









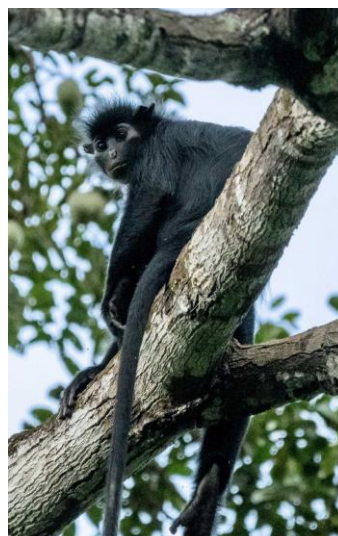


Gabon Wildlife Adventure

Destination: Ivindo (optional pre-tour extension); Lope & Loango, Gabon
Duration: 10 Days (14 Days including extension) **Dates:** 19th (23rd) Jul – 1st Aug 2022

-  Spending time within a troop of hundreds of **Mandrills** and seeing colourful males
-  Watching a silverback **Gorilla** challenge a young **Elephant** in Ivindo National Park
-  Fantastically close views of **Red River Hogs** & wild **Chimpanzees** when in Loango
-  Watching **Forest Elephants** swimming across a river in front of our lodge
-  Rare mammals such as **Long-nosed Mongoose**, **Bay Duiker** & **African Civet**
-  133 bird species including Gabon Coucal, Black Bee-eater & Levillant's Cuckoo
-  Excellent views both **Fire-footed Rope Squirrel** & **Biafran Bight Palm Squirrel**
-  42 mammals including **Black Colobus**, **Marsh Mongoose** & **Yellow-backed Duiker**
-  7 Species of primates seen including a stunning experience with the **Gorillas**
-  Seeing several range restricted Central African Slender-snouted Crocodiles



Tour Leader / Guides

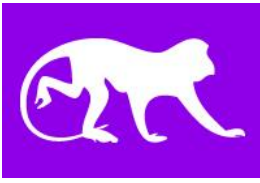
Martin Royle (Royle Safaris Tour Leader)
 Jorge (Ivindo Guide)
 Vianet (Libreville, Akanda & Lope Guide)
 Anouck & Boris (Libreville Transfers)
 David Lehmann (Mandrill Researcher)
 Gildas (Local Pygmy Guide in Lope)
 Donald (Local Guide in Lope)
 Salam (Lope Driver)
 Shergo & Romey (Loango / Akaka River Guides)

Participants

Michael Bird (plus Ivindo extension)
 Aron Matzinger (plus Ivindo extension)
 Lesley McLennan (plus Ivindo extension)
 Richard McManus (plus Ivindo extension)
 Wilfred Powell (plus Ivindo extension)
 Christopher Scharf
 Rita Shiver (plus Ivindo extension)

Overview

Day 1:	Libreville
Day 2:	Akanda NP
Days 2-5:	Ivindo NP
Days 6-9:	Lope NP
Day 10:	Lambarene
Days 11-13:	Loango NP / Akaka River
Day 14:	Libreville
Day 15:	Home



Day by Day Breakdown

Overview

Gabon is a jewel of a country when it comes to intact, pristine forest in Africa (over 80% of Gabon is forested) and with a lack of tourism industry the country is wild and you can end up having thousands of square kilometres of pristine forest and abundant wildlife to yourself. There is probably nowhere else in Africa quite like this amazing country.

A country that has long been rich in oil and has seen no need to exploit its forests, a country that has endless forests, large savannas and huge rivers that crisscross the evergreen landscape. It is also a country with a chequered past when it comes to tourism. For a long time the country was open to tourism (mostly birding), but in the early 2000's the government cut back on tourism and the country fell away from the tourist circuit and into obscurity. But around 2015 the country started to open itself up again to tourism and particularly wildlife tourism. That was then put to a swift end (like all tourism around the world) with the covid-19 pandemic, but after 2 years of being closed and 3 years from our first trip to Gabon, Royle Safaris was back and this being the second of three group tours running this summer.

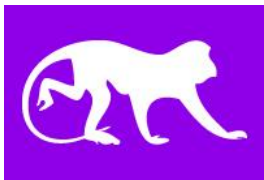
The most remarkable facet of Gabon being off the wildlife tourism radar for so long is that it is a country that offers sightings (and many reliable) of some of the most incredible, elusive, enigmatic and endangered mammals in the world. From the strikingly coloured mandrills, to large populations of African forest elephants, the beautiful red river hogs and handsome western lowland gorillas to the impossibly large giant pangolin and West African manatee. Gabon delivers on a level that few countries can. Of course seeing all of those species on one trip would be exceptional and we were not that lucky. However some of those and many more are near guarantees in Gabon. Thanks largely to the concerted effort of the government to keep their parks and forests as natural and pristine as possible and the great work of people like David Lehmann who is researching the mandrills and also establishing eco-tourism activities for red river hogs and giant pangolins. In the next few years it will most likely that seeing a giant pangolin is as reliable as the habituated gorillas of Uganda or Rwanda. There is more time and work need for this but it is getting better and now for the first time there is a real plan in place to take tourists to see this amazing species, but of course the pangolin has to cooperate as walking in the forest at night around elephants is too dangerous if the pangolin is too far away.

So this tour was broken up into the main trip (which we ran back in 2019) and focused on two of the country's best national parks, Lope & Loango. We also made a quick visit to Akanda National Park in search of northern talapoin and manatees. Our main focus was two primates, the mandrills and western lowland gorillas. But we hoped for a wealth of over wildlife and we were not disappointed. And then there was an optional pre-tour extension which nearly everyone took up to visit the very wild and rugged Ivindo National Park and experience the abundant wildlife (mostly the same species which we would see in other parks) but from large raised platforms overlooking openings called Bais which give an incredible and peaceful view into the lives of these usually secretive forest species. From Ivindo the group would meet up with the others and our Royle Safaris tour leader Martin in Lope and everyone would continue on from day 2 of the main trip and day 6 of the Ivindo clients together.

