

MAKUTSI



SAFARI SPRINGS

Summer has arrived & brings with it the rain, new grass and lots of young.
 Within Makutsi Camp it looks like an Impala kindergarten!
 From the Lapa we are also enjoying daily sightings of Vervet Monkey families,
 with their young ones clinging firmly to their mothers.

Late in November we found out that a newborn Elephant has entered the herd.
 The herd protect the young one really well, which makes it so exciting when we
 do get a glimpse of the little one.

December 2011

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Lodge Updates

We would like to start by saying thank you to everyone who has visited Makutsi in 2011 & to all of those who have planned a holiday with us. Another big thanks to those of you who have contributed to our Facebook page. We love seeing your photos and hearing your stories!

Each year we are planning and improving things within the camp, from bungalows to gardens. In the last 6 months one of our biggest projects has been building an administration room at the local school in Bismarck. The teachers are going to use this room to prepare their lessons much better now as they don't have much space at home.

Mineral pools, fitness room, tennis court & now a NEW ADDITION!
 We are in the process of building a sand volleyball court between the office and the tennis court.... With some luck and good weather, this will be completed by the New Year.

Adopted Brahman calf

In October one of our cows gave birth but unfortunately died during the birth. Heike quickly took on the role of mother for this newborn, now called Lulu, and has taken care of her for the past 2 months. The little calf is now big enough & strong enough to join the rest of the herd. Only the dogs are unhappy & missing her :)





8 HOUR LEKGALAMEETSE - "place of water"

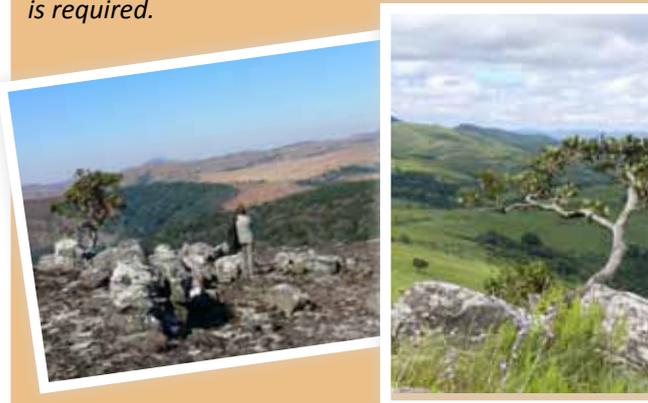
Lekgalameetse Nature Reserve is located 40 minutes from the lodge. Here you can experience a very different landscape to what you find on Makutsi. With its crystal-clear rivers, waterfalls and indigenous forest it is home to a diversity of plant, insect and bird species. It is also renowned for its variety of butterfly species.

The day begins with an early morning pick up, followed by a short drive to the base of the Drakensburg Mountains. Enjoy a light breakfast before you start your walk through the forest to the various viewpoints overlooking the Wolkberg Escarpment.

Our second trail leads you along the Makutsi River where you can expect to experience another different landscape. If the water level is not too high you'll walk along the river through a rain forest trying to discover the rare Samango Monkeys. A lunch stop is at the natural pools of the Makutsi Springs, a perfect way to cool down... and to enjoy your lunch in a scenic atmosphere.

Overall you can walk for up to 4-5 hours and should be back at Makutsi in time for a refreshing afternoon swim.

This excursion can only be booked once on Makutsi (or requested in advance) as we need a minimum of 5 people to run. A moderate to good level of fitness is required.



Safari's on Foot

Safaris on foot allow you to get a different perspective of the wildlife and the natural environment they call home. All walks are conducted by professional Nature Guides who will inform & introduce you to the smaller things of the bush.

For all walking safaris the minimum age is 16 years & no more than 8 people on a walk. A moderate to good level of fitness is required.

3 HOUR GAME WALK

Our guide will collect you early in the morning for a short drive to the northern section of Makutsi, where the 2-3 hour walk takes place.

The groups level of fitness will determine the intensity & pace of the walk. Generally they are slow in order for your guide to point out all the small things along the way such as tracks, bird calls, medicinal purposes of trees, insects & their homes.... if you're lucky you may come across some Giraffe, Zebra or even Rhino on foot.



12 HOUR HATARI SAFARI

Hatari Safari offers you a full day bush experience. Your day will begin with a 3 hour walk (as above), followed by breakfast & relaxing at our Hatari Camp during the hot hours of the day. Fall asleep in a hammock or take the time to read up on the wildlife and insects you have discovered during the mornings walk.

In the afternoon depart Hatari Camp for a 3-4 hour game drive where you have the opportunity to view wildlife such as the Lion, Cheetah, Rhino, Elephants and many more before returning to Makutsi Main Camp.



