

Thursday 20.Sep.07

Last day at work - but not very productive. All I did was going to work but had more coffee breaks than being at my desk. Around lunch time I left and waited for my wife coming home as well. My dad brought us to the airport. Many times before we flew with Air France and had never ever problems with our heavy photo equipment as hand luggage. By 16:00 our flight took off to Paris where we burned three hours before we finally departure to Johannesburg.

Friday 21.Sep.07

Back in Africa for another round! Arrived at the new terminal wasn't fun as the sign posts weren't clear where to go to pick up luggage and where to enter the country. Finally we managed this as well. Well, the main problem was that they had six counters open for SA passport holders and six for none SA passport holders. They weren't flexible enough to open those for none SA passport holders as soon as all of them had gone. We had another flight in front of us before we got our Visa. It took so long that our flight has been taken off from the luggage claim table. As the last years we rented a Landrover from Britz and they picked us up as well. First big step was taken as we entered the Britz Office at Kempton Park. It was a warm welcome and our Landrover was almost ready bringing us back into the bush. After the paperwork had been sorted out we can check the car. The low light is that the car wasn't ready and we spent 2 hours getting it completed. Before we really started that trip we stopped at Spar for the basic needs. It's a Britz rule that you take over a rental car with an empty tank and return it with an empty tank. So we had to fill up before we left Kempton Park. The first day we tent to drive long distances but since we do have friends in South Africa the first overnight stop is in Florida (Johannesburg). I don't know why but we never ever can make it in the first go to get to our friends place. We took the right exit but then we are usually getting lost in Johannesburg. But this time I were better prepared than ever and had the GPS connected to the LAPTOP. The big screen is nice for navigation. It was almost a year ago since we had been in Africa and a lot of things happened meanwhile. The main change on our side was that we married four month ago. Sending emails and calling will never be the same as meetings. They were waiting for us already and the party started. Before other friends came by Ron and I got the car prepared for the trip. While we worked Sabine and Lettie had already a look at the weeding picture book. Wouter and Marlie had been on a Tanzania trip in June and some Kwacha left. After we sorted out all the financials we started the Braai with Brand & Coke. It was late when we went to bed. If we had not closed the evening we still would sit and talk.

Saturday 22.Sep.07

We got up early as we wanted to get to Nata. We left Johannesburg by 5:30. It was not an eventful drive till we reached border post „Martins Drift“. Good that the T4A community had recorded the petrol station as it is not at the main road. The South Africa border post was easy to pass but on Botswana border post was a long queue. Finally we got stamped our passport and tried to pay the road levy. The cashier told me they only accept Pula which is a new role this year. We didn't have Pula but South African bikers helped us making our way into Botswana. The kilometer counter went up but we didn't come closer to Nata. Finally we reached Franzistown where we drawn money from the ATM. Two hours later we were in Nata and filled up our thirsty Landrover. The Engen run out of Diesel (was this already a bad sign for Zambia?) but the Shell did have. Back at the Engen petrol station as there is a bottle store. The human tank needed refilling as well. About one hour later we turned off the engine at Elephant Sands. Not in the mood of cooking today we booked a table for dinner at 19:00. Life started again after the cold shower and a cold. Right in time we were at the main building but they were still busy preparing dinner. Some others joined us at the campfire and we talk about Hwange and the current situation of Zimbabwe. They

told us that they have been here many times before but dinner never got ready before 21:00. Good to know as we were dying of hunger. The food they prepared has been excellent. As soon as we finished we paid and went to bed.

Sunday 23.Sep.07

The sun rose as we entered the tar road towards Kasane. Hennie told us the huntersroad should be good so we went to check it out. The owner of Elephant Sands told us as it was too dry not to expect much there. We took the firebreak line towards Domtshetshu Pan but there was nothing! We gave up the plan driving the huntersroad up to Kayungula. So set back at the firebreak line and drove up the tar road to Pandamatenga. Along the highway we saw our first game on this trip - Elephant, Giraffe, and Grounded Hornbills – more then compared with the huntersroad. The sightings warmed up our hearts as we got the impression of finally having arrived back in Africa. Other cars turned over may have thought of - „oh not again these tourists“! We are good in changing plans. We wanted to from Pandamatenga to Kazuma Pan and stay there overnight but we afraid of just driving up there for nothing. Therefore we went up north at the tar road till we could access the Pan more directly. All the Pans were dry and we didn't see anything. Still not believing it we did just the stretch up to Kasane. The only game we saw was a dead giraffe. As we got closer to Chobe River the signs of elephant's presence got more obvious. Finally at Elephant Valley Lodge we did have plenty of them around our car. After one year not being in the bush the respect was high giving them the right of way. We got more relaxed and our adrenalin level came down when we had to pass them. Almost all campsites in Kasane have been booked out due to bank holiday in South Africa. We found a free stand at „Ngina Safari's Rest Camp“. The only question was why there was anyone else? They were friendly and as we wanted to do a boat cruise they help us organizing. The only problem was we had to go to Mowana Safari Lodge. We arrived just in time. We jumped onto the boat and left for the sundowner cruise. The cruise is a must. From the boat we saw lions, elephants, buffalo and a lot of water birds. The only difference compared against three years ago was the impression that not so many elephant herds were there. Back at the Lodge we changed our itenary again. The Lodge had some free rooms left and we didn't have to get back to Ngina Rest Camp at night. There was no damage for us as we didn't paid. Mowana Safari Lodge is one of the top destinations in Kasane and therefore the service was excellent. Poor boy had to carry my wife's bag into our room. While I were busy getting the car ready for the next day she dressed up for dinner. Another waiter got into our room opened the mosquito net and put some sweets on our pillow. Even if my wife likes camping that's the kind of luxury she likes as well. Being dressed up we enjoyed dinner at the restaurant. As we wanted to leave early next morning we did all the packing.

