

Zimbabwe and Botswana, 2026

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In 1890, German acquired Caprivi (the area which makes the map of Namibia looks odd) in order to provide access to the Zambezi River for inland waterway transportation through Africa. The route was later found not to be navigable because of the location of the Victoria Falls, one of the world's largest waterfalls. The German plan failed, so the land near the Zambezi River was not extensively developed, which was the luck of local wildlife.

Itinerary

August 29th: Arrived at Victoria Falls Airport, Zimbabwe by Ethiopian Airlines, transferred to Robins Camp, Hwange National Park immediately, just in time to catch the afternoon game drive.

August 30th: The guides were all busy in the morning, so make sure to book the game drive days before you arrive. We were only able take another afternoon game drive.

August 31st: Morning game drive. Transferred to Victoria Falls Town and took a 12-min helicopter ride (Chikopokopo Helicopters) to view the Falls. Transferred across Kazungula Border to Botswana, arrived at Chobe House just in time for the afternoon boat cruise in Chobe National Park. (Time is just enough as long as you book all in advance.) At 19:30 we took a 3-hour night game drive with Africa Homeland Mobile Safaris around Kasane and Lesoma Valley.

September 1st: Morning and afternoon game drives in Chobe National Park. Night game drive around Kasane and Lesoma Valley.

September 2nd: Morning game drive in Chobe National Park. Hertz Rent a Car and self-drive to Elephants Sands Lodge, Nata for overnight stay. Enjoyed the up-close encounter with elephants at the waterhole in the lodge.

September 3rd: Self-drive to Planet Baobab, Gweta, many roads were under construction. Picked up by the guide from Camp Kalahari. Afternoon and night game drive in Makgadikgadi Pans (their private concession, not in the national park).

September 4th: Morning game drive with Bushman experience. Afternoon meerkat encounters and night game drive.

September 5th: Morning game drive. Dropped off by the guide at Camp Kalahari, self-drive to Maun, be careful lots of big holes on the road. Return the car and take a mokoro ride (outside buffalo fence. In my view mokoro is more about atmosphere instead of game view, we saw no mammals. If you do it inside the buffalo fence, elephants and hippos will be likely, but do not expect too many animals, either). Overnight at Mochaba Crossing, Shorobe, a short night drive around the rural areas. The planned helicopter ride was canceled because of the strong wind.

September 6th: Morning helicopter ride (Helicopter Horizons) over the Okavango Delta, it was amazing, best way to understand the special landscape, saw many animals. As the delay of helicopter, the full day Moremi Game Reserve drive was canceled. We only did a short afternoon game drive in Kaziikini Community area (NG/33).

September 7th: No mammal watching today. Morning flight from Maun to Kasane. Transferred across Kazungula Bridge to Zambia. Visit Livingstone Island (Devil's Pool) and Elephant Café.

September 8th: Morning transferred across Victoria Falls Bridge back to Zimbabwe. International flights back home.



Victoria Falls (Mosi-oa-Tunya)



