

GREAT PLAINS

CONSERVING AND EXPANDING NATURAL HABITATS



SEASONAL GUIDE TO GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION BOTSWANA



SEASONAL GUIDE TO GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION

BOTSWANA



SUMMER/GREEN SEASON
JANUARY - FEBRUARY

AUTUMN SEASON
MARCH - MAY

WINTER SEASON
JUNE - AUGUST

SPRING SEASON
SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER

SUMMER SEASON
DECEMBER

DUBA CONCESSION

DUBA PLAINS CAMP, DUBA PLAINS SUITE & DUBA EXPLORERS CAMP

WHAT IS GREAT ABOUT THIS MONTH?

JANUARY

January means summer, or the "green" season for the Duba Concession.

The entire reserve is lush and picturesque, with stunning flowers and excellent birding, especially the carmine bee-eaters which swoop low over our wildlife-viewing vehicles as they catch insects.

Early morning mists are common as are late afternoon summer thunderstorms, which are spectacular and make for great photography!

There are plenty of herbivore grazers and their young to be seen, including warthog, lechwe and kudu.

Elephants and buffalo can also be seen, as can the predators.

Temperatures are hot during the daytime, and slightly cooler at night, often helped by evening rain. Fishing activities are suspended during this period due to the breeding season.

FEBRUARY

Wildlife viewing continues to be fantastic, especially if you are a birder, with a host of summer migrants in the area making for spectacular birding and lots of "lifers" like the Denham bustard!

The herbivore grazers have their young at heel and, as always, the predators are in action.

There are still occasional late afternoon thunderstorms with the lightning being incredible to witness and try to capture photographically.

The verdant pastures of this region of the Okavango Delta are thick with flowers of all colours, making this a photographic heaven.

Temperatures are still hot during the day but tend to cool down a little in the evenings with boating and fishing activities remaining suspended for now.

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MARCH	<p>March signals a beginning to the end of our summer with the slow descent into autumn. This is when the migratory birds begin to leave the area, which is still green from the rains.</p> <p>While elephants and buffalo may be slightly more dispersed because of an expanded grazing area, lion and other predators remain in nearby resident territories around the camps and there is actually less overall migration of grazing animals at our Duba Concession compared to other parts of the Okavango Delta because this area is a collective of islands.</p> <p>The floodwaters of the Okavango Delta slowly start increasing as the floods start to trickle into the permanent water channels resulting in the overall Reserve remaining available for wildlife-viewing drives, but water-based activities are still suspended as these water channels are still not conducive to allowing boats to explore their channels.</p> <p>Daytime temperatures are beginning to decrease a little further now, with cooler nights drawing in and the late afternoon summer thunderstorms becoming less frequent.</p>
APRIL	<p>This is great month for spotting leopards, as the foliage begins to dry out. The grasses are still quite tall and start assuming their autumn hues as the season starts changing, but wildlife-viewing is superb nonetheless, as the seasonal floodwaters have yet to arrive in force, making the area available for wildlife-viewing that much more.</p> <p>Predator action is still great, even though the herds of grazers are more widely dispersed.</p> <p>While the daytime temperatures are still high, the evenings are growing much cooler now and the chance of rain decreases significantly.</p>
MAY	<p>This time of year has some of the clearest skies (free from both rain, clouds and dust) and, as a result, offers some of the best star gazing opportunities. The grass and foliage continue to decrease making wildlife-viewing increasingly better and the red lechwe in the area begin their rutting season, making for some dramatic interactions between males! Duba Concession's wildlife-viewing area remains large as the new season's high floodwaters have not yet arrived, although the water may start to arrive and rise sometime during this month. Boating activities usually resume in May, but this depends on the arrival of the actual high-level floodwaters arriving into the Okavango Delta.</p> <p>Daytime and night-time temperatures are now more moderate and very pleasant.</p>
JUNE	<p>The start of Botswana's winter season, June's days are shorter, but the wildlife-viewing is excellent.</p> <p>As the grass and foliage thins out, walking becomes a great wildlife-viewing activity, complementing the traditional wildlife-viewing drives. As the floodwaters rise the wildlife-viewing drive area becomes smaller but animals, both predators and prey, from lions to hippos to elephants, also tend to migrate and congregate on the remaining dry land. This starts resulting in some dramatic and more successful predator kills.</p> <p>As the floodwaters begin to reach their peak levels, iconic images of lechwe running through the water or lions swimming become more common.</p> <p>Temperatures are cool and comfortable, if not chilly in the early mornings and late evenings.</p>

