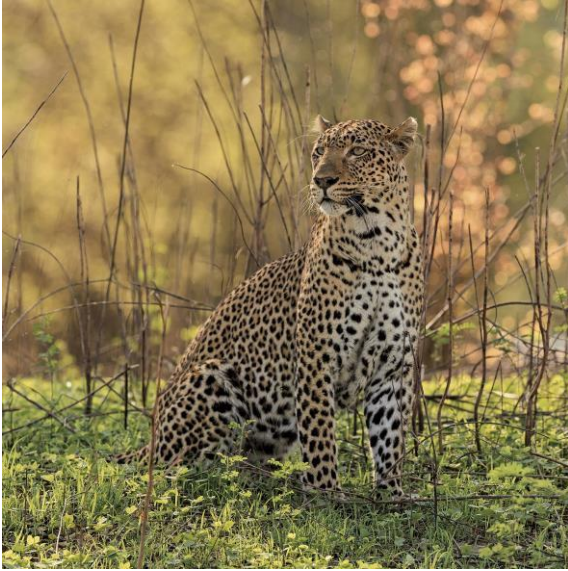


Tour Report

Zambia: South Luangwa Photo Safari

15 – 24 November 2025

Leopard



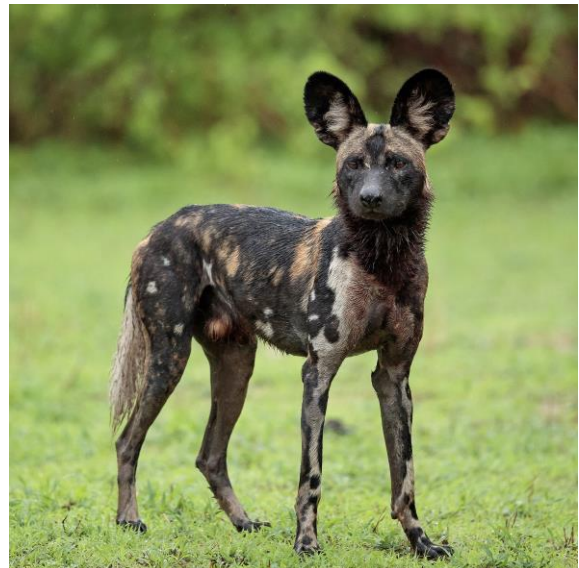
Lion



Hippopotamus



African wild dog



Compiled by Bret Charman

Saturday 15 November 2025

Day 1:

London to Dubai

The group had an evening flight from London to Dubai, with many of us meeting up at the departure gate at Heathrow. We boarded promptly and enjoyed a relatively empty flight to Dubai, with plenty of space to spread out and relax.

Sunday 16 November 2025

Day 2:

Dubai to Lusaka, on to Mfuwe

We had a few hours in Dubai, giving everyone time to find a coffee and some breakfast, before our second flight to Lusaka, Zambia. We left a little late as we departed from a gate where we had to catch a bus. However, we arrived pretty much on time in Lusaka and after picking up our luggage, we walked as a group to the domestic terminal. It wasn't long before the group were checked in for our domestic flight. Once through security, we had a little time to relax before our flight was called and we were walking out onto the tarmac. Enjoying a smooth flight, we touched down in Mfuwe on a warm, dry evening.

Wildlife Worldwide guide Ben Sutcliffe was waiting for us all in arrivals with our two local guides, Malama and Jonathan. Once everyone had identified their bags, we loaded everything into the vehicles and drove the 45 minutes or so to Flatdogs Camp. Most of the journey was in the dark, with only glimpses of village life visible in the dim lights. We were soon welcomed by the wonderful team at Flatdogs and everyone was given an introduction to the camp, as well as some basic safety instructions.

Everyone ordered their dinner before we sat down for our first meal together as a group. With an early start tomorrow and a long journey, many of the group headed to their rooms for a very well-earned rest.

Monday 17 November 2025

Day 3:

South Luangwa National Park

The group met bright and early in the camp's dining area for a light breakfast, tea and coffee. Once we were all ready, water bottles filled and cameras at the ready, we climbed aboard the vehicles and set off to the park entrance. After registering our entry, we crossed the bridge over the Luangwa River. However, we didn't make it off the bridge before our first stop. Down beneath us, in the surprisingly full river, was a crocodile with beautiful light. Carrying on into the park proper, we turned off towards Mbangula Lagoon and came across a breeding herd of kudu, while the birdlife was already prolific. Lilac-breasted roller, southern ground hornbill, white-fronted bee-eater and Cape turtle dove all offered a great avian introduction to the park. After enjoying our first views of puku, impala, waterbuck, hippo and a lovely big bull elephant crossing the river, we heard about a potential sighting worth checking up on.

