

**Uganda Trip Report**  
**November 12<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009**  
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**Chimps and Gorillas!**

On arrival in Entebbe, Uganda we were met by a smiling Lydia who gave us a wonderful briefing, and then we met our Driver/Guide Benjamin Musisi and continued to the Kampala Serena hotel. You know you are back in Africa when you smell the dust and wood smoke!

The next morning we began our journey to *Murchison Falls National Park*. We stopped for lunch at *Kaniyo Pabidi Forest* where we heard that the newly habituated, resident chimp family was very close – maybe 15-20 minutes walk away. This was too good an opportunity to miss, so lunch was forgotten and we headed off to find the chimps.

After a mere 10 minutes we found a family of 30 chimps in a huge fig tree and spent a very enjoyable hour watching them up in the trees and down on the ground in the shade. They amused us with their cavorting and screeching as they played and chased each other. What a great start to our safari!

Onward to Murchison Falls where we spent the afternoon in the park and saw Rothschild's giraffe, elephant, wart hog, water buck, Ugandan kob, buffalo, bushbuck, hartebeest and Hyena.



We woke up the next morning to lovely views of the Victoria Nile from Paraa Lodge and then we were off back across the Nile on the ferry, to view the top of the Murchison Falls.

Our road travel took us onward to *Kibale Forest* and a night at Ndali Lodge.

The following day we set off on a chimp trek, and again we were lucky as after just 15 minutes we stopped to admire a monkey in the top of a fig tree, there sitting sunbathing on a neighboring branch was a chimp ! He was then joined by a second chimp and we watched as they came down onto the ground and bounded up another fig tree where they made themselves comfortable. We carried on through the forest see if we could find some more chimps and found two more in yet another fig tree. We also saw a huge black and white hornbill, a blue d iiker, Colobus monkeys and many more birds and butterflies.



After lunch at Primate Lodge we did the community Swamp Walk and had some fantastic bird sightings as well as red tailed monkeys and the L'hoest's monkeys.



Onward to *Queen Elizabeth National Park* where we drove around the craters and spent the night at Mweya Lodge which has stunning views over the Kazinga Channel and Lake Edward. On our game drive here we saw many elephant, Ugandan kob, water buck, olive baboons and wart hog.



Enroute from Queen Elizabeth we drove through the southern area of *Ishasha*, the open grasslands contrasted to the northern part of the park that has many volcano craters. This is where the tree climbing lions are found!



A long drive had us arriving at the *Nkuringo* side of *Bwindi Impenetrable National Park* and the wonderful welcome at *Clouds Lodge*! Including a hand massage at the door!



The next morning we were up early as we were trekking the *Nshongi gorilla family* and it was an hour's drive to the Park Head Quarters. Bwindi forest is incredibly beautiful and we trekked until 1:00pm before we found the gorillas. The terrain tends to be rolling hills, so there was lots of trekking up the hills, along the top and down the other side to then come to another hill! However the long trek was worth it when we found the gorillas – the family group of 36+ had only been recently opened to the public to trek since September 2009 .



First we saw one of the silverbacks sitting under a tree, in the pouring rain I might add. He didn't seem overly keen to see us as he hid his face behind the leaves of the tree. We heard the others before we saw them as they shrugged their way through the undergrowth. One of the black back juveniles climbed to the top of the tree where he stood up, waved his arms in the air, hooted and jumped up and down. The dominant silverback didn't seem at all perturbed as he continued eating. We saw 20 gorillas during our time with this family. Then we made our way back through the forest, sliding our way down the muddy hills, crossing the river and finally at the end of the day back to our lodge for a hot shower and dinner in front of the fire.



The next day we explored the Nkuringo area to see first hand the incredible sustainable projects they are introducing to the area including schools, the Batwa village where they are selling baskets and growing dye plants, and the local village where we purchased some Uganda home-grown tea. We also enjoyed some leisure time at the lodge before we were visited by the choir from the local orphanage .



The following day, instead of driving around to the other side of Bwindi with Ben our guide, we took the short cut and did the forest walk from Nkuringo to Buhoma. As we stopped often to look at birds it took us the better part of the morning and so we arrived at ***Gorilla Forest Camp*** in time for a very late lunch. Ian, the Manager filled us in the gorilla family groups and showed us the new Park headquarters.

That afternoon we visited the Bwindi Community Hospital and it was very inspiring to see all the good work that is being done there. This will be one of new projects we will be supporting for 2010.

[www.bwindihospital.com](http://www.bwindihospital.com)

From Buhoma we drove to **Lake Mburo** where we spent the night at **Mihingo Lodge**. We had a very successful game drive in the park as we saw herds of zebra, impala and e land. The lodge is high up in the rock kopje with wonderful views over the plains. That evening we watched the bush-babies come down at sunset.



Our last day dawned and we headed back to Entebbe, stopping along the way to do some souvenir shopping and to re-pack and relax at Lake Victoria Hotel before boarding our flight home.

