

TRACKS SAFARIS

WE GET YOU CLOSER



LIUWA PLAIN WITH ROBIN POPE



Liuwa Plain National Park is situated in a remote section of Western Zambia. Few people have ventured into the Liuwa Plain due to its relative inaccessibility. However the prolific birdlife, vast open grasslands and wildebeest migration make it one of Africa's last true wildernesses and a huge attraction to the bush fundi.

This vast open plain lies west of the Zambezi River, on the Angolan Border. This is an extremely difficult area to access and few people have been there. Robin used to lead expeditions there in the 1990s and has recently started operating in the area again. This is a unique opportunity to visit this isolated and rarely visited national park. The safaris are 4 or 5 nights, starting with a charter from Lusaka of 2+ hours to Kalabo. You will be met by Robin and his team and drive the two or so hours onto the plain and to camp.

The plain is home to around 30,000 blue wildebeest, herds of zebra, red lechwe, oribi, steinbuck and more. The predominant predator is the hyena who competes with the wild dog and occasional cheetah. Lions used to be common but there is now a reintroduction program in place. The birding is always a highlight and the many water species inhabit the many water filled pans.

We visit during two periods. November and December are the start of the rains with big storms passing through and when the wildebeest drop their young, the migrant birds arrive and flowers bloom

everywhere. But by mid-December it is inaccessible and the floods move in and we have moved out. The earliest you can drive back in is early May when the pans are full, the birds are everywhere and the game is looking sleek fat and happy! This is a wonderful time to visit with clear blue skies - you feel you can run forever across the plain!

During December there will be dramatic skies with fantastic cloud build up and amazing electrical storms that pass through. This time of year blue wildebeest migrate from Angola, and can be viewed in their thousands, often mingling with zebra and tsessebe. The plains come alive with many flowers covering the ground.

In May and June the rains have gone, but there is plenty of water remaining in the depressions providing water for all the inhabitants. Liuwa Plains is home to many antelope species that are rare in other locations such as roan, red lechwe, steinbuck, oribi and duiker. Africa Parks has recently re-introduced eland and buffalo and their numbers are expected to increase. The area is famous for its abundant birdlife as a mix of plains and woodland allow a larger diversity of species. More unusual species include pink throated longclaw, sooty chat, black winged pratincoles and wattled cranes. The rolling grasslands and diversity give rise to many superb photographic opportunities.

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DAY 1 – LIUWA PLAIN CAMP

From Lusaka, taking off around 0800 hours, the charter flight to Kalabo will take between 1.5 and 2.5 hours depending on the aircraft. The first half of the flight is over the extensive Kafue River flats - with water, reed and channels as far as the eye can see. After flying over the Iteshi Iteshi dam the landscape changes to sandveldt bush. Then you will see Mongu to the left and the Zambezi River and its surrounding flood plain. Kalabo is a further 10 minutes.

You will be met by Robin or the guide and driven to the pontoon to cross the Luanginga River. The harbour seems to be the centre of this remote town and there is plenty of activity to watch. The drive to camp is two hours, firstly through woodland on sandy roads and then out onto the open plain. The game and birds will start to slow you down! You will arrive in camp for a late lunch.

After settling in, lunch and a rest the afternoon drive will take you out onto the plains. There will be a host of birds and wildlife to see. Sunset will be out on the plains, with a well earned beer or G&T and then you will head back to camp for showers, the campfire and dinner.



DAY 2 – 5 (OR 4 FOR 5 NIGHT SAFARIS) – LIUWA PLAIN CAMP

Exploring the plains and woodlands will be an amazing experience. Robin or his guide will take you out and with them you can either walk or drive. There are lagoons and waterholes, literally filled with birds to walk around. There are miles of open plains to drive through, finding the host of wildlife. The pattern of the days

will vary but will be based around an early start with a light breakfast, returning for an early lunch. A siesta before afternoon tea and the afternoon drive. A sundowner out on the plains and then returning at dark to camp.



DAY 6 (OR 5 FOR 4 NIGHT SAFARIS)

December safaris - leave camp around 0730 for the 2 hour drive back to Kalabo. Charter flight back to Lusaka arriving around midday. This is in time for the Mfuwe afternoon flight.



May - June safaris - Up early and leave camp by 0530 for the two hour drive back to Kalabo. Board the awaiting swamp cruiser boat for a 3 hour boat ride to Mongu. This will be through the magical water world of the flooded Zambezi and you will see many birds and even stork colonies.

At Mongu you will be met at the harbour, transferred to the airport where your charter flight will be waiting for you. The flight will arrive in Lusaka around 1330-1400. This is in time for the Mfuwe afternoon flight. You can extend your safari with a few days in the South Luangwa National Park, Kafue National Park, the Lower Zambezi National Park or Livingstone.

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