Arriving at the spot, we found three leopards. What an incredible start to our time in the Luangwa Valley. It was a leopard that Ben and I know very well, Lucy, with her two grown-up cubs. We enjoyed photographing Lucy as she sat on the ground and watched a group of impala intently. One of the two grown cubs was close by, while the other was a little further on. The positions of the boys weren't so productive for photography, but it is always amazing to see one leopard, let alone three.

With the mother sitting in the best position for photography, we focused our efforts on her and positioned our vehicles accordingly.

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Finding an active leopard, particularly in good light, is something that South Luangwa National Park has become synonymous with. It is important to state that these encounters still require an awful lot of luck.



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The thing that makes such a difference is the closest working relationship with our local guides. Together, we can help ensure that our vehicles are in the best position to capture breathtaking images of these stunning predators.



We watched Lucy and the cubs try and stalk the impala, but there was not enough cover and they were not in luck. Making the decision to leave the leopards in peace, particularly as the light was getting a little harsh now, we moved away towards Wamilombe, where we found a family of warthogs feeding on the fresh grass. The rains had come unseasonably early, and the bush was much greener than we would usually expect in mid-November.

Pulling up to the riverbank, it was time to take a break for tea and coffee, delighted with the remarkable start to our safari. We've been running this trip for seven years, but it's hard to beat a morning with three leopards and some exceptional photographic opportunities.

Slowly making our way back to camp, it was mainly birds that made an appearance, such as little sparrowhawk, fork-tailed drongo, grey hornbill and yellow-billed stork along the river. Both vehicles were soon back at camp, where the group settled down to enjoy brunch before heading back to their tents and chalets for a chance to catch up on a little sleep.

It was a warm and sunny afternoon, with everyone meeting up once more for afternoon tea. We were soon climbing aboard the vehicles once again and we quickly found one of the leopard boys close to where we had left them earlier. Having enjoyed such exceptional sightings of them earlier in the day, we made the decision not to linger, quickly moving away and leaving him in his resting place.

Heading back across the main road, passing by Mfuwe Lodge, we started to wind our way up towards Wafwa Lagoon. On our way, there was a plethora of birds and there was water where I had never seen it before at this time of year. It was really quite remarkable to have see so much standing water so early in the season – even for the local guides. Avian highlights this afternoon included a posing little sparrowhawk, a large

flock of trumpeter hornbills, a pied kingfisher and a goliath heron. Stopping for sundowners by the river, we enjoyed our first sunset over this incredible wilderness. One of the real highlights in South Luangwa is the ability to enjoy a night drive. As such, having packed up our drinks, we climbed back aboard the vehicles and spotted a large-spotted genet and a greater bush baby almost immediately. There was also a leopard trying to hunt, likely the grown cub we found in the afternoon. We turned our lights off, with the sky being illuminated by the lightning storm in the distance. In between one of these bright flashes, the leopard darted after the impala but there wasn't enough cover and the attempt ended in failure. Heading back towards the bridge and the park exit there were a couple of spotted hyena making their way along the road, while we spotted another leopard stalking puku off of the ramp (outside the park). Back at camp, everyone enjoyed another fabulous meal before retiring for the evening.

Tuesday 18 November 2025

Day 4:

South Luangwa National Park

We awoke to another calm morning in the valley, with the group meeting up in the dining area at 5.00 am for a light breakfast. By meeting earlier, we aimed to enter the park early, hopefully finding a subject before anyone else was on the scene, therefore maximising our photographic opportunities. Predators evaded us as we explored Mbangula, making our way towards the river. We had hoped to find the leopard family once again, but to no avail. Instead, we had to settle for the incredible sight of a southern carmine bee-eater colony. The group lined themselves up along the bank and fired away as birds soared by in acrobatic turns and dives, while others perched on branches above the water.



It takes a lot of perseverance to capture images of these truly stunning birds. Quite simply, they moved with such speed and agility that even the very best camera gear, combined with a skilled photographer, finds it tricky. However, as time went on, the clients captured some standout imagery of these sought-after birds.



Working our way back inland, away from the river, we enjoyed a number of new bird species such as spur-winged goose, brown-hooded kingfisher, bateleur and striated heron. There were some new mammals too with our first views of buffalo and zebra over by the airstrip. We found a lovely family herd of elephants on the main road, with a young female standing feeding right by the vehicle. There was also a Thornicroft's giraffe with a particularly young calf – quite an unusual sight in this area because of the large number of lions. Speaking of which, it wasn't long before we stumbled upon a trio of lions sitting by the main road. This was clearly a mating pair, with another male keeping a close eye on them both. It was quite late in the morning by now, and the light was already pretty harsh.



Once again, we decided to leave the big cats in peace, with limited photographic opportunities on offer. We had heard that another vehicle had seen a leopard with a baboon kill, but we were not able to find it as we made our way towards the exit. Within another 15 minutes, we were back in the comfort of camp, enjoying cold drinks on what was already a warm day.