Gabon has so much to offer and is a veritable treasure trove of exotic and incredible mammal species that Royle Safaris will be running at least 2 trips annually for some time to come. We also have a new itinerary underdevelopment which would be a dedicated giant pangolin tracking trip, it would most likely consist of 7-10 days dedicated hiking in the forest looking for this amazing species. Only very fit and adventurous people would be able to do this as hiking 25-30km in a day in extreme heat and humidity through dense forest, surrounded by elephants would be needed. However this is an opportunity that is available. Otherwise we offer the giant pangolin tracking activity as described in the body of the trip report below, as standard on our group tours.

For anyone wishing to know more about future trips to Gabon please contact us at info@royle-safaris.co.uk we have already filled our first group tour for 2023 and have opened up dates for your second scheduled tour in July 2023.





Days 1-5 **Ivindo Extension Synopsis**

Wildlife Watching

The pre-tour Ivindo extension was guided by Jorge and we don't have a detailed day by day breakdown however below is a synopsis of the itinerary and also we have a list of the key species seen during these days.

Everyone took the recommended advice of arriving the day before the official start of the trip (Day 0) as to be here in time to visit Akanda National Park the following day. So everyone arrived (nearly everyone – we did have one person have to cancel last minute due to personal reasons) and one client arrived a few days in advance and spent some time in the Pongara National Park just north of Libreville.

So during the morning of day 1 everyone visited Akanda and the trip was successful in terms of seeing the **northern talapoin**, this is a range restricted species which likes the mangrove forest and their habitat is decreasing all of the time. The little island we visit is the home of a ranger station was the only really reliable place to see this species; however on an earlier trip we ran in 2022 we found another location which makes more sense to visit and can result in other species being seen. So our 2023 trips have been changed to accommodate this new location instead of Akanda.

Of course cruising through the waterways to the island there were many of the common bird species which are expected around here, including some nice ones such as common terns, rock pranticoles, palm nut vultures, hammerkops, and the resident colony of pink-backed pelicans on the coast. There are also many species of weaver found along the river banks and on the island including village weavers and Viellot's black weavers. Other birds of note were blue-breasted bee-eater and rosy bee-eaters.

From here the group took the overnight train to Ivindo and then arrival travelled via car and walking to Dilo Camp for breakfast and then onwards again to Rock Camp and on again (a long day is needed today as Ivindo is very pristine and the infrastructure nearly non-existent, the benefit from this means that visiting is a genuine wilderness experience (something unusual in modern Africa). The final destination being Langoue Bai and the home for the next couple of nights.

Staying on the raised platforms is a great experience and can provide amazing views into some of the rare forest dwellers as they come out of the forest to feed and take minerals from the clay soils here. During these days there were many animals that came to the bai. Including the commonly seen species such as many colourful **red river hogs** and large numbers of **African forest elephants**, **forest buffalo** and **sitatunga**. The highlight of the time in the bai was one of the two silverback **western gorillas** (which showed up on both days) having a faceoff with a young male **elephant**, the result was a spectacular sight with water splashing and two of Africa's most iconic and wonderful species having a head to head.

Other species were seen on the walk to and from the platform and these including **putty-nosed monkey**, **bay duiker**, **long-nosed mongoose** and **African civet** but these animals were not by everyone. Other interesting sightings including Hartlaub's duck, Ethiopian swallow, black bee-eater, swamp palm bulbul, great blue turaco and African grey parrots.

One of the most amazing things about Ivindo (and large parts of Gabon in general) is just how wild and pristine they are, every time we bring groups here we are the only people in the whole park, there is probably nowhere else in Africa where you can have such a vast and untouched area of forest completely to yourself.

On leaving Ivindo the walked back to the park headquarters and due to the ever changing and frustrating train schedules (and an unexpected improvement in the road) they took a vehicle to get from Ivindo to Lope, and met up with Martin, Vianet and Chris in Lope Hotel on the night of day 2 below.

Day 1 **Libreville & Akanda NP**

Arrival, Wildlife Watching & Travelling

Chris and Martin had arrived yesterday evening and met Guillermo and settled into the hotel, the next day was a pretty relaxed one, Chris had been to Gabon with Royle Safaris in 2019 and chose not to visit Akanda again, with one of our clients cancelling last minute there was nothing planned in most of the day today, so in the afternoon they left for the train station. Met Vianet at the station and boarded the train to Lope.

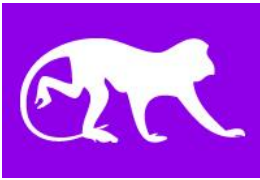
As is normal on these trains we set off around 1 hour later than planned (for no discernible reason) and we were very delayed on arrival. In fact we didn't get into Lope until around 6:30am the following morning. It was a good job that Chris was scheduled to do the mandrills the following day or it would have been a very long day for him.

Day 2 **Lope National Park**

Rest & Wildlife Watching

So Chris and Martin arrived at Lope station at around 6:30am and straight away met the rest of the group who had arrived with Jorge the following evening from Ivindo. They were getting up for breakfast and Martin delegated the group for the mandrills today.

There were many birds around the lodge grounds which is normal, including some colourful copper sunbirds, pin-tailed whydahs, long-legged pipits, African green pigeons and African pied wagtails. After breakfast Aron, Rita, Chris and Richard met David Lehmann and went to see the mandrills this morning. Whilst Martin, Lesley, Mike, Wilf and Vianet had a jeep safari into Lope.



