

Zimbabwe: Big Game and Predators

- Join an Anti-poaching unit on patrol in the Zambezi National Park
- Track Wild Dogs in the company of a Wild Dog expert
- Track rhinos and elephants on foot
- See the mighty *Smoke that Thunders*, Victoria Falls



Summary

Zimbabwe offers some of the best game viewing in Africa and after a difficult decade is making a big comeback. This week-long, small group, trip will have you exploring one of Zimbabwe's great wilderness areas in 4WD vehicle and on foot; tracking rare animals such as Black Rhinos, Wild Dogs and Roan and Sable Antelopes; joining an anti-poaching unit on patrol; visiting a Wild Dog rehabilitation centre; and seeing the mighty Victoria Falls, one of the biggest waterfalls in the world.

Overview



This trip takes you on Safari through Hwange National Park. With an area of some 14,000 km² this wildlife reserve is the largest in Zimbabwe and one of the largest in Southern Africa. Starting with the more remote Sinamatella region in the North you will then journey to the Main Camp region of the South East of the Park.



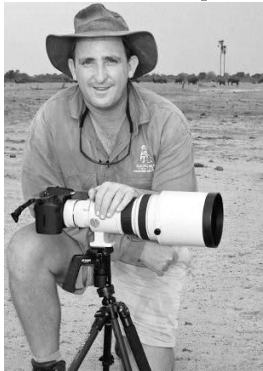
You will explore the park by 4WD vehicle and on foot and, when the opportunity arises, may find yourself tracking endangered Black Rhinos, watching dozens of elephants at a watering hole, looking for the rare Sable and Roan Antelopes in the tall grass or even observing one of the parks predators stalking its prey.



You will also get to learn about the plight of one of Africa's lesser known predators, the African Wild Dog (also known as Painted Dog). Zimbabwe has one of the largest populations of Wild Dogs, one the world's most endangered canines. As well as looking for these animals in Hwange itself you will visit the Wild Dog Rehabilitation Centre which works hard towards the protection and rehabilitation of individual members and of the species as a whole.

Finally you will spend two days at Victoria Falls where you will have the opportunity to see the '*Smoke that Thunders*', the Victoria Falls themselves, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Natural Wonder. You will also spend half a day accompanying a member of the Victoria Falls Anti Poaching unit on patrol in Zambezi National Park and experience firsthand the hard work done by this organisation.

Your experts



David Carson

David, AKA Bushdog, was born in Zimbabwe and grew up in Bulawayo the second largest city. After school he was lucky enough to find his chosen profession by chance and embarked on becoming a Professional Guide. After four years of the most rigours wilderness guide training in Africa David became an expert in various fields from zoology to botony, ornithology to entomology and current world affairs to tracking wild animals.

David is at his happiest guiding safaris in remotes part of the African Bush which he considers his backyard. His passion for getting out on foot is in insatiable and be warned if the Rhino track is fresh take a lot of water, you could be out a while!



Charles Brightman

Charles is a Zimbabwean born local operator, conservationist and safari guide with over 23 years in the industry. In 1999, along with the Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, Charles estanlished the Victoria Falls Anti Poaching Unit, a non-profit organisation which works closely with the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and the Republic Police to patrol and protect an area within four kilometers of the Victoria Falls.



Greg Rasmussen

Greg was born in the UK but moved to Zimbabwe at a young age. He started monitoring wildlife in Hwange National Park in the late '80s and became particularly concerned with the plight of the Painted Dog. In 2002 he set up the Painted Dog Conservancy for which he is a director. In 2003 Greg was in a light aircraft accident whisl't tracking Rhinos in a remote part of Hwange which left him stranded with broken legs and suffering dehydration for over 24hrs until he found and rescued.

Itinerary



Day 1: Victoria Falls – Hwange National Park (Sinamatella)

This morning you will be picked up at Victoria Falls Airport and driven to the Sinamatella area of Hwange National Park (aprox. 1hr). Here you will meet your guide and transfer to a safari vehicle before entering further into Hwange National Park.

En route to the camp, deep within the lesser visited Sinamatella region, you will stop for a picnic near one of the water holes and will be on the lookout for game the whole time. After arriving at camp and acquainting yourself with the facilities you will, time permitting, head out on a late afternoon game drive. This evening you can sit around the camp-fire and really soak in the wilderness you are in.



