping malls Johannesburg is renowned for and just 22 km from OR Tambo International Airport.

Website: www.westcliff.co.za

Please note: Most hotel check in times are at approximately 2pm. Hotels will try and accommodate early arrivals but this is not guaranteed and is subject to availability. To confirm an early check in it is necessary to book the accommodation for the previous night, at an additional cost. Certain hotels do offer "freshen up" facilities for early arrivals.

MON AUG 1: LITTLE KULALA LODGE, NAMIB DESERT (3 nights)

After an early breakfast you will be transferred by private road transfer to OR Tambo International Airport for your scheduled Air Namibia economy class flight to Windhoek.

05h45

Suggested time of check in for **Air Namiba flight SW703**

07h45

Scheduled time of departure from Johannesburg

08h45

Scheduled time of arrival in Windhoek

On arrival at Windhoek International Airport in Namibia, after clearing customs and immigration formalities, you will be met by a Wilderness Safaris representative and assisted to your light aircraft transfer to Little Kulala Lodge. Luxury tented accommodation has been reserved for 3 nights on a full board basis including daily activities. Extras direct.

LITTLE KULALA LODGE

Check in:

Aug 1

Check out:

Aug 4

Accommodation:

Luxury tented

Included:

All meals, drinks (excluding premium import brands), daily activities and park fees



Little Kulala Lodge is an acclaimed desert retreat situated in a large private reserve bordering the Namib Naukluft Park in the heart of the Namib. The camp offers magnificent views of the famous red dunes of Sossusvlei, beautiful mountainous scenery and vast open plains. The 11 climate-controlled, thatched and canvas "kulalas" (kulala in the Namibian language Oshiwambo means "to sleep") merge into the desert landscape, each built on a wooden platform to provide maximum airflow. Along with innovative bleached decks, indoor and outdoor showers and a plunge pool, bedrolls can be placed

on a private stargazing platform on top of each room to sleep under the stars, a popular option with outdoor enthusiasts. The main lodge has a lounge, bar, dining area and plunge pool, with a magnificent view of the dunes. The veranda overlooks a waterhole, while the rooftop open-air area is perfect for dinner *al fresco*. Early morning guided game drives to the spectacular towering dunes are through a private gate into the reserve. Game drives and walks are also offered in the private reserve with incredible views, desert animals and smaller desert fauna and flora. Another option, at extra cost, is a 60-minute balloon safari at first light, offering a truly unique experience to soar silently above the magnificent sand dunes and desert, ending with a champagne breakfast.

Website: www.littlekulala.com

WED AUG 4: SKELETON COAST SAFARI, SKELETON COAST (3 nights)

After morning activities and breakfast, you will be transferred by light aircraft to Windhoek where you will be met by a Wilderness Safaris representative for the start of your **Skeleton Coast Safari**. Tented accommodation has been reserved for 3 nights on a full board basis, including daily activities. Extras direct.

SKELETON COAST SAFARI

Check in:

Aug 4

Check out:

Aug 7

Accommodation:

Tented

Included:

All meals, drinks (excluding premium import brands) and daily activities



The Skeleton Coast Park is one of the planet's most inhospitable, but hauntingly beautiful places, wild, desolate and uninhabited. It has everything from roaring sand dunes and windswept plains, to towering canyons and salt pans, and one of the most productive fishing grounds anywhere. Fresh water springs permeate through barren sands to create rare oases in the desert that sustain pockets of wildlife. Springbok, gemsbok (oryx), the rare desert elephant, ostrich, Cape fur seals, jackal and brown hyena, even cheetah on rare occasions, eke out an existence in this rugged terrain, along with the

vegetation like the ancient *welwitschia* plant which has adapted to the harsh conditions. The arid desert environment of the Skeleton Coast is within the northern reaches of the Namib Desert. The Benguela current brings cold waters all the way from Antarctica and helps to moderate temperatures. The cool air off the ocean meets the hotter desert air and nearly every morning, a cool mist envelops the coastline, bringing life sustaining moisture to the desert. You will visit the most isolated, beautiful, remote and private northern sector of the park, from just north of Mowe Bay to just south of the Kunene River. The Parks have set aside this area for low volume, exclusive safaris.



You will arrive at **Skeleton Coast Camp** by light aircraft and spend all three nights here. The camp lies within the Skeleton Coast Park, a 16,400 sq/km concession bordering the north-western edges of the Namib Desert. The park takes its name from its stark, strikingly beautiful landscape littered with bleached whalebones, skeletal remains and the rusted carcasses of shipwrecks. Skeleton Coast Camp is built on an island in the dry Khumib riverbed about 20km inland from the coastline.

Accommodation comprises six Meru-style tents with spacious bedrooms and en-suite bathrooms. A central area is made up of an open-plan lounge, bar and dining area with sweeping views of the desert. Weather permitting, evening meals may be served in the open-air 'dining room' under an old, gnarled leadwood tree. Because of water shortages, it is unfortunately not possible to offer a laundry service. Activities revolve around the exploration of this unique, wild and desolate environment in 4x4s that are closed to the elements, although all vehicles have pop-top roofs and sliding windows. There are plenty of opportunities to walk, with many areas accessible only on foot, as vehicle tracks can damage the environment. Specially adapted plant species such as Lithops and Welwitschia can only be visited in this way. Extended walks with a picnic lunch, returning to camp in the evening, are very popular. Other excursions include visits to the clay castles of the Hoarusib River, Rocky Point, the dunes, lichen fields, Cape fur seal colonies and Himba villages. Shipwrecks, now fast being devoured by the elements, can be viewed on request.

Website: www.skeletoncoastsafari.com

SAT AUG 7: DESERT RHINO CAMP, PALMWAG RESERVE (2 nights)

After morning activities and breakfast, you will be transferred light aircraft to Desert Rhino Camp. Tented accommodation has been reserved for 2 nights on a full board basis, including daily game viewing activities. Extras direct.

DESERT RHINO CAMP

Check in:	Aug 7
Check out:	Aug 9
Accommodation:	Tented
Included:	All meals, drinks (excluding premium import brands), daily activities and park fees



Desert Rhino Camp, situated in the 1-million-acre private Palmwag Reserve in northwest Namibia between Etosha and the Skeleton Coast, is one of few places on earth that can offer this level of wilderness and privacy. This desert reserve has a number of fresh water springs that support healthy populations of animals including desert adapted black rhino and elephants as well as large populations of the rare Hartmann's mountain zebra, giraffe, oryx, springbok and kudu. The predator population is the largest outside of the Etosha National

Park with over 100 lions, cheetah, leopard, brown and spotted hyena. Bird life is prolific and diverse with most of Namibia's endemic species present. Desert Rhino Camp has eight large East African-styled "Meru" tents each with an en-suite bathroom comprising hand basin, flush toilet and a classic bucket shower that is filled with hot water whenever needed. The tented dining room offers uninterrupted views of the desert and mountains. Welwitschia plants (ancient desert adapted plants) dot the plain in front of the camp. The primary activity is rhino tracking which is usually by vehicle until a sighting is made and then on foot. Guests can also enjoy full day outings with a picnic lunch in the reserve. Desert Rhino Camp is a joint venture between Wilderness Safaris and the "Save the Rhino Trust," a non-profit conservation organization that has been working in the area for 20 years. The Trust has been singly responsible for ensuring that these rare, desert adapted black rhino survived the slaughter that went on throughout other parts of Africa in the 80s and 90s. Today this population of black rhino is growing in numbers and the area boasts the largest concentration of rhino anywhere on the planet outside of a national park. Community game scouts who were employed by the Trust to help with the patrolling and monitoring all these years are now seconded to the camp and are the trackers and guides. A portion of every guest's revenue goes to the Trust.

Website: www.desertrhinocamp.com

MON AUG 9: MOMBO CAMP, OKAVANGO DELTA (4 nights)

After breakfast, you will be transferred by light aircraft to Windhoek International Airport in time for your scheduled Air Namibia economy class flight to Maun.

07h45	Suggested time of check in for Air Namibia flight SW140
09h45	Scheduled time of departure from Windhoek
12h30	Scheduled time of arrival in Maun

On arrival at Maun Airport in Botswana, you will be met by a Wilderness Safaris representative and assisted to your light aircraft transfer to Mombo Camp. Luxury tented accommodation has been reserved for 4 nights on a full board basis including daily game viewing activities. Extras direct.

MOMBO CAMP

Check in: **Aug 9**
Check out: **Aug 13**
Accommodation: Luxury tented
Included: All meals, drinks (excluding premium import brands), laundry and daily game viewing activities



Mombo Camp is situated on Mombo Island, adjoining the northern tip of Chief's Island, and is within the Moremi Game Reserve in northern Botswana. The camp offers abundant wonderful wildlife viewing year round, arguably the best in Botswana. The highlight here is the concentrations of plains animals and all the predators, including rhino and the big cats! Lion sightings are particularly good. Mombo is built under the shade of large shady trees and overlooks a wonderful floodplain that teems with wildlife. The camp has 9 comfortably furnished luxurious tented rooms raised off the ground. The

guest rooms and the walkways that connect the rooms to the living area are up to 2m off the ground, allowing animals to wander freely through and under the camp – but at the same time allowing for guest safety. The rooms are spacious and well appointed and have en-suite facilities under canvas and an additional outdoor shower for those who enjoy a shower under the stars. The dining room, pub and living area overlook the open plain in front of the camp and there is a plunge pool for relaxing in the heat of the day. Activities at Mombo include morning and afternoon game drives in open 4x4 vehicles. The wildlife viewing in the area is excellent and guests can see lion, leopard, large herds of buffalo, cheetah, wild dog, elephant, rhino, hyena, giraffe, wildebeest and zebra. Access into this area is only by aircraft. The placement of Mombo and Little Mombo at number two in the 2008 Condé Nast "The Best of the Best – Top 100 Hotels in the World" put them a mere .9 percentage points behind the winner Four Seasons Tented Camp Golden Triangle in Changa Mai Thailand! Mombo and Little Mombo Camps were also first in the category "50 Top Resorts – Africa."