Monday 24.Sep.07

We couldn't leave as early as planed because the restaurant opened by 07:00 for having breakfast. Being the first one we had a nice and silent breakfast. The tables along the riverside are lovely in the morning as a lot of birds were up in the trees. As all our stuff was packed we could leave straight away for Zambia. Between all options of how to get to Livingstone we always took the most expensive one. At Kazungula Border post we left Botswana and entered Zimbabwe. Not being SA passport holder we had to get a Visa. Before we obtained the Visa we had to fill out the border papers. Easy to do but if everyone runs around like crazy not so easy. Tour operators with their clients tried to be served first but the immigration officer followed strictly the rule - first come first serve. We paid the carbon tax before we got out of the office. I knew that we needed to pay for 3rd party insurance but at least you gave it a try to get around these additional costs. These guys weren't stupid and the 3rd party insurance office was at the barrier. I paid 160 Rand

for the 3rd party insurance plus another 40 Rand for what do I know. As we had no time pressure reaching Livingstone we followed the Zambezi along a dirt road. The track ended at Matetsi Safari Lodge where we went on an already recorded track on T4A maps. The idea following in dry season the Zambezi was good but we didn't had luck in getting some nice pictures. Closed by Matetsi Safari Lodge we had a chat with two game drivers from C.C. Africa. Last year we stood their company but they just started their drive as well and hadn't seen any big game as well. Paying for entering Zimbabwe wasn't expensive as stopping at the Curio Market in Vic Falls. The good thing was we were limited on weight due to our flights home. The market got bigger then last year and we couldn't park our car in the middle as we used to do. Sabine walked around checking all the goodies while I just followed her. For me it was easy not getting anything sold as all I told them that my wife did have all the money. Even I did have all the money I would never buy without her permission. Finally she found a nice stone carved hornbill. The shop owner started the trade at 50US\$. As I got him down to 20US\$ I told him that I had T-Shirts with me. Presented him the brand new T-Shirts from the Soccer World Champion Ship 2006 in Germany the price went down to 10 US\$. Like a bushfire the news of someone having T-Shirts spread around the curio market. From now on everyone tried to get us into his shop. For two more T-Shirts we got two stone Hippos for Hippo-Family at home. The price got incredible down with these T-Shirts. My wife started falling into a shopping flush so I had to get her out of the curio market. As we visited the falls before we didn't stop for another visit. Leaving Zimbabwe was almost easy as entering but this time we run into problems at Zambian border post. We got the Visa without any problems but when I wanted to pay for the carbon tax the immigration officer told that we can't get in as we didn't have the no temporarily export permit from South Africa. I told her many times that this wasn't our first visit to Zambia and we never had this paper. After a while she handed us over to another immigration officer. He brought us into the immigration holy halls. We went from one office to the next one. He opened the door said some words and closed the door. After 10 doors we were back were we started but could pay. No idea what was the problem or whatever made it going. The 3rd party insurance office was outside the building. Last year we could pay in Rand but this year they asked for Kwacha. As we had Kwacha already we didn't run into the hassle getting it changed at the border post. As we had completed all our paperwork we finally ended up in Zambia. As the banks started to close their business for today we had to rush getting the money changed. We had drawn enough Rand for the change but it was difficult to do the calculation if you never went further then Livingstone. Getting out of the Bank as millionaires gave us a good feeling (unfortunately Kwacha and not Euros). We still had some hours before the sundowner and went onto the T1 leading towards Lusaka. The T1 is a potholed tar road but they were busy getting it fixed. We planed to stay in Choma but when we reached it decided to go on to shorten the drive next day. The next known accommodation was at Monze (Moorings Campsite). The police checkpoint out of Pemba stopped us. He officer wanted to see my driver license, 3rd party insurance and warning triangle. Before I presented him the first two items I got out of the car as the warning triangle was in rear trunk. Didn't find it immediately but the officer could hear that I'm busy finding it. Before I got the triangle out he let us go. At Monze we wanted to fill up Diesel. They told us that they run out of Diesel. It started to get dark as we reached Moorings Campsite. My wife took a shower while I was busy setting up the top roof tent and assembling the stove. As she came back I got blamed for our cooling box running on level two as the salad was frozen. Not good in cooking and a statement „just wait until it is defrosted“; I got some further introduction in foods lifespan. We still hadn't taken many pictures as we thought we would do. We thought about if it was a good idea going to Zambia. Our most concerns were about nice game spots as we had on our past trips. As we sat at the campfire and listened to locals playing their drums we came down and didn't change our plan again. We decided to give Zambia more chances warming up

our hearts.

