

Dear Friends

I'm still buzzing with excitement weeks after returning from an exhilarating and successful safari season. Read about our adventures in this latest edition of our Nature Explorer newsletter.

It gives me tremendous pleasure to share my passion for wildlife with those of you that come on our Safaris. This year Explore Nature visited some of the best National Parks and Reserves in Southern Africa. All the safaris were filled with experiences and wildlife sightings that will forever be etched in the memories of those who joined us – many are already planning to return and do it all again.

The longest of this year's safaris was a three week safari with a particular focus on birds. As we travelled through Botswana and parts of South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe we saw no less than 52 mammal and 285 bird species – a great tally considering it was only the start of spring and relatively few migrant birds had arrived.



## What's News

Have you checked out **Explore Nature's Facebook page?**

Keep up to date with exciting news and photos from the bush



### 2013 Safaris:

- 18 Sep – 6 Oct '13: Only four places are left on this small group camping safari starting in Cape Town. We will discover wild flowers, birds and unique mammals as we explore Namaqualand and the pristine Kalahari and Namib Deserts. Safari ends in Windhoek, Namibia
- [Email](#) or [contact](#) Martin for details or for any custom made safari you would like – July to September available

Thanks to the enthusiasm and keen eyes of the participants I managed to see a few lifers (new bird species) although a highlight would have to be the number of owls we saw, several during daytime. It's awesome to watch a formidable raptor like the massive Verreaux's Eagle-Owl (right) in broad daylight, so close you can appreciate all the detail with your naked eye. The pink eyelids belie the prowess of this two foot tall hunter.



We did get somewhat sidetracked from birding by the superb mammal sightings we had along the way, particularly in the Moremi / Khwai region in Botswana, where we had several leopard sightings. This female leopard (below) provided over an hour of excellent viewing pleasure – we saw her climbing down from a tree to avoid being spotted by a troop of baboons, grooming, stalking, and patiently crouching, ready to pounce on some warthog until a wind change gave her position away.

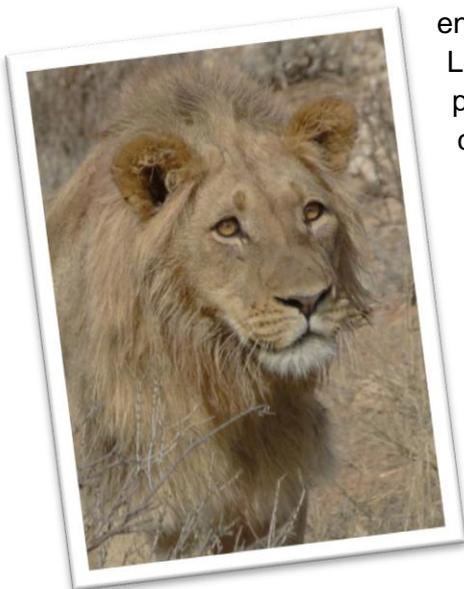




The two safaris to the Kruger National Park area brought fantastic sightings, not just of the Big Five but also for many other mammal and bird species. One animal that was a major draw card for the participants on one of the trips was Rhino, and we saw several Rhino – not only White, but also the elusive Black Rhino. It was amazing to sit quietly just meters away and watch the prehensile top lip reaching to gather the browse and to hear the teeth crunching on the twigs.

In Thornybush Game Reserve we were enthralled to observe Lions mating right in front of us and were fortunate enough to watch a Cheetah female and her grown cub out on the hunt, trying to stalk a herd of Impala. In both Kruger and the Sabi Sands Game Reserve we watched Leopard stalking Impala,

once for over an hour! Neither ended in success for the Leopard – its not as easy as people think for the Big Cats to catch their prey.



The vast Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park in the arid North West of South Africa lived up to expectations and

provided my wife and I with a superb week in this stunning park. We saw most of the carnivores that live in this harsh semi-desert environment – Lion and Cheetah revealed themselves on numerous occasions and luckily for us we came across a Leopard catching a young Springbok.



Some of the less common and (usually) nocturnal predators, like Cape Fox (see bottom page three), African Wild Cat and Brown Hyenas, were exciting to see during the daytime. A great memory we have is of a Brown Hyena coming down for a drink and being harassed by a Black-Backed Jackal. Jackals are wily and brave and it managed to dispatch of the much larger Hyena (right), leaving with hackles raised.



Madikwe Game Reserve in North Central South Africa was an impressive first visit for me. This picturesque reserve is a great malaria-free Safari option, especially for family groups. Lodges were exquisite and we had superb wildlife sightings. Madikwe is renowned as a haven for the endangered African Wild Dog and we saw one of the packs out hunting and later feeding on an Impala. We were actually fortunate to see Wild Dogs on Safari to Kruger in August too; and got to spend time with a large pack, with pups (right), on Safari in Botswana.



I am already eagerly planning next year's safari season. Make sure you get in touch so we can help you plan a journey of a lifetime. Most safaris are private trips tailored to your particular wishes but we do have four places available on a small group camping tour I'm guiding from Cape Town to Windhoek in September. We'll be exploring some remote and exciting wilderness areas and deserts in search wild flowers and unique birds and mammals.

Cheers for now, Martin

## what we offer

### Special Interest Safaris

- Join a group of like-minded travellers on a special interest safari guided by Martin. Check website for upcoming safaris or email.
- Sep / Oct 2013 - The Namib, Kalahari and Namaqualand - appreciating the mammals, birds and wild flowers. **Only four places left**

### Private guided safaris

- Private guided safaris are meticulously planned and personally led by Martin to ensure you have a superb safari experience.
- These are tailor made to suit your needs and expectations – anything is possible.

### Booking Agent

- For those not wanting a privately guided safari we can share our expert knowledge to plan and book a trip of a lifetime.
- There are options available for a range of budgets and accommodation styles.

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