

ZAMBIA and MALAWI 2011 from september 16 to october 26

51 species

In September and October 2011 I travelled through Zambia and Malawi mainly by public transport (which is very easy), except at 2 places mentioned below, using shared jeeps in nearly all the national parks. A great thing in these 2 countries is that you are allowed to do night safaris.

I arrived on September 16 in Lusaka (Zambia) where I spent 2 nights. I was picked up on the 18th to Hippo Lodge in eastern KAFUE NATIONAL PARK. It was quite expensive to stay there (5 nights) but I wanted to improve my chances to see large antelopes, specially Lichtenstein's Hartebeest. For that point it was quite disappointing and despite a lot of searching I didn't see any large antelopes except Defassa waterbucks and Greater kudu(Zambezi). Poaching is the main problem. Nevertheless the place was wonderful and the guiding excellent. I saw several times Lions (including a female with a snare; on one morning there were Lions including one with a dead Bushpig and one with a young Bushpig still alive), 3 times Leopard, a lot of (Common) Warthogs, at least 20 Defassa Waterbucks, no more than 4 Greater(Zambezi) kudus, a lot of Bushbucks (Chobe), many Pukus and Impalas (Common)(including one in the mouth of a crocodile), around 10 Common(Bush) duikers, 1 (Zambian) Blue duiker by night, 2 African porcupines, at least 4 South African Galagos, 1 Greater Galago, at least 6 White tailed Mongooses, 1 Bushy-tailed Mongoose, 2 Slender Mongooses, 1 Marsh mongoose, 3 African civets, around 10 Scrub hares, 5 Large spotted genets, 1 Angolan Genet, 3 Bushpigs by night and 4 by day, 6 Oribis (Central), 3 Reedbucks(Zambian), a lot of Hippos, no more than 15 Elephants, twice African wild cat (once 2 and once 1), Yellow baboons, Vervets and a few Smith's Bush Squirrels. I heard only Spotted Hyena. Then I was driven back to Lusaka.

On the 25th I travelled by bus to KASANKA NATIONAL PARK. I arrived very late at the gate where I was transferred to the lodge where I spent the night. The day after I had arranged to be driven to Shoebill island in the Bangweulu swamps where I camped 2 nights. I didn't look for Shoebill that I had seen before several times in Uganda. I went there mainly to see Black lechwe and I was satisfied with thousands of them (1 group exceeding 4000 animals). In a morning and afternoon safaris I got 3 Side striped Jackals, 4 (Bangweulu) Tsessebes, only 4 Zebras (Plain-boehmii), 1 (Chobe)Bushbuck, 1 Common(Bush) duiker, 2 (Central) Oribis, 3 Bushpigs. I saw also a Spotted Hyena den, but we arrived too late and they had already gone.

Back to Kasanka, I slept there 2 nights doing a morning and afternoon safaris and a boat trip between them. There I got 23 (Southern) Sables, a lot of Pukus, around 10 Sitatungas, a few Bushbucks(Chobe), several Common(Bush) duikers, 1 Hippo, several Yellow baboons, 2 Spotted neck otters, 1 Warthog(Common) with 2 babies, 3 or 4 Blue monkeys and my main target 2 Lichtenstein's hartebeests. There was also a lot of Elephants droppings. During the boat trip we found also evidence of poaching: a canoe next to a camp with fire, food and plenty of snares... The day after I travelled back to Lusaka where I slept one night.

The 1st of October I got a minibus from Lusaka to Chipata, then a minibus to Mfuwe. I stayed 3 nights at Wildlife Camp (where I camped). The place is very nice along the Luangwa river and I saw several species from the camp. Mammals seen in SOUTH LUANGWA NATIONAL PARK included a few Bushbucks(Chobe), a few Warthogs(Common), around 10 Pukus, 3 (Zambezi)Greater kudas, around 200 African(Cape) buffalos, at least 10 Lions (1female with 4 cubs), around 200 Hippos, 2 White tailed mongooses, 1 Bushy tailed mongoose, several Large spotted genets, 2 groups of Banded mongooses, 1 African civet, 1 African porcupine, around 30 Elephants, around 25 Thornicroft Giraffes, around 25 Plain zebras(crawshaii), 2 Leopards, a lot of Yellow baboons, Vervets and Smith's bush squirrels. I didn't see Johnston's Wildbeest which at this time of the year are far inside the park. A pack of African wild dogs was seen by other people near the gate.

I left South Luangwa on the 5th to reach Lilongwe in Malawi. I reached Rumphu the day after and on the 7th travelled to Nyika plateau. I camped 4 nights and was most of the time alone. The mammal list included: around 30 Roan antelopes, at least 300 Cape(Common) elands, several hundreds of (Zambian)Reedbucks, a lot of Bushbucks(Chobe), 2 Common(Bush) duikers, 1 Bush hyrax, at least 12 Bushpigs (4 sightings) and 1 Leopard by daylight).

Back to Rumphu I slept 1 night before heading to VWAZA NATIONAL PARK where I camped 1 night. There was no running water and I got a bucket of water as a shower. I saw 15 Elephants, at least 52 Greater(Zambezi) kudus, around 150 (Common) Impalas, several Banded mongooses, (Common)Warthogs, Vervets, Yellow baboons, 1 Forest elephant shrew, 1 Scrub Hare, and 38 Hippos.

On the 12th I left Vwaza to Rumphu and Lilongwe where I slept. And the day after I travelled to Liwonde where I stopped for 1 night. The day after I reached Mvuu Camp in LIWONDE NATIONAL PARK. I camped 2 nights there. Impalas were commons, like Waterbucks(Ellipsen). I saw also a few Bushbucks(Chobe), 2 Common(Bush) duikers, 1 Sharpe's Grysbok, 1 Bushpig, Vervets and Yellow baboons, 21 (Southern)Sables, Smith's bush squirrels, a few(Common) Warthogs, 2 Forest elephant shrews, 2 Large spotted genets, 10 Banded mongooses and at least 200 Elephants. On one night I was awakened by a big noise, opened my tent to see 2 Elephants eating the branch of a tree they had broken above my tent. I crawled outside, to hide behind a car, waiting they agreed to go away. The staff wanted also to drive me in their enclosure where they have introduced animals, including Black rhinos. I don't like that, but I accepted because they offered me a free drive in the park to see the true wild (Southern) Sables. In the fenced areas I saw around 15 Lichtenstein's hartebeests, 25 (Southern)Sables and 50 (Cape)Buffalos, but no Rhino.

From Liwonde I went to Blantyre for 1 night, and reached the day after, 17, LENGWE NATIONAL PARK. It was very hot and I saw wildlife only early morning and late afternoon (and by night). I camped 2 nights in the parks. I saw 1 Yellow baboon, a lot of Vervets, a lot of (Common)Impalas, 25 Nyalas, 3 (Coastal Sunis), 1 Smith bush squirrel, 10 (Common) Warthogs, 40 (Cape) Buffalos, 2 Blue monkeys, 2 Slender mongooses and only droppings of (Zambezi)Greater kudas.

My next destination was Cap Mac Clear around LAKE MALAWI NATIONAL PARK. I looked for otters but saw only 1 stuffed. I got 1 Yellow baboon and a few Vervets, but the place is more interesting because of the colorfull Cichlids living in the lake.

After reaching Lilongwe, I left Malawi on the 26 of October.

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