As normal the resident group of **forest buffalo** were grazing on the lodge grounds as we drove to the park, getting into the park we found more and more **buffalo**, they are the most common large animal here and there are several groups that have their home ranges focused around some large mud wallows near the park entrance.

Lope National Park is not just the home of the most well known and frequently seen mandrills in the world, but this mosaic of savanna and forests is home to a large diversity of primates and many other mammals and birds. Over the next few days we would make the most of exploring the park looking for as many as we could find.

Other sightings early in the morning safari included African pied hornbills, a juvenile palm nut vulture, a few flocks of noisy African grey parrots and then a brief **grey-cheeked mangabey** and **putty-nosed monkeys** moving through the trees. Before we found a second group of **putty-nosed monkeys** who allowed for better views and pictures. Further along we had nice African green pigeons feeding on fruits before a very nice view of a gymnogene perched on a low rock in the middle of the savanna.

We went out on foot into one of the patches of forest to look for the black colobus, when we entered we heard lots of commotion in the undergrowth and remained still and silent as we tried to figure out what was making the noise. It was a small group of **forest buffalo** that we spooked a couple of times and heard then crashing through the forest to get away from us.

Continuing the search for the black colobus with Donald we came across a mixed foraging flock of birds which had a **green bush squirrel** in among them. We struggled to find the colobus and continued to walk around the forest looking and listening for any sign of them. We did find a blue-throated roller, black-casqued hornbills and flushed a duiker (but didn't get views of it to ID it), before we had great views of a **putty-nosed monkey** on the way back out of the forest. On the way back we had nice views of a female and her calf **kewel** (bushbuck) in a mud wallow, but the only other notable sightings today were birds. Which included oxpeckers, pin-tailed whydahs, bronze mannikins, blue-throated bee-eaters and many more.

When we all met back up for lunch we heard the story of the mandrill tracking group. It had been a hard hike this morning, the **mandrill** group were travelling at first until they came to a large fruiting tree and the group stopped and started to feed. There were three adult males in the group and they were very entertaining with climbing up and down the tree and providing good views and photography opportunities. Despite the longer walk the whole **mandrill** experience today was one of the best David has had, so we had a very happy group of people at lunch.

There was however some drama, of course, as always happens in Gabon. At this time of year the local people and the park authorities often set controlled fires in the dry savannas. And when the group left the forest to go back to the car, the car was surrounded by fire! David had to get the fire extinguisher out and put the fire out from the tyres before driving back to the lodge.

The group did have another nice mammal on the way back, as a **marsh mongoose** crossed the road in front of them.

We had lunch at the hotel and then in the late afternoon the whole group went out on a jeep safari. It was quiet again unfortunately. The only sightings being **African forest elephants** including a female and two generations of calves which the group was able to get out on foot nearby. Then outside of the park there were many **forest buffalo**, **putty-nosed monkeys**, **moustached monkeys** but not seen particularly well.

After dinner we did a little spotlighting around the grounds of the hotel, but it was quiet again and there elephants around the area and village and so we didn't go very far into the little forest around the lodge in case the elephants were in there.

We all retired for the night and hope for better animal activity tomorrow.

Day 3 **Lope NP**

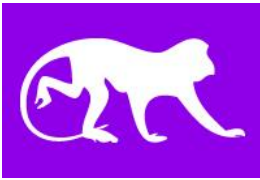
Wildlife Watching

This morning Lesley, Mike, Wilf and Aron went with David to visit the **mandrills** whilst the rest of the group joined Martin and Vianet in the jeep for another safari around Lope. This was a nice safari, it started with a **kewel** in the savanna near the hotel. In the forest we saw a mixed troop of **moustached** and **putty-nosed monkeys** all feeding and being playful in the trees near the road. Bird wise we had nice views of a large flock of African grey parrots and piping hornbills before heading out on foot again to track down the black colobus.

In the forest we had some **moustached monkeys** and a brief view of a **grey-cheeked mangabey** walking along a branch and then very nice views of a solitary **moustached monkey**. Walking along we also flushed a **blue duiker** that not everyone saw as it disappeared quickly into the dense undergrowth. We then finally found the troop of **black colobus** that are usually found in this fragment of forest. They were very relaxed and quite high in the trees feeding on figs. We had fantastic views of them for a prolonged period before we left the forest and headed back to the vehicle. Along the way Martin was sticking his head into any and all tree hollows he could find and eventually was rewarded with three **slit-faced bats** roosting in a large hollow tree. We think they are **large slit-faced bats** but we cannot be sure without accurate measurements.

On the drive back to the lodge we had a large group of **forest buffalo** in the savanna as well as a second troop of **black colobus**, just on the edge of the forest and allowing us to see them well from the vehicle.

Back at the lodge we met up with the mandrill group and found out that they had had a great time with the **mandrills**, many males again, they were not travelling like the day before and everyone had views of many of the



troop and unlike yesterday there was not any drama with the car catching fire! So it was a happy morning all around.

After lunch some of the group went with Martin to have a look at the roosting **Peter's dwarf & Whalberg's epauletted fruit bats** in the far side of the lodge complex, before going back out on a jeep safari as a whole group. On the afternoon safari back into Lope we had our first male **kevel** of the trip near the lodge as well as three species of monkey (**moustached, putty-nosed monkeys** and **grey-cheeked mangabey**) as well as watching a bat hawk hunting and actually catching a bat low over the savanna. Driving through the forested parts of the park we had great views of a **white-legged duiker** before it vanished into the dark forest in the low late afternoon light. Back at the hotel we had a short night walk (as the elephants were still around the village and could be close to the lodge) and we had a **hammerhead bat**, **Franquet's singing fruit bat** and **Epauletted fruit bats** flying around the trees feeding on fruit as well as a **cyclope horseshoe bat** on a trunk listening for insects as they often do when hunting.