Having enjoyed a rest during the heat of the day, we reconvened for an earlier afternoon tea. Once again, we wanted to be in the park before the majority of others were even thinking of leaving their lodges. Exploring the tracks over by the airstrip, we ended up crossing over the dry Mushilashi River. Here we found our first cooperative zebra. Feasting on the lush green grass that was bursting through the cracked ground.



The area also had a group of elephants, with one female sporting an impressive set of tusks, most likely around a metre long. There had been a sighting of lions further south, and we decided to head that way to see if we could find them. On our way, we came across a spotted hyena lying upside down in a ditch, while just round the corner, a Wahlberg's eagle sat in a nest, high in a tree. The ground here was covered in the white flowers of the spider lily, freshly emerged after the rains.

We didn't spend long admiring the flowers or the eagle on the nest, as we were close to where the lions had been spotted. Earlier in the day they had been sat by a waterhole, but they had now moved into cover and so we drove in search of our feline quarry. It was no easy task as the bush here is particularly thick, but the presence of another vehicle gave the game away. We turned up to find five lions snoozing. This is typically what lions do and it is actually unusual to see them being active. Unfortunately, the photography opportunities here were incredibly limited, with several of the lions slowly working their way deeper into cover.

One of our vehicles had slightly better views than the other, but it was by no means the finest lion encounter in South Luangwa National Park. We'd have to hope that the lions would be more cooperative in the coming days. For now though, we moved back towards the river and to enjoy sundowners at the southern reaches of Wakumba. There was a large troop of baboons here and hippos yawning in the backlit water.



After the sun had set, we set off for camp with the spotlights on. Almost immediately, we spotted a young leopard sitting out in the open. It seemed rather unperturbed by our presence, but it started to move in the opposite direction which we were heading. As such, we moved on back towards camp and it was along the main road we had brief views of genet, bushy-tailed and white-tailed mongooses, while one of our vehicles spotted a chameleon.

It had been another busy day, filled with cats and plenty of other wild delights, with a wonderful dinner to finish things off. Suitably fed, the group slowly headed to bed, just as a light rain started to fall. Our plan was to head out in the morning, once more.

Wednesday 19 November 2025

Day 5:

South Luangwa National Park

The rain never really came, but we awoke to a gloomy, overcast morning. As we finished up our early breakfast, drank up our teas and coffees, the light started to improve. Having entered the park, we made our way along the main road towards the shallow lagoon out the front of Mfuwe Lodge. Here we enjoyed some wonderful views of the resident troop of yellow baboons, as the males stood on guard, the females were busy feeding and the youngsters were up to all sorts of mischief.

One of the things that makes South Luangwa National Park so special is the sheer diversity of wildlife. From a photographer's perspective, this is equally rewarding as there are so many subjects to focus on. The yellow baboons, in particular, are always a delight and one of the species that provide memorable encounters – even for those that have been here many times before.



The early rains had led to a profusion of blooms of spider lilies, while also bringing out some species that you simply wouldn't see earlier in the season, such as the water monitors and even a serrated-hinged terrapin.



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There were some new birds seen on this morning's safari, with Meyer's parrot, white-backed vulture and black-crowned tchagra all on show. The mating lions weren't too far along the main road and as we arrived at the spot, they had clearly just stopped the latest mating session.



We were trying to decide what to lion to focus on, and try and predict which way they may move, when we got news of another spotted cat that may be of interest. With the lions taking it easy, we took a gamble and headed down the road in search of the other felid.

