

# Gabon – Africa's Last Eden

## Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

### Outline itinerary

<b>Day 1</b>	Depart London; arrive Libreville & overnight
<b>Day 2</b>	Transfer to Ndjolé
<b>Day 3/4</b>	Lopé National Park.
<b>Day 5</b>	Transfer to Lambaréné
<b>Day 6</b>	Lambaréné – Cultural & Birdwatching excursions
<b>Day 7</b>	Transfer to Loango National Park
<b>Day 8/10</b>	Loango National Park
<b>Day 11</b>	Transfer Port Gentil & fly Libreville
<b>Day 12/13</b>	Nyonié Camp
<b>Day 14</b>	Visit Libreville city; depart
<b>Day 15</b>	Arrive London

### Departs

August to October

### Focus

Mammals and Birds predominantly; some culture

### Grading

Grade B

### Dates and Prices

Visit [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk) (tour code GAB02).

### Highlights

- Tracking for Western Lowland Gorilla
- Enjoy excellent forest birding
- Visit the Albert Schweitzer Museum
- Stay in the heart of the remote Loango National Park



Western Lowland Gorilla, Pel's Fishing Owl, Forest Elephants



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## Introduction

In September 2002, the President of the Gabonese Republic announced the creation of 13 national parks that would cover over 30,000 square kilometres or 11% of the country's land surface. This historic event was a huge leap forward in the protection of the Congolese rainforests and pristine coastal wetlands that still clothe this small West African country, home to Forest Elephants, Sitatunga, numerous birds and numerous large primates, in particular Lowland Gorilla, Mandrill and Chimpanzee. A high standard of living maintained by an active petroleum industry has resulted in less pressure on the country's other natural resources, such as timber, and therefore much of Gabon's forest and wildlife remains relatively intact.



This tour will introduce you to a country little visited by tourists, but one that is well suited to the wildlife enthusiast. You will be one of very few to discover the wealth of wildlife that is found here and discover at first hand why Gabon is referred to as 'Africa's Last Eden'.

Our journey begins in Gabon's capital of Libreville, before we venture on a drive eastwards to Lopé National Park. With two nights here to discover the park's plentiful, but often, hidden wildlife, we then track south-west to the heart of the country, spending two nights in Lambaréné where we will embrace the country's cultural highlights, in particular, the Albert Schweitzer Hospital and museum. There is also much more on offer, with a myriad of inland freshwater waterbodies to explore by boat for the abundant wildlife that resides here. What is by far the most exciting part of our pioneering journey through this West African country will be staying at two remote lodges in Loango National Park, home to an assortment of stunning wildlife. Here, we have the opportunity to track for Western Lowland Gorilla. A habituated family roam here and, with specialist assistance, we hope to spend a short time with these gentle forest giants. The park also has plentiful Forest Elephants and some exquisite birds, including large flocks of Rosy Bee-eaters and the highly sought-after African River Martin – our arrival should coincide with the start of their nesting season and could prove to be the avian highlight of the holiday! Lastly, we will visit Nyonié Camp and Pongara National Park close to Libreville, before spending our final day taking in the city life of Gabon's capital.



## Itinerary

*NB. Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.*

### Day 1

### Depart London; arrive Libreville

We depart from Heathrow Airport this morning to Libreville, the capital of Gabon (normally on an Air France flight via Paris). On exiting the airport, we will meet our local guide and drivers before being transported to a nearby airport hotel, ready for our long transfer towards Lopé National Park the following day.

The transit time in Paris is roughly two hours, but to save the rush of an airport transfer, if you would like to fly to Paris the day before and overnight at an airport hotel, we can make arrangements for this.

### Day 2

### Transfer to Ndjolé

Following breakfast, we will start the long drive towards Lopé National Park, which we will reach tomorrow.



Broad-billed Roller

Our route will eventually take us alongside the mighty Ogooué River, passing through a patchwork of forests and grasslands dotted with small villages. Following a picnic lunch at a shady spot, where we might find our first primates and hornbills, amongst a host of other colourful birds, such as rollers and weavers.

We will make a stop at the equator line near Kango and at Mboka A Nzambe, a traditional village where Bwiti, the ancestral rite of Gabon is practised. It is primarily a tradition of the Fang people of Central Africa, a merge between a religion and spiritual movement that grew out of a secret society of the same name, and is based on the premise that its members can connect with their ancestors.