Tuesday 25.Sep.07

As the early bird catches the worm we left very early. Mazabuka didn't run out of Diesel and we are filled up the jerry cans as well. Our travel book told us to do a stop over at Chilanga. This little town just outside Lusaka is the home of ZAWA (Zambia Wildlife Authority headquarter) and Munda Wanga Botanical Garden. The signposts for Munda Wanga weren't good but my wife found their logo painted on the wall. It's not worth stopping for the enclosures but the botanical garden which is a lovely place. Founded by a forest officer in 1952 the park is a good stop over. Some nice short walks with a lot of local flowers, trees and birds made the stop pleasurable. After stretching our legs the final ride to Lusaka passed by very quickly. It was good that T4A community listed important waypoints. Our first stop was at the Spar market. As we had 40°C and more we run out on soft drinks and we wanted to get some meat for our next days in Kafue as well. After we had restocked for our basic needs we went to the ATM closed by. Sometimes it's good if you can read. I put in the Visa card and was very surprised as it came out right afterwards with card not supported. So we went into the branch and asked if we can get money of the credit card. The lady denied and told us we have to go into town to the Standard Chartered Bank. They do have a Visa ATM. Lusaka is a busy town and by far the most chaotic one we were in Africa. We found the bank and got luckily enough a parking lot right in front of the ATM. As we wanted to go to Kafue we needed to get onto the M9. But if you expected any road signs pointing you into the right direction you are wrong in Lusaka. Stupid enough Wouter from T4A sent we the routable ZIM / ZAM map which I installed on the PC but not on the GPS. So zooming in and out we got onto the right road. Before we left Lusaka we filled up at the Total petrol station. Diesel wasn't a problem but when they checked for oil they caught me. He told me that I'm short on oil and filled it up. As we left the petrol station I realized that they did a crime to me. The oil was around 50 Rand but I learned my lesson. The drive towards Kafue Nationalpark weren't eventful and we were happy once we reached Mumbwa. The petrol station there didn't have Diesel but as we would come back in a couple of days this shouldn't be a problem. The gravel road towards Kabalushi Gate was all kind of mix max - sometimes good - sometimes bad. Entering the park here was easy. All we had to do was filling out the visitor's book and we could pass. As McBride had a very detailed access description on their website and with all the sign posts its easy finding them. The panorama routes lead through bush until we reached a nice Pan. Driving along we the pan we got some spots on Lichtenstein Hartebeest, Pukos and Warthogs. The welcome at McBride has been very warm and was as meeting good friends. Just arrived we got invited for tea and coffee. Almost couldn't finish it as Chris told us we go on a quick game walk. On that game walk other guests of the camp joined as well. Stretching legs was so good that I could have walked forever. On that walk we had plenty Pukos but not the lion sighting. You don't come here for game drives as McBride camp is known for its „lion walks“. During that walk we got some instructions from Chris McBride for our stay. Chris advised some of his staff members to give us a hand in setting up the tent as it was dark already when we were back in the camp. We were too tired for cooking and went to bed without dinner.

Wednesday 26.Sep.07

Another day another chance and so we meet early by 05:30 at the main camp. Light was good when we started for another game walk. Today we had a local game tracker with us and I find it quite impressive how good they are in reading footprints. Just as it started to get a little bit boring we reached a small pan surrounded by some small hills. The local game tracker had eyes almost everywhere and led us to a small hill. You couldn't hear hardly any noise while he climbed up that hill. All you could hear was the alarm whistle of

the Pukos. So there were a lion around - but where. The game tracker came back and told Chris that on the other side of the hill is a male lion resting. Chris, still excited about every lion sighting, called us „lion, lion, lion!“. We could hear him as well as the lion. As the lion run away I run up the hill. All I could see from him has been it his body before he disappeared in the thicket. No chance anymore to follow his track. The local game tracker rolled his eyes and told Chris to be silent next time. We had used up our luck for that walk. Getting back towards the camp we passed a little hide on top of a hill over viewing the pan. Chris told us we can go there anytime we want but someone armed need to join us. Back in camp he introduced us to the ZAWA game ranger and told him that we might want to go there. We spent our lunch time at the campsite. Zambia can be a very hot place and I took some cool showers bringing down my temperature. Before tea time we came back to the main camp for our next activity. Some hippos lying lazy on the beach got our attention. Still being about 150 m away from them they suddenly stood up and run into the river. Right at the same time the alarm whistling of the Pukos started. Still concentrated of the hippos and getting some nice shots we walked back into the camp. Alerted by the Pukos our local game ranger joined us. He found what scared the Hippos and Pukos. Two lions came out of the bush and started to rest under a huge tree. Walking is one option being active in McBride camp. Doing a boat cruise is the other one. Having our local game ranger from today's morning walk and the ZAWA game ranger on board we left "McBride harbor" and went down south. Being on the boat we had a very enjoyable time and some nice good sightings of Buffalo, Elephant, Pukos, and Impalas but as well as Bataleur and Fish eagle. Time passed by and on our way back we got the lions again on the beach. At dark we build up our top roof tent and after a quick dinner got ready to go to bed. My wife went over to the toilet as the Pukos started closed by their alarm whistling again. So I called my wife back into the tent. After a short discussion she came back. Safely in the tent we talked about all the impressions we had today before falling to sleep.

Thursday 27.Sep.07

Confusion started this game walk. The ZAWA ranger told us we should get into the boat as we do a game walk on the other side of the Kafue River. Neither Chris nor other guests were present. We though that camper might be guests 2nd class. We ferried across the river and started our walk. All we saw were Pukos and some Wattle Cranes. Last one was very camera shy. As it got warmer we started to walk back. Back at the camp Chris caught us and asked why we went with the ZAWA ranger and not with him. He is the only one doing game walks as he is responsible for our safety. Finally we sorted out that all this happened due to miscommunication. Chris told the ZAWA ranger to get to the other side to check out if it's worth walking there. We thought Chris didn't want to go on a game walk (actually he and all other guests just came to late) and the ZAWA ranger - I don't know what he thought. After a long walk we enjoyed the stay at our campsite. Closed by the camp are hot springs and I wanted to take a swim. As being told I asked the ZAWA ranger to join us. Sabine wanted to swim as well but not getting undressed in front of him. So I were the only one having fun and my wife took all the pictures while the ZAWA ranger sat in the shadow with his Kalashnikov. We were back at tea time. There are a lot of birds around the camp and we got nice shots. As Chris joined our party we could ask him a lot of questions about lions. Having tea, a great the view at the river and this nice discussion we forgot the time and had to get kicked out for another game walk. It was one of those game walks you weren't in the mute doing it but as it was scheduled you did it. Neither had we seen lions nor other game at the walk. We wanted to leave early and sorted out what we had to pay.