Website: www.mombo.co.za

FRI AUG 13: ZARAFA CAMP, LINYANTI REGION (3 nights)

After morning activities and breakfast, you will be transferred by light aircraft to Zarafa Camp. Luxury tented accommodation has been reserved for 3 nights on a full board basis including daily game viewing activities. Extras direct.

ZARAFA CAMP

Check in: **Aug 13**
Check out: **Aug 16**
Accommodation: Luxury tented
Included: All meals, drinks (excluding premium import brands), laundry and daily game viewing activities

Zarafa Camp - Arabic for giraffe, a common sight on the floodplain - overlooks the Zibadianja Lagoon and evokes a sense of old-style safari with its four large, luxuriously appointed double or twin 'marquis style' tents. At a maximum of eight guests, the emphasis here is on individual hospitality and privacy, or for those who prefer the entire camp for their exclusive use. Each



tent and veranda is positioned under cool shady trees to emphasize the spectacular view and comprises a spacious bedroom, en-suite bathroom, a copper bath and shower as well as outdoor shower. The main area is furnished in the same style as the tents and evokes the traditional safari ambiance. Lounge and dining facilities are enjoyed under canvas or on the full-length deck shaded by giant broad-leaved trees, and overlook the expansive views where wildlife passes by. The camp runs purely on solar powered energy. Activities at Zarafa are flexible to suit guests' particular interests

and include morning, afternoon and night game drives with professional guides in custom-built 4x4 Toyota Land Cruisers. Short guided nature walks from camp are encouraged, to introduce guests to some of Africa's less prominent wildlife. Siesta time can also be spent in the sunken hide at the waterhole's edge. Abundant plains game can be found here including lechwe, kudu, buffalo, zebra and giraffe. It is also a predator-rich reserve including cheetah, wild dog, lion, and leopard. The massive herds of elephant are another highlight while a wide variety of birds - some 300 or more - can be seen.

Website: www.zibadianjacamp.com

MON AUG 16: DUMA TAU CAMP, LINYANTI REGION (5 nights)

After morning activities and breakfast, you will be transferred by light aircraft to Duma Tau Camp. Tented accommodation has been reserved for 5 nights on a full board basis including daily game viewing activities. Extras direct. **A private vehicle and guide has been reserved for you during your stay at Duma Tau. You will spend a full day with the wild dog research team.**

DUMA TAU CAMP

Check in:	Aug 16
Check out:	Aug 21
Accommodation:	Tented
Included:	All meals, drinks (excluding premium import brands), laundry and daily game viewing activities



Duma Tau is tented camp located in the private 125,000 hectare Linyanti Wildlife Reserve which borders the western boundary of Chobe National Park in northern Botswana. It is situated close to the source of the Savute Channel on one of the many lagoons within the Linyanti Swamp system, which makes game drives along the Savute one of the highlights of a stay here. The camp lies under a shady grove of mangosteen trees, raised off the ground to overlook a large hippo-filled lagoon. The ten tents are spacious, under thatch with canvas walls, en-suite bathroom facilities and an outside shower. Guests can enjoy the night sounds of

Africa from the comfort of their rooms, and shower under the stars! There is a dining room, pub, lounge, swimming pool and a special guest bathroom with a fantastic view. The region has all the habitat diversity to make it a haven for wildlife, and is well-known for its elephant

concentrations as they congregate along the waterways and lagoons during the dry winter months. General wildlife viewing is excellent year round including impala, wildebeest, red lechwe, Burchell's zebra, giraffe, Cape buffalo, chacma baboon, vervet monkey, and warthog. Predator sightings of lion, leopard, cheetah, wild dog and spotted hyena are good. Game drives in open vehicles are the primary activity here, either by day or night. Short nature walks can be taken along the Linyanti River and Savute Channel, while the camp's boat takes visitors along the waters of the Linyanti. There are also a number of platforms and hides from which to view and photograph animals and birds.

Website: www.dumatau.com

SAT AUG 21: VUMBURA PLAINS CAMP, OKAVANGO DELTA (2 nights)

After morning activities and breakfast, you will be transferred by light aircraft to Vumbura Plains Camp. Luxury tented accommodation has been reserved for 2 nights on a full board basis including daily game viewing activities. Extras direct.

VUMBURA PLAINS CAMP

Check in:	Aug 21
Check out:	Aug 23
Accommodation:	Luxury tented
Included:	All meals, drinks (excluding premium import brands), laundry and daily game viewing activities



Vumbura Plains Camp is a magnificent camp situated in a private concession bordering the Moremi Game Reserve in the extreme north of the Okavango Delta. The Vumbura Reserve offers both land and water activities in an area that has a wonderful variety of habitats, a great diversity of wildlife and offers an enormous traversing area of close on 130,000 acres. The main activity at Vumbura Plains is game viewing in

wonderfully varied countryside and open 4x4 vehicles allow close proximity to animals in the savanna and forested areas, complemented by activities on the water on mokoros (dugout canoes). The Vumbura area is possibly the only area in the Okavango where one can see red lechwe (an animal that inhabits the fringes of the waterways) and sable antelope (an animal that enjoys the dry countryside) on the same game drive. Add in lion, leopard, elephant, cheetah and buffalo along with all the plains animals and one has an excellent all round wildlife experience in a remote and private part of the Okavango. Birding too is great with large varieties and quantities. Walks, mokoros and boating give Vumbura Plains' guests the opportunity to enjoy Africa from a different perspective. The timber and canvas camp is built under thatch on wooden decks and overlooks a vast and attractive floodplain. Vumbura Plains comprises of two separate seven roomed camps (North and South Camps). Each has its own dining, lounge and bar area. All of the spacious rooms are built under the shade of cool trees and are raised off the ground on wooden platforms with walkways connecting them to the main living areas. Each tented room has a large, very comfortable bedroom, a lounge, a "sala" and en-suite facilities with a shower, a flush toilet and an outdoor shower under the stars. The main dining, lounge and pub area are also raised off the ground and are tucked beneath a canopy of cool, shady, indigenous trees with a wonderful vista across the floodplains. Each room has its own private plunge pool. Access into this area is only by aircraft and then by vehicle to camp.

Website: www.vumbura.com

TUE AUG 24: DEPART TO JOHANNESBURG

After morning activities and breakfast, you will be transferred by light aircraft to Maun Airport in time for your scheduled Air Botswana economy class flight to Johannesburg.

13h00

Suggested time of check in for **Air Botswana flight BP211**

15h00

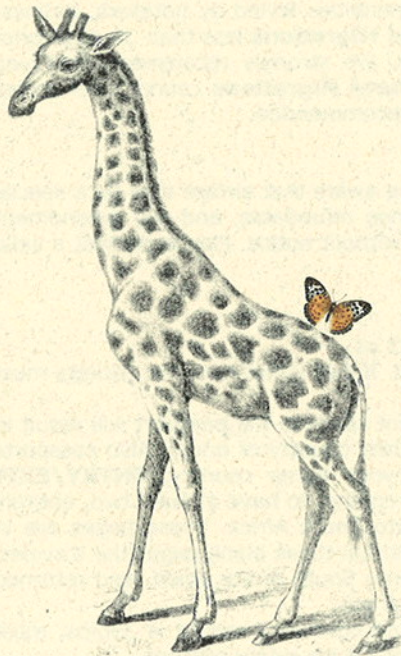
Scheduled time of departure from Maun

16h40

Scheduled time of arrival in Johannesburg

On arrival at OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg, **continue under own arrangements.**

End of Services



Sossusvlei

Coordinates: 24°44′S 15°22′E﻿ / ﻿24.733°S 15.367°E﻿ / -24.733; 15.367

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Sossusvlei (sometimes written **Sossus Vlei**) is a salt and clay pan^[1] surrounded by high red dunes, located in the southern part of the Namib Desert, in the Namib-Naukluft National Park of Namibia. The name "Sossusvlei" is often used in an extended meaning to refer to the surrounding area (including other neighbouring *vleis* such as Dead Vlei and other high dunes), which is one of the major visitor attractions of Namibia.^[2]

The name "Sossusvlei" is of mixed origin, and roughly means "dead end marsh". Vlei is the afrikaans word for "marsh", while "sossus" is nama for "no return" or "dead end". Sossusvlei owes this name to the fact that it is an endorheic drainage basin (i.e., a drainage basin without outflows) for the ephemeral Tsauchab river.