The journey of 230km (140 miles) to Ndjolé will take much of the day (likely around seven hours of driving plus stops), and we'll overnight at a simple, but comfortable hotel. This is a site famous for its markets, and the riverbanks at Ndjolé can be a good location to search for Grey Pratincole, though we must count ourselves lucky to spot this enigmatic bird.

### Days 3 – 4

### Lopé National Park

This morning, we will cover the remaining distance to Lopé National Park (roughly 120 km/75 miles), which will take us much of the morning. Our hotel is the famous La Lopé Hotel, which we hope to arrive at around late morning and, after checking into our comfortable air-conditioned bungalows, will spend the remaining hours of daylight exploring the hotel's wildlife-rich surroundings.



La Lopé Hotel is situated on a wide plain alongside the Ogooué River, just outside the National Park, surrounded by a large garden and small forest glades. Within these mixed habitats we should find an interesting selection of birds including Vieillot's Black, Orange and Village Weavers, plus a variety of colourful sunbirds such as Collared, Copper and Green-headed Sunbirds. White-headed Lapwing are a common sight along the riverbank with Rock Pratincoles hawking for insects overhead. If fortunate we may even find Spot-necked Otter.

The primary forests and grassy plains of La Lopé National Park cover a staggering 5,360 Square kilometres and are a designated World Heritage Site. They are home to 400 of Gabon's 680 species of bird and over 1,500 species of plant. Between 3,000 to 5,000 Western Lowland Gorillas live in the towering forests alongside an estimated 1,350 Mandrills and a healthy population of Chimpanzees! Please note, however,



African Forest Elephants

that whilst Gabon holds one of the largest populations of apes left in Africa, groups have yet to be fully habituated to humans and so are shy and tricky to observe here. They roam the forest and can be very difficult to locate.

More likely mammalian encounters will include Forest Elephant, Forest Buffalo, families of Red River Hogs and a diverse selection of monkeys including Greater Putty-nosed Monkey, Moustached Monkey and Black Colobus.

The birding here can be excellent and amongst the range of forest-dwelling species, some of the more visible species may include the incredible Lyre-tailed Honeyguide undertaking it's aerial display flight, the distinctive Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill, Reichenbach's Sunbird and, in the evening, the possibility of a Bate's Nightjar, while along the various waterways, classic African species such as African Skimmer, Water Thick-Knee and an assortment of kingfishers, in particular the Shining Blue Kingfisher, may show.

During our time at Lopé, we will take a an optional 3-hour hike (an elevation gain of 300 metres/ 985 feet over a distance of around 5km/3 miles on somewhat rough terrain) up to Mont Brazza to view the park from a different angle. As we ascend during the morning through the savannah-like habitat, plenty of grassland birds will be on offer, especially cisticolas, weavers, widowbirds, with raptors overhead including Crowned Eagle and possibly Ayre's Hawk-eagle or Chestnut-flanked Sparrowhawk.



Lopé National Park

When we are not walking, we will explore La Lopé's patchwork of habitats by open, safari style 4WD land cruisers.

## Day 5

## Transfer to Lambaréné

Today will prove to be an early start in order to make good progress towards the town of Lambaréné. This town is famous for the Albert Schweitzer Hospital, built by the German doctor in the early 20th century to treat tropical diseases. During our time here we will have the opportunity to visit the museum and view the



Albert Schweitzer Museum

many artefacts within, plus explore the outskirts of the town and its many waterbodies by boat.

The journey from Lopé could take around seven hours (155 miles/250km), although we will allow time for stops along the journey to maximise our wildlife viewing, and also have lunch in a small town en route.

Arriving at Lambaréné, once we have dropped our bags off at the hotel, we will pay a visit to the Albert

Schweitzer hospital and museum. Schweitzer won a Nobel prize for his work here on diseases and went on to found a leper colony, to care for those suffering from this awful condition. Both areas will prove to be a fascinating insight into the doctor's work as we will have the opportunity to see the original equipment, hospital beds and other items used since its opening in 1913. The gardens here may also prove worthy of a search, as Black-winged Oriole are usually present. We will end the day close to the Ogooué River, close to the water's edge in the hope of a passing bat or nightjar.