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JULY	<p>July means that the high floodwaters are usually at their peak now, making safari drives a water-filled adventure with the animals condensed into a smaller but nonetheless action-packed wildlife-viewing islands.</p> <p>More and more of the reserve can be explored by boat.</p> <p>Temperatures continue to cool and it is now chilly on wildlife-viewing drives at dawn and dusk (layers are a must!)</p> <p>Hot water bottles are a welcome surprise under the sheets when guests tuck themselves into bed.</p>
AUGUST	<p>The floodwaters remain high but are starting to ebb as the eternal cycle of the seasons turns towards the arrival of spring.</p> <p>Boating continues and the short foliage and grass make for excellent visibility on wildlife-viewing drives and walks.</p> <p>The wildlife-viewing is outstanding at this time of year, and temperatures are cool but pleasant.</p>
SEPTEMBER	<p>It's starting to get warmer as spring is in the air! This is traditionally an excellent time for wildlife-viewing as the grass is low, the foliage sparse and the floodwaters are subsiding, meaning there is more land to explore, either on foot or on a wildlife-viewing drive. Boating activities often stop in September due to water levels decreasing.</p> <p>Temperatures are on the rise with warmer days and nights.</p>
OCTOBER	<p>Although boat-based activities have now generally ceased, the low grass and receding floodwaters make October a prime time for wildlife-viewing and walking safaris as more of the Duba Concession is opened up for exploration.</p> <p>It's starting to get hot during the day and warmer nights are drawing in.</p>
NOVEMBER	<p>Periods of incredible wildlife-viewing as the build-up to the summer thunderstorm rains begin.</p> <p>Some rainfall is possible during the second half of the month and birds begin to migrate back into the area.</p> <p>It is truly a spectacular month that in many ways offers the best of both the dry and wet seasons.</p> <p>Toward the end of the month, as the Okavango Delta's waters start to drop slightly, it may be required that our boating activities are suspended.</p>
DECEMBER	<p>Summer rainfall is possible during the second half of November and into December.</p> <p>This brings back green grass and flowers, which heralds the start of the birthing/calving season for grazing animals.</p> <p>The days also get a bit longer. Floodwaters have once again subsided offering easier access to a wider area of the reserve by our open wildlife-viewing drive vehicles.</p> <p>Birds are migrating back into the area in larger numbers.</p> <p>Boating activities are suspended and the temperatures can be hot with an increase in humidity.</p>

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SELINDA RESERVE (NORTH EAST)

ZARAFA CAMP, THE DHOW SUITE AT ZARAFA, SELINDA CAMP, SELINDA SUITE, SELINDA EXPLORERS CAMP

WHAT IS GREAT ABOUT THIS MONTH?

JANUARY	<p>January is summer in the Selinda Reserve. The entire 130,000-hectare private concession is an emerald landscape against bright blue skies. Flowers have appeared and there's excellent birding with migratory birds enjoying the summer.</p> <p>During this period there are often great painted dog sightings around "Shumba Pan". The damp ground in the mornings make for easier tracking and whilst animals such as elephants and buffalo may be slightly more dispersed due to their search for water, the lack of water in the actual Selinda Spillway makes it easier to explore a wider area of the reserve by vehicle and thus discover these magnificent beasts.</p> <p>Temperatures are hot during the daytime, and slightly cooler at night, often helped by short evening rainfall. The lower water levels do result in our boating and fishing activities being suspended until mid - late March usually.</p>
FEBRUARY	<p>Our wildlife-viewing continues to remain great, especially if you are a birder, with a host of summer migrants in the area making for spectacular birding!</p> <p>The herbivore grazers have their young at heel and, as always, the predators are in action, with wild dog sightings still a regular occurrence.</p> <p>Giraffe and roan commonly seen in the Selinda Reserve, usually around our airstrip, and our waterholes are full of hippos.</p> <p>Temperatures are still hot during the day but tend to cool down nicely in the evenings.</p>
MARCH	<p>March shows our summer drawing to a close and we eagerly start looking for signs of the season changes in our environment. The colours over this time present some spectacular photographic opportunities.</p> <p>The wildlife-viewing remains outstanding in the Selinda, with large herds of lechwe always close to the perennial pools of water and predators aplenty, especially painted dogs and lions.</p> <p>Bird-wise, the summer migrants are beginning to depart but the birding is nonetheless still excellent.</p> <p>Temperatures are beginning to cool off an evening, although the daytimes can still be warm - hot.</p>