The Sossusvlei pan

Contents

- 1 Environment
- 2 Landmarks
 - 2.1 Sesriem
 - 2.2 Elim Dune
 - 2.3 Dune 45
 - 2.4 Sossusvlei
 - 2.5 Big Daddy
 - 2.6 Deadvlei
 - 2.7 Hiddenvlei
 - 2.8 Petrified dunes
- 3 Tourism
- 4 In popular culture
- 5 Notes
- 6 References
- 7 External links

Environment

The Sossusvlei area belongs to a wider region of southern Namib with homogeneous features (about 32.000 km²) extending between rivers Koichab and Kuiseb. This area is characterized by high sand dunes of vivid pink-to-orange color, a consequence of a high percentage of iron in the sand and consequent oxidation processes. The

Main article: Dune 45

Dune 45 is so called because it lies 45km past Sesriem on the road to Sossusvlei. It is also known as "the most photographed dune in the world"; because of its unusually simple and fascinating shape, and its proximity to the road, that make it convenient for visitors to stop by and take pictures. It is 80 meters high and it is not very steep, so that it can easily be climbed.

Sossusvlei

Sossusvlei is about 66 km past the Sesriem gate. The last 6 km can only be traversed with 4WD vehicles as the concrete road ends and sand begins (the place where the concrete road ends is known as "2x4 parking" as any non-4WD vehicle must stop there). Sossusvlei is a clay pan, of roughly elliptical shape, covered in a crust of salt-rich sand.^[1] While the pan has been shaped over time by the Tsauchab river, the actual flooding of the pan is a relatively rare event, and sometimes several years pass between one flood and the next one. The river is dry most of the year, and even when it is not, it carries relatively little water to the vlei. The vlei is surrounded by high orange-reddish dunes, partially covered by a vegetation comprising grass, bushes, and some tree (mostly of species *Acacia erioloba*).

Big Daddy

Big Daddy is the highest dune in the Sossusvlei area; it is about 325 meters high (height may vary over time as it is made of sand). Dune 7 which is the highest dune in the world but not big daddy, as it's the seventh dune past the Tsauchab river before dune 45 on your right handside toward sossusvlei (note that this should not be confused with another "Dune 7" found in Namibia, near Walvis Bay). Big Daddy is located past Sossusvlei proper, near Dead Vlei. It faces another very high dune known as "Big Mama".

Deadvlei

Main article: Deadvlei

Deadvlei is another clay pan, about 2 km from Sossusvlei. A notable feature of Deadvlei is that it used to be an oasis with several acacia trees; afterwards, the river that watered the oasis changed its course. The pan is thus punctuated by blackened, dead acacia trees, in vivid contrast to the shiny white of the salty floor of the pan and the intense orange of the dunes. This creates a particularly fascinating and surrealistic landscape, that appears in uncountable pictures and that has been used as a setting for films and videos.



Satellite image of Sossusvlei (Landsat 7)



Dune 45



Sossusvlei seen from the dunes



Sossusvlei during an occasional

Hiddenvlei

Hiddenvlei (or Hidden Vlei) is the third most famous *vlei* in the Sossusvlei area. It is 4 km from the 2x4 parking, and it is the less visited.

Petrified dunes

Petrified dunes are found in several places in the Sossusvlei area (one place called "Petrified Dunes" is about 60km after the Sesriem gate on the road to Solitaire). Petrified dunes are very ancient (billions of years old) red sand dunes that have solidified to rock. They thus represent the final stage in the Sossusvlei dunes' life cycle.

Tourism

Since Sossusvlei is possibly the foremost attraction of Namibia, much has been done by the Namibian authorities to support and facilitate tourism in the area. The concrete road has been built in early 2000s to connect Sesriem and Sossusvlei's 2x4 parking is one of the very few non-urban concrete roads in Namibia. Several accommodation structures are found along the border of the National Park, between Sesriem and the nearest settlement, Solitaire. Recently, structures have been built inside the park as well (that is, past Sesriem's gates). All tour operators and travel agencies in Namibia, including those of Windhoek, offer trips to Sossusvlei. Some also organize scenic flights over the dunes, either with small planes (mainly from Swakopmund and Walvis Bay) or in hot air balloons (departing from Sesriem in the morning).

In popular culture

As a consequence of its fascinating and surrealistic landscapes, Sossusvlei is one the most photographed places in Subsaharan Africa. The area has been the setting of a number of commercials, music videos, and movies, especially of fantastic genres; one of the most well-known examples is the psychological thriller *The Cell* (2000), where the Sossusvlei landscape is used to represent an oneiric virtual reality. Other movies with scenes shot in Sossusvlei include *The Fall* and *Steel Dawn*.^[1]

Notes

- [^] *a b c* Dead Vlei (<http://atlasobscura.com/place/dead-vlei>)
- [^] Sossusvlei (<http://www.sossusvlei.net/>)

References

- Santcross, Nick, *et al.* (2001), *Namibia Handbook: The Travel Guide*, Footprint Travel Guides, ISBN 1900949911

External links

- Sossusvlei travel guide from Wikitravel

flood



Deadvlei

Deadvlei

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Coordinates: 24°45′35″S 15°17′31″E﻿ / ﻿

Deadvlei is a white clay pan located near the more famous salt pan of Sossusvlei, inside the Namib-Naukluft Park in Namibia. Also written **DeadVlei** or **Dead Vlei**, its name means "dead marsh" (from English *dead*, and Afrikaans *vlei*, a lake or marsh in a valley between the dunes).

Dead Vlei is surrounded by the highest sand dunes in the world, the highest reaching 300-400 meters (350m on average, named "Big Daddy" or "Crazy Dune"), which rest on a sandstone terrace. The clay pan was formed after rainfall, when the Tsauchab river flooded, creating temporary shallow pools where the abundance of water allowed camel thorn trees to grow. When the climate changed, drought hit the area, and sand dunes encroached on the pan, which blocked the river from the area.

The trees died, as there no longer was enough water to survive. There are some species of plants remaining, such as salsola and clumps of *!nara*, adapted to surviving off the morning mist and very rare rainfall. The remaining skeletons of the trees, which are believed to be about 900 years old, are now black because the intense sun has scorched them. Though not petrified, the wood does not decompose because it is so dry.



Dead *Acacia erioloba* in Deadvlei



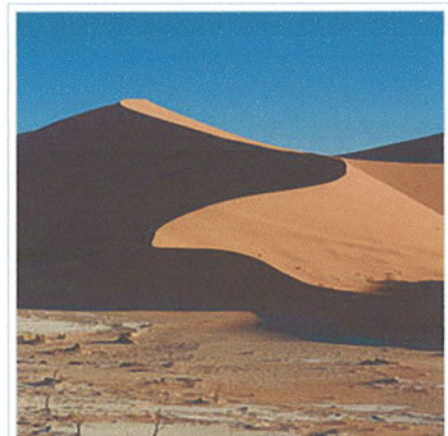
The parched ground in Deadvlei

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- P & M Bridgeford, *Touring Sossusvlei and Sesriem*. ISBN 9991630775

Further reading

- Lancaster, Nicholas (2002). "How dry was dry?—Late Pleistocene palaeoclimates in the Namib Desert". *Quaternary Science Reviews* **21** (7): 769–82. doi:10.1016/S0277-3791(01)00126-3 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016%2FS0277-3791%2801%2900126-3>) .



Dunes around the Vlei

Retrieved from "<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deadvlei>"

Categories: Geography of Namibia

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Lycaon pictus

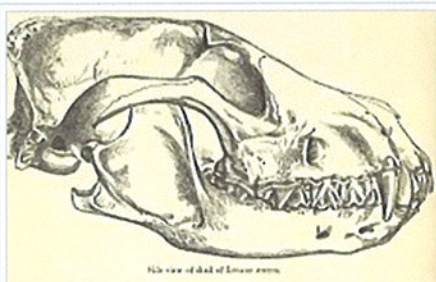
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Lycaon pictus is a large canid found only in Africa, especially in savannas and other lightly wooded areas. It is variously called the **African wild dog**, **African hunting dog**, **Cape hunting dog**, **painted dog**, **painted wolf**, **painted hunting dog**, **spotted dog**, or **ornate wolf**.

Contents

- 1 Anatomy and reproduction
- 2 Social structure
- 3 Hunting and diet
- 4 Distribution and threats
- 5 Suggested change in the English common name
- 6 Taxonomy
- 7 Interspecies adoption
- 8 Research and conservation links
- 9 References
- 10 Bibliography
- 11 External links

Anatomy and reproduction



Skull of an African wild dog

The scientific name "*Lycaon pictus*" is derived from the Greek for "wolf" and the Latin for "painted". It is the only canid species to lack dewclaws on the forelimbs.

Adults typically weigh 18–34 kilograms (40–75 lb).^[2] A tall, lean animal, it stands about 75 centimetres (30 in) at the

shoulder, with a head and body length averaging about 100 centimetres (39 in) long with a tail of 30 to 45 centimetres (12 to 18 in). Animals in southern Africa are generally larger than those in eastern or western Africa.

There is little sexual dimorphism, though judging by skeletal dimensions, males are usually 3–7% larger. It has a dental formula of

Dentition

Lycaon pictus



Conservation status



Endangered (IUCN 3.1)^[1]

Scientific classification

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Carnivora
Family: Canidae
Genus: *Lycaon*
Brookes, 1827
Species: *L. pictus*

Binomial name

Lycaon pictus

(Temminck, 1820)



3.1.4.2

3.1.4.3

for a total of 42 teeth. The premolars are relatively large compared with those of other canids, allowing it to consume a large quantity of bone, much like hyenas.^[3] The heel of the lower carnassial M1 is crested with a single cusp, which enhances the shearing capacity of teeth and thus the speed at which prey can be consumed. This feature is called trenchant heel and is shared with two other canids: the Asian dhole and the South American bush dog.