Friday 28.Sep.07

We left the park on an unrecorded track from Hippo Lodge to Kabalushi Gate. At Mumbwa

the petrol station still didn't have Diesel and as while I did the fuel calculation I got asked if we need Diesel. Of course we did and so we got it from the black market. The price was almost double the regular but our Landy was full and we would make it to Katima without another fuel stop. As we had fuel it got time to fill up soft drinks as well as beer. There was a bottle store but they sold only boxes. The shop owner was very helpful and walked away. When she came back she had organized some bottles. Along the tar road towards Mongu we did have a sighting of Roan antelopes. Even if they were far away we were happy to see them. We had seen them only in Mlilwane in a special enclosure secured by barbwire at the Hilton complex. We did the registration work at Nalusanga Gate. There are some shops around selling soft drinks, beer and food as well. Finally we reached Chunga Gate where we left the tar road going up to Lufupa Camp. It took time till the game ranger walked over from the game ranger camp of the other side of the tar road. At this side of the park we had to pay immediately to get the permit. The gravel road was corrugated and dusty. Not much game along the road and we were happy being at the campsite. Wilderness trails took over this camp as well. At lunch break we discovered that our fridge stopped working. We unloaded the car till I got hands on the fridge. Checked the wires and everything else but couldn't get it working again. You can live without cold drinks but my heart blooded when we through all the meat away. Having the last cold beer on our afternoon drive we had some nice spots but still missed some highlight. Hungry as we were we gone for dinner after the refreshment. We got served fresh Fish with mashed potatoes and vegetables as main dish. Beside us were only two other parties in the camp but we were the only campers. Being too tired to get on the organized night drive we went to bed.

Saturday 29.Sep.07

It was still dark when the alarm clock got us out of bed. We had a long day in front of us as there is no campsite at Busunga Plains. The only accommodations are run by Wilderness Trails and are unaffordable. But you can go up as day visitor which makes up that long trip. From Lufupa to Busunga Plains it was around 130 km and on that bad gravel road at least 3 hours to drive. As we had light rain at night the Tsetseflies were like crazy. Until we reached the Plains it was almost impossible to open the windows. At the Plains the plague ended and we could enjoy every minute. The Plains are wetland even during the dry season. As water is available all the game was up here. We spotted already nine lions before we reached the heart of the Plains. Around the exclusive lodges were the best places for plenty of Roans, Wildebeest and Pukos as well as Grey Crowned Cranes. The Plains were such a lovely place that we wanted to stay forever but the time told us we had to return to Lufupa. Even if it was a long drive it was one of the best days of our trip so far. Very tired we reached Lufupa again. Another light rain forced us going to bed.

Sunday 30.Sep.07

As we didn't have any good sightings around Lufupa Camp we changed our itenary and headed off to Chunga Camp. The light rain softened the underground. On some stretches we had serious mud business. We didn't get stuck and I was happy as we reached Kafue Hook Bridge Gate. On our way back to the gate we had the same luck of spots as we had getting into the section. It was the same procedure when reaching the Gate at Kafue Hook Bridge Gate again. The park officer wasn't present and after five minutes I let us out. As we wanted to go to Chunga Camp anyway I went onto the other side of the tar road where the park officer started to walk towards the gate. After I showed him the papers I could proceed and we went straight on to Chunga. The road was another easy access but not as good as the main road to Chunga Camp. The gravel road runs parallel to the Kafue River and there are some loops. Because bushfires had burned down large areas we didn't went on one of the drives. In a tree we saw some vultures and stopped. Being focused on them

and getting the best light we had almost overseen a male lion just about 15 meters away from the car. The lion were in the mute of posing and gave us some good shots. As we reached Chunga Section Head office we went onto a loop along the river. But after a while we gave up as the "road" was very badly potholed by Elephants. Not many roads around Chunga were recorded so far. It was still before lunch time and too early to stop exploring the area. We started the expedition into unknown territory. First we went from Chunga Section Head office to the airfield which we crossed. The idea was to follow the Shishamba River. As there still have been some puddles left we hoped to be at the right time at the right place. The drive was nice but we didn't see any animals. We went into a huddle of staying here for another day. Having the impression of wasting time we left and went back onto the tar road towards Mongu. The first town outside the National Park is Kaoma. It was a dirty town but they had Diesel. From Kaoma to Mongu it was just driving. As we reached Mongu and our fridge still was out of order we stopped at the Spar. But on Sunday the shop were closed. Some cold soft drinks would have been nice but we didn't see an open mini-market. A warm Coke composed our thirst for the next couple of kilometers. The road was still okay and I remembered about the reading that this road was bad. After a couple of kilometers I understood what the writer said. For about 20 kilometers this tar road got very bad. It was impossible to stay at the tarred surfaces. Finally we found an open Mini-Market. The beer was so good and as the tar road got better we finally approached Senanga. The only recommend stop-over was Senanga Safari Lodge. They allow camping on their property and we were happy that they still had some space as they were fully booked. The sun went down as we started cooking. From our camp we could see the bushfires at the Barotse Flood Plain. It was a long day of driving and after some other warm beers I felt to sleep.