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APRIL	<p>As we head into Autumn you can often see hippo out of the water feeding during the day as the temperatures begin to drop. Some grazing animals are still dispersed because of remaining ground water and grazing are still widely available, but predators such as lions remain in their territories year round and there is easy access around the Selinda Reserve as the Selinda Spillway, which bisects the area, has not yet flooded.</p> <p>The days are cooling down nicely now and evenings are very pleasant.</p>
MAY	<p>May is known for beautifully clear skies and great stargazing. The grass and foliage continue to decrease making wildlife-viewing on walks and wildlife viewing while on safari drives, easier. Leopard sightings occur more readily as the foliage dries. Large elephant herds start to move into the area as water begins to dry up in Botswana's Chobe and Savute areas. Impalas in the reserve begin their rutting season, making for some dramatic interactions between males battling for territory and females.</p> <p>Boating activities in the deeper channels around Selinda Camp could resume in late May / early June but we are still dependant on the annual flood levels topping up our existing water systems in the reserve.</p> <p>The Selinda Spillway waters also typically start to push into the reserve in May from a westerly direction being fed by the increased floodwaters entering into the Okavango Delta.</p> <p>Temperatures continue to moderate and become very pleasant.</p>
JUNE	<p>The days are growing shorter as we move into Botswana's winter season.</p> <p>Wildlife-viewing drives and walks offer excellent wildlife-viewing as the grass and foliage thins. From June onwards, the Selinda Reserve is famous for extremely large herds of buffalo and elephants. Hippos are easily seen feeding outside the water in the cool temperatures, lion and leopard sightings become more regular and painted dogs begin to den.</p> <p>Temperatures continue to cool, and the nights and early mornings are getting chilly.</p>
JULY	<p>This is the time of year when you have a great chance of seeing painted dogs hunting, especially if they are denning. Also, the predator sightings are excellent as the grass and foliage dries up, making it easier to spot them from a distance. Wildlife starts congregating around the remaining water holes ensuring larger herds of antelope sightings. Mornings are evenings are cold now, with hot water bottles a welcome addition to night-time turn-downs.</p> <p>This is the time of year when it's great to sit beside a roaring fire with a mug of cocoa and share bush stories after dinner and your evening wildlife-viewing drive.</p>

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AUGUST	<p>As the pans of water begin to dry up, you can generally spot more animals around the Selinda Spillway which is receiving water from both the Okavango Delta in the West and the Linyanti and Savute river systems in the East. There are increased sightings of eland and sable from our open wildlife-viewing drive vehicles and on guided walks.</p> <p>Predator action is a regular occurrence and the short grass and foliage makes for excellent cat spotting.</p> <p>It is beginning to get warmer during the day, although night-time temperatures are still cool.</p>
SEPTEMBER	<p>September is a time of elephants and buffalos, with huge herds regularly seen, grazing on the receding waters of the Selinda Spillway's floodplains. You can still see predators regularly, with lots of lion and leopard in the area. Eland and sable are also seen regularly.</p> <p>Daytime temperatures continue to rise and the evenings are getting warmer now, as spring is in full force.</p>
OCTOBER	<p>October sees the return of the migrant birds once more, as it gets warmer in the build-up to the summer rains.</p> <p>Wildlife-viewing is excellent due to the great visibility on drives and walks, and there are high numbers of elephants in the reserve at this time of year.</p> <p>Temperatures are soaring now, with it getting warmer during the day and remaining warm at night.</p>
NOVEMBER	<p>The month of babies.</p> <p>Antelopes and warthog tend to give birth to their young during this time.</p> <p>It is also a time of great birdlife as all of the summer migrants arrive and early summer rains often make for swathes of green pasture with large herds of grazers and elephant enjoying the new growth.</p> <p>This month offers the best of both the dry and summer seasons, but as the rains draw in the elephants and buffalo tend to disperse into smaller herds.</p> <p>Temperatures can be hot with increased humidity.</p>
DECEMBER	<p>The long days of summer have arrived and the Selinda Reserve is transformed with the blooming of summer flowers, helped by the "short" thunderstorm rains that characterise this time of year.</p> <p>Birding is at its peak with a multitude of young antelope and warthog around.</p> <p>Predator action is great.</p> <p>Towards the end of the month the heavier rains usually begin, making for spectacular photography as the storms build.</p> <p>It's hot and humid at this time of year, but the storms usually cool things down nicely.</p>

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SELINDA RESERVE (SOUTH WEST)

OKAVANGO EXPLORERS CAMP

WHAT IS GREAT ABOUT THIS MONTH?

JANUARY	<p>January is summer, and the vegetation echoes hues of green as wildflowers blossom in the reserve. The 130,000-hectare private reserve is lush and picturesque against beautiful blue skies. Migratory birds abound during this time.</p> <p>This is the perfect time for landscape pictures as the grass is still short and green in the floodplains. The Selinda Spillway water level is low in this season, turning those seasonal flood plains into grasslands, therefore appealing for a lot of grazers.</p> <p>The temperatures are high during the day and pleasantly cool in the evenings. Canoeing is still offered, although fishing is temporarily suspended during this time due to the breeding season.</p>
FEBRUARY	<p>It is a spectacular month for birding, with most of the migrant birds being spotted feeding and raising their young as they prepare for their return migration back to the north in the coming month. This is the month to see beetles and butterflies.</p> <p>The temperatures are still high, but short rainfall showers during the day make the days pleasant. The grasses have matured and attract a lot of seed eaters, especially birds. Big grazers like buffaloes and elands are well dispersed as most of the water holes are filled with water.</p> <p>Water is still available, allowing for canoeing in addition to our game drives and guided walks.</p>
MARCH	<p>This month marks the beginning of the change in season, which comes with subtle variations in the Okavango Ecosystem.</p> <p>The migrant birds will begin their preparations to head back to the northern atmosphere.</p> <p>Elephants start making their way into this part of Selinda Reserve where the permanent water channels exist. The tall grasses will have been trampled down by the elephants and grazers, creating great locations for walking over the next few months. Painted dogs and lions are the most prevalent predators seen.</p> <p>The nights are also beautiful, with fewer clouds, making star gazing possible. The mighty "Orion - The Hunter" dominates our night skies this month.</p> <p>Temperatures are hot during the afternoons but very pleasant at night and in the mornings.</p>