Day 4 Lope NP

Wildlife Watching

This morning Wilf, Mike and Lesley went with Vianet to find the black colobus as they had still not had any views of them. Everyone else went in the jeep to see what else they could find in the park. Before entering the park we had amazing views of a **moustached monkey** next to the road feeding on fruit and then we had nice views of **forest elephants** near the village. These were the same troop that had been hindering our night walks as they were still very close to the lodge and village over these couple of days. This group of **elephants** was very nice and had many young ones and was entertaining to watch for a while.

Further into the park we saw some **grey-cheeked mangabeys** in the trees and a nice mixed flock of hornbills, with many piping and African pied hornbills perching, feeding and flying in the treetops. There was also a pair of **black colobus** in a tree near the road which probably gave us the best views we had had of the species so far. We just hoped that Mike, Wilf and Lesley had seen them too. Driving around more we had a woolly-necked stork perched on the same exposed rock in the savanna that we had seen the gymnogene earlier in the trip and then we had a **putty-nosed monkey** giving us great views on an exposed branch.

Chris, Rita and Martin then went with Donald into the forest on foot to look for duikers and other wildlife. We had great **red-legged sun squirrel** views and also a couple of Latham's francolins as well as a **bay duiker** which we flushed from the forest to run across our path.

We then headed back towards the black colobus group and found out that they had had great sightings of the **black colobus** as well as **grey-cheeked mangabeys** and best of all a couple of **chimpanzees**. They chimps were seen briefly on the ground, a couple of adult males, but what a sighting.

On the way back to the lodge the only animal we saw was more **grey-cheeked mangabeys** and then back at the lodge some of us went to look at the **fruit bats** roosting again. Everyone decided to skip the afternoon jeep safari, we had seen pretty much everything to expect in the park by now and with the long overnight train ahead of us we just wanted to rest. We were rewarded as after dark we had a small sounder of **red river hogs** near the restaurant feeding on palm fruits which we saw quite well, but they were shy and when we turned our lights on they ran away. Then at 11pm we left the hotel and headed to the train station to catch the train to Ndjole. As always with the trains in Gabon we didn't know when it would arrive, and it didn't disappoint, it was around 3 hours late.

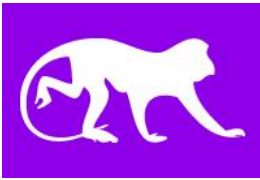
Day 5 Lamberene

Travelling & Resting

When we finally arrived in N'djole we met our drivers and drove to Lamberene. Along the way Vianet left us as he had to go back to Libreville to present at a conference.

We carried on and arrived in Lamberene at around 10am and in time for a late breakfast and the rest of the day spent resting and walking around the grounds of the famous and iconic Albert Schwiester Hospital. We would be staying here and it was nice to get some hot food and drinks and a comfy bed after the long journey.

There was a small group of **hammerhead bats** roosting in a palm tree near the restaurant and other animals that people saw over the course of the day here was an ornate monitor, hippos were heard nearby, **African straw-coloured fruit bats** and various species of birds including white-crowned lapwings, green-headed sunbird and bronze mannikins.



Day 6 Loango National Park

Travelling & Wildlife Watching

This morning we left the hospital for the town of Booue on the N'Komi Lagoon just north of Loango National Park, this would be a long day of travelling. As we boarded the boat we saw many birds around including African cormorants, goliath herons, large egrets and white-crowned lapwings.

Our first stop this morning was to look under the bridge connecting the old town of Lamberene on the island and the new town, underneath the bridge is a colony of **Egyptian rousettes** that is many thousands strong. The sound and smell and pitter patter of urine and faeces coming down into the river. One of the **bats** fell from the bridge and landed in the river, it was interesting to see it swimming towards the pillars where it could scramble back up to the bridge. But it is a hell of a sight and after seeing these bats we left and headed out and along the Ogooue River for the next few hours.

Along the way there were some nice birds as always along the river, including pratincoles, African fish eagles, various species of terns, hornbills and parrots flew over the river and of course we had a couple of groups of **common hippos** including some in the water and a small number basking on a sand bank in the middle of the river. One of the boat drivers also saw a **sitatunga** but no one else saw it. Heading off the main river and onto the smaller channels before getting to the lagoon we had really cool views of a **hippo** coming crashing out of the forest and running along the beach before diving into the river. It looked at first like it was charging us. But it must have been spooked by us coming around the bend in the river, but it was very cool to see one at full speed and heading towards us but us being completely safe.

We arrived at Booue and got into our vehicles which were waiting and then arrived at Ndola Camp at 15:30. We had a lunch straight away and then at 16:45 we went out on a jeep safari around the savanna of this part of Loango National Park.

It is often quite quiet around the savanna but we would try anyway and see what we could see. To get to the vehicle we took a boat around the lagoon for a short way, in the lagoon we saw African spoonbills, goliath heron and then Atlantic tarpon jumping out of the water as a large West African crocodile was chasing them.

When in the savanna we saw many **forest buffalo** compete with their oxpecker entourage as well nice views of a mother and young **elephant**, the young **elephant** being around 1-2 months old. Other sightings we had on the short jeep safari were nice views of a long-tailed hawk flying over the savanna and a pair (male and female) black-and-white casqued hornbill.

We then came back to the lodge for dinner and after dinner did a little night walk where we didn't see very much, just a few freckled nightjars.