## Day 6

## Lake Onangué

After breakfast, we will make our way to Gabon's largest freshwater lake – Lake Onangué. Here, we will board a motorised vessel and spend a morning navigating the lake's many channels and larger open spaces where we could expect that birds will be present in large numbers. The lake also supports a small population of Hippos.

In Africa, where water is involved, there is always a variety of herons and egrets: Goliath and Black-headed Herons, and, Great White, Intermediate and Western Cattle Egrets are all frequently on the water edges, African Jacanas and perhaps a variety of crakes and rails will also be seen. Overhead, birds of prey will be apparent, as will hirundines and, although unlikely in this region, this could well prove to be our first opportunity of

glimpsing the lovely African River Martin. Blue-breasted and Little Bee-eaters and Broad-billed Roller hunt for insects along the water's edge and there will also be kingfishers, especially Pied and Malachite



Malachite Kingfisher

Kingfishers. This will certainly be a time to observe a wonderful array of birds, whilst navigating this pristine lake.

In the afternoon, we have a guided excursion of a cocoa plantation and learn all about this small-scale industry. This industry is slowly dying out due to the government's strict protection of the country's primary forests and untouched habitats, and the plantation we visit will be at the forefront of a project that sets out to improve the productivity of cocoa farms and encouraging agroforestry for a high quality and sustainable cocoa production without deforestation.

We also aim to visit the 'bat bridge' in Lambaréné. This site is home to a large colony of Egyptian Rousette Bats, and we will spend time admiring this colony before commencing the short journey back to our hotel.

## Day 7

## Transfer to Loango National Park

After breakfast, we will begin our adventurous journey to Gabon's most famous national park. The first five hours of the journey will be by motorised boat, travelling down the Ogooué observing the rivers' lush, vegetated riverbanks.



African Finfoot

As we approach the narrower channels, we may be able to spot the rare Hartlaub's Duck, plus African Finfoot, White-crested Tiger Heron and several species of kingfisher, including the rare White-bellied Kingfisher. With luck we may also come across a family of Spot-necked Otter or the Slender-snouted Crocodile.

Our final part of the journey to Loango will be by car, which will take a couple of hours on moderate tracks, and will see us arrive at our overnight accommodation at Ndola Camp.

Situated along Gabon's Atlantic coastline, Loango National Park, approximately 1500 km<sup>2</sup> in size has numerous habitats, whether this is coastline comprising sandy beaches, lush forest, wetlands and savannah. Due to this, the park has a fantastic number of mammals and birds, many of which we hope to encounter during our four days here. We will be spending one night at Ndola Camp and a further three nights at Akaka Camp, both situated in the heart of the forest.

## Days 8 – 10

## Loango National Park

The next day we will make our way towards Akaka Camp – a small camp set in one of the richest parts of the park. From here, we will depart in a southerly direction through the forest, papyrus swamps, floodplains and open lagoons which offer excellent mammal-watching opportunities. Here we have a good chance of



close encounters, with Forest Elephant or Forest Buffalo possibly even bathing in the river. Hippo, plenty of birds and a selection of monkeys, including Red-capped Mangabey, while Moustached and Crowned Monkeys, are also frequently observed. Akaka is set in a forest clearing in one of the remotest parts of the National Park and home to a wealth of animal and bird life. These include such difficult to locate species as Long-tailed Hawk, Black-headed Bee-eater, Black Dwarf Hornbill, African Forest Flycatcher, Bates Paradise-Flycatcher and Carmelite Sunbird. On one day we will take a trip to a nearby small island, home to one of the few known breeding sites of the extremely localised Loango Weaver. We may, however, need a bit of patience here for it can take some searching through the large numbers of nesting Slender-billed and Village Weavers to locate this elusive bird. We might then continue to the river mouth where we can expect to find a large selection of waterbirds including roosting African Skimmers, several species of tern including the small Damara Tern and the large Caspian Tern, and numerous waders and egrets.