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APRIL	<p>April marks the return of all the big herbivores to the floodplains around the camp.</p> <p>Big herds of buffaloes and elands come and grace the area. It also marks the beginning of ideal opportunities to enjoy heading out on guided walking safaris.</p> <p>The first push of the annual Okavango flood waters is evident as the water levels start to rise and flow into the dry seasonal flood plains.</p> <p>Lions and painted dogs are often spotted in the open plains.</p> <p>It is also "rut" season for impalas as they start breeding soon and their rough calls can be heard throughout the night, especially at full moon.</p> <p>The temperatures are pleasant during the days and nights cooler as we approach winter.</p>
MAY	<p>This month marks the beginning of winter in the Selinda Reserve. The Okavango floods are slowly filling up the Selinda Spillway.</p> <p>In the open floodplains, herds of red lechwes are seen feeding on the fresh grasses. The grasses are breaking down and turning brown and the deciduous vegetation leaves start drying up. This makes it easier to track and follow animals around.</p> <p>The day temperatures are mild to warm, and nights are getting a little colder.</p>
JUNE	<p>Game viewing is still amazing, the water lilies are coming up in the flood plains creating a colourful view across the flood plains.</p> <p>Animals like Zebra, Sable, Wildebeest and Roan are often spotted in the open plains.</p> <p>Temperatures continue to cool down. The days are very pleasant, but mornings and nights are chilly.</p>
JULY	<p>The game continues to be great as most of the vegetation is dry making it easier to spot animals.</p> <p>Big herds of elephants are seen very often around the camp. The "Scorpio" constellation dominates our night skies. This is the month where you can see 5 planets with the naked eye in one night.</p> <p>Hot water bottles are available when out on game drives for your comfort. The days are pleasant with the evenings and mornings being chilly.</p>

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AUGUST	<p>The Selinda Spillway flood is at its peak this month.</p> <p>Temperatures begin to rise slightly with daytimes still very pleasant.</p> <p>The animals move freely around as the temperatures rise making for continued, great game viewing.</p> <p>It is a great month with beautiful aromas of Apple Leaves as they start flowering.</p> <p>The temperatures are warm during the day and cool at night.</p>
SEPTEMBER	<p>The Selinda Spillway floods are now receding as the temperatures start to rise. This results in the floodplains slowly turning into grasslands. This encourages a rich mixture of herbivores feeding off the new grass shoots. They tend to be congregated around the waterways which attracts a variety of predators such as African wild dogs (also known as painted dogs), lions and cheetahs.</p> <p>The temperatures are warm to hot during the day and cool to warm during the nights and mornings.</p>
OCTOBER	<p>October sees the return of the migrant birds once more, as it gets warmer in the build-up to the summer rains.</p> <p>Wildlife viewing is excellent due to the great visibility on drives and walks, and there are high numbers of elephants at this time of year.</p> <p>Temperatures are soaring now, with it getting warmer during the day and remaining warm at night.</p>
NOVEMBER	<p>The month of babies! Antelopes and warthog tend to give birth to their young during this time. This naturally attracts the predators...</p> <p>It is also a time of great birdlife as all of the summer migrants arrive and early summer rains often make for swathes of green pasture with large herds of grazers and elephants enjoying the new growth.</p> <p>This month offers the best of both the dry and summer seasons, but as the rains draw in the elephants and buffalo tend to disperse.</p> <p>This month produces incredible thunder and lightning experience.</p> <p>Temperatures can be warm to hot with increased humidity.</p>
DECEMBER	<p>The extended summer days have begun, and the Selinda Reserve is now adorned with blossoming summer flowers, thanks to the frequent short afternoon thunderstorms typical of this season, creating stunning photographic opportunities as the storms gather. Birdwatching is at its finest, accompanied by numerous young antelopes and warthogs. Predator activity is impressive. The waters of the Selinda Spillway are at their lowest, but water activities are still possible. Although it is hot and humid during this period, the storms generally bring a refreshing coolness.</p>

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SITATUNGA PRIVATE ISLAND

SITATUNGA PRIVATE ISLAND AND SITATUNGA PRIVATE ISLAND SUITE

WHAT IS GREAT ABOUT THIS MONTH?

JANUARY

During the summer rains, Sitatunga Private Island transforms into a lush haven, teeming with diverse wildlife and a stunning variety of birds. Visitors can spot notable species like Pel's Fishing Owls, African Fish Eagles, and Coucals, along with Carmine bee-eaters, White-fronted bee-eaters, and Woodland Kingfishers. The newly hatched chicks take to the skies, preparing for their northward migration in March and April.

Large lagoons and connecting channels attract large mammals such as elephants, hippos, and crocodiles along the banks. The lush vegetation draws numerous herbivores while monkeys forage in the treetops. January's warm and wet climate, with frequent afternoon thunderstorms, adds drama to the landscape. Temperatures range from 20°C to 35°C (68°F to 95°F), providing a warm, sunlit environment during the day and a cool, refreshing atmosphere in the evenings. This dynamic weather supports the ecosystem and offers excellent opportunities for photographers.

