



A new decade has started!

January 2010

December 2009 was a very hot month with temperatures up in the high 30s. But after a very busy New Year, it's back in the 20s, and quite pleasant. The good rains so far have made Muchenje and the Chobe really green. It's very, very pretty and many flowers are out.

One would think that the high grass would make game viewing more difficult. Not so, as we have had a profusion of game here. Even though many of the pans away from the riverfront are full of water much of the game uses the river. On a daily basis we are getting good sightings of elephant, buffalo, lion and giraffe, plus all of the antelopes. And, excellent sable, kudu (in large, large numbers), waterbuck, puku and lechwe. The impala are great fun- all their young were born 2-3 months ago and these large herds are a joy to watch.



There are two rare animals that we now seeing frequently. We think that Wild dogs must have a den nearby, around the Ihaha area, as we are often seeing 7 or 8 dogs on the flood plain. Plus, guests have regularly seen leopards, both during the day and also on night drives!

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You would have thought that with all of the greenery and lushness around, that the elephants would have plenty to eat. Yes, they do, but it amazes me to see that they still pull down trees and branches. Oh well.....

This is dung beetle time. Watching these small animals rolling up baseball sizes of elephant dung down the road is great fun. The males work very hard at this, followed by a female close by (she does no work!) When he finds the right spot she will lay her eggs in the dung ball leaving him to guard the “incubator”.

Late at night sitting in reception of Muchenje with only the reception lights on is such a laugh. Dung beetles are flying about attracted by the lights. They fly like helicopters and their wings hum like bees. But as pilots they are absolutely hopeless, crash landing into the floor, walls and me. Then they try and take off again, up they go, humming away and then another crash landing. You can't help but laugh.

Our senior guides remain our great force... we have received several nominations already for this years Good Safari Guide for the ‘Best Camp Guiding Team’. Our guiding team is Malipa Mbangwa (“Lips”), Neo Hakamo (Neo) and Bogosi Kakambi (B.G.). Great guides and loved by everyone.



Presley Mpeha

Presley Mpeha has now joined the Muchenje team as Guide manager. Presley, born in 1974, hails from Kavimba, a village some 20 km south west of Muchenje on the Chobe River. His early school years were in Kavimba, then Junior school in Kasane, our nearest big town on the eastern Chobe. High school was in Maun, the entrance to the Okavango Delta, and this is where he became passionate about the outdoors.

Whilst in Maun he did a Distance Learning Course from Penn State in the USA, earning a Diploma in Wildlife and Forestry Conservation. His practical training was

done with Okavango Wilderness and Gametrackers (now Orient Express), where he worked on mokoros (canoes), walking safaris and boat cruises. A wide experience indeed.

In 1995 Presley did his examinations for guiding and obtained a Full Professional Guides licence- together with this he has done a full series of First Aid courses. Freelancing as a guide based in Kasane, mainly at Mowana Safari Lodge, took place from 2001 to 2009.

Presley has his full guides license and as such is able to conduct Walking Safaris and night drives. Both activities are unique to Chobe... Presley has already had several Leopard sightings. We are very pleased that he can offer us his great experience, qualifications and passion for the bush. Welcome to Muchenje, Presley!

'My two main passions' says Presley 'are photography and birdwatching. I use a Nikon D70. Birdwatching was a hobby, but now its my life'.

Puisano Seeletso (known as "P") has joined our admin team. P has a lot of experience in the tourism industry and came to us with superb credentials. She helps with ensuring the bookings and transfers are carried out efficiently and is also in charge of the Muchenje shop. She provides great support for Cathy, Rod and JJ.

We look forward to 2010 - we are currently doing plenty of refurbishment work, ready for the high season. This is always a busy period for us.

We continue to remember our motto- "Arrive as Friends, Leave as Family!"