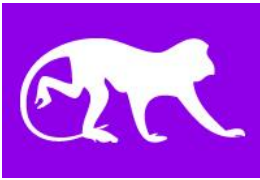
Day 7 Loango NP / Akaka River

Gorilla Tracking / Wildlife Watching

This morning Chris stayed at Ndola Lodge for the night (as he had been to Akaka Camp previously), whilst the rest of the group departed around 7am to head across Iguela Lagoon towards Akaka Camp in the boat. After crossing the lagoon (there were some nice birds seen, but nothing unusual or particularly special), we dropped Wilf, Mike, Rita and Richard off with the gorilla researchers at the gorilla station. We would find out more about their gorilla tracking experience this afternoon.

The boat with Martin, Lesley and Aaron carried on up the channels and along the Akaka River to the Akaka Camp. Along the way we had nice views of a Central African slender-snouted crocodile basking on a tree stump and many beautiful shining-blue kingfishers and giant kingfishers, which are ubiquitous around these rivers. Our next mammal of the trip were nice views of **red-capped mangabeys** feeding next to the water on red berries. But they were not too cooperative with allowing for pictures. Travelling further along we had a few African finfoots which are a real birding speciality here and of course several **elephants** including a very large male **elephant** on the bank, he remained hidden for a while and seemed to want to keep some papyrus reeds in between us and him. But then he came out a little and gave us great views. We then had nice views of an African fish eagle perched low down next to the river. More birds followed including more giant kingfishers (one nearly flew into the boat), pied kingfishers, yellow-billed storks and great views of a pair of great blue turacos in a mixed flock with some African green pigeons.

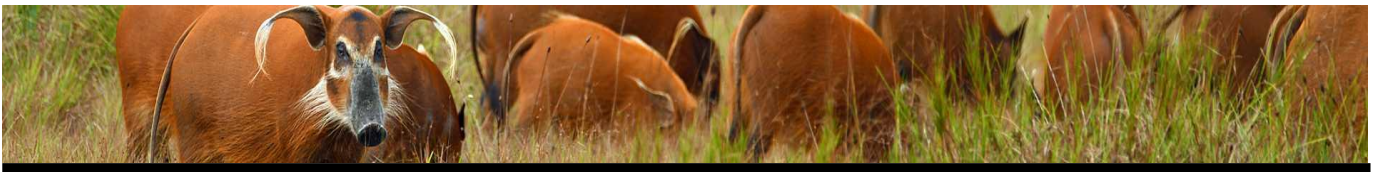
We then arrived at the camp and before lunch Aaron and Lesley went for a walk into the forest at the back of the camp. They saw more **red-capped mangabeys** high in the trees as well as a large male **elephant** only around 10m away from them and they had to take some evasive action to get away.



Back at the camp we watched **elephants** coming out of the forest to feed in the savanna and along the river banks and swimming across the different channels using their trunks as a snorkel and being nearly completely submerged. We waited for the gorilla trackers to get back, but they didn't get back until 5:30pm. Which is much later than usual; when they did get back to we exchanged stories and they had some incredible sightings. It took a while to find them as they had to cross a swamp before they could find the group. But when they had found them they had amazing views of the silverback as well as females with babies and they got nice views and pictures of the mother picking up a young baby and kissing it on the head.

In the evening Lesley, Martin and Aaron went out for some spotlighting, the others decided to eat and rest after a very long hard day hiking through the forests. Before the sunset we had more giant and pied kingfishers as well as a nice ornate monitor lizard and of course **elephants** including a female with two youngsters (one around 3 years old and one around 6 months old).

As the light began to fade we watched a vermiculated fish owl catch a fish and eat it before finding a second vermiculated fish owl. Then as the sun set we had views of **moustached monkeys** and **red-capped mangabeys** finding their roosting trees and getting ready for the night. Other animals spotted before returning to the camp were many slender-snouted crocodiles, including some seen very well swimming under the water as they moved away from us.



Day 8 Loango NP / Akaka River

Wildlife Watching

This morning the usual bird life was all around the camp when Richard, Wilf, Rita and Mike went for a walk in the forest and Lesley and Aaron went to see the gorillas. The hike in the forest at the back of the camp resulted in some great sightings, such as black guineafowl, Gabon woodpecker, many hornbills among other birds. Mammals seen this morning included **red-capped mangabeys**, **putty-nosed monkeys**, **moustached monkeys** and very good views and pictures of a stunning **red-footed rope squirrel**. They also heard a crowned guenon but couldn't locate this elusive primate.

The **gorilla** trackers came back for lunch and they had a similar experience to yesterday, with nice silverback views and some very playful youngsters. The group moved into a swamp, which is always nice as they are in the open and the brighter sunlight allows for better pictures. They were eating fresh grass shoots in the swamp. But there was a sad side to the sightings today, one of the females in the group had recently lost her young baby and she was calling out for her and looking for the baby.

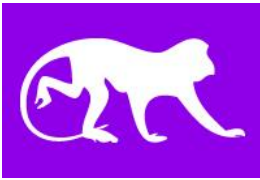
We then all departed and headed back to Ndola Camp at around 3:30pm. Along the way we had great views of **elephants** moving through the swamps and feeding as well as nice basking slender-snouted crocodiles and some nice birds such as the endemic Gabon coucal in the papyrus next to the riverbank. Other notable birds including a nice flock of rosy bee-eaters, flying over the river and perching.

Back at Ndola at 7pm we had dinner and met back up with Chris. During his first day looking for red river hogs he spent around 1.5 hours with a large sounder of **red river hogs**. They were so relaxed they allowed him to enter their group, he would crawl and get eye level with them and they completely forgot he was there. Allowing him to have some great views and amazing pictures from within the group. Other than these amazing **hogs** they saw 100's of **forest buffalo**.