Monday 01.Oct.07

As we found out the day before that the ferry across the Zambezi starts operating by 06:00 in the morning and knowing from friends that the drive towards Katima Mullima is on a very bad gravel road we stood up early. It wasn't a long drive till we reached the ferry. The ferry was already on the way to our edge of the Zambezi. They were busy in creating a concrete ramp. But I don't think it will survive the first flood. They ferry was about 20US\$ and it was quite impressive to cross the Zambezi by knowing the all water from here runs down the Vic Falls. The gravel road towards Sitoti was still okay and I thought the others have been wrong with their impressions. At the start the roads went along the Zambezi and the landscape was fantastic. But by each kilometer we went south the road became worse. The bumpy road was really bad and more then 30 km/h were almost impossible. On a photo stop one local farmer came by in his oxwagon. As he asked for some food he got an apple which we had in the front of the car. He was so happy about it when he left. Still didn't believe that our fridge didn't work. At a break I switched it another time on - but this time it started to run. Now I knew what it was - a wiring problem. But without any tools I couldn't get it fixed. As we had too many Kwacha left we wanted to spent some on fuel in Shesheke. Our map said that there is one but none of the locals knew of a fuel station. We gave up and got into Namibia. These 220 kilometers from Senanga to Katima Border post took us about 8.5 hours driving time. As the fridge worked we went shopping for our stay at Kalizo Lodge.

Tuesday 02.Oct.07

Middle of the night my wife waked me up and told me she can hear that our fridge stopped working again. Having a little debate I stood up checking the fridge. The fridge was working alright! The noise from the broken fridge was quite similar but these time she heard the drums from the Zambian site of the Zambezi. I went back to bed. As the sun rose we went on another boat cruise. The Kalizo Lodge was a place birdwatchers have to

stay. At this time of the year the southern carmine bee-eaters were there for breeding. It was a huge colony and thousands of these birds were around. But there were many other birds (white-fronted Bee-Eater, Blue-Cheeked Bee-Eater, and Kingfishers) as well and time flew by. I had my hands on the fridge to get it fixed permanently using my Swiss tool. We went at lunch time to Katima buying some more meat. Back at Kalizo Lodge we just sat at the Zambezi bank reading a book. As we didn't use up all our days in Zambia we decided to go to Mudumu Nationalpark in Namibia for the next two days. We had never been there before and this was a great chance to do.

Wednesday 03.Oct.07

On our way to Katima Mullima the fridge stopped working again. The most important to-do was to get the wiring problem sorted out. We stopped at the first garage. But he didn't have time and sent us to his neighbor. Entering his property made us feeling good. A lot of Landrovers stood around and he did car electric as well. Meanwhile the starter relay made some funny noise. But this garage did have time as well and sent us to another one. They had time and told me they will send out the electrician. Waiting for him we packed the car and got it ready to be checked. But I couldn't get my hands off and as the electrician arrived the problem had disappeared. All he did was to check if the alternator was charging the 2nd battery properly. By the way all garages in Katima Mullima are using the same car electrician! His name is Evans (ext. 00264608005118). The road to Kongola was driven by us many times before and so we speeded up. At Kongola we took the gravel road to Mudumu Nationalpark. A Namibian Nationalpark sign indicated clearly that we were entering Mudumu. The sign told us we need to pay for the permit but not where. As there was a ranger post closed by we went there and asked. The ranger told us we need to go to Nokatwa for the permit. We arrived at lunch time. Mudumu is far away from everything and not often visited. Therefore we hadn't any camping fee. She told us we should go to Camp #3 as it's the best one they do have. We shouldn't worry about the others as it's a huge stand. On our way to the campsite we had to give some elephants the right of way before we could pass. As we reached the campsite we were surprised. The party did have a number plate from Switzerland. As they are from our neighbor country we started to talk to them and joined them for the rest of our stay. Still early afternoon we found out that we know each other from the German speaking Namibia-Forum. We enjoyed the afternoon and counted elephants coming for a drink. Finally I got my wife up for a game drive. We left the campsite and went towards the breeding herd of about 30 Elephants. It's always good to have a small corridor between them and you. How good it was has been proven within the next minute. The smallest of them felt over a tree trunk and landed on his nose. He got scared and trumpeted. Immediately the rest of the group built a defense circle around him while some of the half grown bulls walked towards us. They were blaming us for their frighten youngster. As we went backwards the situation got relaxed and the elephants went back into the bush. We didn't have the change taking photos of the drinking elephants at the Kwando River. The sun has gone down long time ago as we went to bed.

Thursday 04.Oct.07

We wanted to explore Mudumu a little bit more and as our neighbors headed off as well it went time to say good bye. I started the engine but the battery light stood on. Our rental station installed a black box checking oil, water and voltage. If something was on failure the alarm went on. I thought about cutting the wire because driving 200 km back to Katima Mullima with the alarm on wouldn't be fun. After a while the visual and acoustic signal disappeared. No experiments anymore before we might run into serious problems. I didn't look left or right until we reached Katima Mullima and the garage from yesterday. They called the car electrician and when he arrived I told him what happened. After I finished the