The African wild dog has a bite force quotient measured at 142, the highest of any extant mammal of the order Carnivora, although exceeded by the Tasmanian devil a marsupial carnivore.^[4] The BFQ is essentially the strength of bite relative to the animal's mass.

The African wild dog may reproduce at any time of year, although mating peaks between March and June during the second half of the rainy season. The copulatory tie characteristic of mating in most canids has been reported to be absent^[5] or very brief (less than one minute)^[6] in the African wild dog, possibly an adaptation to the prevalence of larger predators in its environment.^[7] Litters can contain 2-19 pups, though ~10 is the most common.^[8] The time between births is usually 12-14 months, though it can also be as short as 6 months if all of the previous young die. The typical gestation period is approximately 70 days.^[9] Pups are usually born in dens dug and abandoned by other animals, such as the Aardvark. Weaning takes place at about 10 weeks. After 3 months, the pups leave the den and begin to run with the pack. At the age of 8-11 months they are able to kill small prey, but depend on the pack kills for most of their food. They do not become proficient hunters until the age of 12-14 months. Wild dogs reach sexual maturity at the age of 12-18 months.

Females will disperse from their birth pack at 14-30 months of age and join other packs that lack sexually mature females. Males typically do not leave the pack in which they were born. This is unusual among social mammals, among which the core pack tends to consist of related females. Among African wild dogs, females compete for access to males that will help rear their offspring. In a typical pack, males outnumber females by a factor of two to one, and only the dominant female is usually able to rear pups. This atypical situation may have evolved to ensure that packs do not over-extend themselves by attempting to rear too many litters at the same time.^[10] The species is also unusual in that some members of the pack, including males, may be left to guard the pups whilst the others, including the mothers, join the hunting group. The practice of leaving adults behind to guard the pups may decrease hunting efficiency in smaller packs.^[11]

Social structure

Packs are separated into male and female hierarchies, though previously thought that if one of the alphas were to die the pack would split up, this was recently disproven (although on a small scale) by mutual of omaha's wild kingdom, in which 6 dogs who had previously been held in captivity (only 5 made it to the island, 1 died of anesthesia) lost their 2 alphas, by what was presumed to be crocodiles, but the pack of 3 stuck together and a new alpha male and female were made.^[12] In the female group, the oldest will have alpha status over the others, so a mother will retain her alpha status over her daughters. Among males, the eldest brother or the father of the other males will be dominant. When two such loner separate-gender groups meet, they may form a pack together if

African wild dog range

Synonyms

- *Canis pictus*



At Denver Zoo, Colorado, USA

unrelated. Dominance is established without blood-shed, as most dogs within a group tend to be related to one another in some way. When this is not the case, they form a hierarchy based on submission rather than dominance. Submission and nonaggression are emphasized heavily; even over food, they will beg energetically instead of fight. This behavior may be due to their manner of raising large litters of dependent pups in which the loss of a single individual due to injury would mean that the hunting pack might not be able to provide for all the pack's members.^[13]

Unrelated African wild dogs sometimes join in packs, but this is usually temporary. Instead, unrelated cape dogs will occasionally attempt hostile takeovers of packs.^[14]

Hunting and diet

The African wild dog hunts in packs. Like most members of the dog family, it is a cursorial hunter, meaning that it pursues its prey in a long, open chase. Nearly 80% of all wild dog hunts end in a kill; for comparison, the success rate of lions, often viewed as ultimate predators, is only 30%. Schaller found that 9 of 10 wild dog hunts in the Serengeti ended in kills.^[15] Members of a pack vocalize to help coordinate their movements. Its voice is characterized by an unusual chirping or squeaking sound, similar to a bird. Wild dogs frequently kill larger prey via disemboweling, a technique that is rapid but has caused this species to have a negative, ferocious reputation. For this reason, even some early wildlife conservationists, such as Carl Akeley^[16] took pride in killing entire wild dog packs.^[17]



Dogs with a wildebeest carcass

After a successful hunt, the hunters will regurgitate meat for those that remained at the den during the hunt including the dominant female, the pups, the sick or injured, the old and infirm, and those who stayed back to guard the pups.

The African wild dog's main prey varies among populations but always centers around medium-to-large sized ungulates, such as the impala, Thomson's Gazelle, Springbok, kudu, reedbuck, and wildebeest calves. The most frequent single prey species depends upon season and local availability. For example, in the Serengeti in the 1970s wildebeest (mostly calves) were the most frequently taken species (57%) from January to June, but Thompsons gazelle were the most frequently taken (79%) during the rest of the year.^[18] In the Selous Game Reserve, the most frequent prey is impala.^[19] While the vast majority of its diet is made up of mammal prey, it sometimes hunts large birds, especially Ostriches.^[10] Other predators, such as lions, sometimes steal the prey that wild dogs catch.^[20]

Some packs are also able to include large animals among their prey, including zebras and warthogs. The frequency and success rates of hunting zebra and warthogs varies widely among specific packs. To hunt larger prey, wild dogs use a closely coordinated attack, beginning with a rapid charge to stampede the herd. One African wild dog then grabs the victim's tail, while another attacks the upper lip or nose, and the remainder attempt to disembowel the animal. Male wild dogs usually perform the task of grabbing warthogs by the nose.^[21] This behaviour is also used on other large dangerous prey, such as the African Buffalo, giraffe calves, and large antelope—even the one-ton Giant Eland.

Remarkably, studies indicate that this large-animal hunting tactic may be a learned behavior, passed on from generation to generation within specific hunting packs, rather than an instinctive behaviour found commonly within the species. Some studies have also shown that other information, such as the location of watering holes, may be

passed on similarly.

Distribution and threats

The home range of packs varies enormously, depending on the size of the pack and the nature of the terrain. In the Serengeti, the average dog density (prior to the local extinction of the species) was 1 dog per 208 square kilometers (80 square miles), whereas in the Selous Game Reserve the average density was 1 dog every 25 square kilometers (9.6 square miles).^[22] Their preferred habitat in the Serengeti is deciduous woodlands because of large prey herd size, lack of competition from other carnivores, and better sites for denning.^[23] In the Serengeti, the average range has been estimated at 1,500 square kilometres (580 square miles), although individual ranges overlap extensively.^[10]



An African wild dog in a captive breeding program at Monarto Zoo, South Australia.

There were once approximately 500,000 African wild dogs in 39 countries, and packs of 100 or more were not uncommon. Now there are only about 3,000-5,500 in fewer than 25 countries,^[1] or perhaps only 14 countries.^[24] They are primarily found in eastern and southern Africa, mostly in the two remaining large populations associated with the Selous Game Reserve in Tanzania and the population centered in northern Botswana and eastern Namibia. Smaller but apparently secure populations of several hundred individuals are found in Zimbabwe, South Africa (Kruger National Park), and in the Ruaha/Rungwa/Kisigo complex of Tanzania. Isolated populations persist in Zambia, Kenya, and Mozambique.

The African wild dog is endangered by human overpopulation,^[25] habitat loss and predator control killing. It uses very large territories (and so can persist only in large wildlife protected areas), and it is strongly affected by competition with larger carnivores that rely on the same prey base, particularly the lion and the Spotted Hyena. Lions often will kill as many wild dogs as they can but do not eat them. One on one the hyena is much more powerful than the wild dog but a large group of wild dogs can successfully chase off a small number of hyenas because of their teamwork. It is also killed by livestock herders and game hunters, though it is typically no more (perhaps less) persecuted than other carnivores that pose more threat to livestock. Most of Africa's national parks are too small for a pack of wild dogs, so the packs expand to the unprotected areas, which tend to be ranch or farm land. Ranchers and farmers protect their domestic animals by killing the wild dogs. Like other carnivores, the African wild dog is sometimes affected by outbreaks of viral diseases such as rabies, distemper, and parvovirus. Although these diseases are not more pathogenic or virulent for wild dogs, the small size of most wild dog populations makes them vulnerable to local extinction due to diseases or other problems.^[1]

The Painted Dog Conservation (PDC) effort, based in Hwange National Park, western Zimbabwe, works with local communities to create new strategies for conserving the wild dog and its habitat.

Suggested change in the English common name

In the late 1990s some conservationists working to protect *Lycaon pictus* suggested that their most common name, "African wild dog", was a source of confusion and prejudice. Greg Rasmussen wrote in 1998:

"The name 'wild dog' developed during an era of persecution of all predators when the name applied to feral dogs, hyenas, jackals and the cape hunting dogs (Pringle, 1980). 'Painted' aside from being a direct translation

of the specific epithet, accurately describes the unique varicoloured markings of each individual. Apart from being misleading, continued use of the name 'wild dog' does little more than further fuel negative attitude and prejudice which is detrimental to conservation efforts.^[citation needed]

Rasmussen is one of the founders of the Painted Dog Conservation, which was originally founded in 1992 as Painted Dog Research Project. He advocates using the name "painted dog". Nonetheless, "wild dog" still is the most commonly used name for this species.



