

Zambia's South Luangwa NP

Naturetrek Tour Report

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Report kindly compiled by a client



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After a long, but uneventful, journey from the UK to Lusaka we were somewhat daunted by the length of the queues at immigration and passport control, especially as there were less than two hours to our onward flight to Mfuwe with Proflight. Fortunately, we were rescued by a very helpful Proflight employee, Jack, who moved us to the short “diplomats” queue, collected our baggage tags and baggage off our flight from Dubai and escorted us to the Proflight check-in. We were all 2kgs+ over the Proflight weight limit but Jack steered us through without us having to repack. The short (1 hour) flight to Mfuwe was in a small (30-seater) turbo-prop aircraft. The reason for the Proflight baggage restriction is not really concern for the weight but the size of the cabin baggage. There was no overhead storage and even a medium-sized rucksack would hardly fit under the seat. The pilot steered us through some impressive rain clouds to an early safe landing at Mfuwe airport, where we were met by David from Kafunta Lodge for the short journey over (mostly) good roads to the Lodge. After settling into our rooms and freshening up we enjoyed the first of many excellent meals at the Lodge. We four ladies were delighted to find we were the only guests at the Lodge and would have it to ourselves for 4 days.

The staff at the Lodge were amazing, so pleasant and helpful. It was an interesting novelty to be summoned to our meals by a drummer and to be escorted to dinner by a guard with a torch. Everyone was so friendly and anxious to ensure we were having a great time.

The rooms at the Lodge are spacious and well-equipped with fridge and tea/coffee making facilities, armchairs and small table and lots of shelf space with a balcony outside. An ample mosquito net protects the beds and there is a ceiling fan and standing electric fan to cool the room at night. Both were necessary as it was usually 30°C + during the day. The bathroom also was spacious with a shower and, in addition to the usual toiletries, an insect-repellent lotion was provided. One room came provided with a Treefrog, a Praying Mantis and a House Gecko. Other rooms were en route for the nocturnal hippo trudge from the lagoon to the bushes behind the Lodge. The light sleepers complained of hippo grunts in the night but they didn't hear the elephants walk through the grounds. A troupe of Vervet Monkeys were day-time visitors as were a few Nile Monitor lizards.

Our days started at 5.30 am with a light breakfast and then into the safari vehicle at 6.00am. The plain in front of the Lodge was still too wet for us to be able to drive to the pontoon to cross the Luangwa river into the park. Instead, we had a 20 km drive back along the access road to the Lodge to the main road leading into the park. This was not, however, a drawback as many bird species were seen along these roads which were not seen elsewhere and this part of the drive yielded night-time sightings of amongst other things Spotted Hyenas, a Bushbaby, White-tailed Mongoose, Large-spotted Genet and a Pearl-Spotted Owlet. Our morning safari lasted until about 10.30am when we returned to the Lodge for brunch at 11.00am. By about 12.00 it was very hot and time for a siesta or a swim in the excellent pool. Afternoon tea was at 3.30pm and we were back in the vehicle at 4.00pm for the afternoon/night drive. A stop for a sundowner marked the transition from day to night and we spent about two hours searching for wildlife with a spotlight. Our spotter, John, was so good he even saw a green chameleon in a green bush! We were usually back at the Lodge at 7.30pm for dinner at 8.00pm. The meals were uniformly excellent, varied and imaginative, and the vegetarian options equally so.

The first two days were sunny and hot to very hot. We could see great thunderclouds building up in the distance and were treated to some spectacular sunsets. In the last hour of the evening of our second day, there was a heavy rainstorm but we were all prepared and were well sheltered in the jeep. The next day was cooler and

cloudy in the morning and it rained during siesta time but then cleared. On the following day sightings were slow until 9.30am attributable to the cloudy weather. This cleared in the afternoon. Apart from one sharp, short downpour at dinner-time one day, this was all the rain we had. The rest of the days were again hot and sunny.

Abel, our guide and driver, was excellent. He was wonderful at spotting and identifying all kinds of wildlife, very knowledgeable about animal behaviour and very patient in answering our questions and making sure we all saw and had good views of whatever it was we were meant to be looking at. In short, he was always good company. He excelled in finding two male lions asleep and half hidden under a bush in the middle of a large desolate looking grassland sprinkled with bushes and in spotting (together with John) a leopard in total darkness stalking an impala.