story he told me he believes to know what the problem was. One hand grip on the ground terminal of the relay and it felt off. It turned out that the terminal was squeezed by a side cutter and not the correct gripper. As the failure resulted from a standard item I didn't know how difficult it got getting it fixed. The garage did have the correct terminal. I put the electrician in our car and drove him into the first shop. They had a terminal but not the one we looked after. After the fourth shop I told him that I wouldn't care but if we would get a package. Finally we ended up at the last shop and they had a package of the right terminals. The package was about 10NAM\$ but the car electrician went into trade mode trying to get only one. I stopped the trade and bought the package. Evans didn't have the right gripper with him so we left the shop and went to his home. As the terminal has been assembled correctly we went on a short drive to check if the battery got charged. After one hour the battery started to recover and we left Katima Mullima facing Botswana. As we were forced to change our plan we won one day. Without any time pressure we went to Lake Liambezi. After all the agitation we looked forward and hoped for a quite nice time for the rest of our trip. We hoped finding the recreation at the lake and of course some nice game spots we went into Salambola Conservancy. We did have the expected sightings as expected because a lot of cattle and fishermen we at this place. So we went back the way we came. At Ngoma we crossed without any hassle and went straight to Kasane. We stopped again at the Spar and the bottle store before we went to Toro Lodge. The Swiss from Mudumu told us about the Lodge and that's a good place to stay. As we settled down I checked the battery and it was fully charged. The Braai has been one of the best we did on our entire trip. The rest of the trip we didn't have any hassle with the car anymore.

Friday 05.Oct.07

We were many times at the Chobe Riverfront and at Savuti but never been to Nogatsaa. We didn't know if it was a good idea to visit this area at this time of the year when we started. This started quite good as we had already Sable antelopes along the tar road towards the gate. Just a little bit later the first group of elephants crossed our way. Before we drove towards Nogatsaa area we registered the Sedudu Gate. At Maku Pan we took the direct road to Nogatsaa Pan. While being on that way we didn't have any other sightings. Nogatsaa was such a remote area that DWNP (Department for Wildlife and Nationalparks) never built up the destroyed ablution blocks at Nogatsaa Camp. It was a nice area and from what we saw I wanted stay. At Nogatsaa was a nice hide overlooking a man made waterhole. The solar driven water pump station was secured to keep elephants out. We had just sat down as a giraffe came for a drink. As she got closer Impalas started their alarm whistle. Their whistling cleared out the area around Nogatsaa. As the grass was high we hardly could see anything. Beside the knowledge that some predator was around we left the hide. The next promising place was Tchinga Pan. There was a solar driven water pump as well. The road there was for a long stretch badly potholed by elephants. The rain of the last nights didn't make it better as the weak ground went into black cotton soil. Good enough that there were some by-passes at the most wicked places. Finally we reached Tchinga Pan. Some elephants were at the waterhole when we arrived. After a while we left for Saregho hide where we wanted to have early lunch. The road wasn't driven for a while as we had to get trunks and branches off the track. As we got closer to the hide a lot of vultures were sitting in the trees. At the pan were a dead elephant and the vultures started already feeding. They just had opened the body. The smell wasn't something for sensible noses and we went onto the other side of the pan where the hide was. Still being hungry my wife told me that we wouldn't stay here for lunch. Still being hungry we left and my wife decided it was time to get out of Nogatsaa area. We made a quick turn to our left to stop at Kabunga Pan because there was a hide as well. The hide was overlooking another pan but there was no man made waterhole and so the luck of spotting game low. The heat of the day dried the sand and we had deep

sand stretches on our way back. As we reached the tar road it got time to inflate our tires. Good that we did have a compressor and so it was an easy job. Spotting game in the middle of the day was low. We went to Kasane for filling up the Landy and got some goods out of Spar before we went back into the National Park. As we went down the hill towards the dry Sedudu River my wife spotted a big Kudu at the other side of the river closed to the road. As the road hasn't been closed for public we went there. The Kudu let us getting closer and we got some nice pictures. Finally we reached the Riverfront at Water Cart Loop. Following the track towards Kasane we found some lionesses overlooking the Chobe Riverfront. On our way back to the junction we entered the drive we spotted a leopard. While we were busy finding the lions he must have killed an Impala. As we had the pole position a lot of others car approached and the leopard left. But he didn't went far and lay down on the branch of a huge tree. As the sun went down we left the park. A lot of elephants came down for water or were on their way back into the bush. We didn't go far as a big breeding herd stopped us. As they left the place we went on but got stopped by another big breeding herd. I forgot to check when the gate closes and we rushed towards the gate. But we still would have had time left before closing time. Very happy about all our sightings we drove back to Toro Lodge.

Saturday 06.Oct.07

No concrete plan made for today as we were going to stay at Ihaha campsite. Our way brought us back where we found the lions yesterday but they were gone. The next stop we made was where we saw the leopard yesterday but he were gone as well. No cats for the moment and so we went towards Ihaha. Before we reached Puku Flats the smell of rotting meat got into our nose. We took all possible drives around the carcass but the bush was too thick. Even the attempt getting closer by driving a little bit offroad didn't end in success. Back on the loop I had a short chat with a lodge driver and he told me that when we turn them over shortly afterwards three lionesses came out of the bush. We went back to the place and found them as well. A lot of other cars came along chaising the lionesses away. They went in the thick bush so we couldn't see them anymore. From a viewpoint we had a nice view at Puku Flats. By using our binoculars we could fairly easy find out that at the moment no game were there. As we reached Serondela we stopped having a quick snack. Three years ago we couldn't get there as this part of the park was closed due to an outbreak of Anthrax. Based on the numbers of tables I guess it can be a busy place. A single Sable walked from the riverfront into the bush as we got closer. Buffalo where lying in the shadow as we reached Kabulabula Island. I can imagine that this is a lovely place to stay at night but it's open only for HATAB. At the end of that road was an outpost of Botswana Defense. Strictly no entry but I doubt that all the animals surrounding them took care. The next stop we had was at the Ihaha campsite. As the entrance office wasn't manned we pass through straight to our reserved place. The game ranger just finished the cleaning of our campsite. He checked all out papers. As being tired I took a nap at the rear bank of our Landrover while my wife red her book. Late afternoon we started again for the sundowner drive. Taken the firebreak towards Simwanza Dam was a quick access to back country side. As we didn't have luck we went back to Chobe Riverfront. Some game rangers were busy burning same carcass as we passed them. Guess they still in business keeping the Anthrax under control. It started getting dark as we almost reached the campsite. But today a huge breeding herd of elephants was here for water. As they had plenty of time some of them stood at the road and we couldn't pass. After a quarter of an hour more and more elephants enjoyed the last sunlight standing at the road. So we went back to the firebreak line 16 and took the inland route to the firebreak line 15. Being back in camp we had almost no light anymore. Before we went back to our place we stopped for having a shower. It must have been 21:00 as a lodge auto came along. First we thought that they do allow night drives for them but then the car stopped. They went out of the car