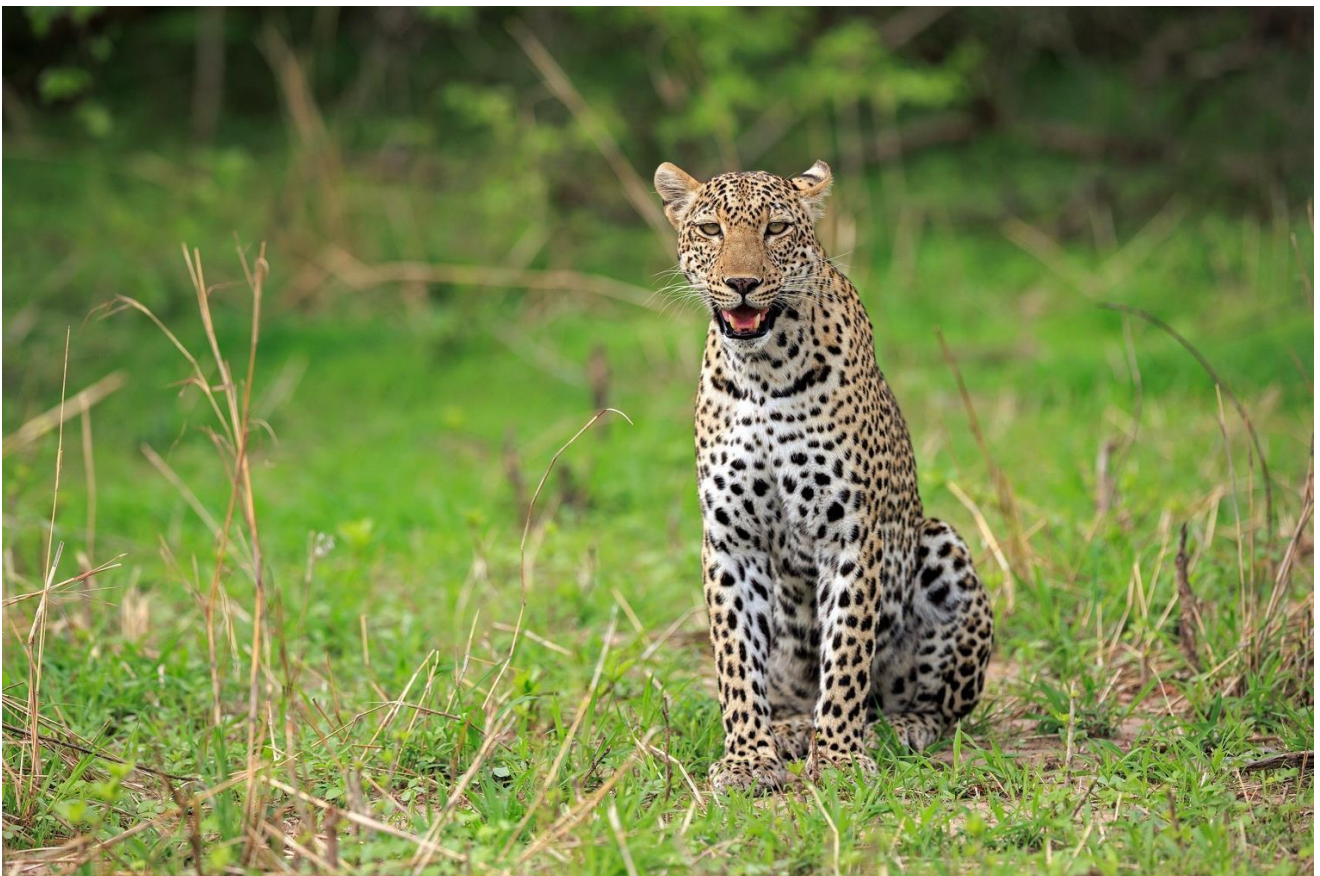


It looked as if we were too late to start with, having to take a detour around a flooded section of road, but suddenly, she appeared on the road in front of us. A beautiful female leopard, closely followed by a cub. What luck! Our timing was impeccable and we were rewarded as the mother walked out across the road, right in front of one of the vehicles. No matter how many leopards you see, you never lose that thrill of seeing such a beautiful big cat. It is even better when they put on such a good show and you're rewarded with exceptional images. Cameras fired busily, while the

leopards seemed almost unaware (at least they were not concerned) of our presence.



We were lucky to enjoy particularly good views of the cub as it came through the thick undergrowth and darted across the road right in front of us.



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It really was a very special encounter and something few safari goers get to enjoy. Our leopard luck thus far had been truly exceptional. The mother headed off to one side, where a large giraffe stood, seemingly on the hunt. We heard impala alarms and it was clear she had been spotted. All the while, the giraffe clearly had eyes on her and one of our vehicles waited to see whether she might re-emerge. Alas, on this occasion she stayed hidden from view and we made the decision to move on for morning tea and coffee.

There was, of course, a number of birds around this morning, including saddle-billed stork, black-headed heron, long-crested eagle, martial eagle, black-winged stilt and tropical boubou. The temperature had started to rise as we made our way back across the bridge and turned down the driveway to Flatdogs. Upon our arrival, cold towels were waiting for us and we enjoyed another fabulous brunch.

The day remained overcast, with the group all raring to go for another drive post-afternoon tea. As we pulled up to the main road, still on the Flatdogs 'driveway' we encountered a family of banded mongooses, while from the bridge over the river, we saw our first giant kingfisher of the trip. There were plenty of birds around this afternoon, with African openbill, African fish eagle, purple-crested turaco, dwarf bittern and red-billed firefinch all proving to be popular as we made our way to where we left the lions this morning. There was now only one male lion in the area, but the light was dull and the photography was uninspiring. Instead, we drove to a hippo pool which proved to be a photographic extravaganza. We parked up right by the water's edge and photographed these huge mammals as they yawned.



After everyone had their fill with hippos, we moved to a spot nearby for sundowners before going back to find the male lion. He was up and about as the light level continued to drop, but it was still limited when it came to capturing striking imagery. One vehicle did enjoy a particularly close approach though as the male walked right up to their vehicle, before moving alongside and around the back. The rest of the night drive was fairly quiet, with a few genets spotted and a brief view of a spotted hyena. There was a big storm on the horizon, and this was likely the reason for the relative lack of activity. We returned to camp for, as I'm sure you will now realise, yet another delicious dinner.