Our trip was very productive and we saw so much on each drive that it is difficult to recall the precise when and where of everything. We shall, therefore, just outline the highlights. First, felines. On our first afternoon drive what looked in the distance like a large lump on the side of the road got up and turned out to be a leopard. After a short stroll through the bushes, it emerged a few yards in front of our vehicle, walked slowly across the road, sprayed some bushes on the other side and slowly went on its way. We all got some great photos. The next day we saw in the distance a very muddy lion panting heavily in the heat having sated himself on a buffalo which had got stuck in the mud near the Luangwa Wafwa oxbow lake. After our sundowner not far away from our viewpoint, we came across a lioness with three cubs just a few yards from the track. We had wonderful spot-lit views as each of the cubs got up and went over to their mother to suckle. There was no-one else around – just us and the lioness and cubs. We saw the same group the next day not far from their original location and later had a distant viewing of a lioness dragging a small buffalo carcass through thick mud and up a bank to share with the group. There was another pride of lions located on the outskirts of a grassy plain. Puku were grazing peacefully since each of the lions were flat out on their backs sleeping off very full stomachs and stirring only occasionally. A few days later Abel managed to locate two adolescent male lions sleeping under a bush in the middle of a grassy plain near the Wamilombe Drive. The two brothers, known as Ginger and Garlic, lazily got up and with an air of sleepy discontent wandered up to and past our vehicle in search of a larger bush to flop under. It was amazing to see such powerful creatures so close.

There were numerous small herds of elephants, many with young, who allowed us to come near. We were able to watch them feeding on long grass by tearing it up at the roots and smacking it on their legs to get rid of the mud before eating it. We were so close we could hear the grass roots being pulled out of the ground. One of the young was still suckling and, after a feed, he and his mother walked just in front of our vehicle and he took the opportunity of misbehaving by rolling around in the mud and not keeping up with her. On another occasion, driving along a narrow track we rounded a bend to be confronted by a large bull elephant who was determined to show he had the right of way. He advanced towards us, with his ears splayed and shaking his head. Abel muttered, as he put the jeep into reverse, “He is not happy”. Neither were we until he went past us on his way.

The giraffe sub-species in the park, Thornicroft's Giraffe, is endemic to South Luangwa as is the zebra sub-species, Crawshaw's Zebra. We saw small groups of each on numerous occasions well scattered throughout the park and usually attended by Red-billed Oxpeckers. We always had very close viewings, particularly of the giraffes, who moved slowly across tracks in front of our vehicle. The grassy areas favoured by giraffes were also attractive to Warthogs and we encountered a number of family groups. Warthogs are quite hairy and have long,

thin brown manes. They were not very jittery and allowed our vehicle to approach within a few yards and showed off their mud-wallowing prowess and preference of feeding on grass by kneeling on their forelegs.

We did not see many hippos which was surprising as the area claims to have the highest concentration of them in southern Africa. Most of those we saw were submerged under the surface weed, usually water cabbage, in the lagoons. A few were spotted in the evening or at night in the bush and woodland areas near the Lodge where they graze at night. One mother with baby was seen but the usual view was of a large backside disappearing into the bushes.

Of course, there were many groups of antelopes in the park and surrounding area. The most common were the Impala with large groups of females guarded by a male who was constantly having to assert his position against other males. Whenever the vehicle stopped close, the whole group would look up at us with wide eyes and ears before settling down again to graze. Occasionally a few bachelor males were on their own chasing and sparring with each other. Next in number were the Puku. These antelopes are more robust than Impala and are about the size of a deer. They live in herds of up to 40 animals and were the antelope most seen grazing on the plain in front of the Lodge. Although common in South Luangwa, they are rare elsewhere. We saw quite a few Waterbuck, very sturdy, handsome animals who usually did not hang around to be photographed easily. One exception was a pair with a calf hidden in the long grass. The male considered that a determined stare would provide safety enough. We also saw a few Bushbuck, greater Kudu, one Cookson's Wildebeest and one nocturnal sighting of a Sharpe's Grysbok, our only "rare" animal.

Of the smaller mammals, we saw two groups of Banded Mongoose foraging in some fairly long grass, one group being watched intently from a safe distance by two Hamerkops hoping to catch some flushed insects. Tree squirrels were numerous but most small mammals were seen on the night drives.

