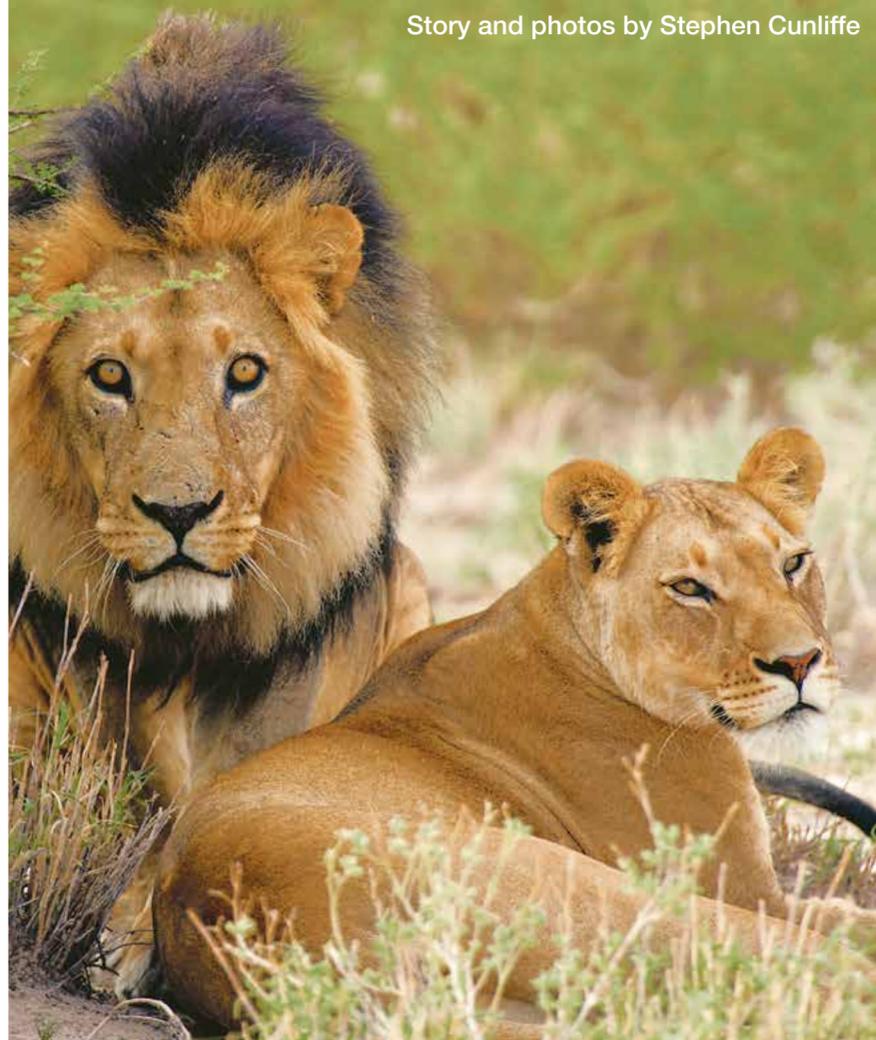


Central Kalahari: not for the nervous

ボツワナ 中央カラハリ動物保護区
Story and photos by Stephen Cunliffe



黒いたてがみが特徴的な雄ライオン(左)と雌ライオン



全長50センチにもなるクロエリショウノガン



キャンプ場近くの水場にやって来た4頭のライオンのうち2頭



大型のレイヨウの一種、オリックス



最大で70センチ程度にまで成長するヒョウモンガメ



オオミギツネ。名前の通り、大きな耳が特徴的



トイレの中に潜んでいたケープコブラ

■ 荒野にすむ多種多様な動物たち

The Central Kalahari is a landscape of sand, stone and grasslands. Home to the oryx and echoing nightly with the roars of the black-maned king of the African savanna, this desert wilderness is like nowhere else on earth.

Covering most of central Botswana, the 52,800-square-kilometer Central Kalahari is one of Africa's largest and most remote game reserves, and is the ultimate desert escape for nature-loving and adventure-seeking safari enthusiasts. This seemingly endless wasteland is actually home to plentiful wildlife, and the last few communities of indigenous San. Although the area was opened to tourists in the 1990s, its location, harsh environment and limited infrastructure have helped preserve a true wilderness feel. With the exception of a couple of tourist camps in and around Deception Valley, the park should only be explored by confident off-road drivers in 4x4s.

In my opinion, there are two Central Kalahari campsites that every visitor

should try. The beautiful Xaka wilderness campsite is an idyllic spot to relax after a long day. This campsite has a lovely location in a group of trees on the edge of the dry Okwa fossil river valley and overlooks a permanent water hole.