On his second day here Mathieu (the manager of Ndola Camp) took him into a forest patch and they had an hour with a wild troop of **chimps**. Usually wild **chimps** are very difficult to see and when you do find and see them, they tend to get spooked and disappear into the deep forest. But this group were very relaxed around Chris and Mathieu. They were playing, feeding and grooming, all oblivious to Chris being there, whilst the views were not great as they were in the tops of trees and silhouetted it was amazing to spend that quality time with unhabituated **chimps**. Other sightings included a **yellow-backed duiker** in the early morning moving from the savanna into the forest and some large ornate monitors. All in all everyone in the group had had a great time in Loango and Akaka and we had one more morning here in which we would all try and replicate Chris's red river hog experience before starting our long journey home.

Day 9 Loango NP – Port Gentil – Libreville Wildlife Watching & Travelling

This morning we left Ndola early and at 5:30am we were in the savanna and heading deep into the park and to near where Chris had seen the sounder a couple of days earlier. As usual there were many **forest buffalo** around and we also saw several black-headed bee-eaters and some **forest elephants** in the savanna, but no hogs. It was all looking a little quiet for the hogs until we pushed further and found a sounder of around 50 **red river hogs**. But the wind was not favourable for us and they smelt us approach and so didn't allow us to get as close as Chris did



previously. But we got around 100m away before they left and ran into a stand of nearby forest. We followed them quietly to see if we could get any closer in the forest. But they had gone completely. Inside the forest we found a huge serrated hinge-back tortoise and also a **Biafran Bight palm squirrel** as well as **green bush squirrel**.

We left the patch of forest and started to drive back towards the lodge and along the way we saw a lone female **sitatunga** in the distance and some nice views of a Forbe's plover before we found a second sounder of **red river hogs**, they allowed us to get a little closer but not too much closer, however there was a mating pair of them in this group and they were more preoccupied with each other to notice us approach and we got closer to these two than any others, until they finished, saw us and bolted to join the rest of the group entering a patch of forest.

We then left the savanna, crossed the lagoon and met our drivers and vehicles and headed to Port Gentil. We arrived in time for some lunch before catching the evening flight to Libreville. On arrival back in the capital we met Guillermo and went back to the hotel for the final night of the trip.

Day 10 **Home**

Departure

This morning some people had arranged to visit some local markets for souvenirs and some people rested, but whatever the plan the day was a rest day as we waited for the Air France flight in the evening. All that was except for Andrew who left in the morning to catch his flight back home.

Everyone eventually made it to the airport and caught their flights back home without issue.

Species List

Gabon Wildlife Adventure

Jul 2022

Mammals (* = heard or signs only / ‡ = seen in Ivindo pre-tour extension)

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Marsh mongoose	<i>Atilax paludinosus</i>
2	White-legged duiker	<i>Cephalophus crusalbum</i>
3	Bay Duiker	<i>Cephalophus dorsalis</i>
4	Blue duiker	<i>Cephalophus monticola</i>
5	Yellow-backed duiker	<i>Cephalophus silvicultor</i>
6	Red-capped mangabey	<i>Cercocebus torquatus</i>
7	Moustached monkey	<i>Cercopithecus cephus</i>
8	Putty-nosed monkey	<i>Cercopithecus nictitans</i>
9	Crowned guenon	<i>Cercopithecus pogonias</i>
10	African civet	<i>Civettictis civetta</i>
11	Black colobus	<i>Colobus satanas</i>
12	Straw-coloured fruit bat	<i>Eidolon helvum</i>
13	Biafran Bight palm squirrel	<i>Epixerus ebii</i>
14	Whalberg's epauletted bat	<i>Epomophorus wahlbergi</i>
15	Franquet's singing fruit bat	<i>Epomops franqueti</i>
16	Fire-footed rope squirrel	<i>Funisciurus pyrropus</i>
17	Western gorilla	<i>Gorilla gorilla</i>
18	Red-legged sun squirrel	<i>Heliosciurus rufobrachium</i>
19	Common hippopotamus	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>
20	Cyclops roundleaf bat	<i>Hipposideros cyclops</i>
21	Hammer-headed bat	<i>Hypsignathus monstrosus</i>
22	Grey-cheeked mangabey	<i>Lophocebus albigena</i>
23	African forest elephant	<i>Loxodonta cyclotis</i>
24	Mandrill	<i>Mandrillus sphinx</i>
25	Peter's dwarf epauletted bat	<i>Micropteropus pusillus</i>
26	Greater long-fingered bat	<i>Miniopterus inflatus</i>
27	Northern talapoin	<i>Miopithecus ogoouensis</i>
28	African palm civet	<i>Nandinia binotata</i>
29	Banana pipistrelle	<i>Neoromica nanus</i>

