

# Niger

8 February – 17 February 2010 – Michel GERVAIS (France) : [gervais.michel@wanadoo.fr](mailto:gervais.michel@wanadoo.fr)

Some comments about W National park in Niger, where we (my wife and 2 friends) spent 9 days in February 2010.

During our entire trip we were accompanied by Oumar OUALI, a very good spotter and a very knowledgeable man that we recommend. He is able to organize mammal-watching trips in Niger (W NP). He speaks French and he is now studying English. It's easy to reach him on his cellular :

00 227 96 57 72 85

or by mail : M. Oumar OUALI

guide du parc W, la Tapoa

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NIGER

He has no email for the moment !

With Point Afrique ([www.point.afrique.com](http://www.point.afrique.com)) we booked a cruise of 5 days on the Niger River, sailing along the border of the W park, from Boumba to Say : cool and pleasant travel. The left side of the river is deforested, with traditional villages and, on the other bank, trees, bushes with many groups of African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*), Vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus aethiops*), Anubis baboons (*Papio anubis*), one time 2 kobs (*Kobus kob*), and 1 Oribi (*Ourebia ourebi*).

Though we didn't see any crocodiles (even at night !) during the cruise, we saw some groups of Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*). It's possible we saw an African Manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*) just under a camp called : Niger car.

During this cruise we had a 2 and half hour walk in the park in front of the village called Karekopto. We spotted : 6 kobs (*Kobus kob*), 1 Southern reedbuck (*Redunca arundinum*), 1 group of Anubis baboons (*Papio anubis*), 2 Roan antelopes (*Hippotragus equinus*), 2 Patas monkeys (*Cercopithecus patas*), 5 African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*), 4 Striped Ground Squirrels (*Xerus erythropus*), and many tracks (porcupine, buffalo, elephant, antelopes...).

After the cruise we had 4 days in the only hotel in the park, la Tapoa.

During two driving safaris (The first one in the morning and the second in the last afternoon) we saw groups of Anubis baboons (*Papio anubis*), 2 + 2 Warthog (*Phacochoerus africanus*), one herd of African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*), kobs (*Kobus kob*), 1 Striped Ground Squirrel (*Xerus erythropus*), 3 African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*), groups of Patas monkeys (*Cercopithecus patas*), 2 Bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*) and 1 Jackal sp.

One morning safari walk : Patas monkeys (*Cercopithecus patas*), Defassa waterbucks (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*), many different footprints and droppings (genet, jackal, antelopes, elephant...)

We spent the end of an afternoon with an armed ranger in a watchtower on a ridge of the la Tapoa River : very good observations of Kob (*Kobus kob*), Defassa waterbucks (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*), Bushbucks (*Tragelaphus scriptus*), African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*), Vervet monkeys (*Cercopithecus aethiops tantalus*) with crocodiles, Patas monkeys (*Cercopithecus patas*), one Slender mongoose (*Herpestes sanguinea*).

At night from the hotel we had a good view with our headlights of Common Genet (*Genetta genetta*).



Common Genet

We booked a night drive accompanied by an armed ranger and a driver : Oumar used a very powerful light. The driver went too fast, but despite this, we spotted one Common Genet (*Genetta genetta*), one African civet (*Civettictis civetta*), some Bushbabies sp, Kobs (*Kobus kob*), and one Bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*) ; we made very good observations of an African wildcat (*Felis silvestris lybica*), a Side-striped Jackal (*Canis adustus*), a Common Duiker (*Sylvicapra grimmia*).



African wildcat



Common Duiker

During our stay in la Tapoa people saw 4 cheetahs and, not far away from the hotel, 2 lions.

Before boarding the plane in Niamey, we drove to Kouré to see giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis*): the herd of 250 of them is increasing but live in millet and sorghum fields! As a consequence there are problems. What's the future for the last giraffes of West Africa?

We didn't have enough time to visit the flying foxes of Niamey: we only saw many of them flying at night, accompanied with other species of bats.

If the density of animals is not important, W park has good opportunities to see some mammals. Note that night drives and accompanied walks are a plus for this park.

List of 23 mammals:

- African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*)
- African civet (*Civettictis civetta*)
- African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*)
- African wildcat (*Felis silvestris lybica*)
- Anubis Baboon (*Papio anubis*)
- Bush baby sp
- Bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*)
- Common Duiker (*Sylvicapra grimmia*)
- Common Genet (*Genetta genetta*)
- Defassa waterbuck (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus*)
- Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*)

Giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*)  
Kob (*Kobus kob*)  
Oribis (*Ourebia ourebi*)  
Patas monkey (*Cercopithecus patas*)  
Redunca arundinum (*southern reedbuck*)  
Roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*)  
Side-striped Jackal (*Canis adustus*)  
Slender mongoose (*Herpestes sanguinea*)  
Southern reedbuck (*Redunca arundinum*)  
Striped Ground Squirrel (*Xerus erythropus*)  
Vervet Monkey (*Cercopithecus aethiops tantalus*)  
Warthog (*Phacochoerus africanus*)

I need some help identifying this species of a very little « mouse ».