Hwange National Park, which is divided into Sinamatella in the north, Robins in the south and Main Camp in the southeast, is similar in size to Northern Island. The landscape shifts and transforms itself from the sands of the Kalahari in the South to rocky hilly country in the North. This is home to over 35,000 elephants which dominate all the water holes during the dry season. Also present are lions, leopards, cheetahs, rhinos, buffalos, impalas, kudus, sables, elands, waterbucks, zebras, giraffes, wild dogs, baboons and warthogs, not to mention some 400 species of birds.

Overnight at Sinamatella Bush-Camp. (L, D)



Day 2 and 3: Hwange National Park (Sinamatella)

The next two days will be spent exploring the Sinamatella area by vehicle or on foot. Starting the day early with a light breakfast you will then head off in the safari vehicles, on foot, or a combination of both depending on what was heard during the night. Among the likely highlights are tracking black rhino on foot or finding yourself amongst a herd of elephants.

Overnight at Sinamatella Bush-Camp (B, L, D)



Day 4: Hwange National Park (Main Camp)

Today will be another early start as you cross the park heading towards Main Camp. You will be on the lookout for game along the way and visit a number of water-holes. Time permitting you will have a late-afternoon game-walk or game-drive after arriving at your camp for the next two nights.

Overnight at Main Camp Bush-Camp (B,L,D)



Day 5: Hwange National Park (Main Camp – Wild Dog Tracking)

Today you will head out in the company of Greg Rasmussen, the director of the Painted Dog Conservation, to track Wild Dogs and learn more about this highly sociable animal. You will also explore the Main Camp area with its numerous water-holes and acacia woodlands. There is always a large variety of animals that come down to the water-holes and this is a good place to see Sable antelopes. You may have the opportunity to track other animals such as wild dogs.

Overnight at Main Camp Bush-Camp (B,L,D)



Day 6: Wild Dog Rehabilitation Centre – Victoria Falls

Upon leaving Hwange National Park, this morning, you will visit the Wild Dog rehabilitation Centre. The centre was built as part of the National Conservation Strategy for wild dogs. Its aim is to care for injured and orphaned wild dogs (also known as painted dogs) with the aim of releasing them into the wild and back into their packs



when they are fully recovered.

The visit starts with an introduction to the work done by the Painted Dog Conservation (PDC) and the Rehabilitation Centre. You will then be taken to see the dogs and learn more about the individual dogs and the process of caring for the dogs and, ultimately, re-releasing them into the wild.

After visiting the centre you will return to Victoria Falls Town and be dropped off at the Victoria Falls Hotel. The rest of the day is free to go and see the Falls themselves (a short walking distance from your hotel), have high-tea in the gardens of the hotel, visit the local crafts market or enjoy various other activities.

Overnight at the Victoria Falls Hotel (B)



Day 7: Victoria Falls (Zambezi National Park with the Anti Poaching Unit)

This morning you will be picked up from your hotel at 6h30 and taken to the Zamezi National Park with the Victoria Falls Anti Poaching Unit (VFAPU). You will learn about the work done by the VFAPU, the history of the unit, the many fascinating aspects involved in its operation and its challenges and successes.

You will then join a member of the unit in the field keeping a record of game sightings, identifying spoor, patrolling and sweeping for snares and generally investigating sites for signs of poaching.

This afternoon is another free afternoon.

Overnight at the Victoria Falls Hotel (B)



Day 8: Tour ends/ Extensions

Today is the last day of the tour. You will be transferred to Victoria Falls airport to catch your flight home or you can extend your stay in Victoria Falls or elsewhere.

(B)

Pre and Post Tour Extensions:

Zimbabwe, and Southern Africa in general, offer a wide variety of stunning and diverse destinations if you want to extend your trip. Here are just some suggestions.

Victoria Falls: You could extend your time in Victoria Falls and take part in the numerous activities on offer here such as white-water rafting, bungee jumping, micro-lighting or taking a helicopter ride to name a few.

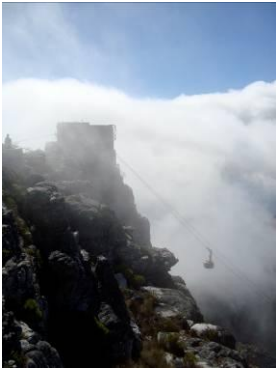
Mana Pools National Park: Along the lower Zambezi in the North East of Zimbabwe, the river flows in and out of a number of pools which form Mana Pools National Park. This area offers more great wildlife viewing and the opportunity to view game on foot and from a canoe contrasting from the dryer Hwange National Park.