Red-capped Mangabey

The highlight of our stay in the park will be to track, and hopefully spend some time observing, the Western Lowland Gorilla. A habituated family of gorillas will be tracked and we will very much hope for sightings of this gentle forest giant. **Please note a maximum number of four can visit the gorillas at any one time, so the tracking will be split over two visits if we have a full group.**

During the late summer and early autumn months Loango is also the scene of one of the world's most spectacular avian phenomenon, the massing during late afternoon, of literally tens of thousands of African River Martins and Rosy Bee-eaters; a spectacle that needs to be seen, and heard, to be believed! The former



Senegal Lapwing

we will spend time in trying to locate, as their distinctive red bills and red eyes, set against a black head and body, is something be desired by all wildlife enthusiasts. Please note that while we are travelling at an appropriate time of year to witness this spectacle, we can't guarantee the behaviour of the birds on any given day and numbers could be lower than anticipated.

On another day we will take a boat trip across the lagoon situated in front of the lodge into the national park. Here we will board 4WD open land cruisers and explore the vast grasslands and forest patches home to the uncommon Forbes' Plover and Senegal Lapwing, plus a variety of hornbills, swallows and finches. Forest Buffalos often forage in large groups here, but we will be especially on the lookout for the rare and secretive Sitatunga, one of the most attractive of Africa's antelopes.



Finally, for those who wish, we will also arrange a night excursion in search of some of Gabon's more nocturnal inhabitants including up the 3 different species of Crocodile - Nile, Dwarf and Long-snouted. Plus, a reasonable chance of finding both the Pel's and Vermiculated Fishing Owls which patrol the rivers at night. Suffice to say, a thermal image camera will be very helpful here. A thermal camera may also assist us in locating the mythical Giant Pangolin... , and our dedicated tour leaders will be searching for such species during our time here.

African Dwarf Crocodile



## Day 11

## Transfer Loango to Libreville

This morning, after a gentle wander from the camp to search for species we may yet not have encountered, we will sadly depart Loango and make our way to Port Gentil and catch a short flight back to Libreville, a journey of around six hours by boat and road.

Upon arriving, we will be transferred to our hotel where we have the remainder of the day to relax and unwind from our journey so far. As our hotel is close to the beach, some may wish to go for a gentle stroll along the beach front, or, set up a telescope and scan for seabirds. Although few and far between, especially in our summer, there could well be a shearwater or skua lingering offshore. Quieter sections of the beach may have some waders and we should be on the lookout for White-fronted Plover.

## Day 12

## Nyonié Camp

Today we will travel by boat and jeep to Nyonié Camp, situated near Pongara National Park, a designated RAMSAR site to the south of Libreville, on the shores of the Gabon Estuary. The park is a mix of forests,



Fiery-breasted Bushshrike

savannah, mangroves and beaches, with a surprising diversity of birds, primates and plants, which we will explore during an afternoon safari drive. Small herds of Forest Elephants, Buffalo and Red River Hog live here, along with more elusive species such as chimpanzees, mandrills and leopards. Bird species that are found here include Black-headed Coucal, Gabon Woodpecker, Fan-tailed Grassbird, Green Hylia,

bee-eaters, shrike-flycatchers, sunbirds, cuckoos, egrets and waders, with many migratory birds being found along the waterfront.

Our simple, but comfortable camp is located on the coast, and there is wildlife right on the doorstep; occasionally elephant or hippo wander through the surf off the

beach. During the summer and early autumn months, migratory whales and dolphins arrive to breed off the coast, with Humpbacks being the most likely species. It's also an important breeding site for sea turtles, although they typically come ashore to lay eggs during the winter months, so we are less likely to see these during our visit.



Humpback tail

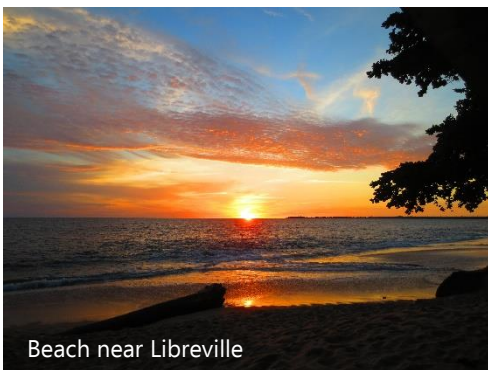
## Day 13

## Nyonié Camp

This morning, we will further explore Pongara National Park, with a walking safari or trek, although there is also the option to relax at the beach for those who would prefer. Being on foot will allow us to hear the various bird and animal calls. We may spot buffalo wandering along the beach, find a small troop of monkeys in the tree tops, watch wading birds scurry along the surf line or locate a Yellow-billed Turaco by its noisy call that echoes through the forest. We will return to be camp for lunch before we make our way back to Libreville and overnight.

