

HWANGE NP

WILDLIFE & ECOLOGY

Hwange National Park, on Zimbabwe's western border with Botswana, is the country's largest game reserve. Situated on the easternmost edge of the Kalahari Desert, its 1.4 million hectares (3.4 million acres) of sandy soils harbour extensive stands of broad-leafed woodland that during the summer months, despite the low rainfall, are a profusion of green.

CAMPS

- Linkwahsa
- Little Makololo
- Davison's



The private, ecologically diverse Makalolo and Linkwasha concessions, where Wilderness Safaris' camps are located, are found in the south-eastern corner of Hwange. The park is predominately Kalahari sandveld supporting teak and mopane woodlands, dry acacia scrub and is interspersed with salt pans, vast open palm-fringed plains and grasslands that support enormous species diversity and provide a true wilderness experience.

The Park has one of the densest concentrations of wildlife in Africa, in particular its herds of elephant and buffalo. There are shallow pans spread throughout the Park, around which wildlife congregates (notably in the dry season), making for excellent game viewing.

Located on the border with Botswana, Hwange was proclaimed some 75 years ago and has served as a haven for one of the densest concentrations of game in Africa. In particular, its great herds of Cape buffalo and elephant (nearly 30 000 in the Park) are a sight to see.

With over 100 mammal species, Hwange has some of the highest mammal diversity for any national park in the world, including: slender mongoose, yellow mongoose, banded mongoose, Selous's mongoose, dwarf mongoose, honey badger, black-backed jackal, bat-eared fox, side-striped jackal, lesser bushbaby, vervet monkey, chacma baboon, porcupine, aardwolf, spotted hyaena, pangolin, caracal, leopard, African wildcat, lion, scrub hare, southern giraffe, hippo, springhare, warthog and Burchell's zebra. Antelope often seen in the area include common duiker, eland, roan antelope, impala, kudu, sable, steenbok, common waterbuck and blue wildebeest.



Hwange is also home to a varied bird community. Typical drier Kalahari birds include Kori bustard, crimson-breasted shrike, Kalahari scrub-robin, scaly-feathered finch, cut-throat finch, red-eyed bulbul, swallow-tailed bee-eater, black-cheeked waxbill and southern pied babbler.

The Zambezi teak and false mopane woodlands are home to other birding specials like Arnot's chat, Bradfield's hornbill and racket-tailed roller.

Bat hawk and African hobby are good finds here in the summer, sometimes seen at dusk hunting bats and swifts. The plains are alive with pipits, larks, coursers and wheatears like African pipit, dusky lark (in summer), Temminck's courser and capped wheatear. Raptors are plentiful too, including rare red-necked falcon, Dickinson's kestrel, martial eagle, five vulture species and accipiters (hawk-like raptors) like shikra and Gabar goshawk.

In the summer months, the bird list is greatly increased by migratory species like southern carmine bee-eater, black kite, broad-billed roller, various cuckoo species, Abdim's stork and European bee-eater.