Matopos National Park: In central Zimbabwe is a region of hills, caves, crannies and unusual rock formation. These form the Matopos National Park. As well as the enigmatic boulders, and rich wildlife this is also the final resting place of Cecil Rhodes, explorer and coloniser of Southern Africa.

Chobe National Park (Botswana): Not far from Victoria Falls is one of Southern Africa's most popular parks and one of the best places to view Elephant, in particular from boat safaris along the river. Chobe National Park is just across the border in Botswana and can be easily added to your Hwange and Victoria Falls trip. You can also continue deeper into Botswana and visit the world's largest inland delta – the **Okovango Delta**.

Cape Town (South Africa): It is quite easy to fly from Victoria Falls to Cape Town and





make a stop-over for a few days before returning to the UK. Cape Town is a vibrant city with numerous landmarks including Table Mountain, Robin Island and the Victoria and Albert Waterfront. From here you can also explore wineries, go to Cape Point or explore more of S. Africa.



Dates

24 September – 1 October 2011
9 June – 16 June 2012
8 September – 15 September 2012

Please note: If these dates do not suite you we can also arrange a trip to Zimbabwe on a tailor made basis at any time.

Main tour cost

2011 Price: From £2125* per person in twin-share accommodation excluding international flights.

2012 Price: From £2235** per person in twin-share accommodation excluding international flights.

** This price is based on a minimum of 4 people travelling*

***2012 prices are subject to change*

Single Supplements

If you are happy to share accommodation with a fellow traveller of the same sex then you will not be charged a single supplement for your holiday. This is of course dependent on there being another same sex traveller on the trip who is also wanting to share. If we cannot find a partner with whom you can share then unfortunately we will be left with no choice but to pass on the single supplement, imposed by the properties we are using. We will endeavour to keep this supplement to a minimum. Naturally should you wish to have a single room then this is possible by simply opting to pay the single supplement as per the itinerary

Includes

All transfers, all accommodation (semi-luxury camping in Hwange, Victoria Falls Hotel in Victoria Falls), meals as per the itinerary including wine and beer with dinner, the services of guides, drivers and a facilitator (in Victoria Falls), donations to the Painted Dog Conservancy, Victoria Falls Anti-Poaching Unit and Friends of Hwange and entrance to Hwange and Zambezi national parks.

Excludes

International flights, visas, optional excursions and extensions, spirits and gratuities.

Travelling from outside the UK

We are happy to give you quotes in either USDollars or Euros. Please contact us for more details.

Group Size

Max: 8 passengers.

Please Note:

****Exchange rates correct at time of printing. We maintain the right to confirm the price at time of booking with the up-to-date exchange rate****

Important information

Accommodation in Hwange NP:

The accommodation in Hwange is based on semi-luxury camping. The tents used are 3m² walk-in tents with mosquito proofing and sewn-in ground sheets. They are equipped with stretcher beds, foam mattresses, pillows, sheets and blankets. There is also a shower and toilet per every 4 guests. There are two staff members at hand to set up and breakdown the camps and guests are not required to help with these chores.



Accommodation in Victoria Falls:

This beautiful hotel is popularly known as “the grand old lady of the falls” and is situated in the Victoria Falls National Park, a world heritage site. An atmosphere steeped in history, combining the charm of the old with the comfort and convenience of today. It is one hotel that can truly claim to be unique. Breakfast and dinner buffets with Makishi dancers and an indigenous choir entertaining every night. Traditional high tea is served every afternoon on the Terrace, with spectacular views of the Victoria Falls bridge down the Batoka Gorge with the spray rising from The Falls. The hotel also has a private path leading to the falls themselves.



Weather in country

Zimbabwe enjoys a temperate-to-tropical climate year-round with the summer and winter seasons generally defined in terms of rainfall.

Summer (November – April)

This is when rain is to be expected, usually in the form of short, sharp afternoon showers. Rainfall peaks in December, January and February.

Winter (May – October)

The early months are cool, warming up significantly to a hot, dry period through September and October.