## Day 14

## Libreville



Beach near Libreville

After a leisurely breakfast, to round off our tour of Gabon, today will see us have a city tour of the country's capital. With plenty of time to negotiate the hustle and bustle of Libreville's streets, one can go about a spot of shopping at the traditional markets to buy souvenirs or generally soak in the lively atmosphere of this coastal town. After a stop for lunch, we will make a timely journey back to the hotel to freshen up, before driving to the airport, ready for our flight home.

## Day 15

## Arrive London

Following a change of aircraft in Paris, our flight is due to arrive back into London's Heathrow Airport.

## Optional Mamidi Extension

There is the option to extend your time in Gabon, with some additional days in the east of the country. Here there would be another opportunity to track for gorillas, but also the chance to track for Mandrill. Covering a range of forest and savannah habitat, we'll find a slightly different range of birds and mammals compared to the west of the country, and will also include the impressive caverns at Lastoursville, with their vaulted roofs.

### Day 14

### Transfer Bambidie

This morning, we leave the departing group and take a flight across the country to Franceville, where we pick up a road transfer to Bambidie Forest. The drive time is around four hours, so we will arrive during the afternoon. A stop for lunch and an opportunity to look out over the Bateke Plateau, an area of sandstone outcrops which lies on the border between Gabon and the Republic of Congo, will be incorporated into the journey.

### Days 15 & 16

### Mamidi

Today we journey to Mamidi Forest Camp. We will find out more about the local industries and visit the village of Mamidi. This area is also part of a forest management scheme, and we will find out more about



Western Lowland Gorilla

this too. If there is time, we will take a short walk along a botanical trail. Weather permitting, we will head out on a night safari this evening. The forest is home to elephants, antelope and chimpanzees, as well as a wide range of birds, amphibians, reptiles and insects.

The following morning we have another opportunity to trek for gorillas. This is for Western Lowland Gorilla, the subspecies of Western Gorilla that is found in Gabon. Most

treks are between 3 – 5 miles in length, taking around four hours, including the observation time with the family. Gorilla here are known to favour a type of aquatic plant and will often frequent areas where this can be found.

During the heat of the day, there will be a chance to relax at camp, or perhaps swim in a nearby river. In the late afternoon, we will head out again on an evening/night safari.



## Day 17

## Transfer Bambidie

In the morning, we will set out on foot for a couple of hours to explore the forests around the camp, in search of any new species that may be around. Possible birds include turacos, hornbills, doves, tinkerbirds, flycatchers and woodpeckers. After lunch, we will head to the south of the forest concession for a 4WD excursion, which will include stops at one of the old forest camps, the 'Elephant Pool' in the savannah and at the Marshall Bridge salt spring. We'll arrive at the forest base in Bambidie in time for dinner.

## Day 18

## Transfer Moanda

Today we retrace our route from Bambidie back towards Moanda, however we will take a detour to visit the Lastoursville caves, as series of 35 caverns in the dolomite rock formation set amidst dense primary forest that is found around the town. We will visit either the Lihouma section or the Kessipoghon area, depending on who our local village guide is. Traces of human activity here date back over 7,000 years, making them of significant geological and cultural interest. They are also home to thousands of roosting bats of several different species.

From here, we return to Moanda, with the option to visit a mining facility if anyone is interested.

## Day 19

## Ledeki & return Libreville

An early start this morning will allow us to arrive at Ledeki Park in order to join a Mandrill trek. Views of these amazing primates can't be guaranteed, however there is a good success rate of seeing them here. During our trek we may also come across buffalo, antelope and a variety of forest birds.

There will be the option to transverse a suspended 350 metre-long canopy walkway, allowing for a closer look at the treetops. We may spot some of the 250 or so bird species found in this forest, including Gray-headed Nigrita, Congo Pied Hornbill, Black Goshawk, Bronze Mannikin, Copper Sunbird and Yellow-billed Turaco.



Following a final lunch in this part of the country, we will return to Franceville for a flight back to Libreville, where we will overnight.