An African wild dog in repose

Taxonomy

Lycaon pictus is the only extant species in the genus *Lycaon*. An extinct species from the African Pleistocene, *Lycaon sekowei*, is a possible ancestor of the modern species.^[26] Another possible ancestor of these (and several other canids) from the Pleistocene of Eurasia is *Xenocyon lycaonoides*; this is sometimes also placed in *Lycaon*.^[27] Although in a lineage distinct from wolves, domestic dogs, and coyotes, Wild dogs are more closely related to them than to other canids.^[28]

There are five recognized subspecies of *Lycaon pictus*:^[29]

- *Lycaon pictus pictus*
- *Lycaon pictus lupinus*
- *Lycaon pictus manguensis*
- *Lycaon pictus sharicus*
- *Lycaon pictus somalicus*



Fossil of *Lycaon sekowei*, a possible ancestor of modern wild dogs

Interspecies adoption

In 2009 at the Pittsburgh Zoo, a female mixed breed domestic dog was brought in to nurse nine African wild dog pups, after the pups' mother had died. The nursing was going successfully, and the pups had gained weight. This is the first time that a domestic dog has ever been documented nursing African wild dog pups.^[30]

Research and conservation links

Botswana Wild Dog Research Project^[31]

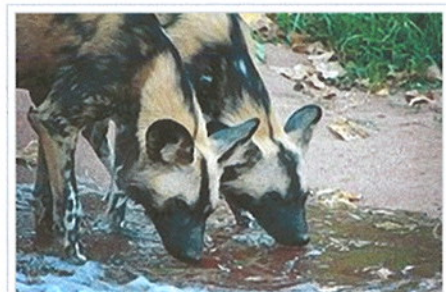
Institute of Zoology Wild dog research^[32]

Cheetah & Wild Dog Conservation Planning Process^[33]

Harnas Wildlife Foundation (<http://www.harnas.org/projects/wild-dog/>)

African Wild Dog Conservancy^[34]

Zambian Carnivore Programme^[35]



African Wild Dogs in Perth Zoo

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Okavango-Kalahari Wild Dog Research Project

Project Notes | Updates

Researchers: Botilo Thato Tshimologo and Kai Collins

This project is part of the overall project: **Botswana Wildlife Research - Increasing Capacity.**

This project aims to build on past research done on wild dog within the Okavango Delta, as well as add to the body of knowledge currently existing, hence the selection of areas wherein wild dog packs have not been closely studied.

This study aims to compare wild dog packs in two locations within the Okavango Delta Ramsar site with wild dog packs in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR). Movement and activity data from GPS collars on wild dog packs in the CKGR will be compared with data from 3 GPS collars on wild dogs in the Okavango Delta Ramsar site, as well as behavioural observations from the study packs. Due to recent advances in technology, the collars are lighter than ever before which is very important for such a highly mobile species. The new collars are also able to store GPS fixes onboard that can be downloaded remotely later on - even from the air if necessary.

The same data collection methodology and time period will be used across study sites in order to gain a better understanding of how wild dog have adapted to survive in such different habitat types. This study forms part of an MSc research project being carried out by Botilo Thato Tshimologo, who is studying through the University of Botswana's Harry Oppenheimer Okavango Research Centre. This project is very closely linked to the Central Kalahari Wild Dog Research Project as both studies will compare data.

The information gained from the comparison of the species in the two different habitat types and an understanding of movements across fence lines can be used in the creation and implementation of a proactive conservation plan for this endangered carnivore.

One of the significant threats for wild dog is the potential spread of diseases such as canine distemper and rabies, often

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contracted through contact with domestic dogs. As such, one of the primary focuses of this project is to determine wild dog movements in relation to the closest human settlements, with an aim to concentrate a canine disease vaccination programme on domestic dogs in these areas, in an attempt to minimise the risk of these diseases spreading to free-ranging wild dog populations.

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Black Rhinoceros

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Black Rhinoceros** or **Hook-lipped Rhinoceros** (*Diceros bicornis*), is a species of rhinoceros, native to the eastern and central areas of Africa including Kenya, Tanzania, Cameroon, South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Angola. Although the Rhino is referred to as *black*, it is actually more of a grey/brown/white color in appearance.

The other African rhinoceros is the White Rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*). These common names are misleading, as those two species are not really distinguishable by color. The word *white* in the name "White Rhinoceros" is a mistranslation of the Dutch word *wijd* for wide, referring to its square upper lip, as opposed to the pointed or hooked lip of the Black Rhinoceros. These species are now sometimes referred to as the Square-lipped (for White) or Hook-lipped (for Black) Rhinoceros.

Contents

- 1 Taxonomy and naming
- 2 Description
- 3 Distribution
- 4 Behavior
 - 4.1 Diet
 - 4.2 Communication
 - 4.3 Reproduction
- 5 Footnotes
- 6 References
- 7 External links

Taxonomy and naming

There are four recognized subspecies of the black rhinoceros:^[3]

- South-central (*Diceros bicornis minor*) which are the most numerous, and once ranged from central Tanzania south through Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique to northern and eastern South Africa.
- South-western (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*) are better adapted to the arid and semi-arid savannas of Namibia, southern Angola, western Botswana, and western South Africa.

Black Rhinoceros or Hook-lipped Rhinoceros^[1]



Black Rhinoceros at the St. Louis Zoo

Conservation status

Extinct Threatened Least Concern
EX EW **CR** EN VU NT LC
Critically Endangered (IUCN 3.1)^[2]

Scientific classification

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Infraclass: Eutheria
Order: Perissodactyla
Family: Rhinocerotidae
Genus: *Diceros*
Species: *D. bicornis*

Binomial name

Diceros bicornis

(Linnaeus, 1758)

Subspecies

Diceros bicornis michaeli
Diceros bicornis longipes †
Diceros bicornis minor
Diceros bicornis bicornis

- East African (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*) which had a historic distribution from south Sudan, Ethiopia, down through Kenya into north-central Tanzania. Today, its range is limited primarily to Tanzania.
- West African (*Diceros bicornis longipes*) historically occurred across the savanna belt in western Africa, but in recent times it only remained in northern Cameroon. In 2006 an intensive survey across its putative range in Cameroon failed to locate any, leading to fears that it is extinct in the wild.^{[4][5]} In the hope that a tiny undiscovered population remains, it is maintained as Critically Endangered by the IUCN.^[4]



Description



Black rhino in Ngorongoro crater, Tanzania



Diceros bicornis skull

An adult Black Rhinoceros stands 140–170 cm (55–67 in) high at the shoulder and is 3.3–3.6 m (11–12 ft) in length.^[6] An adult weighs from 800 to 1,400 kg (1,800 to 3,100 lb). The females are smaller than the males. Two horns on the skull are made of keratin with the larger front horn typically 50 cm (20 in) long, exceptionally up to 140 cm (55 in).

The longest known horn measured nearly 1.5 m (4.9 ft) in length.^[7] Sometimes, a third smaller horn may develop. These horns are used for defense, intimidation, and digging up roots and breaking branches during feeding. Skin color depends more on local soil conditions and the rhinoceros' wallowing behavior than anything else, so many black rhinos are typically not truly black in color. The Black Rhino is smaller than the White Rhino, and has a long, pointed, and prehensile upper lip, which it uses to grasp leaves and twigs when feeding.^[7] White Rhinoceros have square lips used for eating grass. The Black Rhinoceros can also be recognized from the White Rhinoceros by its smaller skull and ears.

Their thick layered skin protects the rhino from thorns and sharp grasses. Their skin harbors external parasites, such as mites and ticks, which are eaten by oxpeckers and egrets that live with the rhino. Such behaviour was originally thought to be an example of mutualism, but recent evidence suggests that oxpeckers may be parasites instead, feeding on rhino blood.^[8] Black rhinos have poor eyesight, relying more on hearing and smell. Their ears possess a relatively wide rotational range to detect sounds and an excellent sense of smell to alert them the presence of predators.

Distribution



Black rhinos in Ngorongoro crater,
Tanzania

For most of the 20th century the continental black rhino was the most numerous of all rhino species. Around 1900 there were probably several hundred thousand^[2] living in Africa. During the latter half of the 20th century their numbers were severely reduced from an estimated 70,000^[9] in the late 1960s to only 10,000 to 15,000 in 1981. In the early 1990s the number dipped below 2,500, and in 2004 it was reported that only 2,410 black rhinos remained. According to the International Rhino Foundation, the total African population has recovered to 4240 by 2008 (which suggests that the 2004 number was low).^[10] In 2002 only 10 West African Black Rhinos remained in Cameroon, and in 2006 intensive surveys across its putative range failed

to locate any, leading to fears that this subspecies is extinct,^[5] though it is maintained as Critically Endangered by the IUCN.^[4]

The only rhino that has recovered somewhat from the brink of extinction is the southern white whose numbers now are estimated around 14,500, up from fewer than 50 in the first decade of the 20th Century.^[11]

The Black Rhinoceros has been pushed to the brink of extinction by illegal poaching for their horn, and to a lesser extent by loss of habitat. A major market for rhino horn has historically been in the Middle East to make ornately carved handles for ceremonial daggers called jambiyas. Demand for these exploded in the 1970s causing the Black Rhinoceros population to decline 96% between 1970 and 1992. The horn is also used in traditional Chinese medicine, and is said by herbalists to be able to revive comatose patients, cure fevers, and aid male sexual stamina and fertility.^[12] The purported effectiveness of the use of rhino horn in treating any illness has not been confirmed by medical science. In June 2007, the first-ever documented case of the medicinal sale of black rhino horn in the United States (confirmed by genetic testing of the confiscated horn) occurred at a traditional Chinese medicine supply store in Portland, Oregon's Chinatown.^[12]

Behavior

Although they are typically solitary animals, with the exception of coming together to mate, mothers and calves will sometimes congregate in small groups for short periods of time. Males are not as sociable as females, although they will sometimes allow the presence of other rhinos. They are not very territorial and often intersect other rhino territories. Home ranges vary depending on season and the availability of food and water.