July										Aug
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17	Squacco heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>
18	Yellow-throated grenbul	<i>Arizelocichla chlorigula</i>
19	Western black-headed batis	<i>Batis erlangeri</i>
20	Yellow-lored bristlebill	<i>Bleda notatus</i>
21	Haded ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>
22	Cattle egret	<i>Bubalcus ibis</i>
23	Yellow-billed oxpecker	<i>Buphagus africanus</i>
24	Water thickknee	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>
25	Striated heron	<i>Butroides striata</i>
26	White-thighed hornbill	<i>Bycanistes albotibialis</i>
27	Piping hornbill	<i>Bycanistes fistulator</i>
28	Black-and-white casqued hornbill	<i>Bycanistes subcylindricus</i>
29	Square-tailed nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus fossii</i>
30	Freckled nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus tristigma</i>
31	Gabon coucal	<i>Centropus anselli</i>
32	Black coucal	<i>Centropus grillii</i>
33	Blue-headed coucal	<i>Centropus monachus</i>
34	Senegal coucal	<i>Centropus senegalensis</i>
35	Black-casqued hornbill	<i>Ceratogymna atrata</i>
36	Mosque swallow	<i>Cercopis senegalensis</i>
37	Pied kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
38	Blue malkoha	<i>Ceuthmochares aereus</i>
39	Forbe's plover	<i>Charadrius forbesi</i>
40	Dideric cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>
41	Woolly-necked stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
42	Olive-bellied sunbird	<i>Cinnyris chloropygius</i>
43	Copper sunbird	<i>Cinnyris cupreus</i>
44	Wing-snapping cisticola	<i>Cisticola ayresii</i>
45	Leviellant's cuckoo	<i>Clamator leviellantii</i>
46	Feral pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
47	Pied crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>
48	Great blue turaco	<i>Corythaeola cristata</i>
49	Black cuckoo	<i>Cuculus clamosus</i>
50	Green-headed sunbird	<i>Cyanomitra verticalis</i>
51	African palm swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>
52	White-faced whistling duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>
53	Gabon woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos gabonensis</i>
54	Golden-crowned woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos xantholophus</i>

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93	Black-chinned quailfinch	<i>Ortygospiza gabonensis</i>
94	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
95	Northern grey-headed sparrow	<i>Passer griseus</i>
96	Pink-backed pelican	<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>
97	Latham's francolin	<i>Peliperdix lathamii</i>
98	African spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>
99	Village weaver	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>
100	Lesser masked weaver	<i>Ploceus intermedius</i>
101	Vieillot's black weaver	<i>Ploceus nigerrimus</i>
102	African finfoot	<i>Podica senegalensis</i>
103	Yellow-throated tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus bilineatus</i>
104	Gymnogene	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>
105	Tawny-flanked prinia	<i>Prinia subflava</i>
106	Black saw-wing	<i>Psolidoprocne pristoptera</i>
107	African grey parrot	<i>Psittacus erithacus</i>
108	Hartlaub's duck	<i>Pteronetta hartlaubii</i>
109	Common bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>
110	Sabine's spinetail	<i>Rhaphidura sabini</i>
111	African skimmer	<i>Rynchops flavirostris</i>
112	Hammerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>
113	Vermiculated fishing owl	<i>Scotopelia bouvieri</i>
114	Black-and-white mannikin	<i>Spermestes bicolor</i>
115	Bronze mannikin	<i>Spermestes cucullata</i>
116	Little tern	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>
117	Common tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
118	Royal tern	<i>Sterna maxima</i>
119	Little tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>
120	Red-eyed dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>
121	Yellow-billed turaco	<i>Tauraco macrorhynchus</i>
122	African paradise flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>
123	Swamp palm bulbul	<i>Thescelocichla leucopleura</i>
124	African pied hornbill	<i>Tockus fasciatus</i>
125	African green pigeon	<i>Treron calvus</i>
126	Green sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
127	African thrush	<i>Turdus pelios</i>
128	Blue-spotted wood dove	<i>Turtur afer</i>
129	African hoopoe	<i>Upupa africana</i>
130	Long-tailed hawk	<i>Urotriorchis macrourus</i>

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							~306			
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							2	7	6	
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				~30	~20		~10	4		
		25	~27	10	8		~26	5	24	1
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131	White-headed lapwing	<i>Vanellus albiceps</i>
132	Senegal plover	<i>Vanellus lugubris</i>
133	Pin-tailed whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>

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Reptiles (* = heard or signs only)

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Red-headed agama	<i>Agama agama</i>
2		<i>Agama lebretoni</i>
3	West African crocodile	<i>Crocodylus suchus</i>
4	Laurent's green-tree snake	<i>Dipsadoboa viridis</i>
5	African half-toed house gecko	<i>Hemidactylus mabouia</i>
6	Serrated hing-backed tortoise	<i>Kinixys erosa</i>
7	Slender-nosed crocodile	<i>Mecistops cataphractus</i>
8	Speckled-lipped skink	<i>Trachylepis maculilabris</i>
9	Congo palm gecko	<i>Urocotyledon palmata</i>
10	Ornate monitor	<i>Varanus ornatus</i>

July										Aug
Ivindo	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
		11	~20	~60			~15			
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Fishes (* = heard or signs only)

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1		<i>Chrysichthys ogoensis</i>
2	Atlantic tarpon	<i>Megalops atlanticus</i>
3	Nile tilapia	<i>Oreochromis niloticus</i>
4	Atlantic Mudskipper	<i>Periophthalmus barbarus</i>

July										Aug
Ivindo	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
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African Forest Elephant