## Day 20

## Libreville & depart

After a leisurely breakfast, to round off our tour to Gabon, today will see us have a city tour of the country's capital. With plenty of time to negotiate the hustle and bustle of Libreville's streets, one can go about a spot of shopping at the traditional markets to buy souvenirs or generally soak in the lively atmosphere of

this coastal town. After a stop for lunch, we will make a timely journey back to the hotel to freshen up, before driving to the airport, ready for our flight home.

## Day 21

## Arrive UK

Following a change of aircraft in Paris, our flight is due to arrive back into London's Heathrow Airport, typically around mid-morning.

The extension cost is from £3,795.00 per person, depending on group size. Please contact the Naturetrek office for further information.

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Images courtesy of Shutterstock

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## Grading

**Grade B** – the walking is easy to moderately difficult at times. There is no major trekking on tour, but there will be plenty of daytime walks in a range of Gabon's varied habitat types. The most difficult walks will be those in search of gorillas. All walks are optional and taken at a leisurely pace, but they will often be on forest trails over hilly and forested terrain, and in hot, humid conditions. As such, the tropical climate coupled with the basic nature of the local infrastructure and some of the accommodation in Loango, demand at least average fitness and an adventurous spirit! In Lopé, there will be an optional 3-hour walk/hike up Mont Brazza which gives a superb aerial view over Lopé National Park, but in the heat, may be strenuous.

On the extension, distances covered on foot some days will be around five to six miles, in forested and hilly terrain, so a reasonable level of fitness is required.

It is important that you are aware that roads in Gabon are often in very poor condition (in places more pothole than road!), so it can take time to cover even short distances in some areas. There are a number of lengthy journeys involved in the tour, in order to get to the different parts of the country. Stops will be taken along the way, but these journeys can be very tiring and somewhat uncomfortable, especially in the heat and if it's bumpy. There aren't service stations, so we may need to be prepared for 'bush bathrooms' at times.

Particularly at Lake Onangué, the boat trip will be in local style wooden boats with plank seats that are open to the elements, and boats for the other boat trips and journeys will also be fairly basic in nature, designed for function rather than comfort!

International tourism is still relatively new to Gabon and as there isn't a lot of infrastructure in place for this, so a sense of adventure, being prepared to expect the unexpected and having the flexibility to cope with some changes are key to getting the most out of this tour.

## Focus

This is a mixed focus tour, primarily looking for Gabon's mammals and diverse range of birds, although your tour guide will also be keen on pointing out any reptiles, amphibians and other wildlife you find along the way.

You will need to appreciate that tropical mammals, particularly in the forests, can be shy and retiring, present in low densities and some are crepuscular or nocturnal in nature. Although this tour spends time and effort in looking for exciting and iconic mammal species, potential participants should be aware that a significant proportion of the time will be spent birdwatching (alert to other wildlife at all times of course), as birds are the most conspicuous members of the local fauna.

Although we expect to see a good cross-section of Gabon's avifauna, including a variety of regional specialties, birding in tropical habitats is challenging and can be quite frustrating at times. There may be days when most birds seem to have disappeared, but such days should be compensated for by other memorable encounters.

**NB. In short, this tour focuses on birds and mammals. If you are interested in birds AND mammals, you are likely to enjoy it. If you are interested in birds but not mammals, or mammals but not birds, you are unlikely to enjoy this tour and it is probably not for you. Further, since the success of our group holidays relies heavily on like-minded participants being able to enjoy a shared interest in each holiday's advertised focus, should you choose to join this one without an interest in both birds and mammals, our fear would be that not only might you compromise your own enjoyment of this holiday, but also that of others. Please do give us a call if you would like to discuss!**

## UK/Paris/Libreville Flights

The airline connection time in Paris for this holiday is reasonably tight with just over two hours available to change aircraft. This is a valid Air France connection, but as there is only one flight to Libreville daily, any delay out of the UK resulting in missing the onward connection in Paris could seriously disrupt the tour. We therefore suggest that group members consider flying out to Paris the afternoon or evening before the start of the tour and stopping overnight at an airport hotel a short distance from Charles de Gaulle Airport. This would allow for a more leisurely start to the holiday and also negates the need for a very early start from the UK. Although you are very welcome to book your own hotel room over the internet, we are also very happy to arrange this additional night for you. A night (room only) at the Ibis Hotel at Charles de Gaulle Airport costs around £110 per room.