Thursday 20 November 2025

Day 6:

South Luangwa National Park

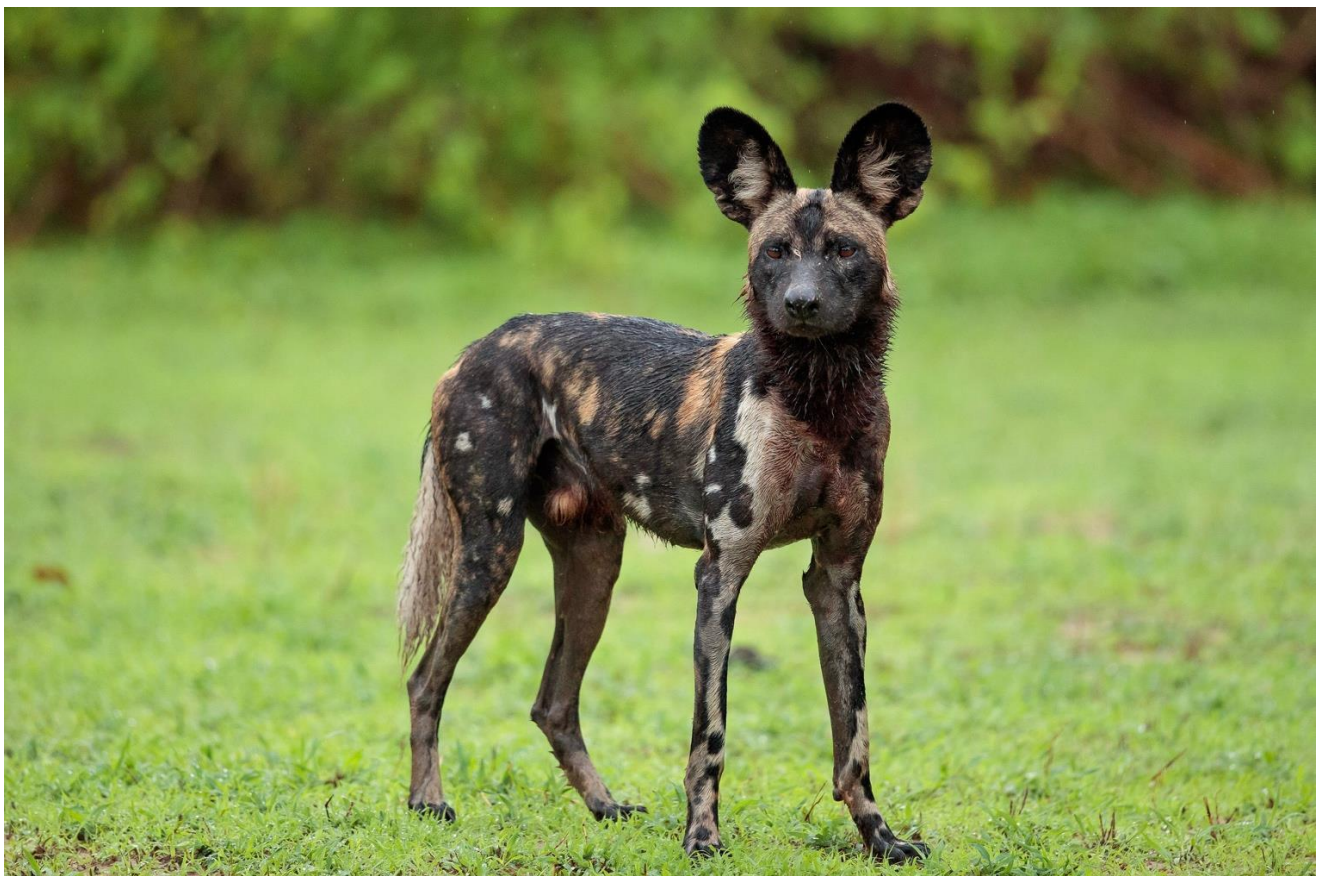
We awoke this morning to a sodden world. Huge thunderstorms rolled in overnight and the heavens opened. The sound of the thunder and the rain was exceptionally loud. The heavy rain would make some areas of the park inaccessible and so we would likely have to keep to the all-weather roads.

Crossing over the bridge, heavy, low clouds hung in the air. There were plenty of hyena tracks all over the road as we entered the park. However, it was a western banded snake eagle and an African fish eagle that caught our attention to start with.

The park had well and truly come to life. There was standing water everywhere, the grass was growing ever longer with the herbivores were loving life. Zebra, puku and impala abounded all around as we continued along the park's main road. An unexpected mammal made an appearance, with several four-toed elephant shrews feeding in the bushes. A little further down the main road, Malama spotted some lion tracks on the road and we stopped to take a look. I looked down on the other side of the vehicle and realised I was looking at a different set of tracks – these belonged to a pack of African wild dogs.

