



## Hwange Walking Safari

We've just put the finishing touches to a new type of Exploration with walking through Hwange in Zimbabwe. I just got back from Hwange a few weeks ago and we walked a lot.

The walking there is incredible and largely untouched. This is ground breaking stuff in an incredible area, where the walking takes on a new meaning thanks to the variety of habitats in Hwange and the great variation in species diversity. This incredible ecological indicator as to why Hwange is such an off the charts wildlife destination...is a concept called "ecotones".

Hwange National park is a convergence zone where the dry tongues of the Kalahari desert meet dry and moist miombo woodland. This is interspersed with the open grasslands I mentioned above, as well as belt of mopane that cuts Hwange down the middle. Where more varied habitats converge in an ecotone there is a greater variety of species...desert adapted species like gemsbok feeding alongside woodland adapted species like sable. Greater variety of species means the ecosystem can support greater and more varied number of predators...hands down it's predator paradise! Now imagine walking through all that.

Remember that Hwange National Park (about 3.5 million acres in size) is one of the best dry and green season safari destinations in Africa and for good reason.

During the dry season from May – October, 32 boreholes throughout the park are permanently pumped to sustain the huge herds of elephant and buffalo the park is famous for. Your borehole/waterhole viewing becomes exceptional. This is exactly why we have built a number of log pile hides (blinds) at the waterholes. Many a game drive or walk in this case would end with guests just staying in one of the hides with a gin & tonic on hand watching hundreds of elephants, herds of 250 strong buffalo and enormous prides of lion in and around these waterholes.

During the green season from November – April, the arrival of summer rains means the open plains (vleis) sprout a nutrient rich short grass called foxtail buffalo grass. It's one of the cenchrus grasses, I can't remember which... bottom line is it tastes yummi to grazers! The herds of plains game (buffalo, eland, wildebeest, zebra) move onto these plains to feed and drop their young. The predators use the woodlands nearby as cover to target and hunt the grazers on these open plains – it's an epic battle that unfolds around these open plains in our summer...the green season.

I reckon with that short grass we could consider walking into the beginning or end of the green season, but the comfort factor does

become a concern and I would rather suggest walking through the middle of the year, maybe July, August and September being optimal.

We've already scheduled three walks for next year...maximum 7 pax per walk.