This camp offers fantastic opportunities for boating and mokoro excursions, allowing guests to explore the water channels, observing frogs, aquatic bird life, and mammals coming to drink. Fishing is paused during the breeding season, which lasts until the end of February. Walking activities are another major highlight.

FEBRUARY

Birdlife remains abundant in February, with the lush flora transforming the island into a photographic haven. The vibrant flowers and greenery attract numerous species, making it a prime time for birdwatchers and photographers alike. Large mammals like elephants and buffaloes continue to be frequently seen.

February continues to be warm and humid, with occasional rains providing relief from the heat. Temperatures range from 20°C to 35°C (68°F to 95°F). The dramatic late afternoon thunderstorms persist, offering incredible lightning displays that captivate photographers. Despite the daytime heat, evenings cool down noticeably, creating a comfortable environment for both wildlife and visitors. The lush landscapes and flourishing flowers make every safari excursion a visual feast, while the continuing hot temperatures during the day remind guests to stay hydrated and take advantage of the cooler mornings and evenings for wildlife activities. Guests can experience mokoro and boating adventures, along with incredible walks across various islands.

Hippos don't have a specific breeding season, but most babies are seen during the first quarter of the year.

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MARCH	<p>As summer transitions into autumn, March marks a period of change at Sitatunga Private Island. Migratory birds prepare for their journey up North, creating a final spectacle for bird enthusiasts. Large herbivores and predators remain active, with elephants and occasionally buffalo and giraffes seen. The gradual decline in temperature provides a reprieve from the intense heat, making wildlife observation more comfortable.</p> <p>March sees a decrease in rainfall and thunderstorms, leading to a more settled weather pattern. Daytime temperatures begin to drop, ranging from 18°C to 33°C (64°F to 91°F), while evenings become cooler, inviting a more comfortable ambience over the island. The sporadic thunderstorms become less frequent, allowing for clearer skies and tranquil moments, ideal for wildlife observation and photography. The end of the fish breeding season means guests can enjoy catch-and-release fishing again, adding another dimension to their safari experience.</p> <p>As the daytime temperatures cool and the seasons change over, the intra-African migrants get ready to depart northward with their young. We say goodbye to the Carmine bee-eaters, Cuckoos, White Fronted bee-eaters, Woodland Kingfishers, Marsh Harriers, and Yellow Billed Kites until they return in August and September.</p>
APRIL	<p>April unveils a fascinating chapter in the wildlife drama of Sitatunga Private Island. As the landscape continues to undergo subtle changes, the water levels are at their lowest point this month. This provides excellent opportunities to the exposed island edges with your professional walking guide. The ever-so-subtle shrinking of the rivers results in hippos congregating in larger pods where bulls guard their territory, and females nurse their calves. Their occasional honk and grunt speaks to quintessential Africa.</p> <p>The daytime temperatures still maintain their warmth, while evenings begin to embrace a cooler breeze. Temperatures range from 15°C to 30°C (59°F to 86°F). The chance of rain decreases significantly, marking the culmination of the summer season. The once frequent and rejuvenating showers give way to a drier spell, creating a more stable environment for both predators and prey.</p>
MAY	<p>Wildlife remains active, with exceptional viewing opportunities. During the daytime, wildlife congregates at the water's edge and more permanent water channels to quench their thirst.</p> <p>May transforms Sitatunga Private Island into a celestial spectacle, offering visitors unique and enchanting experiences under some of the clearest night skies imaginable. The absence of rain and clouds contributes to the clarity of the skies, allowing constellations, planets, and the Milky Way to shine in all their glory. As Orion sets, Scorpio rises to take charge of the night skies. Temperatures range from 12°C to 28°C (54°F to 82°F), making outdoor activities enjoyable. At sunset, the mild temperatures create the ideal climate for nocturnal adventures without the intensity of summer heat. May invites guests to witness the beauty of the African landscape and its wildlife while also marvelling at the celestial wonders above, creating a magical and immersive encounter with nature.</p>