There were good numbers of Yellow Baboons and Vervet Monkeys in the park, along the access roads and around the Lodge. It was amusing to see the baboons lying on their backs in the middle of the road being groomed by very intent companions. There were a lot of babies running around or riding on their mother's backs and generally getting into mischief. The baboons formed large troupes and frequented the bridge across the Luangwa and the roads within the park. The Vervet Monkeys stayed mainly amongst vegetation being seen climbing in leafy bushes or else in short grassy areas. Their babies were particularly cute especially when trying to size us up from the safety of their bush. One Vervet group hung around the Lodge running underneath the cabins and onto the balconies. One male scoped the breakfast buffet and made off with a cheese scone – not for the first time, we were told.

Both John and Abel succeeded in making our night drives very productive. In addition to the felines and chameleon, we saw lots of Scrub Hares, Large-spotted Genet (five individuals), Spotted Hyenas (three), Slender Mongoose, White-tailed Mongoose and a Four-toed Elephant Shrew as well as a number of nocturnal and crepuscular birds such as the Three-banded Courser, the Water Thick-knee, Verreaux's Eagle-Owl and a Pearl-spotted owl. An African Civet was spotted near the kitchen area of the Lodge as he was a regular visitor to that area.

Although this was a "Mammals" tour, we were all interested in birds and had some great close-up views of many of the park's inhabitants. For beauty, the dry land Kingfishers competed for first prize with the Little and White-

fronted Bee-eaters and the Lilac-breasted Rollers. Storks were the most abundant family with large groups of Yellow-billed Storks, African Openbills seen in company with Sacred Ibis, Hadada Ibis and African Spoonbills. A few Marabou Storks were around often near the lion kills in company with Hooded and African White-backed Vultures. Grey and Black-headed Herons and Great Egrets were commonly seen. Raptors such as the Brown and Western Banded Snake Eagle were frequently seen perched on top of electricity pylons as was a Martial Eagle. Blacksmith and White-crowned Lapwing were abundant and most days yielded views of Wood Sandpipers, Common Sandpipers, Greenshank, Black-winged Stilt and African Jacana in the lagoons in the park. The most common waterfowl were the Spur-winged Goose, Egyptian Goose, White-faced Whistling Duck and Knob-billed Duck.

Driving along the access roads we commonly saw large numbers of White-browed Sparrow Weavers, Ring-necked Doves, Emerald-spotted Wood Doves and Meve's Starlings fly up from the ground in front of the jeep to settle in nearby bushes. Red-billed Hornbills were commonly seen along the access road and one day yielded a flypast of about 50 Grey Hornbills one after the other. Two groups of the spectacular Southern Ground Hornbill were seen; one flushing insects in long grass and the other clambering up the trunk of a tree before flying away on huge wings. Apart from the White-browed Sparrow Weaver and the Red-billed Buffalo Weaver we saw very few other Weavers with just one sighting of a Lesser Masked Weaver, a Southern Masked Weaver and a Village Weaver. In contrast we had frequent sightings of the wonderful Shaft-tailed Paradise Whydah in full breeding plumage, generally perched on telephone wires. Blue Waxbills were numerous but only one Firefinch and one Variable Sunbird were seen.

Finally, reptiles. There were crocodiles seen on the banks of the Luangwa river but not in huge numbers. There was a crocodile feeding frenzy on a buffalo carcass in the Luangwa Wafwa oxbow lake which was soon broken up by a large male hippo who swam rapidly towards the group. After the rain early in the trip, a number of Nile Monitor lizards were seen walking through the undergrowth or part way up a tree. They were also seen in the Lodge grounds with a couple of very large specimens in the muddy areas near the Lodge.

All of which added up to a fantastic trip.

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Species Lists

Mammals

Four-toed Elephant Shrew *Petrodromus tetradactylus*. We were pleased to see this tiny animal in the middle of the road on a night-drive.

Warthog *Phacochoerus aethiopicus*. Fairly common in South Luangwa NP, with c5 seen daily. One was a youngster who appeared to be on his own, but there was, in fact, an adult in the vicinity not too far away.

Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius*. There are large populations of hippo in the Luangwa River but we didn't see any mass gatherings. Some Hippos were seen in temporary pools and lagoons, mostly hidden under water cabbage or other weed. Many Hippos left the river and lagoons and grazed during daylight. There was a Hippo pathway through the Lodge and at night a large Hippo bottom could sometimes be seen disappearing into the vegetation. At the Luangwa Wafwa ox bow lake, one large angry Hippo moved swiftly through the water to break up a crocodile feeding frenzy.

