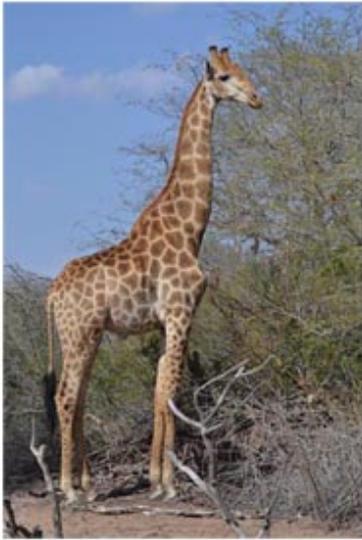


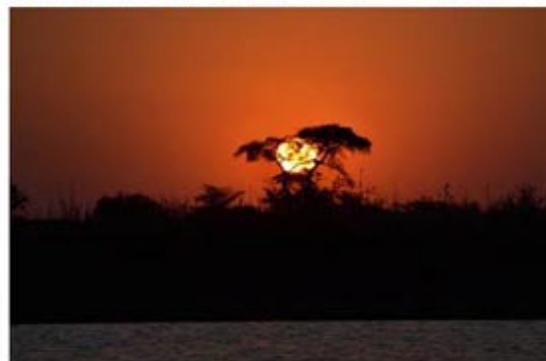
We travelled through Botswana and SA from 12. August until 2. September. After few days in Sodwana (some nice scuba diving) and driving through Kruger (plenty of rhinos), we stopped for the first night in Botswana at Khama rhino sanctuary, really nice camping spot for a stop-over. Saw only 1 rhino, but plenty of antelopes, including the only hartebeest on the whole trip. Next stop was Kubu island, lovely scenery across the pans. The road across the Sua pan was pretty easy going, until the second day when, unfortunately, we got stuck in the mud, even though we were driving on a track, marked on T4A and following plenty of previous tracks. You can't be too careful. Fortunately, nice couple from Holland and another nice couple from Switzerland (thanks again to both of them if anyone is on this forum) helped us to pull the cars out. Had a great night at Elephant sand campsite, with ellies passing our campsite throughout the evening. Off to Kasane next day, lovely Chobe river sunset trip with Big Sam Hubber company, very happy with them, not too big boat, and very courteous driver/captain, fulfilling our wishes where to go. From Kasane we started with Chobe, driving along the Chobe river to Muchenje campsite. Seen some sable antelopes, and plenty of ellies, hippos, zebras, giraffes and different antelopes. No lions or leopards, though. Very nice stop for sleepover at Muchenje campsite. Next day was a long drive from Muchenje to Khwai. Not really difficult, but long with very slow driving along the marsh road. Saw couple of young male lions hidden in the bush close to Savuti, but not much else along the road, everything looked very dry and few antelopes (some tsetsebe and impalas) we met didn't look at their best, I guess the drought had affected them.



Had some nice drives around Khwai with usual sightings, plenty of hippos, ellies and giraffes, and some crocodiles along the Khwai river. We also saw a couple of lions, again 2 young bachelors. Hyena was visiting us in the evenings, checking if there were any leftovers from our braai (which were none, as steaks from Botswana beef were delicious), there was also a civet walking around the camp at night, and some ellies. Plenty of baboons around, but not causing any problems. Curiously, one night at Khwai, only three campsites out of 10 were occupied. With such problem for booking I wonder what happened – did some company prebooked the sites and didn't arrive?



Chobe, along the river



From Khwai we drove to Third bridge, again not too much sightings on the way after exciting start with two lions (again two young bachelors) walking along the road jut outside the camp. Close to Third bridge, there were more lions, again 2 young bachelors that had a buffalo for supper about 500 meters from the camp. We watched them feeding in the evening, and next morning, they came even closer, they were both sleeping right at the gates to the camp, so during the morning walk to ablutions, they were lying about 20 meters from us. During the same day, we had a herd of about 30 ellies strolling and feeding right across our campsite (number 6). They were very relaxed, they let babies to wonder alone without mothers protecting them. Only when one woman from another site approached them too quickly, one female ellie gave her a warning with loud trumpeting. Also, 20 meters from our site was an old hippo sleeping during the day, it seemed old and battered, had injured skin, not sure if it came from a fight.

Lions at third bridge camp



After Third bridge we drove south to Maun, and then to CKGR. Nothing much on a way from Third bridge to Maun except plenty of giraffes. All along the way we saw a lot of young animals, baby giraffes, zebras, impalas and other antelopes, never seen so many young giraffes, were we just lucky or was this year a good wet season for reproducing?

Moremi, Khwai and Third bridge



Kalahari deception valley was beautiful, covered with yellow grass. Plenty of springboks, gemsboks, bat eared foxes, and we also saw cheetah, but from quite far away, we might actually interrupted its hunt (unintentionally). Stayed at Kori 3 and Sunday pan 2, both beautiful campsites, wish we could stay for longer than two days. No problems with bees (didn't see any at all). Both mornings we had cat spoor on our site, second night definitely lions (size), first night probably cheetah.

Kalahari



After Kalahari, long drive back to SA, for the last night at Matamba campsite – very nice and relaxing place, thanks to Alan for his hospitality.

Wonderful trip, if I would plan again (and if vacation time would allow) I would extend the route for 2 or 3 days, but otherwise, we had a great time. Very different from Namibia and Zimbabwe where I travelled before, much harder and more serious driving. Almost too hard and adventurous for my wife, but I enjoyed every moment of the trip, as did my son and daughter (9 and 7 years old).