Serrated Hinge-backed Tortoise



African Forest Elephant & Western Gorilla



Great Blue Turaco



Western Gorilla



Central African Slender-snouted Crocodile



Sitatunga



Vermiculated Fish Owl



Moustached Monkey



Grey-cheeked Mangabey



Putty-nosed Monkey



Pied Kingfisher



Black Colobus



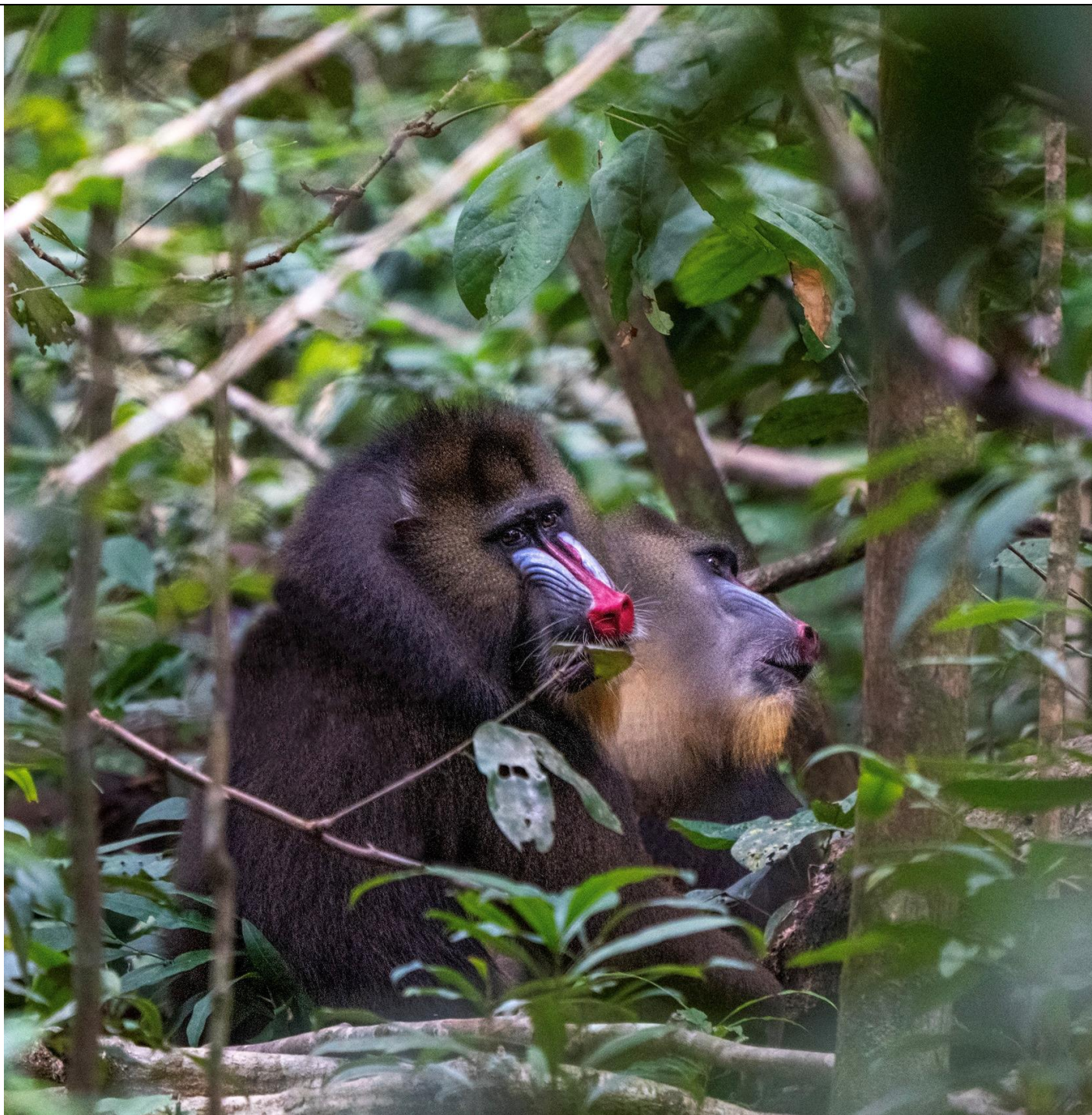
Pink-backed Pelican



Forest Buffalo



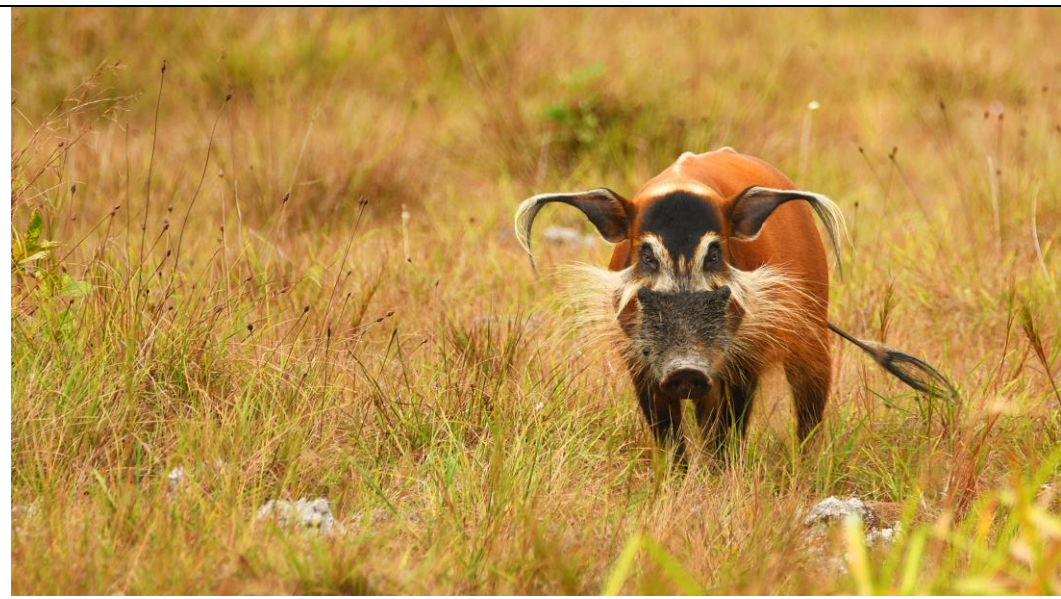
Fire-footed Rope Squirrel



Mandrills



Woolly-necked Stork



Red River Hog



Northern Talapoin



Large-eared Slit-faced Bats?