Following the tracks down the road, they suddenly veered off to one side and disappeared into an area we couldn't follow. All of a sudden, there was a flurry of activity and there were the dogs. They crossed the open area where we had seen the mating lions the day before. The adults dashed by first, quickly followed by the 10 pups. It turned out that we had joined the pack just as they started to hunt. In the distance, we could see impala running.

We turned the vehicle around and dashed down the main road, turning off at a junction where we hoped the pack might appear. Malama's intuition was spot on; the pups appeared right in front of us with a couple of adults keeping an eye on them. Then there was a contact whistle and the dogs were on the move again.



Our guides were so quick to react and we were all able to enjoy some truly remarkable photography of the pack as an adult brought an impala calf to feed the pups.



What unfolded before our eyes was utterly breathtaking. When things happen with African wild dogs, they happen fast. Once the kill had been delivered, the pups started to feast on the carcass, ripping it apart right in front of our vehicles. The whole process looks chaotic, but the adults will always ensure that the pups eat first, going hungry themselves to ensure their young have the best chance possible to reach adulthood. This is no mean feat for dogs as the pups are preyed upon by lion and hyena alike.



After the initial feeding frenzy, the pups disappeared, leaving one individual alone with the carcass above the ribs. Undeterred, it carried on feeding without its siblings. The others likely thought that the adults had made another kill, leaving the original meal for a greater prize. As it turned out, the adults hadn't got another kill and so they quickly returned to devour what was left of the impala.

Within 30 seconds or so, there was nothing left except for the front legs, a little bit of the spine and the head. This, as it turned out, ended up being a great plaything for the youngsters that

lingered, while others moved off to find the adults once again.



One of the most memorable moments was when two pups decided to play tug of war with these remnants.



With several vehicles now in the area, both vehicles made the decision to leave the pack to hunt again. What we had already witnessed was a moment that is rarely seen, even by the guides who are in the park every day. Driving across the Mushilashi Bridge, we enjoyed some red velvet mites at morning tea, while there was plenty of birdlife such as saddle-billed storks, yellow-billed kite and crowned lapwing.

It was while we were enjoying our morning tea that the guides heard that the dogs had made another kill, but before they could eat it, a male lion had stolen it. And so, with that information, both vehicles set off to find the lion. Instead, we found the other male resting on the road, which posed perfectly for some photographs.



The other male had indeed stolen the kill, but he was in the thick vegetation and not cooperative from a photography point of view. After another action-packed morning, it was time to wind our way back to the park entrance and drive the short distance to Flatdogs.

There were spots of rain throughout the day, but it never got heavy and so we headed out again in the afternoon. The overnight rain had made many of the tracks impassable and as such, we were still limited as to where we could explore this afternoon. At Mbangula, there was a small group of impala with wonderful reflections in a freshly formed pool. All of these water bodies were now likely to be home to crocodiles. It is, therefore little surprise that many species are nervous around water and don't linger. This was exactly how the impala behaved and so we didn't manage to get the pictures we had hoped for.

It was, however, a bit of a birding bonanza. The heavy rains make the lush greens of plant life seemingly glow, providing exquisite contrast to the many birds' plumage. Sometimes it is these drives, where the bigger species take a back seat, and instead we focus on the avifauna that calls the landscape home during the green season.



It was a very overcast afternoon and there was no real sunset to mention for our sundowners, but it's a fabulous time to enjoy a gin and tonic and reminisce on yet another memorable day. On our night drive, it seemed that the wildlife wanted to stay out of sight, with a solitary white-tailed mongoose and large-spotted genet, alongside a chameleon making an appearance.

Friday 21 November 2025

Day 7:

South Luangwa National Park

We awoke to another overcast morning, having had more heavy rain overnight. Once Malama and Jonathan had joined us for our early breakfast, everyone had finished their teas and coffees, it was time to hop on the vehicles and see what South Luangwa had in store for us. We started off with some cheeky baboons on the bridge, alongside a lone hyena which was crossing back into the park.

The bird life today was even more impressive than the previous few days on safari, with a pair of Verreaux's (giant) eagle owl in a wild mango tree an undoubted highlight. They were not in the best spot for standout imagery, but it's always amazing to see these huge birds. The male lion was still by the impala carcass stolen from the wild dogs, but as such it was not going to make any memorable imagery. We did get a particularly cooperative



African fish eagle on a dead tree, though, which posed for a prolonged period.

Continuing south down the main road, we turned off at the Lupunga Spur, where a pair of saddle-billed storks were dancing with joy. Meanwhile, a mother elephant with a tiny calf crossed the road in front of us a little further down the road. A couple of notable bird species included paradise flycatcher, malachite kingfisher and yellow-throated canary. It was unbelievable to see the extent of the flood waters around the

park, with both the Katete and Mushilashi Rivers having flowed over the past couple of days. This is not something that usually happens at this time of year.