Generally they have smaller home ranges and larger density in habitats that have plenty of food and water available, and vice versa if resources are not readily available. In the Serengeti home ranges are around 43 to 133 km², while in the Ngorongoro it is between 2.6 to 44 km². Black Rhinos have also been observed to have a certain area they tend to visit and rest frequently called "houses" which are usually on a high ground level.^[citation needed]



Black rhino in Ngorongoro crater,
Tanzania

The Black Rhino has a reputation for being extremely aggressive, and charges readily at perceived threats. They have even been observed to charge tree trunks and termite mounds.^[citation needed] Black Rhinos will fight each other, and they have the highest rates of mortal combat recorded for any mammal: about 50% of males and 30% of females die from combat-related injuries.^[13] Adult Black Rhinos normally have no natural predators,^[14] but they

may fall prey to crocodiles in exceptional circumstances.^[15]

Black Rhinoceros follow the same trails as elephants use to get from foraging areas to water holes. They also use smaller trails when they are browsing. They are very fast and can get up to speeds of 56 kilometres per hour (35 mph) running on their toes.

Diet

The Black Rhinoceros is a herbivorous browser that eats leafy plants, branches, shoots, thorny wood bushes, and fruit.^[16] Their diet can reduce the amount of woody plants, which may benefit grazers (who eat grass), but not competing browsers. It has been known to eat up to 220 species of plants. It can live up to 5 days without water during drought. Black Rhinos live in primarily grasslands, savannas, and tropical bushland habitats.

They browse for food in the morning and evening. In the hottest part of the day they are most inactive- resting, sleeping, and wallowing in the mud. Wallowing helps cool down body temperature during the day and protects against parasites. If mud is not available rhinos will wallow in dust. Drinking water is most common in the afternoon. When Black Rhinos browse they use their lips to strip the branches of their leaves.

Communication

Rhinos use several forms of communication. Due to their bad eyesight and solitary nature, scent marking is often used to identify themselves to other Black Rhinos. Urine spraying occurs on trees and bushes, around water holes and feeding areas. Females urine spray more often when receptive for breeding. Defecation sometimes occurs in the same spot used by different rhinos, such as around feeding stations and watering tracks. Coming upon these spots, rhinos will smell to see who is in the area and add their own marking. Less commonly they will rub their heads or horns against tree trunks to scent-mark.

Different types of vocalizations have also been observed. Growls and trumpets may be used during a fight. A long snort indicates anger, while sneeze-like calls are used as an alarm to danger. Short snorts with pricked ears and wrinkled nostrils are a startle reaction to a newcomer. A high-pitched "wonk" has been described for when they are fearful. A high-pitched scream has been observed in times of terror. "Mmwonk", a deep, resonant sound is a sign of contentment. Squeak, done with different tones and intonations may mean "I'm lost", "Where are you?", "I'm over here", or other signals that are not yet understood. Breathing speeds can be used to communicate greetings, anxiety, and reassurance. A puffing snort is a common greeting when males and females encounter one another.

Body language also a form of Black Rhinoceros communications. A bull will sometimes display an aggressive ritual towards a potential rival. They will smell, spray repeatedly, scrape, trample, and bash with their heads in bushes. They may also snort in an attack posture. When their tail is up, it may indicate one of several things: curiosity, alarm, or sexual receptivity. Erect ears also indicate curiosity, and flat ears express anger.

Reproduction



Black rhino grazing, Sydney Zoo



Chewing on plants

The adults are solitary in nature, coming together only for mating. Mating does not have a seasonal pattern but births tend to be towards the end of the rainy season in more arid environments.



Mother and calf in Lewa, central Kenya

When in season the females will mark dung piles. Males following females that are in season will follow her; when she defecates he will scrape and spread the dung, making it more difficult for any other adult males to pick up her scent trail.

Courtship behaviors before mating include snorting and sparring with the horns among males. Another courtship behavior is called bluff and bluster, where the rhino will snort and swing its head from side to side aggressively before running away repeatedly. Breeding pairs stay together for 2–3 days and sometimes even weeks. They mate several times a day over this time and copulation lasts for a half an hour.

The gestation period is 15 to 16 months. The single calf weighs about 35–50 kg at birth, and can follow its mother around after just three days. Weaning occurs at around 2 years of age for the offspring. The mother and calf stay together for 2–3 years until the next calf is born; female calves may stay longer, forming small groups. The young are occasionally taken by hyenas and lions. Sexual maturity is reached from 5–7 years old for females, and 7–8 years for males. The life expectancy in natural conditions (without poaching pressure) is from 35–50 years.^[6]

Footnotes

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Safaris / Camps / Namibia Kunene / Desert Rhino Camp - Classic

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The Save the Rhino Trust (SRT)

In the Palmwag Concession Wilderness Safaris works closely with the Save the Rhino Trust (SRT), a highly respected NGO almost single-handedly responsible for the preservation of desert-adapted black rhino in the area. The SRT focuses on the protection, monitoring and understanding of the local black rhino population and is funded by both donations and partnerships.

As the rhino numbers in the area shrank to near extinction, the SRT was formed to stop the indiscriminate hunting that was taking place within the Palmwag Concession. Community game scouts were employed by the SRT to help with the patrolling and monitoring of the remaining rhino. Ironically many of these new scouts were previously convicted poachers from within the local community - their extensive knowledge of the habits and movements of rhino in the wild proving absolutely invaluable! Around 30 trackers now monitor over 100 desert-adapted black rhino.

Today this programme is a major success and is responsible for the wellbeing of a very unique sub-species of black rhino - differing even from other populations found within this sub-region. Wilderness Safaris' partnership with the SRT and Namibia's Ministry of Environment and Tourism has meant that the black rhino population in this area is now able to sustain relocations of founder individuals to surrounding areas on communal land. Since the founding of the SRT poaching has drastically declined and the rhino population has more than doubled. One of our staff has even been awarded an MSc degree in black rhino habitat.

In a decisive move, Wilderness Safaris has seconded these vastly experienced community game scouts to Palmwag Lodge and Desert Rhino Camp as trackers and guides. They possess an inconceivable wealth of knowledge on the behaviour of the rhino, conservation methodology and the wondrous desert-adapted fauna and flora of the region. Their incredible insights often prove life-changing for many guests.

The overall success of Wilderness Safaris' and the SRT's efforts, as well as the enthusiastic support of the local community and neighbouring farms, is a testament to an exciting new era in the evolution of the human spirit and wildlife conservation.



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About us

Mission statement

Save the Rhino International works to conserve viable populations of critically endangered rhinos in Africa and Asia. We recognise that the future of wildlife is inextricably linked to the communities that share its habitat. By funding field projects and through education, our goal is to deliver material, long-lasting and widespread benefits to rhinos and other endangered species, ecosystems and to the people living in these areas.

Aims

- To increase the number of rhinos in genetically viable populations in the wild
- To enhance the integrity of ecosystems
- To ensure that local communities benefit from conservation activities

Primary objectives

- To provide financial support for *in situ* projects focused on all five of the rhinoceros species
- To encourage and enable the sharing of information, experience and skills between rhino programmes, *ex situ* and conservation organisations
- To measure and improve the effectiveness of our grant-making and charitable activities
- To raise awareness of the need for rhino conservation and communicate the work of Save the Rhino

Our grant-making activities



Audited Accounts 09-10



Audited Accounts 08-09

The funds we raise are used to support projects that address rhino conservation through a number of measures:

- Community conservation programmes that develop sustainable methods by which local communities can creatively manage natural resources
- Environmental education programmes that teach children and adults about the importance of preserving natural resources and address human-wildlife conflict issues
- Anti-poaching and monitoring patrols, which detect and deter poachers and gather information about rhino ranges and numbers
- Translocations, so that rhinos from established populations can be reintroduced to former habitats
- Research into the threats to rhino survival and alternatives to the use of rhino horn
- Veterinary work, such as the implanting of transmitters into horns, or removal of snares

Our approach

- We employ a pragmatic approach focused on viable populations, and are not sentiment-driven
- We support the sustainable use of natural resources for the mutual benefit of wildlife, habitat and local communities
- We support the sustainable use of wildlife (i.e. culling, cropping and hunting) provided it is legal and the profits are ploughed back into conservation
- We do not create or run our own projects in the field; rather, we find rhino conservation projects that we think are doing a good job, and then fund them
- We prefer to work with projects on a long-term basis, rather than making one-off or ad hoc grants
- We believe in the value of partnership working with other *in situ* and *ex situ* NGOs and conservation organisations



RHINO NEWS

Genetic Analysis of Kunene Black Rhino Population

25 May 2011 15:43

Dr Paul O'Donoghue (University of Chester) and Professor Michael Bruford (University of Cardiff), are currently working as part of a long-term collaboration with Save the Rhino Trust (Namibia) and...

25 May 2011 14:58

Namibia launches Rhino SMS Hotline 55555

02 February 2011 08:46

Rhino Africa Challenge4aCause 2011 Cycle Ride

14 July 2010 00:00

Information about Rhino Horn

24 May 2010 00:00

Capetonians undertake gruelling desert race to mitigate falling wildlife numbers

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OVERVIEW

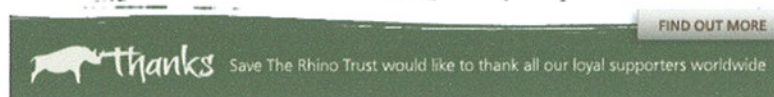


The desert-adapted black rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*) surviving in the Kunene Region (former Damaraland and Kaokoland) in the arid, north-west of Namibia are the only rhino worldwide, surviving on communal land with no formal conservation status. Furthermore, they are the largest truly free-ranging black rhino population left in the world.