Okavango Delta

Mammal List

	English name	Scientific name	Locations
1	African bush elephant	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	Numerous in Hwange, Chobe and Okavango; solo bulls in Elephant Sands and Makgadikgadi
2	Smith's bush squirrel	<i>Paraxerus cepapi</i>	Common in Hwange, Chobe and Okavango
3	South African springhare	<i>Pedetes capensis</i>	Night drives in Lesoma; common during night drives in Makgadikgadi
4	Cape porcupine	<i>Hystrix africaeaustralis</i>	Night drives around Kasane
5	Acacia rat	<i>Thallomys paedulus</i>	Night walk inside Robins Camp Hwange
6	African pygmy mouse	<i>Mus minutoides</i>	Night drive in rural area near Shorobe
7	African savanna hare	<i>Lepus victoriae</i>	Night walk Robins Camp, Hwange; night drives Kasane, Lesoma, Makgadikgadi, Shorobe
8	Peters's epauletted fruit bat	<i>Epomophorus crypturus</i>	One roosting in the restaurant of Robins Camp Hwange
9	Chacma baboon	<i>Papio ursinus</i>	Hwange and Chobe
10	Vervet monkey	<i>Chlorocebus pygerythrus</i>	Chobe
11	Mohol bushbaby	<i>Galago moholi</i>	Both two nights just near our tent in Camp Kalahari, Makgadikgadi
12	Lion	<i>Panthera leo</i>	Hwange, Chobe, Makgadikgadi
13	Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	One in Chobe
14	African wild cat	<i>Felis lybica</i>	One in the afternoon in Hwange, one in night drive Lesoma, one in night drives Shorobe
15	Spotted hyena	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>	Hwange, night drives Kasane, from helicopter Okavango
16	Black-backed jackal	<i>Lupulella mesomelas</i>	Hwange, Chobe and Makgadikgadi
17	Side-striped jackal	<i>Lupulella adusta</i>	One in night drive Kasane
18	Bat-eared fox	<i>Otocyon megalotis</i>	Morning and night drives Makgadikgadi
19	Rusty-spotted genet	<i>Genetta maculata</i>	One in night drive near Kasane
20	South African small-spotted genet	<i>Genetta felina</i>	Night drives Lesoma and Makgadikgadi
21	Banded mongoose	<i>Mungos mungo</i>	Robins Camp Hwange, Chobe House, Elephant Sands
22	Common dwarf mongoose	<i>Helogale parvula</i>	Kaziikini Okavango
23	Meerkat	<i>Suricata suricatta</i>	Makgadikgadi
24	Yellow mongoose	<i>Cynictis penicillata</i>	Makgadikgadi
25	White-tailed mongoose	<i>Ichneumia albicauda</i>	One in night drive Lesoma
26	Common slender mongoose	<i>Herpestes sanguineus</i>	One in Robins Camp Hwange
27	Plains zebra	<i>Equus quagga</i>	Common in Hwange, Chobe, Makgadikgadi and Okavango
28	Hippopotamus	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>	Chobe and Okavango
29	Common warthog	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>	Hwange, Chobe and Okavango
30	Southern giraffe	<i>Giraffa giraffa</i>	Hwange and Chobe
31	African buffalo	<i>Syncerus caffer</i>	Chobe floodplains
32	Waterbuck	<i>Kobus ellipsiprymnus</i>	Hwange, Chobe floodplains
33	Lechwe	<i>Kobus leche</i>	Chobe floodplains, Okavango
34	Puku	<i>Kobus vardonii</i>	Only once on Chobe floodplains
35	Southern reedbuck	<i>Redunca arundinum</i>	Common in the plains north of Dekka River Hwange, Occasional Little Toms and Big Toms
36	Sable antelope	<i>Hippotragus niger</i>	One herd in Chobe, after they drink in the river and moving back to the inland bush
37	Roan antelope	<i>Hippotragus equinus</i>	Daily around Robins Camp Hwange
38	Greater Kudu	<i>Tragelaphus strepsiceros</i>	Hwange and more common in Chobe
39	Cape bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus sylvaticus</i>	One seen at the Zimbabwe-Zambia Border, inside the fence of Victoria Falls Walk area
40	Impala	<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>	Common in Hwange, Chobe and Okavango
41	Gray duiker	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>	One in Chobe
42	Steenbok	<i>Raphicerus campestris</i>	Hwange, Chobe and Okavango
43	Springbok	<i>Antidorcas marsupialis</i>	Common in Makgadikgadi
44	Tsessebe	<i>Damaliscus lunatus</i>	From helicopter Okavango
45	Common wildebeest	<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>	Common in Makgadikgadi and Okavango



African bush elephant



Mohol bushbaby



Acacia rat



South African springhare



Lion



Leopard



African wild cat



Bat-eared fox



Black-backed jackal



Side-striped jackal



Rusty-spotted genet



South African small-spotted genet



Meerkat



Yellow mongoose



Lechwe



Puku



Southern reedbuck



Greater kudu



Sable antelope



Roan antelope



Steenbok



Springbok

What we missed

Selous's mongoose (*Paracynictis selousi*): This is a rare sighted species in Africa. In theory they do occur around Kasane, so I arranged two 3-hour night drives around Kasane and Lesoma Valley. However, according to our guide, nocturnal mongooses were rare to be seen. On the second night we got a glimpse of a mongoose in Lesoma Valley. Though no photo, I think it was a white-tailed mongoose based on its robust body and thick tail. Maun is the area where most iNaturalist reports produced. I didn't find any operator for night drives there. I chose a lodge near Shorobe because I thought it was closer to the wild area than Maun. Our host was really nice and took us out at night with his 4×2 car for 1 hour. Unfortunately, the road access was too limited and we found no mongoose.

Brown hyena (*Parahyaena brunnea*): Makgadikgadi is the habitat. We found fresh footprints (must be the brown because of the spotted not exist there), but didn't see the animal. According to the guide, they are difficult to be seen.\

African wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*): Okavango Delta is the best place in the world to see them. The matter is that as we all know safari in Okavango Delta is expensive. Having seen them in Kruger, South Africa, I decided to save my money.

Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*): NG/33 in Okavango Delta is the nearest section by road from Maun, day tours are possible, and cheetahs are regularly seen there. Our time is too short. We have seen them in Masai Mara, Kenya, anyway.