3 DAY 2 NIGHT TENTED CAMP SLEEP OUT

The newest addition to Makutsi and our most comprehensive walking package yet! This 2 night sleep out in the bush allows you take daily walks right from your tent. Walks are the same as above but can range between 2 to 4 hours at a time.

The Sleep Out Safari is perfect for the adventures traveller who enjoys exploring on FOOT.

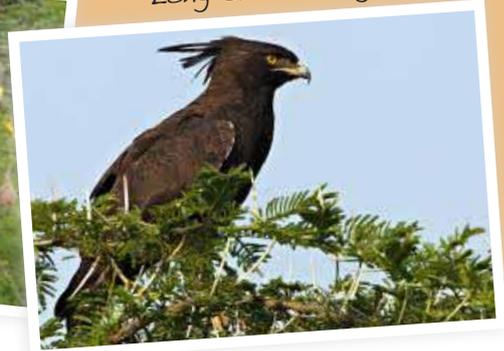
Southern Ground Hornbill



Village Weaver nest - Hippo Hide



Long Crested Eagle



Birders Paradise

Safari Sightings are always the hardest section of the newsletter. It is so difficult to choose one sighting over another! So we have decided to dedicate this section to the wonderful bird sightings we regularly enjoy on Game Drive and within Makutsi Camp. The diverse landscape on the reserve along with the Hippo Hide, our tropical camp grounds & viewing deck really makes this a birders paradise!

Southern Africa is home to more than 950 species (with two thirds found in the lowveld), which is pretty impressive when you think the Worldwide species are around 10,000! The majority of the birds occurring here are indigenous but there is a fair amount of migratory birds that for different reasons travel the long distance down to Southern Africa (warmer climate, mating and raising of chicks, better food resources). In the last several months on Makutsi we have enjoyed sightings of the **Red-chested Cuckoo** and in the last few weeks the **Woodlands Kingfisher** has made its way back to the lowveld.

Some common birds you can see are the **Crested Barbet**, **Lilac-brested Roller**, **Burchell's Coucal**, **Hoopoe**, **Paradise Flycatcher** and **many different varieties of the King Fisher, Eagles, Bee Eaters & Weavers**, (the **Village Weaver** have built their nests at the Hippo Hide.... which is a colorful & loud display!).

Some more special sightings we have had this month are the **Southern Ground Hornbill**, **Kori Bustard**, **Yellow Billed Stork & Long Crested Eagle**.

We can't forget to mention how musical it is here in the morning with all the different calls!

Yellow Weaver



Crested Barbet



Kori Bustard



Little Bee-Eater



African Hoopoe



Lilac-brested Roller



Burchell's Coucal

Why do we enjoy the Burchell's Coucal so much?? On Safaris you often see this bird among the reeds along the rivers or in grasslands across the reserve.

- Common, near endemic (native) resident of South Africa
- Belongs to the Cuckoos with the exception that he incubates his own eggs
- Males do more work than the female - building the nest, hunting and even incubating the eggs!
- Is a monogamous bird - one breeding partner for the rest of their life
- Also known as the rain bird.... it has been told that when the Burchell's Coucal calls, the rain is on its way.
- The Burchells Coucal can reach 41 cm in height & 180 grams in weight.



Ode to an Earthly Eden

Conference - Quarks & Atomics!

In November we hosted a symposium for over 50 Nuclear Physicists for a week, with daily presentations at the Conference Center. The Topic: "Symposium on Exciting Physics: Quarks and gluons/atomic nuclei/ biological systems/networks".

Through utilizing our new Tented Camp we were able to accommodate all the delegates and partners (along with our other guests) at both camps.

Each morning would begin with a mini safari on the way to the conference center, followed by a busy day of seminars and onto an afternoon safari or relaxing by the Mineral Pools. Who said you can't combine some productive work with the African bush!

Without too many hiccups - some inspiring topics, one BIG storm, daily temperature over 35 degrees & several power cuts ... everyone managed to survive the week. It was a great success, and it was important for us to see that we can handle such big symposiums here at Makutsi. (Our Internet room certainly has never been that busy before :)

*Shangri-La is but a myth
Eden may be, too.
A paradise on earth today?
Unlikely to be true . . .
Yet there are places still where life
Is nurtured, not destroyed;
And happily we've found one here
Where we have all enjoyed*

*Days that flow on like a dream
Thanks to the Makutsi team.*

*We came to share ideas among
Ourselves, but leave with lore
In fields we seldom have a chance
To ponder and explore.
We'll carry back new memories --
And after we've returned
We may be changed in subtle ways
By all that we have learned --*

*And without effort, it does seem --
Thanks to the Makutsi team!*

Poem written by Alice McLerreen from America, offered on behalf the participants in the Symposium:



From the family & staff of Makutsi we wish you a wonderful festive season between family & friends as well as a very Happy New Year. May 2012 bring many happy travels.

The Makutsi Team

www.makutsi.com OR www.facebook.com/makutsi