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JUNE	<p>June heralds the onset of winter in Botswana, bringing captivating changes to the landscape and wildlife dynamics at Sitatunga Private Island. The shorter days and cooler temperatures make wildlife more active, providing excellent viewing opportunities against a backdrop of cool and comfortable weather. Antelope, hippos, crocodiles, predators, and prey adjust their behaviours to the refreshing briskness of the atmosphere.</p> <p>The winter months are a perfect time to enjoy watching the crocodiles, many of them are more docile during this time and can be found outside the water during the daytime, soaking up the warm rays of the sunshine.</p> <p>The mornings and late evenings embrace a touch of chilliness, adding a refreshing briskness to the atmosphere. Temperatures range from 10°C to 26°C (50°F to 79°F). The reduced foliage makes wildlife spotting even more rewarding as animals move through the more open terrain. The dryness of the winter season further contributes to clearer visibility, offering an unobstructed view of the flora and fauna as the deciduous trees shed their leaves and the evergreens maintain the hue. June invites visitors to revel in the tranquillity of the winter season, where the shorter days and crisper air create an intimate setting for wildlife encounters.</p>
JULY	<p>July marks a significant juncture at Sitatunga Private Island as the high floodwaters reach their zenith, transforming the landscape into a mesmerising aquatic wonderland. The Okavango Delta becomes a labyrinth of channels and lagoons, offering unique and enchanting spectacles. The Sitatunga antelope birthing season peaks and the thick papyrus and reed beds provide perfect cover for youngsters. The resultant predator activity also increases as they seek out these young antelope. The shallow floodplains that fill up as a result of the flood waters offer perfect hunting grounds for the aquatic waders, such as black-winged stilts and a variety of storks.</p> <p>The days are cool, providing a refreshing break from the intense heat of the previous months, with temperatures ranging from 8°C to 25°C (46°F to 77°F). However, temperatures can drop further as the sun sets, necessitating layers to stay warm. Hot water bottles become a comforting surprise tucked under the sheets, ensuring guests can nestle into their beds with warmth and comfort. The high floodwaters create new exploration opportunities as animals navigate the intricate waterways, offering a unique perspective on the circle of life in the Okavango Delta.</p>

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AUGUST	<p>August at Sitatunga Private Island experiences a transitional phase as the high floodwaters begin to recede, marking a pivotal moment in the eternal cycle of seasons. The landscape undergoes a subtle transformation, presenting a unique blend of water and land. This dynamic environment enhances the wildlife experience, with animals adapting to changing water levels and migratory birds returning.</p> <p>The refreshing climate encourages outdoor activities, from daytime safaris to evening strolls, with temperatures ranging from 10°C to 28°C (50°F to 82°F). The high floodwaters offer a unique perspective on the interconnectedness of land and water. Keep an eye out for young sitatunga antelope and the spectacular white-fronted bee-eaters carving out nesting sites on the sand cliffs, beautifully spotted from the boat.</p> <p>It is during August and September that the intra-African migrants arrive. It is here that they breed, and specials sightings may include the Carmine bee-eaters, Cuckoos, White Fronted bee-eaters, Marsh Harriers, and Yellow Billed Kites.</p> <p>During August and September, as the temperatures start to warm, the crocodiles also begin their annual mating rituals before the mothers lay their eggs in the sandbanks above the high water mark to incubate. The mothers jealously guard these nursery areas until the hatchlings arrive three months later.</p>
SEPTEMBER	<p>September unfolds at Sitatunga Private Island with the promise of spring as nature prepares to shed the remnants of winter and embrace the warmth of the upcoming season. The landscape gradually transforms, and the air becomes infused with a sense of renewal. The annual barbel run begins, attracting plentiful tigerfish, and birdlife is abundant, with many species nesting. At the same time, the arrival of migratory birds, such as woodland kingfishers and yellow-billed kites, adds vibrancy to the environment, and the call of the kingfishers signals that spring has arrived.</p> <p>The sun asserts its presence, bathing the island in gentle warmth that extends from daytime into evening, with temperatures ranging from 15°C to 32°C (59°F to 90°F). The milder temperatures energise animals, who engage in various behaviours, from playful interaction to active foraging. The transitional period between winter and spring offers a unique opportunity to witness the island's inhabitants' dynamic interactions and renewed vitality. Bird enthusiasts should look out for white-fronted bee-eaters jetting over the short vegetation as they catch grasshoppers and other flying insects, creating a photographer's dream as their vibrant colours are captured mid-flight. At times, you may even be lucky enough to spot the more elusive Carmine bee-eaters.</p>
OCTOBER	<p>October marks the transition from milder spring temperatures to warmer days and nights at Sitatunga Private Island. The sun strengthens, causing a subtle shift in the landscape and encouraging wildlife to adjust their activities. The annual barbel run continues, making it an ideal time for fishing, and wildlife becomes more active during the earlier hours of the day.</p> <p>Daytime temperatures start to rise, ranging from 18°C to 35°C (64°F to 95°F), introducing a touch of heat to the atmosphere. The sun's rays permeate the island, casting a golden glow over the diverse landscapes. Crocodiles can be seen energising on the banks. While the temperatures increase, October retains the charm of a transitional month, balancing the lingering warmth with the anticipation of the upcoming summer. The warming trend encourages wildlife to seek shade during the warmer afternoons, offering guests unique wildlife sightings in the cooler mornings and evenings.</p>

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NOVEMBER

November at Sitatunga Private Island offers a captivating blend of wildlife spectacle and the prelude to the summer thunderstorm rains. This month, often considered a bridge between the dry and wet seasons, showcases the best of both worlds. The migratory birds would have hatched and are actively nursing their chicks, adding a new dimension to birding. The large herbivores and predators are active and easily observable.

