



大あくびをするカバ。この地域の川や沼には多くのカバやワニが生息する。特にザンベジ川支流のルアンガア川では、数十頭ものカバの群れを見ることもあるという



ザンベジ川の水の上から動物を見るのは、陸上での観察とは全く異なる経験。ゾウの群が水を飲んだり泳いだりする様子は見もの



頭にシヨウジョウサギを乗せたアフリカスイギュウの群れ



大きな歯を持つどう猛なタイガーフィッシュは、釣り人に人気



大きな丸い耳が特徴的なリカオン



群れを作って生きるキロヒビ



戯れる雌ライオンの未成年と幼獣



筆者が泊まったソーセージツリー・キャンプでは、川に足を浸しながらの昼食など珍しい体験もできる

Lower Zambezi: A river runs through it

ザンビア・ロウアーザンベジ国立公園
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■ アフリカ南部の大河が育む野生動物たち

It was a tight squeeze with six of us crouching between two large sickle bushes. Our escort officer with his rifle sat watching a herd of 60 elephants disappearing to the west. I was keeping an eye on a separate group of the herd just 20 meters away. Everybody was quietly fascinated. We were enjoying a close encounter with elephants during the walking safari. Hard to imagine, but things were about to get more exciting.

An elephant came and started to feed on one of our sickle bushes. This was not a typical bush walk in Zambia's Lower Zambezi National Park, but in September, at the height of the dry season, it is often difficult to explore on foot without encountering 100 elephants or more! Eventually, the elephants finished feeding and left into the bush. It was an unbelievable safari experience.

The western boundary of the 4,092-square-kilometer national park is the everlasting Chongwe River. The north is bound by 800-meter mountains. To the east, the park ends just short of where the Luangwa River converges. The park's biggest feature is its southern boundary: the 120 kilometers of Zambezi River alongside it.

Across the Zambezi River is Zimbabwe's world-famous Mana Pools National Park. These two national parks form one of the most stunning and diverse trans-frontier wilderness areas in Africa. On the Zambian side of the river lies a relatively narrow floodplain, which gathers the wildlife, while a beautiful mountain backdrop glorifies almost every sighting.

■ 官民協力し密猟対策、動物の楽園に

During the 1970s and 1980s the Lower Zambezi area was ruled by poachers, but tourism development of the Lower Zambezi National Park began in 1990. At this stage the park was estimated to be losing as many as 300 elephants annually to illegal hunting.

As tourism slowly expanded, roads were maintained and game drive loops were opened. The improved accessibility of the national park allowed the Zambia Wildlife Authority to become more involved in patrolling the area. Concerned tourism operators and conservationists founded an NGO, Conservation Lower Zambezi, to assist the Zambia Wildlife Authority with its anti-poaching operations. Animal populations recovered rapidly as the tourism sector expanded deeper into the park.

The park is currently home to more than 50 mammal and 400

bird species. Enthusiastic birders are attracted by frequent sightings of the pennant-winged nightjar, collared palm-thrush and Lillian's lovebird, but the most popular bird is the Pel's fishing owl. And everyone will be amazed by hundreds of carmine bee-eaters digging into the steep banks of the Zambezi.

■ ゾウとスイギュウの大群が見もの

Surprisingly, there is no evidence of giraffe, wildebeest, or cheetah having ever lived in the park. Large predators are well represented with crocodile, lion, leopard, spotted hyena, wild dog and side-striped jackal that are sighted regularly. The park is a mecca for many other smaller nocturnal species: large-spotted genet, African civet, white-tailed mongoose, honey badger, porcupine and thick-tailed bushbabies are numerous, with occasional sightings of aardvark and even pangolin. As for antelope, there are herds of delicate impala, families of shaggy-coated waterbuck, king-like kudu, shy bushbuck, and nocturnal Sharpe's grysbok. Today the park is most famous for its elephant and buffalo herds along the Zambezi River during the dry season. On occasion, elephants form into larger groups, producing herds approaching more than 200.

Visitors have a wide choice of safari activities, including regu-

lar game drives (day and night), catch-and-release tiger fishing, sunset boat cruises to view elephants playing in the river, morning bush walks, and expertly guided canoe safaris.

Whether you choose to float down the Zambezi for an hour at sunset, or spend a full day exploring its smaller hippo-populated channels with an experienced guide, Lower Zambezi offers what is undoubtedly one of the greatest dry season wildlife experiences on earth. And as your canoe drifts slowly with no noise from a diesel engine, you will feel total peace and satisfaction. So visit with caution, because most who visit the Lower Zambezi quickly become addicted and end up returning year after year.

Lower Zambezi National Park, Zambia

ゾウやスイギュウの大群が見られることで有名。陸だけでなく水上からの動物観察も楽しめる。乾季は4月上旬から11月中旬。6~7月は涼しいが、10月には気温が40度を超える。日本から訪れるなら南アフリカ・ヨハネスブルク経由でザンビアの首都ルサカまで飛び、車で約3時間。国立公園内外にさまざまな宿泊施設があり、筆者のお薦めは設備の充実した Sausage Tree Camp (www.sausagetrecamp.com)。



KEYWORDS

tight squeeze 窮屈な状態
crouch しゃがむ
sickle bush ネムノキ科の低木(後出 bush は茂み)
a herd of ~ ~の群れ
encounter 遭遇(後出は動詞)
safari 動物観察旅行

feed (on ~) (~を)食べる
explore 探索する
boundary 境界(後出 (be) bound by ~は(ここでは)~が境界になる)
everlasting (ここでは)流れが年中絶えない
short of ~ ~の手前で
converge (ここでは)合流する

stunning 素晴らしい
diverse 多様な
trans-frontier 境界をまたいだ
floodplain 氾濫原(洪水時に冠水する平野部のこと)
backdrop 背景
glorify 飾る
sighting 観察
rule 支配する

poacher 密猟者(後出 anti-poaching は反密猟)
game drive loop 車での動物観察のための環状道路のこと
conservationist 自然保護活動家(後出 conservation は自然保護地区)
mammal 哺乳動物
species (生物の)種

bird 野鳥観察者
pennant-winged nightjar フキナガシヨタカ
collared palm-thrush アサナキヒタキ(ツグミ科の鳥)
Lillian's lovebird ボタンインコ
Pel's ... owl ウオクイフクロウ
carmine bee-eater ベニハチクイ(土中に巣穴を掘る鳥の一種)

steep bank 急勾配の川岸
wildebeest ヌー
predator 捕食者
leopard ヒョウ
spotted hyena ブチハイエナ
wild dog リカオン
side-striped jackal ヨコスジジャッカル
nocturnal 夜行性の

large-spotted genet オオブチジェネット(ジャコウネコの一 種。後出 African civet はアフリカジャコウネコ)
white-tailed mongoose シロオマングース
honey badger ミツアナグマ
porcupine ヤマアラシ
thick-tailed bushbaby フトオ

ガラゴ(サル的一种)
aardvark ツチブタ
pangolin センザンコウ(アルマジロに似た動物)
antelope レイヨウ(ウシ科の動物。後出 waterbuck, kudu(ネジツノカモシカ)、bushbuck, Sharpe's grysbok はレイヨウの一種)

shaggy-coated 毛むくじらの
tiger fishing タイガーフィッシュ(体長1メートルほどになる大型の淡水魚)釣り
float down (川を)下る
hippo-populated channel (ここでは)カバが生息する川
drift 漂う
addicted 病みつき

多読チャレンジ ロウアーザンベジ国立公園には約何種類の鳥が生息する? [本文 - 656 words]