After enjoying morning tea and coffee, we drove northwards once again. One of the clients spotted a very handsome male kudu, with a huge set of horns, but it was seeing the water starting to flow down the Mushilashi River that was particularly memorable. This ephemeral river usually only flows during the height of the green season, so to see the waters flowing forward across a dry riverbed was something I will never forget. There was one more surprise in store. With the cloud cover overhead thinning, the temperature was now rising and a rock monitor made an appearance by the roadside. These large reptiles are stockier than their water monitor cousins, and not so common along the floodplain.

During the middle of the day, the sun started to pierce the clouds periodically and it was much brighter by the time afternoon tea was served. As our vehicles rolled into the area around Mbangula Lagoon, impalas were alarming. Working our way up and down the track, we tried to find what might be causing the alarm, but to no avail. There was nothing obvious and it seemed to be a false alarm. Instead, we found a large hippo enjoying the fresh grass growth that was now covering much of the landscape of the floodplain.

It was in this area that we found a herd of zebra with a foal. This foal proved to be an absolute delight. It was galloping around at high speed. It was loving life and made for a wonderful photographic subject, particularly when it decided to jump up in play against its mother's side. Such a charming sight.



Once the foal had calmed down, we turned back on the main road and came across a huge group of banded mongooses. They were a little too far away, but they are always fun to watch as they scurry around in search of food, always chattering with one another. As the mongooses headed to cover, we turned off the main road, up towards Wafwa Lagoon. Scimitarbill, green wood hoopoes and black-winged stilts were some new species of birds for the group to enjoy, while there were also some cheeky yellow baboons playing by the roadside.

The road past Wafwa had washed away after the heavy rains and the hippo channel we usually cross was filled with a raging torrent of water. A crocodile had been sitting in these rapids, waiting for anything to be washed into its reach. Meanwhile, the sun was setting across the river as the group enjoyed their sundowner drinks.

With the light fading, the spotlights were readied and so we set off for another night drive. It was an evening where scrub hares, which had yet to make an appearance, were absolutely everywhere. There was no point in keeping count, but a few genets also showed themselves, while a bushy-tailed mongoose also made a brief appearance. This was a night to remember though, as Ben spotted his first chameleon, while our other vehicle had a particularly close encounter with a curious young hyena. After a very different day, we were soon back at the lodge and enjoying another delicious meal.

Saturday 22 November 2025

Day 8:

South Luangwa National Park

There was a little light rain overnight, but nothing to worry about and despite an overcast sky this morning, we were looking forward to our final full day exploring the park. As we turned onto the main road, we noticed that puku and impala were staring at a bush right by the camp's drive. Baboons were also alarming from the trees ahead, so it was likely that a leopard was using the bushes as cover. We waited to see if we could catch a glimpse, but the leopard would likely stay put until it knew we were out of sight. The baboons were at their usual spot on the bridge and we were able to capture some great portraits as they walked along the railings.



Continuing on down the main road, there were a number of giraffe surrounded by the lush foliage of the trees and shrubs.



It was another exceptional morning for birds and the smaller mammals with notable highlights including lanner falcon, grey-backed camaroptera and pearl-spotted owlet for the birds and warthog, banded and slender mongooses for the mammals.

A leopard was also seen in some very thick vegetation, but compared to what we had on previous days, this sighting was not one to remember. We had been incredibly spoiled at the start of the week, but since the rain, the cat activity had reduced slightly (this is very common with big cats). We stopped at a beautiful spot by Lake Mbangula for our morning tea, where a great-spotted cuckoo was sitting on the ground. Exploring the area of the riverbank opposite Flatdogs, we found a large crocodile walking across the open, highlighting how these large predators are prepared to leave the main river in search of a meal.



The cloud cover burnt off as the morning went on, and during the middle of the day, there were sunny spells. The temperature was rising once again, meaning many crocodiles were emerging from the waters of the river and lagoons, warming themselves on the banks. After crossing the bridge, we worked our way along the main road, with a Jacobin cuckoo popping up onto a branch, while a large crocodile was sat by the muddy, shallow lagoon by Mfuwe Lodge. Having endured a few cooler days, the crocodiles were likely happy to have the warming

rays of the sunshine once again. Over near Big Baobab, one of the male lions was still hanging around, not too far from the impala kill stolen from the dogs. He was fast asleep and the group were not keen on staying with him as he sat there motionless in the warm afternoon sun.

The guides had planned for us to enjoy a sundowners at Womilombe, but we went via Mushilashi where a huge bull elephant walked right in front of one of the vehicles. The sun was starting to retreat behind the trees, and the light was stunning. We were hoping to find Lucy and her cubs around Womilombe, with the sun setting across the river. Instead, we found an open plain lit by golden light, with puku busy grazing on the lush green grass.



