



Mysterious Makgadikgadi: More than seas of salt

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ボツワナ マカディカディ・パン国立公園

広大な塩盆にたたずむシマウマ。マカディカディ・パン国立公園では、雨期の初めにはシマウマの大移動が見られる



ボテティ川のそばを歩いていた象



バオバブの巨木。幹の直径は5メートルを超えることも



塩盆を駆けるヌーの群れ



レイヨウの一種、クーズー



マンゴース科の動物、スリカタ。可愛らしいが、鋭い歯が特徴的

■ 世界最大の塩盆群

Salt pans cover an expansive region of northern Botswana known as Makgadikgadi. A large part of this wilderness is protected within the Makgadikgadi Pans and Nxai Pan national parks, which provide a special setting for an unusual safari experience.

The Makgadikgadi Pans National Park, Nxai, Ntwetwe and Sua salt pans together make up the 12,000 square kilometers of the Makgadikgadi complex, making it the largest network of salt pans on Earth, surpassing even Bolivia's Salar de Uyuni (the biggest single salt pan in the world).

The pans boast landscapes interrupted only by the occasional rocky outcrop, along with dunes, channels and spits along the shoreline. Baobabs sporadically rise up like ancient desert phantoms. Heat mirages make imaginary lakes shimmer on the horizon only to disappear if you get closer. The landscape erodes one's sense of direction and can have a hypnotic effect on drivers, so you need not only a 4x4 vehicle with plenty of fuel, drinking water and a GPS, but also full confidence in your driving ability.

It is important to note that with the onset of the rains, water pools on the salt pans dissolve the crust to expose a thick layer

of soft clay below. Every year these marshes entomb a couple of safari vehicles. Therefore, the dry months of May to October are the best (and safest) time to explore these seas of salt.

Most safari goers believe that there is little more to Makgadikgadi than the giant salt pans of the rainless winter, but when we visited there in November — when the heat of the late dry season gives way to gray clouds and thunderstorms — we saw a completely different Makgadikgadi emerge.

■ 唯一の川周辺は野生動物の宝庫

Due to the large scale of the salt pan complex, the 3,900 square kilometers of Makgadikgadi Pans National Park covers only part of the overall pan network. Extending from the Boteti River in the west to Ntwetwe Pan in the east, the national park protects large areas of grassland, palm forest and woodland.

The only source of permanent water in the region, the Boteti River is a wildlife bonanza where elephants dominate the show along with droves of impala and crowds of kudu. The large herds of elephant had munched their way through most of the trees along the riverbank. We were surprised to discover many dead zebra on the floodplain, hinting at the harsh survival challenges of the long dry season. We also saw a raft of hippos, but many of the antelope herds had already dispersed with the

recent arrival of the rains.

Triggered by the late spring onset of the rains, the Makgadikgadi hosts the spectacle of the largest zebra migration in southern Africa with an estimated 30,000 animals. The golden grasslands in the region transform into a green carpet. Without warning and as if by magic, large herds of zebra suddenly appear on the plains, drawn by the grasslands and for several months the area teems with wildlife. We were fortunate to see the start of this zebra gathering.

During the two days we spent exploring the eastern plains and pans, we saw only one other vehicle: a Department of Wildlife and National Parks research vehicle, conducting a census of the migrating zebra. For safari goers, the best place to stay to observe the zebra spectacle is at one of the park-administered wilderness campsites located on the eastern plains. Despite a high-quality wilderness experience and a wide array of wildlife, including brown hyena and cheetah, few people stay here.

■ 草原や低木地が育む多様な生き物

From our remote Tree Island Camp, we drove west to the Khumaga Campsite high atop the bank of the Boteti River. Zebra were plentiful during the early stages of our journey but,

KEYWORDS

(salt) pan 塩盆 (水が蒸発し、塩類が堆積している盆地。後出 complex と network はその盆地群のこと) expansive 広大な wilderness 荒野、未開地

safari (ここでは)動物観察旅行 surpass ~ ~をしのぐ boast 有する landscape 景観 interrupt 遮る outcrop 露出部 dune 砂丘 channel 溝

spit (ここでは)岬のような地形 shoreline (ここでは)塩盆の縁 sporadically 所々で ancient 古代の phantom 幽霊像 heat mirage 蜃気楼 imaginary 架空の shimmer ゆらめく

erode 失わせる hypnotic effect 催眠効果 plenty of ~ ~たくさん(後出 a raft of ~ ~も同意。plentiful はたくさん) onset (ここでは)降り始め dissolve 溶かす crust 硬い表面

marsh 沼 entomb (ここでは)立ち往生させる emerge 現れる bonanza 宝庫 dominate (ここでは)主役となる drove 群れ(後出 crowd と herd も同意)

impala レイヨウの一種(後出 kudu と antelope もレイヨウの一種) munch one's way through ~ ~を食べながら進む (river)bank (川)岸 floodplain 氾濫原(洪水時に冠水する平野部のこと。後出

plain は平原) hint at ~ ~をほのめかす harsh 厳しい hippo (=hippopotamus) カバ disperse 消散する triggered by ~ ~をきっかけに spectacle 社観 migration 移動(後出 mig-

rate は動詞) teem with ~ ~で満ちる census 個体数調査 park-administered (ここでは)公園に管理された a wide array of ~ ~さまざまな brown hyena カシコクハイエナ give way to ~ ~に変わる

scrubland 低木地 toast ~ ~のために乾杯する springboard 出発点 game reserve 動物保護区 incredible 信じがたい diversity 多様性 habitat 生息地 itinerary 旅程

when the grasslands gave way to scrubland, the zebra were replaced by giraffe and kudu.

At Khumaga, my travel companions and I toasted the Makgadikgadi. We agreed that this national park offers so much more than a springboard for exploring the salt pans. While it might not have the same lion sightings as some of Botswana's other game reserves, it boasts wonderful elephant viewing, an incredible diversity of habitats and a zebra migration. Makgadikgadi is a safari destination that deserves to be included on any northern Botswana tourist itinerary.

偶数月第4週掲載

Makgadikgadi Pans National Park, Botswana

マカディカディ・パン国立公園とその周辺に広がる塩盆は、かつて存在した湖の跡。公園の南部、東部、北東部に位置する塩盆は11月中旬に水で満たされ、4~5月ごろまで水が保たれる。乾燥した大地は広大な湖に姿を変え、水鳥の大群が集まり、ヌーやシマウマの大規模な移動が起こる。この時期に車で近づくことはできないので、飛行機から観察するのがお勧め。

ANGOLA ZAMBIA
Nxai Pan National Park
Makgadikgadi Pans National Park
BOTSWANA
Gaborone
NAMIBIA

THE WILD LIFE

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多読チャレンジ 雨期の初めに大移動するシマウマの数は推定何頭? [本文 - 707 words]