



### **THE MANY REASONS TO VISIT CHOBE, BOTSWANA, IN THE GREEN SEASON**

The green season in Chobe is full of hidden gems - with birding at its best, as well as an abundance of very young wildlife, it is a rewarding time to visit the region, says Safari and Guide Services director Clive Millar.

Also known as the low season, it stretches from December to April, encompassing the November/December to March peak birding season, where more than 300 species migrate to Chobe from Europe, as well as other parts of Africa and the northern hemisphere, Mr Millar said.

“Among those birds are the carmine bee-eaters and the yellow billed kites, and we have many different waders,” he said.

In November/December, after the first rains have fallen warthogs, wildebeest, impala as well as other antelope species, such as tsessebe and lechwe, drop their young ones. Impala lambs gather in creches, forming herds as big as 40 or 50, he said.

Predators, such as lion and wild dog, are more active with the plethora of young, vulnerable wildlife around, so visitors can witness some dramatic scenes.

“The bush is thick and some people think that limits the game viewing, but I’ve seen some of the best game in February. Just because it’s green season it doesn’t mean it’s very hard to see the wildlife,” Mr Millar said.

“It depends on the inland water – if the pans are full, animals don’t have to worry about going great distances, but if you get periods during the rainy season where it’s not raining, for example for seven to ten days, a lot of the animals will go back to the river.”

There is often significant movement of game, and this usually enhances sightings.

“The bush changes remarkably – it’s so much more alive. At this time of the year everything is green and bursting with life, colour and energy and the animals are fat and healthy. The colours are brilliant for photography.”

Chobe National Park is open for an extra hour from October 1 to March 31, from 5.30am to 7pm, offering visitors a greater chance of viewing the nocturnal species, such as hyena, honey badgers and springhares, Mr Millar said.

There are also a couple of very practical advantages to visiting Chobe in the green season - accommodation prices are lower, depending on where you are staying, some lodges and hotels offer a considerable reduction, and there are fewer other tourists around.

Some lodges and camps also offer longer stay discounts, such as Ngoma Safari Lodge, part of the Africa Albida Tourism (AAT) hospitality group, where three and four night stays attract a 15 per cent discount, and five or more night stays receive 20 per cent off.

AAT chief executive Ross Kennedy said: “The location of Ngoma Safari Lodge overlooking the floodplains from an elevated site affords wonderful game viewing and birding opportunities, especially in the early mornings and late afternoons/early evenings.

“Green season also means fewer vehicles in Chobe National Park, and hence an enhanced sense of tranquillity,” Mr Kennedy said.

AAT operates a portfolio of lodges and restaurants in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, including its flagship property Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, as well as the luxury boutique Ngoma Safari Lodge in Chobe, Botswana.

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