We sat in our vehicles photographing the antelope in this magnificent light. It was as we were finishing up that I noticed a group of blacksmith and white-crowned lapwings stood in front of a pool, providing the most wonderful silhouettes.



We enjoyed a fabulous final sundowners, with the soft, golden hues illuminating the waters of the Luangwa River. It was then that we climbed back aboard the vehicles and enjoyed a shorter night drive than usual back to Flatdogs. Tonight the camp had kindly set up special drinks in the comfort of the bar area and we had an excellent final night's celebration with the whole group. As usual, the dinner was fantastic, but everyone was a little sad that we only had one last drive in the morning.

Sunday 23 November 2025

Day 9:

South Luangwa National Park

This morning was our last in South Luangwa and we were hoping for a finale to remember. We set off into the park, nice and early as usual, waiting to see what the morning had in store for us. This morning was an avian bonanza, with an intention to visit the carmine bee-eater colony we spent time at earlier in the week. There was a large hippo resting in a pool that had formed after the heavy rains.



However, it was amazing just how many birds we saw this morning, including many familiar species such as Cape turtle dove, hadeda, African pied wagtail, red-necked spurfowl and water thick knee. However, we saw a few species which are not seen as frequently such as, hobby and combed duck. By the time we reached the carmine bee-eater colony, we discovered that they were not overly cooperative. Despite waiting around, they wouldn't return to their nesting holes and so we decided to leave them in peace. Instead, we found a lovely group of giraffes with a couple of youngsters, all of which were very cooperative and made for some charming imagery.



We headed down to an area along the riverbank to spend some time with a pod of hippos. It was wonderful to watch the hippos as they jostled for position in the water, with individuals resting on top of one another. There was the occasional fight, but for the most part (with the river waters exceptionally high for this time of year), it was a peaceful scene and made for some heart-warming photography.



It was here that we heard about a potential leopard sighting, just a little way away from us. Lucy and the nearly fully-grown cubs had been seen by the 'roundabout', and so we made our way to see if we could get one last glimpse of these magnificent cats. As we arrived, there were several other cars around, but none of them currently had a view of the family. When we stopped, we almost immediately noticed one of the young males sat in a bush right by the track.

It was then that we realised that the sibling was slightly further down the slope. The mother must have been further in the thicket, but at that time she was out of sight. We waited to see if the brothers emerged, but they seemed intent on staying hidden. Suddenly, there was movement and we could see Lucy moving towards the other side. We headed into position, but unfortunately a self-driving vehicle rather ruined the

sighting by driving far too close to her. She soon disappeared into an area where we could not follow. We thought the sighting might be over and that lady luck wasn't with us today. However, one of the young males decided to follow and came out into a more open area.

Working closely with the guides, we got our vehicles into position as the cub emerged from the undergrowth and walked across the open grasslands of Womilombe. We couldn't have asked for a better finale. Although the sighting was a little more distant than we might have preferred, you can't complain when you have a leopard out in the open. It was all about capturing this predator in a stunning landscape – sometimes it's worth zooming out and capturing the environment.



The icing on the cake was when he paused for a brief moment, looking back towards where we were sitting. It is these moments that make a visit to South Luangwa National Park a must.



We headed across to Mbangula where we stopped for morning tea, where a great spotted cuckoo made an appearance and long-tailed starlings flitted about in the trees above. Sadly, it was time to head back to Flatdogs for the last time, but we stopped to photograph the yellow baboons just before crossing the bridge and leaving the park.



What a wonderful last morning in the park. We were soon across the river and back for brunch at Flatdogs. Some of the group had to check out by 11.30 am, while some others had their rooms until 2 pm. We were all able to make use of the fantastic facilities of the camp, with the swimming pool, restaurant and shower block all open to us until we left later in the day. At around 4.30 pm, we had everyone's bags loaded into the vehicles and we started the 45-minute drive to Mfuwe Airport. On the way, one of the vehicles had a large grey mongoose run out in front of them. This species is one that is rarely seen in the park. They seem to prefer the agricultural landscape to the east of the park, where there is an absence of large predators.

Find out more about our [South Luangwa Photo Safari](#) trip or [contact us](#)
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Once everyone had arrived at the airport, we had the luggage unloaded and checked everyone in for our flight to Lusaka. We left on time, arriving in Lusaka with plenty of time before our flight back to the UK (via Dubai). Walking across from the domestic terminal to the international was straightforward. Within ten minutes, the group were all checked in for our flight, and we were soon through immigration, waiting in the lounge before boarding.

Monday 24 November 2025

Day 10:

Arrive UK

Our journey home was smooth, and our transit through Dubai all went to plan. We arrived at Heathrow on time and were able to quickly make our way through immigration and met up in the luggage hall. Our bags arrived surprisingly quickly. It was then that we said our goodbyes. What a fabulous trip and a wonderful group of people.

We look forward to welcoming a new group of people back to South Luangwa in 2026.

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