Thornicroft's Giraffe *Giraffa camelopardalis thornicrofti*. Good populations of this sub-species, which has a very restricted range, were present in South Luangwa, with 5-10 seen daily, with some groups having youngsters

Bushbuck *Tragelaphus scriptus*. We had sightings only on three days with just a few individuals.

Greater Kudu *Tragelaphus strepsiceros*. These elegant antelopes were seen only on one day, with a total of about five animals.

Common Waterbuck *Kobus ellipsiprymnus*. Very handsome males with characteristic white crescent shape on the rear. We saw these daily, mostly taking flight when we drew near but we had good views of a male and female standing guard over a calf which was sitting in the grass.

Puku *Kobus vardoni*. This species was the second most numerous antelope species in the park, with c 200 seen daily. They were typically found in grassy swards close to the river. There was always a herd in the plain facing the Lodge. Elsewhere they were content to share a plain with four overfed and over-sleepy lions.

Impala *Aepyceros melampus*. This was the most common antelope in the park with c200 seen daily, typically in bachelor herds, or large groups of does and young accompanied by a single buck.

Sharpe's Grysbok *Raphicerus sharpei* One individual was seen, albeit not very clearly, during a night drive. It is a small, shy antelope and grazes in the evenings and at night.

Cookson's Wildebeest *Connochaetes taurinus cooksoni*. This is a sub-species of the Common or Blue Wildebeest and is endemic to South Luangwa. It is lighter in colour than the Blue Wildebeest, and has very clear markings on the sides and face. Only one individual was seen.

Burchell's (Crawshaw's) Zebra. (*Equus quagga crawshawii*) is a subspecies of the Plains Zebra native to eastern Zambia, east of the Luangwa river. According to Wikipedia, Crawshaw's zebras can be distinguished from other subspecies of plains zebras in that its lower incisors lack an infundibulum, but we were unable to verify this. Crawshaw's zebra has very narrow stripes compared to other forms of the Plains Zebra. We saw c 5-10 daily.

Elephant *Loxodonta africana*. Herds were encountered daily throughout the park feeding on grass or browsing trees and bushes. Some family groups had small calves that were still suckling or else being naughty by rolling in the mud. On one drive on rounding a bend, we encountered a large bull elephant who decided he had the right of way and whose decision we respected.

Tree Squirrel *Paraxerus cepapi*. These were common around the Lodge and in mopane woodland.

Thick-tailed Bushbaby (Greater Galago) *Otolemur sp* We saw one individual on a night drive.

Southern Scrub Hare *Lepus saxatilis*. We saw one or two individuals each night drive and one daylight sighting.

African Civet *Viverra civetta*. We had reasonably good views of this handsomely marked animal on one evening as he checked out the kitchen area of the Lodge

Servaline (Large-spotted) Genet *Genetta maculata*. This small carnivore was fairly common, and the species was seen on four night drives, with up to four seen in an evening.

Slender Mongoose *Herpestes sanguineus*. This species was seen on two night drives, typical views were of it running at speed, with the black tipped tail held high.

Banded Mongoose *Mungos mungo*. Two separate groups of this highly social carnivore were seen, c15 in each, foraging amongst grass and low bushes. One group was attended by two Hammerkops hoping to catch any insects that were flushed out.

White-tailed Mongoose *Ichneumia albicauda*. Two examples of this large, solitary and nocturnal mongoose were seen on a night drive near the flood plain below the Lodge.

Bushy-tailed Mongoose *Bdeogale crassicauda*. One was seen on a night drive.

Spotted Hyena *Crocuta crocuta*. Three animals, all singles, were seen while spotlighting. Two were near to flood plain below the Lodge.

Lion *Panthera leo*. We saw our first lion late on our first afternoon. It was a male, in a very muddy condition as he had killed a buffalo (not seen) which had got trapped in a muddy hollow near an oxbow lake called Luangwa Wafwa. After our sundowner (all teetotal), we had very close views of a lioness with four cubs. None of them reacted to our presence and the cubs wandered over to Mum for a suckle. For us, a very privileged sight. The next day we saw a lioness struggling through the mud to drag a buffalo carcass back to the cubs. Other days yielded sightings of four to five young, adolescent lions sprawled out on their backs – overfed and over-sleepy. On one occasion we had excellent views of two bachelor lions walking very close to our jeep. They were not part of a pride but kept each other company.