and had a little discussion before the setup their tents between us and our neighbor. They were French I still do believe they came late to get around the camping fee.

Sunday 07.Okt.07

The assumption that the French didn't want to pay for camping got more solid as the started to leave as soon as the sun rose. These ignoramus set on their fire again and let it burn as they left. So we went there and put down their fire as we left as well. The plan was to go to Linyanti but not the standard route. We wanted to take leave the gravel road at Kachikau and go along the Linyanti to the Linyanti Camp. We had driven the route from Savuti to Kachikau and did know what to expect. As we stood at Ngoma Gate inflating our tires again a HiLux stopped and asked where we are going. They were Germans as well and I passed them all my knowledge about the road. They had almost left as another car stopped. Our compressor still being busy I asked them where they were going. They were not sure but had a booking for Linyanti. They were scared about the sand and if they could make it in their HiLux. We talked with them and finally came up with that we would go via Ghoha Gate and join them. At the Gate they still could decide where to go. The Germans had left long time ago before we started. As we reached Kachikau we fetched them and turned over. As the sand track started right after the village we deflated our tires. I took over the leadership for all of us as the Germans wanted to join as well. The rain of the last days had tightened up the soft sand. We proceeded without any problems as long as we stood at the firebreak line. At Chobe Forest Extension the sand got weak and the HiLux started struggling a little bit. The 2006 Model is lower then the old one. At Ghoha Gate the other Germans left our party and we went to Linyanti. The road was better then I thought and just some elephants along the drive asked for attention. Almost one hour later we stood at Linyanti Gate. Highly motivated rangers scuffed from their camp to the office. As we settled down at the booked campsite we went over to our neighbors. From the German speaking Namibia-Forum I knew that other Germans will be at Linyanti at the same time. They told us they haven't had luck on game since they where here. We spent the rest of the day at our campsite. It was a nice place and we had a barbed woodpecker working at the trees around our camp. The black-collared Barbet was busy with breeding. As everyone told us Linyanti is a must and there are a lot of Elephants, Zebras etc. around we must caught the day all of them had their „day off“. Only one Elephants was at the swamp and that was it for the day. The French part of our party invited us for dinner. As they own a restaurant in France this dinner wouldn't be a normal one! We put on the table what we had and Fred started to create the menu. We had a nice vegetable soup as starter before we had some salad. Unfortunately the main dish had to be eaten quick as the thunderstorm got closer. The Boer Sausage with mashed potatoes was ready at the same time it started to rain. We finished up extremely quickly and put the dirty dishes in the car. The wind got stronger and finally folded our top roof tents. We had chosen the wrong place as the wind blew the rain through the mosquito nets into our tent. As we closed it was better but got hot inside. As soon as the rain lost intensity we opened the mosquito covers.

Monday 08.Oct.07

Before we started cleanup the dirty dishes from yesterday we saw we had a nightly visitor. An elephants had come by as we saw on his footprints. The French were scared about the direct link to Savuti and didn't want to disturb further as they knew we changed our plan and went with them to Linyanti. Even if we told them many times that they were welcome and not disturbing they went the route via Ghoha Gate to Savuti. The rainy season started and another thunderstorm came along. We had luck and strapped but the French were right in the middle. For us the nightly rain has been good as the deep sand track to Savuti was almost an easy drive. Just for about 5 kilometers we had really deep sand. On our way to Savuti we saw three Roans and where concentrated in getting closer to them. As

we had taken our pictures and I started the engine a Serval from the other side of the road jump up and run away. Dammed - we missed that one! Fred and Veronique just passed the gate as we reached Savuti as well. We asked the game ranger about good sightings but he hasn't heard anything. With this poor information we went on a game drive. First we went north checking out the waterholes around Savuti. Beside the artificial waterhole all pans were dry and so we went to Rhino Vlei. At the junction of the Marsh and Sandridge Road we saw two lionesses. Rhino Vlei did have an artificial waterhole and we saw two elephants. Compared with our last visit three years ago we had much less game. At this time we had hundreds of Elephants as well as plenty of normal game. As it started getting hot again we went back to Savuti having a lunch break. Early afternoon we went on another drive. First my wife brought us back to the lionesses which were still at the place we left them. The next stop we made was at Bushman Hill. We might have been blind or spoiled from other places but we found only one rock painting. We went back to the artificial waterhole of Savuti and got some more Elephants there. We had a talk with one of the game rangers at the camp and hold us - not knowing if it is true or not - that they observe since a couple of month that the numbers of game are getting down. As it was dry I guess all the breeding herds left the place for better food because we saw only Elephants bulls. As it started getting dark we came back into camp. Sabine and I decided to leave Savuti one day earlier as planed as this place was almost empty. As the French part of our company came as well we set up beds before Fred started cooking. We had another lovely evening in the bush and as we went to bed the lions started roaring but still far away - too far.