Passports and Visas:

UK nationals need passports with at least 6 months validity and a \$55 visa which can be obtained upon arrival. If you plan to extend your trip with visits to Botswana or Zambia before returning to Zimbabwe to catch your flight you will need to get a multiple entry visa. As visa regulations for Zimbabwe can change it is always best to double check the latest entry requirements.

Health

We recommend the following inoculations / immunisations: Typhoid, Tetanus, Cholera, Diphtheria, Hepatitis B, Rabies and Hepatitis A. If you are a regular traveller abroad we would recommend that you are up to date on Yellow fever and on all childhood inoculations and vaccinations including Polio. Malaria is endemic in Zimbabwe - expert advice is therefore essential. We recommend that you consult a medical practitioner or ring MASTA on 09065 501402 (premium rate call) or visit the website at www.masta.org. You could also try The Hospital for Tropical Diseases on 0207 3889600 or visit the website at www.thehtd.org at least one month before departure.

Essential Items:

You should bring light cotton clothing and something warm for the evenings. Sun hat, sun glasses and sun block as well as rain protection. You will also need mosquito repellent (light-coloured clothing with long sleeves and legs also help). Good binoculars and camera with plenty of memory and spare batteries. A head torch (or normal torch) can also be very useful.

Our commitment

In 2007 Steppes Discovery celebrated 10 years of spectacular achievement as pioneers in the field of nature travel. As we approach our 15th birthday, our commitment to the principle of 'conservation travel to protect' remains steadfast.



We have raised significant funds in support of the world's leading wildlife and conservation agencies, researchers and experts, and increased awareness of travel and conservation through newsletters, lectures and consistent media coverage. Furthermore, we have voluntarily spearheaded collective action campaigns such as Travel Operators for Tigers in South Asia.



Victoria Falls Anti Poaching Unit (VFAPU) works closely with the National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and the Zimbabwe Republic Police to combat poaching of wildlife and plants which has had damaging effects on the area around Victoria Falls and the nearby Zambezi National Park. Starting with just 3 scouts in 1999, the VFAPU now has a team of 12 full time scouts patrolling an area of nearly 50km² day and night.



The **Friends of Hwange Trust** came into being as a result of a severe drought in 2005. As Hwange does not have any perennial rivers the wildlife relies on waterholes and in times of drought water needs to be pumped into the waterholes. Lack of funds meant that the large elephant and other wildlife populations were not getting enough water to survive the drought.

Friends of Hwange raise funds to develop and maintain water resources within the park to prevent animal deaths; combat poaching; and develop long-term sustainable solutions to the conservation of the park and its wildlife.

Painted Dog Conservation's vision is to "Create a Conservation Model that will make a lasting contribution to the future of Painted Dogs and the lives of the local people." They aim to do this by using a holistic approach to conservation combining research, direct conservation of the dogs, conservation education, capacity building for the future and community development. For more information visit www.painteddog.org.



An unavoidable consequence of travel is the emission of carbon dioxide into the high atmosphere and while Steppes Discovery takes measures to reduce the carbon footprint of its holidays, regrettably it is not yet possible to make them carbon neutral. In order to offset these emissions we give £10 per client to **Rainforest Concern**. Rainforests have a central role to play in the slowing of climate change and yet we are removing forests from the planet at a faster rate than they can grow back. Rainforest Concern supports projects that look to preserve the forests that we have rather than replanting new ones, working to safeguard biodiversity and local communities and in so doing mitigate climate change.



Our travel partners, accommodation, service providers and ground agents are all carefully chosen to ensure their commitment to the environment, most being quality, family owned businesses – reflecting the unique character of the places, the abiding hospitality of its people and the remarkable spirit of its wilderness.

Now come along and see for yourself. With us it won't cost the earth!

Want to discuss this trip?

Please call **Chris** on ++ 44 (0) 1285 643 333 for more details or drop him an email (chris@steppesdiscovery.co.uk) to make a booking.



Having travelled extensively in East, South and Central Africa, Chris has developed a passion and understanding for this wild and captivating continent. From the endless plains of the Serengeti, the wilds of the southern parks and the primates of west, he will be more than happy to share his enthusiasm for this fascinating part of the world. He has also been lucky enough to spend time with the elephants and predators on this particular tour in Venetia Limpopo and Mashatu and will be happy to discuss his meetings with wild dogs and cheetah's as well as the elephant families he met