However, in the early 1980's in this vast, beautiful and spectacular desert, a savage slaughter of desert wildlife took place. As the number of rhinos shrank, resulting in their near extinction, a Trust was formed with the aim of ensuring protection of the remaining rhinos while affording, elephant and other wildlife, the chance to recover to sustainable numbers. With the help of international funds, Save the Rhino Trust - Namibia was officially registered as Welfare Organization number W.O. 53 in 1982.

Initially, a combination of ex-poachers and members of the local community were employed by Save the Rhino Trust to monitor and protect the rhino. These men had extensive knowledge of the habits of these animals and the rugged terrain they inhabited. The aim of preventing the extermination of the endangered black rhino on communal land has been enthusiastically supported by Chiefs, headmen and the local communities. Since the Trust was formed, there has been close collaboration with Government, the local communities, and both national and international partners. This coalition has been central in achieving the aim of enhancing security for the rhino, monitoring and researching the rhino population, and providing benefit to the community through conservation and tourism.

SRT has an administrative office in Swakopmund, and field bases at Palmwag, Mbakondja and the Ugab River at Brandberg West. The organisation is led by Rudi Loutit, aided by a committed staff of local Namibians who have spent the better part of their lives living with black rhinos in the Kunene. These dedicated people constantly monitor on foot, with camels, by air and by vehicle in a concerted effort to protect these rare and critically endangered animals.



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Home > Background > KUNENE REGION

KUNENE REGION



HOME TO THE DESERT-ADAPTED RHINO

The Kunene region (former Kaokoland and Damaraland) in the north-west of Namibia encompasses a range of biomes or landscapes neatly arranged parallel to one another. On the west is the forbidding Skeleton Coast - a region of rocks, fog, shipwrecks and desolation, washed by the waters of the Benguela current, which brings Antarctic cold to desert heat. Parallel to the beach lies the northern extension of the Namib desert - the oldest and most fascinating desert in the world.

The desert dunes form a narrow band along the coast, seldom reaching further than 30 km inland except in the far north, where the sand extends 60 km from the coast. The sand desert is replaced eastwards by a zone of gravel plains, otherwise known as the pro-Namib.

Inland of the gravel plains, the mountains rise to the escarpment. The escarpment runs from Angola through the Kaokoveld and southwards, where it becomes the great escarpment of South Africa. It is a broad chain of mountain ranges sometimes broken and bisected by river valleys, deep gorges and canyons.

To the east of the escarpment lies the central drainage basin, itself an extension of the rugged and broken escarpment, and a transition to the next great region, the highland plateau. This high country extends as the interior plateau far to the east - beyond Etosha National park and into Botswana.

The Skeleton Coast National Park lies between the Ugab River in the south and the Kunene in the north. Its eastern boundary is a surveyed line, 30 - 40 km from the coast. To the east of this park lies former Damaraland and Kaokoland, now known as Kunene Region. There is no fence dividing the Skeleton Coast Park from the adjoining inland areas, which permits free movement of all wildlife.

While the Kunene Region lacks any formal protection, pioneering efforts in community-based conservation led by local conservation NGOs, private tourism companies, local authorities and the government's Ministry of Environment and Tourism have created opportunities for local communities to benefit from utilization of their resources. Such benefits are consumptively and/or non-consumptive.

This has led to improved conservation measures by local people who now have a vested interest in conserving their livelihood resources.

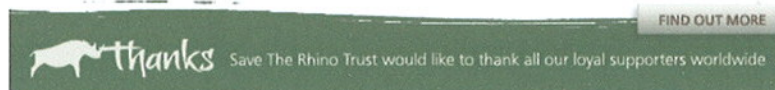
The deserts of the Kunene represent one of the last true wildernesses remaining in Southern Africa. This distinctive and floristically rich area is also the only desert in the world that maintains a full assemblage of native megaherbivores and large carnivores such as the famed desert elephants, desert lion, cheetah, leopard and hyena, and healthy populations of ungulates including mountain zebra, giraffe, springbok, oryx and kudu. The Kunene, and especially the escarpment zone, is also an area where endemic reptiles, scorpions and birds are found.



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Botswana Rhino Ecology Project

Project Notes | Updates

The primary aim of this project is to study the wet and dry season range and feeding preferences of reintroduced black and white rhino in the Moremi Game Reserve in Botswana. The reintroduction of rhino into any unfenced ecosystem is a complex undertaking and though translocation has been a key component of successful rhino conservation in Africa, the management of these new populations poses a challenge to wildlife managers.

Background

During the 20th century, both black and white rhino subspecies became extinct in Botswana, due to poaching. In 2001, Botswana's Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP), with the help of Wilderness Safaris and the Trust, successfully reintroduced a number of black and white rhino into the Moremi Game Reserve. Before bringing them into the reserve, the area was assessed and considered suitable habitat for both black and white rhino. However, interestingly, both species have been moving off to occupy other habitats.

The Project Details

The primary objective of the project therefore is to identify key factors influencing the movement of reintroduced black and white rhino out of the habitat into which they were introduced. The identified factors will be used to draw recommendations relating to appropriate habitat into which rhino can in the future be released.

A hypothesis is that foraging and distribution patterns of both rhino species are affected both by a number of abiotic factors, such as slope and distance to water etc., as well as by a number of biotic factors such as predation, territoriality (behavioural relations with other species) and possibly poaching pressure.

The objectives will be met by:

1. Determining home ranges, movement patterns and distribution and comparing these between habitat types, sexes and seasons.
2. Sampling vegetation to establish food

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availability and plant species preferences.

3. Determining the response of rhinos to other species by means of observations.

The research will be conducted on Chief's Island within the northern part of Moremi Game Reserve in Botswana, making use of tracking GPS data recorded by Anti Poaching Unit (APU) officers during regular monitoring patrols. In addition, animals will be tracked by spoor, identified by means of their ear markings and digital photographs will be taken of the individuals to assist with identification.

Vegetation will be sampled to establish food availability and plant species preferences by the rhinoceros. This will be done whenever an individual has been sighted or its spoor has been positively identified. Vegetation type, soil type and the presence of /distance to the nearest water body will be determined.

The rhino will be observed when they come into contact with other species and their response will be recorded, including whether the animal flees, fights, or ignores the presence of the other species. Finally, data from the Anti-Poaching Units on rhino mortality will be analysed versus habitat type and the presence of humans.

The results of the project hopefully will lead to a better understanding with regards to reintroductions in a free-ranging system, and provide a better understanding of the ecology of the two species. The project will improve and contribute to the paucity of literature on this specific subject, as well as increase the success of the reintroduction programme going forward, which in turn should enhance the marketability and sustainability of ecotourism in the area.

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Botswana Rhino Relocation and Reintroduction Project

Project Notes | Updates

The Botswana Rhino Reintroduction Project is a true success story: Collaborative conservation efforts between Wilderness Safaris, Wilderness Safaris Wilderness Trust, Botswana's Department of Wildlife (DWNP) and the Botswana Government have realised a dream with the successful reintroduction of black and white rhino into the Mombo area of the Moremi Game Reserve.

By the 1970s, both black and white rhino populations had declined alarmingly in northern Botswana; the black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*) had previously been confined to the Kwando-Chobe area but the white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum*) had been common throughout the area until the middle of the 20th century. As a result of over-hunting by illegal hunters and worldwide demand for their valuable horns, as well as inadequate protection by the government, even rhino that had been reintroduced from South Africa were drastically reduced. A survey in 1992 showed 19 white rhino while the black rhino was classified "locally extinct" in Botswana.

To help rectify the situation, the Botswana Defence Force and the Department of Wildlife reacted by creating Africa's finest anti-poaching operation, laying the groundwork for the reintroduction of rhino into the country. All surviving white rhino were moved to protected sanctuaries until such time as they could be released back into the wild, in national reserves.

White Rhino

In 2001 Wilderness Safaris together with the DWNP initiated a programme that has resulted in more than 32 white rhino running free and wild in the Okavango Delta. The first group of four white rhino arrived at Mombo in November 2001, Wilderness Safaris having purchased the first three and Gaborone Game Reserve donating one - a bull. As soon as these animals were freed, they became the property of the state and Moremi Game Reserve.

Wilderness also financed the construction of bomas, much of the transport and much of the monitoring costs. A further 22 rhino arrived as a result of an innovative 'rhino-for-roan' swap between South Africa and Botswana. Despite challenges and

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setbacks - poachers killed two rhino in October 2003 - the project team has continued to work with undiminished fervour. A week after the crime, security was upgraded, the poachers caught and three new rhino released, sending a powerful message that the rhino have returned!

The ultimate accolade, though, came from the rhino themselves. Since August 2004, no less than 11 rhino calves were born in the wild, all to mothers released in the programme. The total white rhino population now stands at over 38, and it is likely that there may be more births in the coming months, as the rhino have clearly settled down in their new home.