Tuesday 09.Oct.07

The lions came closer to the camp and their roaring told us that they weren't too far away. As soon as we could we left and started the hunt. As we reached the place where they were they stood up and started moving into the bush. Fred made a lot of pictures of the lion till he realized that he forgot to insert the memory card. As we had planed we left Savuti via sandridge road. As we did have plenty of time we stopped at Marabou Pan. Some elephant bulls were there as another big bull arrived. He chased them away. A tiny breeding herd came nearer but the bull chaised them away as well. Before we started leaving the park we drove up to Xgana Pan. Along that drive we had other Elephant sightings and some Wildebeest. We went back to Tsukwe Pan and found Zebras, Tsetsebe and Giraffes. We got a little bit more satisfaction out of Savuti and left finally the park. Closed by Mababe Village one has to cross the Khwai River. The crossing looked interesting but we didn't trust our rented Landrover as the doors didn't lock properly. We would had flooded the car and decided to go back and took the less deep crossing. They were busy in upgrading the road to Mababe. As the T4A did have a promising waypoint at the Khwai River we went there for a stop over. This was really a lovely drive along the Khwai. At the moment there is a new campsite (S 19 14.386 E 23 56.820) under construction which should be open in Jan'08. We had decided to spend our last days in Pilanesberg as my wife likes the park so much. Instead of staying in Maun as planed we went further to Ghanzi. The drive between Maun and Ghanzi was boring and reached Ghanzi as the petrol light went on. After filling up the car from the jerry cans we went on to Tautona Lodge. It was almost dark when we turned off the engine at the Campsite. Ghanzi was cold and along our trip the only day I wore long trousers and a pullover.

Wednesday 10.Oct.07

This day was a driving day. We left as the sun raised and went straight to Lobatse. On that way we just had two quick stops - one for having breakfast and the other one for refilling the Landrover. As we reached Zeerust we stopped for lunch at Wimpy. Without any time pressure we went to Pilanesberg. Manyane Camp is just outside the park and can be

entered at any time of the day. We called our friends in Johannesburg and told them we arrived safely in South Africa.

Thursday 11.Oct.07

I did the paperwork at the gate for the next two days. There was a new historical site at the park which we visited first. Still being cold and too dark for taking pictures we could stretch our legs and enjoyed the last part of our trip. My wife did the navigation and told me where to go. We stopped at Pilanesberg Center for their sandwiches. According to my wife those are the best in Africa! As they did have a map showing exciting sightings we got the information about lions between Fish Eagle Picnic Site and Twin Dams. As it was lunch time we tried but never thought about having luck. It still was cold and the thermometer at Pilanesberg Center showed 15 degrees. Before we went onto the lion hunt we took a short drive and where on our way to Twin Dams as a lioness jumped out the grass run across the street and this just ten meters in front of our car. We had a good position as we saw she walked towards a male with two half grown cubs. Then we saw another male and lioness not too far behind the first group. They turned around and walked straight to our car before they crossed the road just two meters in front of our car. My wife looked at the second male which was still on her side of the car while I observed the first one. All of a sudden the first male started a short sprint of about 15 Meters. It went too fast getting the camera up but the lion kill just happened. The rest of the pride joined and the big feeding started. We had the pole position and got plenty of pictures. One hour later the Kudu was history and the „killers“ started resting. That was just luck! The rest of the day we were driving but didn't have any luck as we just had.

Friday 12.Oct.07

It looked like we used all our luck at the lion kill yesterday. No more luck today and so we gave up for a long stay at Pilanesberg Center. All the impression from the past weeks was asking for a rest. A long rest from driving to recover before we can go on - we were tired! But we still enjoyed our stay and back at Manyane we went for dinner. The first time I tried Eland but not as good as Kudu or Springbok.

Saturday 13.Oct.07

We were going back to Johannesburg. Being on the way to Rustenburg we remembered last year we didn't manage to go to De Wildt. The cheetah conservation farm was closed to Brits. We arrived at 08:45 but the tour started at 08:30 and almost wouldn't have made it again. As they still did the introduction speech about De Wildt the manager on duty let us join. The entrance fee was 180 Rand per person. This wasn't cheap but the tour run for about three hours and as a lot of information was passed we think it was worth all the money we spent. De Wildt breeding station started a couple of years ago a Wilddog project as well. But they are busy in all areas on nature conservation and each visit supports them. Our friends are living close to Sterkfontein and it was early afternoon as we arrived. We didn't have much time to tell everything as we got invited to a house warming party. It got a long day for us.

Sunday 14.Oct.07

No bush, no camping anymore but we left for shopping. After a couple of hours later we were back at Sterkfontein and all our friends came for a Braai. We had a nice last day in Africa.

Monday 15.Oct.07

We left by 14:00 Sterkfontein and went back to Kempton Park to return the car. Our flight left late on schedule.

Tuesday 16.Oct.07

As the flight was too late we didn't get our connection flight and had to wait another three hours at Paris Airport before we made it home. My Dad picked us up at the airport and at home we started to tell all the stories about our trip.

You can find the trip album here:

http://www.andreas-cierpka.de/privat/reisen/fotoalben/afrika_2007.html