



WILDERNESS



## WILDERNESS ZAMBIA GUIDE

### JAMES MUBIRU MUKASA-BATENDE

James Mubiru Mukasa-Batende has over 15 years of tourism experience and a strong background in walking safaris. He is most passionate about sharing Wilderness's conservation mission and connecting guests to the rich biodiversity of Zambia's wild landscapes.

A Wilderness Zambia guide since June 2023, James has an enduring love for nature and conservation, thriving on sharing Africa's wild spaces with guests from around the world. "Sharing my love of nature, engaging with visitors, and the satisfaction of educating others about wildlife are all reasons why I love working with a team that is fighting to protect the environment through sustainable conservation," he says.

Born in the mining town of Ndola in Zambia's Copperbelt Province, James grew up between Ndola and Lusaka. He earned a marketing certificate from Zambia Insurance Business College, followed by a certificate in automotive mechanics from the Livingstone Institute of Business and Engineering Studies. His path to guiding began later, driven by a desire to be closer to nature.

James entered the tourism industry in 2007 with Bushtracks Africa in Livingstone, progressing from a driver to assistant supervisor of the tour guide and mechanics workshop. From 2017 to 2022, he studied wildlife guiding, and went on to hold guiding and management roles with Tusk and Mane Safaris, Kaingu Safari Lodge, and Classic Zambia. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he joined Game Rangers International as a logistical officer, volunteering in Kafue National Park. In 2022, he returned to Classic Zambia to guide at Camp Musekese before joining Wilderness the following year.

In the field, James finds magic in every safari. While each experience is unique, it's the people and the shared moments in nature that he finds most rewarding. "Every safari is distinct in its own right," he reflects, "and just sharing the vast wilderness with different people signifies the start of a new phase in this life journey in which we are all significant participants".

A lover of birds and flight, James says that if he could be any animal for a day, he'd choose the Peregrine Falcon for its speed, freedom, and extraordinary sensory awareness. He's also full of intriguing wildlife insights—like how Wattled Cranes perform a synchronized duet, called a "unison call," to strengthen pair bonds and claim their territory.

Looking ahead, James hopes to continue growing professionally and inspiring the next generation. "I am very passionate about conservation, and I want the next generation to appreciate the beauty we do. If we collaborate, the possibilities are endless".

His advice to first-time safari-goers? Slow down, trust the process, and be present: "Just as a mirror reflects what you project onto it, so too does life. The odds of you catching a butterfly that is flying by are extremely low, but if you remain motionless, there is a good chance the butterfly will come to you"



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## WILDERNESS ZIMBABWE GUIDE

### AMINATA JACKSON

Aminata Jackson's journey to becoming a Guide with Wilderness Zimbabwe highlights her dedication and diverse background. She values the opportunity to grow within Wilderness, where her role offers the chance to share her passion with guests, grow through the camaraderie of her colleagues, and immerse herself in the beauty of nature.

Born and raised between Francistown, Botswana, and Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Aminata spent 16 years in her beloved Bulawayo, where the principle of Ubuntu – humanity and unity – deeply influenced her. Her multicultural upbringing, coupled with fluency in several languages including English, Shona, Ndebele, Zulu, Setswana, and conversational skills in French and German, have enabled her to connect effortlessly with individuals from diverse backgrounds all around the world.

Aminata's educational path began with primary schooling in both Botswana and Zimbabwe, culminating in her O-Levels with The British Council in 2014. She furthered her studies at Speciss College, earning an International Computer Driving License (ICDL) in 2015 and a Diploma in IT Systems Support in 2017. Following her studies, Aminata entered the professional world, initially taking on roles as an administrative assistant, pursuing entrepreneurship in novelty teas and chocolates, and gaining experience in medical administration.

In 2019, Aminata discovered her true calling in guiding. Driven by a deep passion for the field she joined the Zimbabwe Professional Guides Association in 2021, obtaining further certifications in Game Lodge Management and Front of House. Committed to continued learning, she furthered her expertise by obtaining her FGASA Apprentice Field Guide (NQF2) qualification in 2023. She joined the Wilderness family in the same year, starting out as a Trainee Manager at Wilderness Little Makalolo and later moving to Wilderness Chikwenya and Wilderness Ruckomechi, where she travelled to nearly all the camps in Zimbabwe – an experience she considers a true career highlight and defining moment in the realisation of her dream role.

As the only female guide in Wilderness Zimbabwe, Aminata is pioneering a new movement, inspiring women to pursue their dreams with determination. Her key focus is to authentically represent herself while guiding, continually improving her knowledge and proficiency in the field. Aminata cherishes the opportunity to grow within Wilderness, enjoying the camaraderie of her colleagues and the profound beauty of nature.

#### About Wilderness:

Founded over 40 years ago, Wilderness is a world-leading conservation and hospitality company, offering immersive journeys to a range of environments in Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Wilderness is part of a global collective working to conserve the world's iconic unfenced, untamed and unpredictable wilderness areas. With more than 60 exceptional camps and lodges, Wilderness helps protect some 2.3 million hectares (6 million acres) of land across its eight African destinations. Its goal – to double that by 2030. Four decades on, the company's purpose is stronger than ever: To increase the world's wilderness, together.

[www.wildernessdestinations.com](http://www.wildernessdestinations.com)



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