Black Rhino

The classification of the black rhino as 'locally extinct' became redundant as of October 2003, when the first four black rhino - two males and two females - were released into the Okavango Delta. Since then, other negotiations include the 'sable-for-black-rhino' deal between the South African and Botswana governments, as well as initiatives with the Africa Conservation Science Centre, the International Rhino Foundation and with Wilderness Safaris guests.

Conclusion

Joint monitoring patrols with the DWNP Anti-Poaching Unit are achieving good results, and are also successful in tracking rhino as they move further away into new areas to find the very best grazing. Thanks to the project, breeding populations of both African rhino species have been re-established in the Okavango Delta, and aside from the value that is added to world rhino numbers and population distributions, guests to Wilderness Safaris' camps have the privilege of encountering rhino on game drives - an encounter that enhances the concept of changing lives of people and Africa.

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Sable Antelope

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Sable Antelope** (*Hippotragus niger*) is an antelope which inhabits wooded savannah in East Africa south of Kenya, and in Southern Africa.

Contents

- 1 Subspecies
- 2 Description
- 3 Ecology and behavior
- 4 References
- 5 External links

Subspecies

There are four subspecies:

- *H. n. niger* which is considered low risk conservation dependent
- *H. n. variiani* (Giant Sable Antelope) of central Angola which is classified as critically endangered
- *H. n. kirkii* (Zambian Sable Antelope) of central Angola and western Zambia and is classified as vulnerable
- *H. n. roosevelti* the Roosevelt sable antelope found in Kenya and Tanzania and possibly in Mozambique.

Description

The Sable Antelope stands 120 to 140 centimetres at the shoulder and weigh 200 to 270 kilograms, males being larger than females. Female Sable Antelope are chestnut to dark brown darkening as they mature while males are very distinctively black. Both sexes have a white underbelly, white cheeks and a white chin. They have a shaggy mane on the back of their neck. Sable antelope have ringed horns which arch backward, in females these can reach a meter, but in males they can reach over one and a tenth meter. The life span of these animals is up to 18 years.

Ecology and behavior

Sable Antelope



Sable Bull (Kafue, Zambia)

Conservation status



Least Concern (IUCN 3.1)^[1]

Scientific classification

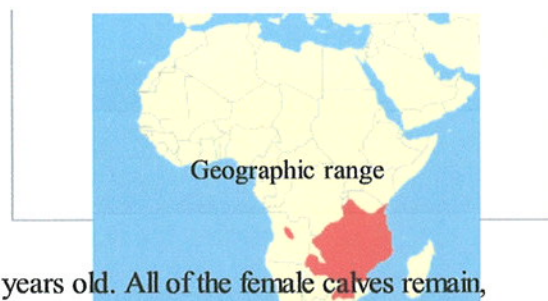
Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Class:	Mammalia
Order:	Artiodactyla
Family:	Bovidae
Subfamily:	Hippotraginae
Genus:	<i>Hippotragus</i>
Species:	<i>H. niger</i>

Binomial name

Hippotragus niger

Harris, 1838

Sable Antelope live in savanna woodlands and grasslands during the dry season where they eat mid-length grass and leaves. They are diurnal but are less active during the heat of the day. Sable Antelope form herds of ten to thirty females and calves led by a single male, called a bull. Sable Antelope males will fight among themselves; they drop to their knees and use their horns.



In each herd, the juvenile males are exiled from the herd at about 3 years old. All of the female calves remain, however. When the herd gets too large, it divides into smaller groups of cows and their young. These groups will form new herds, once again with only one adult bull. The young males, which have been separated from the herd, associate in "bachelor groups" of up to 12 individuals. Among the bachelors, the most dominant will be the first individual to join a new group of females when the position is open. Very seldom, during their fights for supremacy, are they able to inflict bodily harm to the contender.

When sable antelopes are threatened by a predator, including lions, they will confront it, using their scimitar-shaped horns. Many of these big cats have died during such fights. Despite their effectiveness, the sable's horns have contributed to the sharp decline of the animal, being a highly prized hunting trophy. In addition to heavy hunting, numbers have been reduced severely as part of regional Tse-tse fly control programs.

The grassland habitat of the sable is being reduced due to habitat destruction for agricultural development. Antelope are important to their habitats as grazers and browsers. They are also important as prey for carnivores. THERE ALL ALSO PART OF HORSES AND THE THE SHORT - NECK GIRAFFE

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1. ^ IUCN SSC Antelope Specialist Group (2008). *Hippotragus niger* (<http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/10170>) . In: IUCN 2008. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Downloaded on November 2008.Database entry includes a brief justification of why this species is of Least concern.

External links

- ARKive - images and movies of the sable antelope (*Hippotragus niger*) (http://www.arkive.org/species/GES/mammals/Hippotragus_niger/)
- Animal Bytes (<http://www.seaworld.org/animal-info/animal-bytes/animalia/eumetazoa/coelomates/deuterostomes/chordata/craniata/mammalia/artiodactyla/sable-antelope.htm>)

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sable_Antelope"

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Botswana Sable Research Project

[Project Notes](#) | [Updates](#)

By Michael Hensman

This project is part of the overall project: **Botswana Wildlife Research - Increasing Capacity.**

The sable antelope, *Hippotragus niger*, has shown some dramatic declines in parts of its range in southern Africa. Despite fairly intensive study in the Kruger National Park and other areas, the reasons for these declines are imperfectly understood.

It is for this reason that an investigation into the home range and habitat use of the species has been initiated in the Vumbura area in the Okavango Delta. Here a relative stronghold of sable exists, allowing an investigation into what factors allow the species to thrive here. Michael Hensman, an MSc student from the University of Witwatersrand and HOORC (being jointly supervised by Prof Norman Owen-Smith and Dr Casper Bonyongo), has just begun his research project using the relatively new technology of Geographical Positioning Systems (GPS) collars to produce fine scale movement data from three different herds.

We have so far managed to fit two collars onto two sable cows and are indebted to the assistance of veterinarian Dr Dane Hawk and gyrocopter pilot Mark Muller without whom the exercise would not have been possible. Dr Casper Bonyongo also lent valuable field experience during the operation.

The first cow darted was part of a herd of 22 animals that use the area in the north-west of the Vumbura Concession around the airstrip. This herd is well known and is comfortable with vehicles, allowing a close enough approach for darting from a vehicle. After some initial challenges this cow was successfully darted, immobilised and collared by Dr. Hawk. All relevant measurements and samples were taken from the cow before she was 'reversed' and allowed to rejoin the rest of the herd. Further observations on that day, the following morning and subsequently, suggest she has recovered completely and has continued to hold her position as the dominant female within the

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herd.

The second cow darted was located from the air by Mark Muller who guided us into an area to the north-east of Vumbura Plains Camp. We eventually located the 15-strong herd in an area of open grassland within mopane woodland. We were again able to successfully dart a selected cow from the vehicle and following all checks and processing of the animal, Dr Hawk successfully revived her, allowing her to rejoin the herd without incident. She was again located the following day and found to be behaving normally.

The third herd intended for inclusion in the study had in the meantime moved into a temporarily inundated area we were unable to access. We will attempt a second operation later in September and are excited to see the results from this study and what role these might play in the conservation of this iconic species.

Namibian Cape Vulture Release Project



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HABITAT AND SPACE USE BY SABLE ANTELOPE IN NORTHERN BOTSWANA

A study by Michael Hensman (BSc Masters in Ecology)

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Within Southern Africa, the distribution of Sable antelope (*Hippotragus niger niger*) has become greatly restricted due to cattle ranching, agriculture and development. An alarming decline in their abundance has recently been observed in the Kruger National Park where fewer than 500 Sable remain. It is unclear whether this decrease is related to the effects of climatic extremes on habitat conditions, competition from other grazers, or heightened predation following excessive water provision. Although the available evidence does not indicate significant decline in the abundance of Sable in Botswana, the species remains restricted in its spatial distribution. Hence, the aim of the current study is to determine the factors governing habitat suitability for Sable, which is them from being more widely abundant. The specific objectives are:

- To determine the extent of the home ranges covered by breeding herds of Sable Antelope.
- To establish relative use of different sections of these ranges by Sable at particular times of the year.
- To distinguish conditions in the areas utilized by Sable from those not occupied by Sable in particular seasons.
- To record how the nutritional status of Sable changes seasonally as a consequence.

The study has been enabled through the support provided by the Wilderness Wildlife Trust in terms of accommodation, vehicle and basic living expenses at *Vumbura Plains*. They have also sponsored the costs of three GPS collars placed on an adult female in each of the three Sable herds resident near Vumbura. These collars record the GPS coordinates of herd locations every hour. The data is downloaded from the collars through a remote radio link every few days. Locations are plotted on maps using Geographic Information Systems software and related to the prevailing habitat conditions in the region as revealed by satellite imagery. Sites where Sable are located during times of day when foraging or resting occur are visited to record more detailed information on the grass and tree species present as well as other information on habitat conditions such as the height and greenness of the grass and extent of tree and shrub cover. Fresh fecal pellets are collected and analyzed for nitrogen and phosphorus contents to give an indication of the nutritional status of the herds during different times of the year (particularly during the dry season when food is limiting.)

Once completed, the study will provide a baseline for assessing the habitat and food requirements of Sable in a region where the species seems to be thriving, as well as identifying habitat conditions not used by the herds in this region. It may later be extended into a wider study of the distribution and habitat requirement of Sable and other rarer antelope species in northern Botswana. This will enable more effective conservation measures to be implemented in places where the species is not doing well, as in the Kruger National Park.