Warm with increasing rainfall, temperatures range from 20°C to 35°C (68°F to 95°F). Expecting the imminent rains adds a sense of urgency to animal activity as they make the most of the remaining dry conditions. The skies come alive with vibrant colours and distinctive calls of migratory birds, enhancing the overall safari experience. The dynamic and multifaceted environment provides a rich and immersive adventure for those exploring this corner of the Okavango Delta.

Keep an eye out for the hatching of baby crocodiles from late October and into November. The mothers' eggs were laid three months ago, and during this time, they were jealously guarded by the mothers. She will go on to watch over them, too, as they grow over the next couple of months before they head out in the channels on their own, never to return. If you listen carefully, you may, in fact, just catch the sound of the baby croc calling its mother as it exists its egg buried under the sand...

DECEMBER

December marks a transformative period at Sitatunga Private Island as the summer rainfall renews the landscape, a clear signal being distinctive petrichor. The revitalised greenery provides a rich tapestry for the island, with the emerald hues of grass and blooming flowers heralding a period of abundance. Young animals take their first steps on the lush grasslands, and migratory birds fill the skies.

Warm and wet, temperatures range from 20°C to 35°C (68°F to 95°F). The revitalised landscape is a feast for the eyes and a boon for herbivores. The vibrant hues and melodies of migratory birds add another layer of diversity to the island's ecosystem. Mokoro rides, boat safaris, and birdwatching excursions allow guests to fully appreciate the lush scenery and active wildlife, creating rich photographic opportunities and unforgettable memories.

Expect to see increased activity from the baby crocodiles who hatched just over a month ago as they begin to become more independent. They can easily be spotted now clinging to the reeds and vegetation alongside the channels as they stalk frogs and smaller fish, for example. Don't be fooled; they can still bite!

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WILDLIFE NOTES

DUBA CONCESSION

What makes the private 33,000-hectare Duba Concession unlike any region in Africa and completely unique is the topography influenced by flood waters, sedimentation and localised fault lines.

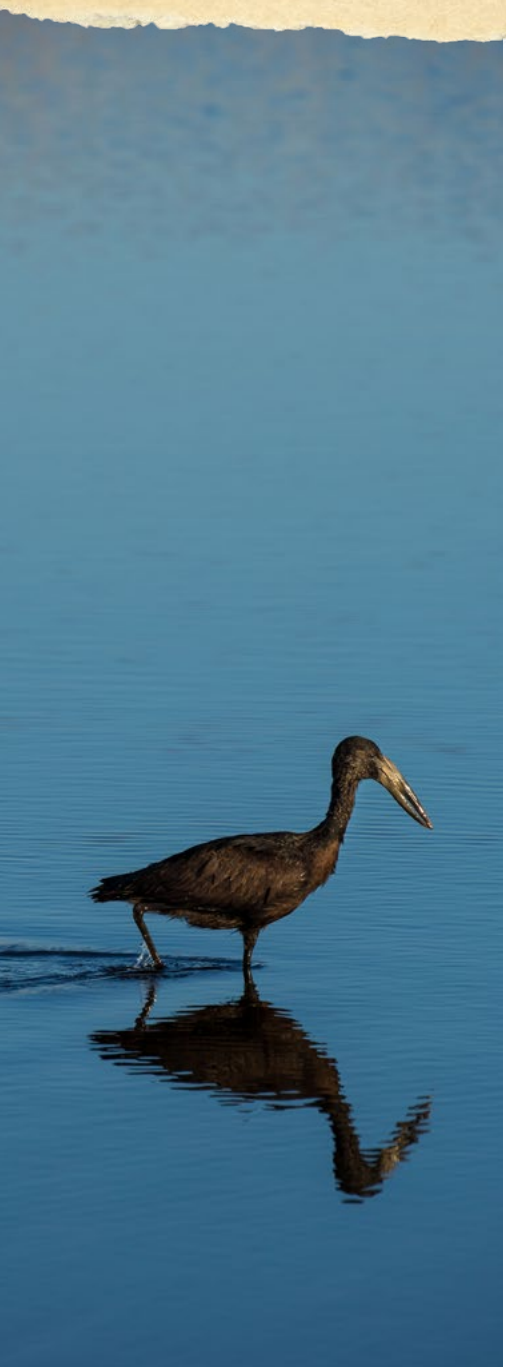
The Duba Concession has a series of islands created over millennia by weathered anthills, creating the wildlife-abundant islands we see today. These open plains are surrounded by permanent deep water channels, almost ring-fencing the entire Duba Plains island! As the waters of the Okavango Delta flow from the north, this is the first landmass they meet. As the waters slow, rich sediments are deposited, allowing succulent and nutritious grasses to grow successfully. This natural cycle creates the perfect environment for wildlife, with abundant food sources and plenty of water to thrive.

Red lechwe, estimated at 20,000, are the most dominant antelope here. With one of the highest densities found in Africa, the once-dominant buffalo herds have been displaced and migrated northward. Giraffes are less common here but can be seen occasionally on the island around Duba Plains Camp.

The predator and big cat populations remain very healthy. The larger lion populations have split into smaller but more numerous prides, with the region dominated by two males. Leopards are regularly seen. However, this marshy ecosystem is not the ideal habitat for cheetahs, which are more frequently seen at our Selinda Reserve.

