



The Liuwa Plains Safari



A new adventure exploring a remote Zambian wilderness

Tell someone you are going to “Liuwa Plains” – and you have their attention. Many seasoned Africa travelers have heard of these vast open grasslands in the far west of Zambia but few, very very few, have been there. Now is your chance to visit the plains with Robin Pope Safaris.



This notorious status is due to the wildebeest population – some 35,000 blue wildebeest that move between the western boundary and the centre of the plains. Many say this is the third largest migration in Africa. However the movement is not en masse. You tend to see large herds of up to a 1000 wildebeest, with zebra and sometimes tsessebe amongst them.

So why have so few people been there? It is extremely hard to get to, being cut off other than by boat for 4 months of the year (Jan – April), and even when you can drive there it is a serious expedition to do so – with miles and miles of deeply rutted sand roads, dodgy pontoons and no road signs!



Why go? The Liuwa Plains is an immense wilderness area, brimming with birds and home to huge numbers of animals. The landscape is completely flat and the skies vast - here you really are in the middle of wild, remote and isolated lands.



The bird life throughout the year is spectacular. It is home to large groups of crowned crane, sometime numbering several hundred and often mingling with the many wattled cranes that are never far from view. Bustards, both Denham and white-bellied, are common and secretary birds stalk the plains. The water birds are diverse in species and the sheer numbers are staggering. Flocks containing hundreds of pelicans, egrets, spoonbills, yellow and open billed storks gather at the pans, which are often a white carpet of water lilies. The waders run around the shores of these pans keeping any birder occupied for hours. In December the resident birds are joined by many thousands of migrants passing through.



Other than wildebeest, there are zebra, tsessebe, red lechwe, oribi and steinbuck with (the less common) roan, eland and buffalo. The predators include curious hyena, large packs of wild dog, cheetah and a single remaining lioness that lives near the camp (two males are joining her in 2008). Sightings of side striped jackal, porcupine, a huge python and other specials always enhance the day.



Robin used to lead expeditions into the plains during the nineties but has not done so for ten years. He has never lost the yearning to return and will do so in December 2008 and May/June 2009. He will be based at the African Parks camp Matamanene Camp, a 3* camp providing the usual RPS 5* service. Each safari will be 4 or 5 days, maximum of 6 guests if individuals, 8 if a single group.



Transfers

December the group will fly in and out of Kalabo Airport (avoiding the rutted roads!) May and June, fly in to Kalabo, then on the return journey boat from Kalabo to Mongu and fly out of Mongu. This boat transfer is around 3 hours, through the vast swampy, watery world of the Zambezi flood plain. The birding will be quite spectacular! The camp is a 2-3 hour drive from Kalabo.

For enquiry regarding rates and transport please contact:

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