



Monday, June 14, 2010

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## Shenton Safaris - Newsletter archive

### September 2002

Greetings from the bush!

September is already here. The huge colonies of carmine bee-eaters have arrived and are busy nesting in the banks of the Luangwa river.

Our evergreens such as the lilac, ebony, sausage and Natal mahogany trees are all changing their leaves and flowering. Game concentrations along the riverine areas are staggering. Everywhere you look, there are buffalo, zebra, impala, puku, and elephant, while giraffe, kudu, bushbuck and their predators are easy to find too.



Although it has warmed up (32 deg C/midday) there is a continuous breeze blowing off the river which helps to cool things off. This wind carries on into October before the final build up to the rains in November. We are all hoping that this wet-season will not be affected by 'El Nino'. While Zambia is short of food due to patchy rains last year, it is not as badly affected as some of our closest neighbours.

As always at this time of year, the game viewing just gets better and better. Guests who arrived yesterday were able to see elephants crossing the Luangwa river, a buffalo bull wallowing at the edge, hippo, croc kudu, giraffe and a lioness drinking, all from the 'deck' or platform at Kaingo Camp.

The wake-up drums are beaten at 5.15am these days, as sunrise is before 6.00. But the early start usually pays off in terms of predator activity and there is scarcely a drive or walk that does not yield a sighting.

We have at last been given the 'green light' from ZAWA (National arks) to build our elephant hide down-river from Kaingo, close to their regular crossing point. We will be able to watch the elephants cross and then mud/sand-bath from the safety of this tree hide - a sturdy platform 4m high off the ground.

Another warm season option at Kaingo is to take a dip in the Luangwa's healing and refreshing waters protected by a strong croc proof wire-mesh fence. Nothing can touch the feeling of cooling off at eyelevel to basking hippos - drink in hand. (100% safe).

Mwamba has been particularly popular this season with most of our visitors opting for a night or two in this comfortable bush camp while experiencing the walks and drives in the area. The main attractions are the Cookson's wildebeest, eland, buffalo elephant and the very vocal Mwamba lions. The resident leopard is also losing her shyness.

### Recent game viewing highlights:

- hooded vulture nesting in the ebony grove near Kaingo (the hooded vulture lays one egg and

incubates for 54 days).

- Mwamba lion pride - the four classic dark maned males feeding noisily on a buffalo kill.
- two leopards on an impala in the ebony grove.
- marsh owl, black bellied koran, stork fishing parties
- some excellent serval cat sightings
- side-striped jackal on lion plain
- two hundred hippos counted at the hippo hide corner

Well, that's it for now; time for an afternoon drive. Until next time, wishing you all the best .

*Salani bwino (stay well)*

*Derek Shenton*

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