Upon arrival we set up our camping shower and heated some water on the fire. An hour later the tents were up and we were drinking cold beers under a giant camelthorn tree. Life was good.

As the sun set, the desert came to life, and we soon understood how great this camping spot was. The call of a pearl-spotted owl was drowned out by the cough-like roar of a male leopard. Later, a brown hyena walked past on the very edge of the firelight. But I didn't let all this distract me from grilling our steaks! After a delicious meal, we fell asleep to the sound of the leopard.

■ ライオンに何度も遭遇

I was suddenly awoken at sunrise. I lay still, and heard a strange sound. Sitting up slowly, I looked outside and saw four lions drinking at the water hole. I woke

up my travel companion and we slipped out of the tent and into our camp chairs for a better view. The lions kept an eye on us, but continued drinking. They moved off 15 minutes later, and my companion whispered: "Nothing beats watching a pride of lions from the comfort of a camp chair ... What a way to wake up!"

The second place that's well worth camping is Piper Pan with its great location in the center of the game reserve. Wildlife watching tends to be good here thanks to a nearby water hole, and we saw many lions during our five-night stay. On the first morning we spent three hours following a pride of two males and three lionesses as they marked their territory and hunted along the edge of the pan. Some other male lions also made regular appearances near our camp, and we could hear lion roars every night.

■ トイレのコブラに仰天

When I got up to use the toilet early on the last morning, the lions were roaring close by. I shined my flashlight left and right, but there were no lion eyes looking

back at me, so I headed for the pit latrine around 50 meters away. As I was preparing to do my business, I felt something was not quite right. I pointed my flashlight into the latrine and got the scare of my life: There in the pit was a 5-foot-long Cape cobra. The venomous snake looked like it was eyeing my buttocks for breakfast! Outside, roars told me that the lions were not far away. I felt trapped, and took five seconds to consider my options.

In the end, I chose the lions and dashed outside. I rapidly dug a hole with a spade, did my business, burnt the toilet paper, buried it all, and ran back into my tent. As I lay in bed, I reflected that Piper Pan really is a special place to camp, but perhaps not for the nervous type.

If isolation and the sound of lions roaring in the night are your thing, the desert wilderness of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve will likely become your favorite safari destination in Africa.

Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Botswana

1961年設立の世界で2番目に広い野生動物保護区で、多様な地形と豊かな生態系が特徴。訪れる場合は、四輪駆動車と燃料、食糧、水に加え、基本的な予備部品とサバイバルキットを調達し、2台以上の車で移動すること。多くのキャンプ場では、自分で穴を掘って小さなトイレを作る。特にトイレレットペーパーの処理に注意し、人間がそこにいた痕跡を残さないようにしなければならない。野生動物を観察するベストシーズンは12月から4月。ヘビやサソリなどがテントに侵入できないようにしっかり閉めること。



THE WILD LIFE

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KEYWORDS

the nervous 臆病な人
landscape 地形、景観
grasslands 大草原
home to ~がすむ
oryx レイヨウの一種
roar ぼえ声(後出はほえる、callは鳴き声)
black-maned ... savanna ライオンのこと (black-manedは黒いたてがみの)
wilderness 荒野、未開地(後出 wastelandも同意)
remote 人里離れた
game reserve 動物保護区
ultimate 究極の
escape 気晴らし

safari (ここでは) 動物観察旅行
enthusiast 愛好家
seemingly 見たところ
plentiful 豊富な
indigenous San 先住民のサン族
harsh 厳しい
valley 谷(後出 dry fossil river valleyは枯れ川のこと)
4x4 四輪駆動車
idyllic のどかな
overlook ~を見下ろす
water hole 小池、水場
camelthorn ラクダ草(マメ科の多年草)
come to life 活気づく
pearl-spotted owl アフリカ

スズメフクロウ
(be) drowned out by (ここでは) ~にかき消される
leopard ヒョウ
brown hyena カッシュコクハイエナ
distract 気を散らす
fall asleep to ~を聞きながら眠りにつく
lie (→ lay) still 横になったまま(ここでは)横になっている(後出 sit upは上半身を起こす)
slip out そと抜け出す
beat ~に勝る
pride 群れ
pan 皿状のくぼ地
lioness 雌ライオン
make regular appearances

多読チャレンジ

筆者がハイパーバンに設置したテントとトイレの距離は?
[本文 - 699 words]

(ここでは) 定期的に見える
flashlight 懐中電灯
pit latrine 掘り込み便所
do one's business 用を足す
scare of one's life 死ぬ程怖い思い
5-foot-long 約150センチの
venomous 毒を持つ
buttocks 尻
trapped (ここでは) 追い詰められた
dig (→ dug) 掘る
spade スコップ
bury 埋める
reflect 思い起こす
isolation 隔離
(be) someone's thing ~に合う