**NB: If you decide to fly out to Paris the night before - whether or not you opt to reserve your own room - please could we ask you to contact the Naturetrek office so we can amend your outbound flight.**



## Weather

Gabon's climate is equatorial and tropical with hot and humid conditions prevailing throughout the year. Temperatures typically average around 25-30°C with a humidity of around 85%. In August to October, you should expect, and pack for, the occasional rain shower although this tends to take the form of short sharp showers and we do not foresee this disrupting the itinerary to any degree. We will be visiting at the end of the dry season, so rainfall has the potential to increase throughout the holiday.

## Gorilla Tracking

At least one opportunity per person to track Western Lowland Gorillas from Akaka Camp is planned for the tour. Please note that whilst every effort is made, gorilla viewing is not guaranteed and depends on weather and tracking conditions, as well as the whereabouts of the habituated group. Sightings, however, are fairly reliable. Please also note that guests displaying cold, flu or other respiratory tract symptoms will NOT be allowed to track gorillas. Guests will also be asked to complete a Gorilla viewing vaccination protocol (paper exercise), and to provide evidence of Measles and Polio vaccinations, and confirm they do not have active tuberculosis (TB) infection.

Please note the price of the gorilla permits may increase from 350 euros, to 750 euros. The cost of the permits is included in the overall tour cost at their current price, but, if the permits increase in price, we will have to ask for the additional 400 euros.

When tracking the gorillas, it will be in group sizes of no more than four participants and only in the morning, therefore, we have two days when the gorillas is scheduled to allow the entire group to go tracking.

Gorilla tracking is an optional excursion, and it would be helpful to know before the tour whether you wish to take part in this activity.

## Great Ape Health

Due to the potential risk of transmitting human diseases to primates, the authorities of Gabon insist that you are vaccinated against the following diseases prior to travel: Polio, tetanus, Hepatitis A and yellow fever.

## Group size

The maximum number of clients on this tour will be seven. You will also be accompanied by a Naturetrek tour leader, as well as the local guide/drivers.

## Food & accommodation

All accommodation and meals are included in the cost of this holiday when in Gabon. Accommodation is a mix of comfortable lodges, tented camps and hotels. All rooms have private facilities.

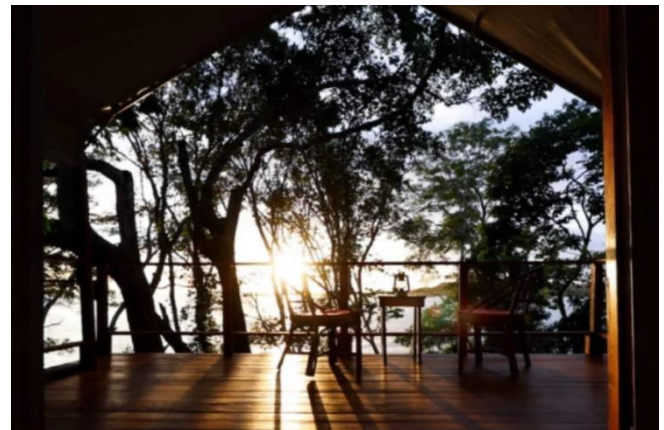
**Please note, in Loango National Park, there is no single occupancy, therefore, you will have to share with one other participant or the UK leader.**



Lopé Hotel – one of the site's bungalows



Ndola Camp



## Akaka Camp, Loango NP

We will have three nights at the remote, yet, beautifully situated, Akaka Camp. One of three satellite camps within Loango National Park, all five of Akaka's safari tents are mounted on platforms and are outfitted with two single beds along with an ensuite bathroom with a shower that faces the forest. The camp is situated approximately 60kms away from Loango's hub, so this is a remote site but will most likely be the highlight of our time in Gabon.

## Gabon Visa/Other Health Requirements

As of May 2024, UK nationals need a Visa to enter Gabon. Our Gabonese partners will sort this for us, but we do require a few details closer to the time of departure. A yellow fever certificate is also compulsory for entry into the country, whilst a rabies vaccine is recommended.

## Your safety & security

You have chosen to travel to Gabon. Risks to your safety and security are an unavoidable aspect of all travel and the best current advice on such risks is provided for you by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination, it is essential that you refer to the Foreign Office website – <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/gabon>

## How to book your place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk), or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website. Please stipulate any special requirements, for example extension requests or connecting/regional flights, at the time of booking.