The Duba Concession is one of the better places to see Botswana's calm and approachable kudu. Bushbuck numbers are also plentiful, and Reedbuck sightings are very good. Aardwolf, painted dogs (wild dogs), and even pangolin sightings are occasionally seen. Wildebeest, impala, giraffe, and zebra are frequently seen around Duba Explorers Camp but tend to be scarce in the rest of the Duba Concession. Areas with big trees, open plains, and thicker vegetation characterise the area around Duba Explorers Camp. Duba Plains Camp is characterised by open plains on nearby larger islands with scattered termite mounds and fewer large trees.

Due to the abundance of water and ideal habitats, birdlife is exceptional. Specials seen include rosy-breasted longclaw, wattled crane, and slaty egret, with rarer sightings of Pels Fishing Owl. Sightings of more than 100 bird species are usually achievable with a minimum three-night stay.



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SELINDA RESERVE

The Selinda Spillway dominates the Selinda Reserve's ecosystem. This is a waterway derived primarily from the Okavango Delta in the west that floods annually. From the east, floodwaters from the Linyanti and Savute water systems flow into the Zibadianja Lagoon, which extends in front of Zarafa, before flowing further into the water channels in front of Selinda Camp before proceeding toward the Selinda Spillway.

The 130,000-hectare private Selinda Reserve has a wide diversity of habits and wildlife, boasting some of Botswana's best wild dog (also known as painted dog) sightings, with local packs denning on the reserve for the past few years.

Research monitoring estimates that the area has the highest population of elephant bulls in the world, with large herds seen throughout the year - peaking from July to November. In August, large buffalo herds also move to both the reserve's eastern and western sections, once the Selinda Spillway floodwaters subside, to graze on the rich grasses of the exposed flood plains.

Dominant male lions look after resident lion prides, with several prides enjoying territories through the Selinda Reserve. There are healthy leopard numbers, and they are seen regularly throughout the reserve. Impala are the dominant antelope alongside healthy kudu, waterbuck, steenbok and lechwe populations. Warthog numbers have increased, and it has become the favoured prey of our lion.

Occasional sightings of eland, roan and sable are also possible in the western section where Okavango Explorers Camp is located. Roan antelope are quite rare in other parts of Botswana and Southern Africa.

Birdlife peaks in October and November, with the slaty egret as the signature bird. This is an excellent area to witness the return of migratory birdlife during the summer months.

The Selinda Reserve sees a seasonal wildlife migration once the rains arrive in November. As the numerous waterholes fill, they provide elephants, in particular, with a more extensive habitat to roam. This presents greater wildlife viewing opportunities for guests to explore and seek out these magnificent herds.

Once the waterholes dry, beginning in May, the herds congregate into bigger herds, often seen along the Selinda Spillway and deeper water channels, with herd densities peaking in October. Giraffes are readily seen all year round, with a perfect habitat of acacias. Hippos are widespread throughout and a guaranteed sighting during a visit, especially in the east.

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SITATUNGA PRIVATE ISLAND

Sitatunga Private Island is located on the fringe of the mighty Okavango River, where the river starts its meander through the channels and over floodplains on its course due South. These permanent water channels and seasonal and perennial floodplains are a unique sight to enjoy. The aquatic birdlife in and around Sitatunga Private Island, both resident and migratory, offers the keen birder exceptional sightings and top-notch photographic opportunities. Sightings range from Pels Fishing Owls that spend their days in the thick water indicator tree canopies to Woodland Kingfishers, Carmine bee-eaters, Marsh Harriers and Pygmy Geese with their colourful plumage. Sitatunga Private Island is indeed a birder's paradise.

The Okavango Delta's heartbeat, which is its annual inundation of flood waters from highlands further North of the continent, brings with it uniqueness and life as the sheet floods pass through papyrus beds and the seasonal floodplains pulsate with life as waters flow in and out the floodplains. During the high flood period, the camp provides a true escape for keen fishermen and women to enjoy action-filled catch and release tiger fishing, the annual barbel run or hooking different tilapia species.

This well-hidden gem is the ideal environment to spot the rare and elusive sitatunga, a rare and well-adapted aquatic antelope endemic to these specific ecosystems. Spotted on floating papyrus islets or seen crossing deep permanent water, these antelopes offer visitors a feeling of nature's complexity and a glimpse into the ecosystem's interconnectedness and uniqueness. One cannot help but appreciate an unhurried time and the abundance of space around you while cruising on a boat. This offers you a great vantage point to understand the landscape's expanse, the water channels' interconnectedness and the majesty of the area in its totality. The edges of these channels are dotted with some of the largest crocodiles ever seen, which also speak to the ancient and intricate ecosystem experienced in this area. A tranquil mokoro ride brings one even closer to nature as you are immersed in amphibious sounds and the chirping and squawking of birdlife. A professionally guided walk on carefully selected islands calls to mind all the visitor's senses as they traverse the ancient and remote lands as one with nature.