Leopard *Panthera pardus*. On our first afternoon drive, we had wonderful views of a female leopard who walked slowly in front of our jeep. There were no more sightings until our last night drive when Abel, our driver, miraculously found a leopard stalking an impala near a lagoon. Our spotlight alerted the impala which escaped but the leopard was unphased and walked alongside and in front of our jeep to find another place to hunt.

Yellow Baboon *Papio cynocephalus*. These baboons were common throughout the park with large troops of up to 140 individuals regularly encountered on the roads and on the bridge over the Luangwa river. It was amusing to watch the antics of the babies and the intense concentration of grooming pairs on their task.

Vervet Monkey *Circopithecus aethiops*. These were less common but were seen every day foraging on the ground or in bushy trees. One troupe spent a lot of time around the Lodge and one individual managed to steal a cheese roll from the lunch buffet – not for the first time, we were told.

Birds

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*. Numerous, seen daily. Large flocks on lagoons

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis*. Numerous, seen daily. Common on lagoons or perching in trees.

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotus*. Common species, seen daily in smaller numbers than the other waterfowl.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*. Common species on lagoons throughout the park, seen daily.

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*. Flock of about 10-15 birds seen most days

Natal Spurfwowl *Pternistis natalensis*. One sighting only

Red necked Spurfwowl *Pternistis afer*. One sighting only

Swainson's Francolin *Pternistis swainsonii*. 2 or 3 birds seen most days, usually foraging alongside tracks.

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*. Recognisable species in its rose washed breeding plumage, it was commonly seen on lagoons in the park and the Kafunta Lodge lagoon where about 50 turned up one afternoon.

African Open-billed Stork *Anastomtus lamelligerus*. This snail specialist was seen on most days at Kafunta Lodge lagoon and lagoons in the park.

Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii*. One individual was seen at the Kafunta Lodge lagoon.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*. This species was seen on three days in the park in small numbers.

Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*. One individual seen perched on top of a bare tree.

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumenifer*. This was seen on a few days with a couple at a lion kill and two or three individuals at the Kafunta Lodge lagoon on the same day as the 50 Yellow-billed Storks.

African Sacred Ibis *Threshkiornis aethiopicus*. A common sight paddling around in wetlands and in the Kafunta Lodge lagoon, seen daily.

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*. Seen on three days in wetlands and the Kafunta Lodge lagoon.

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*. Seen on two days. About 10 seen with Yellow-billed Storks working a gully.

Green-backed (Striated) Heron *Butorides striatus*. One example seen in a lagoon

Cattle Egret *Bulbulcus ibis*. Not very numerous, birds seen on a couple of days.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*. Fairly common with 2-5 seen most days. Often perched on bare tree at Kafunta Lodge lagoon.

Black headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*. Slightly more numerous than Grey Heron. Frequent at Kafunta Lodge lagoon and also seen in both wetlands and grassland in the park.

Great White Egret *Egretta alba*. Widespread. Individuals seen at the lagoon at Kafunta Lodge and on lagoons in the park.

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*. A common species in marshes and wooded channels, seen most days. On one occasion, two Hamerkops were closely following the activities of a group of Banded Mongoose in the hope of catching insects.

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*. Fairly common with a few birds seen on three days near a lion kill. Two birds were seen finishing off what was left on a Puku skull.

African White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*. Seen on three days near a lion kill.

White headed Vulture *Trigonoceps occipitalis*. Sightings on two days near a lion kill.

Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*. Seen on three days, usually perched on an electricity pylon overlooking open ground

Western-banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinerascens*. Seen on three days, usually perched on a differently located pylon overlooking open ground.

Bataleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*. One seen flying over open savannah

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus*. Two sightings; one bird was being mobbed by starlings

African Hawk Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus*. One sighting in the park.

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*. This was seen on four days in the park with some good sightings.

Little Sparrowhawk *Accipter minullus* One sighting on the first day

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius*. One sighting in the park on the last morning.

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*. This raptor was seen once perched on a bare tree by the Kafunta Lodge lagoon , and once in the park.

Water Thick Knee *Burhinus vermiculatus*. Fairly common in the park, with 1-4 seen daily, either standing by the edges of lagoons during the day, or on roads at night.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Seen occasionally on the lagoons in the park

Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum*. Two birds were seen at a distance on one day

Blacksmith Lapwing *Vanellus armatus* Seen most days in small numbers. Very vocal with a 'tink'tink'tink' alarm call

White crowned Lapwing *Vanellus albiceps*. A noisy bird, seen on most days.

