

Enchanting Okavango: Birds & Mammals of Botswana Species List | August 2-16, 2025 with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by guide Greg Smith with local guide Ewan Masson. Our clients included Reba, Gayle, Joan, Ruth & Howard and Mona & Gary.

This was a special year in Botswana, there had been a long drought and the Okavango had nothing but minimal flows over the last number of years. This year Angola had wonderful rains in their mountains, the life blood of the Okavango flowed steadily south and provided copious amounts of water to the Delta. The Thalakamne River in Maun flowed steadily south thru town actively filling pools in the riverbed as we birded. One of those wonders of the world that all of us had read about, but none of us had experienced.

All that water made for a few challenges in getting to certain areas, but our local guide Ewan, and our guides at the two safari camps knew their ways around. We explored various habits within the Okavango, the Kalahari Desert and the riverine habitat at Moremi Crossing. The avian spring migration commenced towards the end of journey, but there were plenty of resident birds and animal species to find and view. No rain on this tour, but plenty of water, so viewing and photography conditions were ripe with possibilities. We found 163 different bird species and 34 mammal species throughout all of the different vegetative communities we visited. Wonderful close-up views of most everything was the norm on this tour, a totally exhilarating experience with a wonderful group of folks!

BIRDS 168 species were recorded of which 1 was heard only. Details are included below.

The eBird link below details the 168 species of birds our group observed during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

[Enchanting Okavango:](#)
[Birds & Mammals of Botswana | August 2-16, 2025 | eBird Trip Report](#)

Following is a list of the mammals, reptiles and amphibians we were fortunate to observe during the trip.

MAMMALS (33):

Peters' Epauletted Fruit Bat *Epomophorus crypturus* — Seen hanging in the uppermost part of the Moremi Crossing Lodge's main gathering area.

African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* — Seen every day except for the very first day while we were in Maun.

Chacma Baboon *Papio ursinus* — Seen about every three days with one persistent teenager trying its best to get into our lodging at Moremi Crossing (unsuccessfully).

Vervet Monkey *Chlorocebus pygerythrus* — A regular species seen about every other day in treed habitat.

Scrub Hare *Lepus saxatilis* — Seen on our two night drives at Moremi crossing, mostly in sparsely vegetated areas.

Lion *Panthera leo* — Two sightings, the first being one of the coalition brothers in the Khwai area and the second a group of six 3 month old cubs, three females and a male in the Moremi area.

Leopard *Panthera pardus* — One sighting at Moremi Crossing of an adult male with lechwe kill and a spotted hyena hoping for a few scraps.

African Civet *Civettictis civetta* — A pretty good sighting on one of our night drives at Moremi Crossing. It was laying on a horizontal branch in the open.

Small Spotted (Common) Genet *Genetta genetta* — Another night drive sighting of an individual on the ground near its den.

Yellow Mongoose *Cynictis penicillata* — Two sightings, both in the Khwai area of the Okavango.

Banded Mongoose *Mungos mungo* — Troupes of this species were regular visitors to our lodgings at Moremi Crossing.

Dwarf Mongoose *Helogale parvula* — Seen only on the first two days of our tour in the Khwai River area.

Slender Mongoose *Galerella sanguine* — Seen just once at the beginning of the tour.

Spotted Hyena *Crocuta crocuta* — Seen a number of times in Khwai, and also in the Moremi area. Best view was of a den near Moremi Crossing with two adults and three young.

Black-backed Jackal *Canis mesomelas* — Common, very common everywhere.

Bat-eared Fox *Otocyon megalotis* — Only in the Kalahari, but also very common. Seen foraging during the crepuscular hours.

Burchell's Zebra *Equus quagga burchellii* — Everyday and everywhere.

Common Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus* — Seen everyday except in the Kalahari. Usually with tails up and running.

Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibious* — Where there was water, there was always hippos. Including in the Thalakamane River.

(Southern Reticulated) Giraffe *Giraffa camelopardalis* — More common than on past tours for some reason, not sure why though.

Blue Wildebeest (Brindled Gnu) *Connochaetes taurinus* — Lots of these, long strings of females with young and lots of bulls on territory.

Tsessebe *Damaliscus lunatus* — This, the fastest antelope in Africa is a striking dark bronze color. Seen in savanna habitat only.

Springbok *Antidorcas marsupialis* — Certainly the most abundant antelope in the Kalahari.

Steenbok *Raphicerus campestris* — Seen at least three times with last being adjacent to the Nxai Pan airstrip.

African Buffalo *Syncerus caffer* — It took a few days to see our first buffalo, but they were regular after that.

Greater Kudu *Tragelaphus strepsiceros* — The adult males are absolutely huge compared to the females.

Gemsbok *Oryx gazella* — Only one seen, a bull on our drive back from Baine's baobabs.

Impala *Aepyceros melampus* — The most common antelope in the non-desert regions.

Waterbuck *Kobus ellipsiprymnus* — Sporadic sightings in the Khwai and Moremi areas.

Red Lechwe *Kobus lechwe* — Where there were flooded areas, there were red lechwe

Southern Reedbuck *Redunca arundinum* — Only three sightings, but always in patches of reeds.

Cape Ground Squirrel *Xerus inauris* — Seen on most days of our tour.

Southern Springhare *Pedetes capensis* — Our night drives found a number of these individuals.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (2):

Nile Monitor Lizard *Varanus niloticus* — Seen only once along the River Khwai.

Wahlberg's Striped Skink *Trachylepis wahlbergii* — Regularly seen at the Moremi Crossing Lodge.