

# VOLCANOES NP WILDLIFE & ECOLOGY

Volcanoes National Park itself supports in excess of 70 mammal species in its various alpine and sub-alpine habitats. Of these, the mountain gorilla is the most well-known, but the bamboo forests are a critical habitat for another equally range-restricted and endangered primate, the golden monkey. Black-fronted duiker and bushbuck inhabit the bamboo forests, while the tracks and dung of both buffalo and elephant are commonly seen here as well.

## CAMPS

- Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp



Spotting mammals in this habitat is challenging – many are nocturnal, while others are extremely shy – but hikes to Bisoke Crater, Lake Ngezi or Dian Fossey’s grave provide a chance for some of the above-mentioned creatures as well as Carruther’s mountain squirrel and the southern tree hyrax.

While reforestation of the Bisate site only began in March 2016 (after cultivation of potatoes, pyrethrum, wheat and other crops stopped), many thousands of indigenous trees have since been planted. The high rainfall and fertile volcanic soils mean that nature is quickly re-establishing itself. Aside from the trees themselves, one of the most noticeable elements of this change is the recolonisation of a number of small mammal species. One of the first to be seen was the side-striped jackal. More recent ‘colonists’ include small carnivores such as African wild cat, large grey mongoose and serval. The screeches of the southern tree hyrax can also be heard after dark in certain seasons, and even golden monkey and buffalo have been recorded as occasional vagrants from the nearby national park.

As the natural vegetation matures, we expect other species such as Carruther’s mountain squirrel, Gambian giant-pouched rat and brush-tailed porcupine to settle in the regenerating forests of Bisate.

Volcanoes National Park is excellent for birds too, with almost 180 species recorded to date. Through our habitat restoration project around Bisate, we are optimistic that as many as 12 bird species endemic to the Albertine Rift will recolonise the Bisate area in time, including Rwenzori turaco, mountain black boubou, strange weaver, Rwenzori batis and Rwenzori double-collared sunbird.

Other interesting species to look out for are Rwenzori nightjar, black-crowned waxbill and streaky seedeater.