Crowned Lapwing *Vanellus coronatus*. These were seen in small numbers in the drier areas with sightings on most days.

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*. One or two were present on most of the well vegetated lagoons in the park. Good sightings of one with chicks at the lagoon outside Mfuwe Lodge.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* One or two seen on four days on lagoons in the park.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*. Individuals were seen on four days.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*. 5-10 seen on most days in many locations.

Three banded Courser *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus*. This nocturnal courser species was seen in groups of two or four on four night drives usually alongside the track.

Cape Turtle Dove (Ring-necked Dove) *Streptopelia capicola*. A very common species throughout the park.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*. Scarce, with just one sighting.

Emerald spotted Dove *Turtur chalcospilos*. This attractive small dove was common in wooded and bushy areas, typically feeding on the ground along the edge of tracks.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*. Examples of this tiny dove were seen on three days.

Grey Go-away Bird *Corythaixoides concolor*. Just two birds seen on different days

White-browed Coucal *Centropus superciliosus*. Two individuals seen.

Great-spotted Cuckoo *Clamartor glandarius* One individual seen

Jacobin Cuckoo *Oxylophus jacobinus*. Good sighting of two birds which flew into and perched in a nearby tree. Good views of white wing bars when flying.

Verreaux's Eagle-Owl *Bubo lacteus* Two nocturnal sightings; one perched at the top of a dead tree in the lagoon near Kafunta Lodge

Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum* One night sighting of an individual sitting quietly in a tree near the Lodge

Square tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus fossii*. Occasionally seen on roads and tracks during night drives and hoovering up moths attracted by the light at Kafunta Lodge.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*. Large numbers frequented the Luangwa Bridge.

Lilac breasted Roller *Coracias caudata*. This was seen throughout the park, with 3-4 seen daily.

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*. We saw this species on two occasions.

Grey headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala*. A few examples of this richly coloured species were seen on three days, quietly sitting in low bushes and trees.

Brown hooded Kingfisher *Halcyon albiventris*. We had one sighting of this species

Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti*. One example of this relatively dull kingfisher were seen in scrub

Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis*. This was the most common dry land kingfisher with 3-5 birds seen on most days.

Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus* Good sightings of this tiny kingfisher. A parent and young regularly perched near a small culvert on the Lodge access road

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*. Regularly seen hovering over channels and pools, seen on most days.

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus*. A common and widespread species several pairs/parties encountered on most days in savannah with scattered bushes.

White fronted Bee eater *Merops bullockoides*. The most common Bee eater, usually seen in ones and twos on most days

Green Woodhoopoe *Phoeniculus cyanomelas*. Parties of c3-5 birds were seen in Mopane woodland on two days.

Southern Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus leadbeateri*. This impressive species was seen on three days; one group walking through grassland and another group clambering on a tree trunk before flying off

Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus erythrorhynchus (rufirostris)* . A very common species generally seen in ones and twos on most days.

Crowned Hornbill *Tockus (Lophoceros) alboterminatus*. One individual seen perched on a tree and then on the ground hunting for insects

African Grey Hornbill *Tockus nasutus*. This species was seen on only one day when there was a fly past of about 50 birds in ones and twos across the road.

Trumpeter Hornbill *Bycanistes bucinator* One sighting

Golden tailed Woodpecker *Campethera albingoni*. A few seen on the last day

Bearded Woodpecker *Campethera cailliantii*. A couple seen on the last day

Dickinson's Kestrel *Falco dickesoni* One seen on the last day

Brown-necked Parrot *Poicephalus fuscicollis* A flypast by a few individuals just close enough for identification

Retz's (Red-billed) Helmet-shrike *Prionops retzii*. A party of these striking birds were seen in woodland on the last day

Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla* This small black-and-white species was seen once foraging in a leafy bush

Tropical Boubou *Laniarius major* This black-and-white shrike was more often heard than seen but one individual was spotted in a small tree in the grounds of the Lodge

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*. One sighting only

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*. This bird was seen on most days in open habitats, perched on top of bushes.

African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus*. One bird was seen feasting on the fruit of a False Baobab tree

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*. A common species of woodland edge, seen on most days.

Dark-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*. Seen on a couple of days, admired as a songster

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*. The most numerous swallow, seen on three days in small numbers around buildings and water courses and sitting on telephone wires.

Lesser Striped Swallow *Hirundo abyssinica*. Only singles seen perched on wires with Wire-tailed Swallows on one day.

Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana*. One sighting

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* One sighting.

Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardineii*. A couple of parties seen in bushy areas

Greater Blue-eared Starling *Lamprolornis chalybaeu*. This species was seen on most days in fairly large numbers in open habitats, notable for their metallic dark blue plumage.

Meves's Starling *Lamprolornis mevesii*. This is was the most common species of starling, seen daily.

Yellow-billed Oxpeckers *Buphagus africanus*. One sighting only.

Red-billed Oxpeckers *Buphagus erythrorhynchus*. Seen daily on Impala, Zebra, Warthog and Giraffe.

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus* One sighting of an individual flitting between bushes near the main road into the park

White-browed Sparrow-weaver *Plocepasser mahali*. An abundant species in open woodland, and seen daily in large numbers generally flying up from the road into nearby bushes. Has a variety of songs

Southern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer diffuses*. Fairly common species in scrub and open woodland.

Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger*. Birds were seen on three days around their nests in Baobab trees

Lesser Masked Weaver *Plocens intermedius*. Just one bird seen in the park

Southern Masked Weaver *Plocens velatus* Just one bird seen

Village Weaver *Plocens cucullatus*. One sighting only.

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* Small flocks of about 50-60 individuals seen amongst bushes on two days

Firefinch sp. *Lagonosticta* sp. One example seen but we were not close enough to see whether it was a Jameson's or a Red-billed.

Blue Waxbill *Uraeginthus angolensis*. Common along tracksides, with 5-10 seen on most days.

Village Indigobird *Vidua chalybeata*. One sighting.

Shaft-tailed Whydah *Vidua regia* Males with their spectacular tails were seen on 4 days generally perched on telephone wires

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*. One individual was seen on a mudbank in the Luangwa river close to a basking crocodile

African Pipit *Anthus cinnamomeus*. One bird was seen on a sandy plain in the park

Chestnut-backed Sparrowlark *Eremopterix leucotis*. A few were seen in sandy areas

Yellow-fronted Canary *Crithaga mozambica* This species was seen on three days perched on low bushes on the access road to the Lodge

Reptiles and Amphibians

? Mottled Shovel-nosed Frog Individual living in Lodge room.

Nile Crocodile *Crocodilus niloticus* - These were seen in small numbers in the river and on the road (at night). We saw one monster slide into the water of the Luangwa Wafwa oxbow lake to join in a feeding frenzy on a buffalo carcass. Their activity was broken up by an angry hippo

Nile Monitor *Varanus niloticus*. One seen swimming, others crossing the road or walking through vegetation. One was in a fork of a tree with the hand of another monitor protruding from its mouth. Some large individuals near the Lodge.

Flap-necked Chameleon *Chamaeleo delepis* Seen on night drive

Striped Skink *Mabuya striata* Dark brown with a pale buff stripe extending along the sides of the upper body. An individual was seen in the lounge area of Kafunta River Lodge

Common House Gecko *Hemidactylus mabonia* These were seen around the Lodge

Marsh Terrapin *Pelusius* sp. One seen in puddle by the side of the road

Insects

Northern Harvester Termite *Hodotermes mossambicus* These were seen in a very, dry grassy plain. Workers have very dark brown heads. They forage for fresh and dead grass and other plant matter which they drag into piles around foraging ports.

Grooved Dung Beetle *Heteronitis castelneri* We saw one individual attracted to lights in dining area and buzzed around for 5-10 minutes. Large (body length 28mm), shiny black. Mostly active around dusk and commonly found in elephant and zebra dung.

Zebra Mantid *Omomantis zebra* Slender green mantis, characterised by forewings which are decorated with brown stripes and a yellow spot surrounded by black. Attracted to the lights in Lodge room.

Glowing Click Beetle. One found in Lodge room.

Grasshopper *Thericles* sp. Small, Stocky body, very large eyes and short rod-like antennae. Green legs, wingless, white markings on brown body, abdomen turned up at the end. On the jeep bonnet when we stopped to register the vehicle at the park entrance gates.

African Giant Millipede *Archispirostreptus* sp. Two individuals seen separately.

Butterflies – mostly seen in mixed groups fluttering in roadside vegetation

African Monarch *Danaus chrysippus*

Whites, Sulphurs, Orange-tips – we can only identify:

Brown-veined White *Belenois aurota* – ‘puddling’ on animal dung

Sulphur Orange-tip *Colotis auxo*