

GREAT PLAINS

CONSERVING AND EXPANDING NATURAL HABITATS

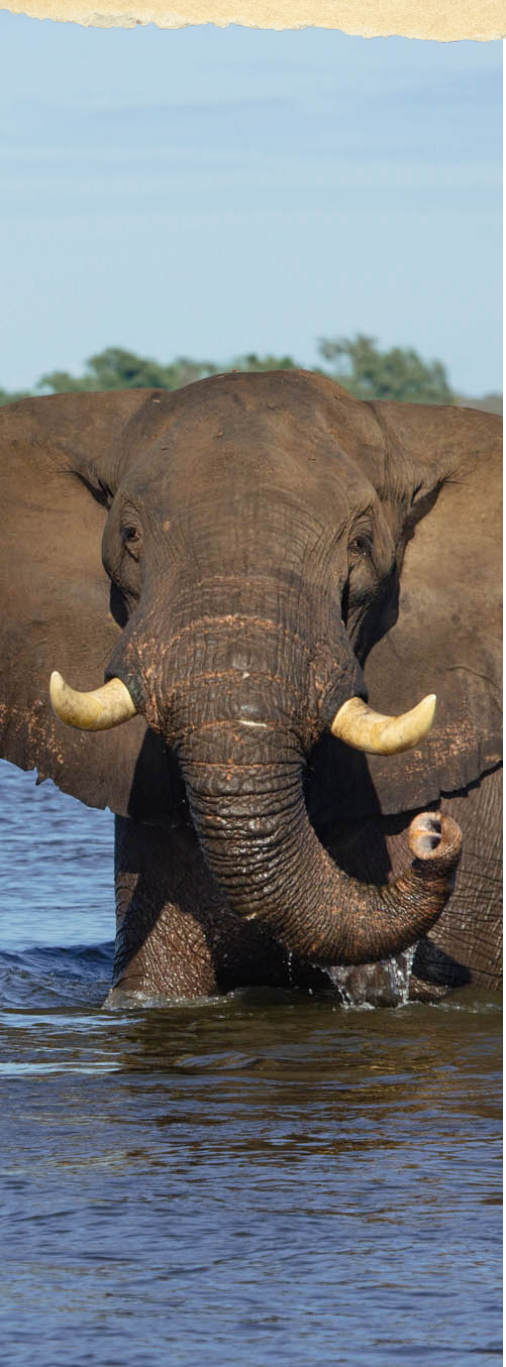


SEASONAL GUIDE TO GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION ZIMBABWE



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AUTUMN
APRIL - MAY

WINTER SEASON
JUNE - AUGUST

SPRING SEASON
SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER

SAPI PRIVATE RESERVE

TEMBO PLAINS CAMP AND THE ZANJI SUITE AT TEMBO PLAINS

WHAT IS GREAT ABOUT THIS MONTH?

APRIL

Tembo Plains Camp reopens to guests!

The rains are over now, and the bush dries out slowly. Wildlife starts to head to the flood plain, including the elusive Nyala antelope, bushbuck and kudu are frequently seen. Due to the abundance of wildlife on the flood plain, big cats are drawn to these areas and seen during wildlife viewing activities on the water and when out on a drive.

Beautiful sunrise and sunsets are a treat this time of the year. Gentle elephants start moving to the river for fresh water, accompanied by a change in their preferred diets.

During the day, it is still hot with less humidity and a slight cooling of temperature at night.

MAY

The bush continues to dry out. This makes the floodplain a lucrative wildlife viewing area from May to the end of October.

Many grazers search for the availability of the last remaining good grass from the summer months to graze on.

More species, like the elands, are now visible as most of the trees have lost their leaves by now as winter starts arriving.

There is also lots of noise in the bush with the rutting season of impalas. Our warthogs will keep you intrigued.

Elephants start to increase in number on the flood plain, and riverfront swimming is the order of the day. Predators are highly active, taking the opportunity of the rutting impalas.

Night temperatures start to drop quite a lot, with the early mornings being a bit nippy. Daytime temperatures are of a comfortable heat.

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JUNE	<p>As winter approaches, the bush and inland waterholes start to get drier.</p> <p>Buffalos start to come out of the thickets, and the game concentrations increase on the floodplains. More wildlife are easily spotted, with leopards, lions and cheetah being spotted more regularly. Elephant herds are seen swimming across the Zambezi River with their calves tagging along.</p> <p>Due to favourable daytime temperatures, hippopotamuses start coming out of the water to graze on the banks and rest. This month is also busy with hippos mating, so territorial fights are common. During the daytime, the males chase each other and fight for territories.</p> <p>The cold weather has crept with the evenings now colder. Daytime temperatures remain very favourable.</p>
JULY	<p>Most inland water holes are now dry, and many animals move to the river throughout the day to quench their thirst. Fantastic wildlife sightings and experiences continue. Great sightings of elephants, big cats, and painted dogs are possible.</p> <p>The foliage is dry, which offers superb bird viewing opportunities. The crocodiles come out of hibernation with great sightings of their hunting and stalking activities possible.</p> <p>Early mornings and evenings, once the sunsets are cold with the bonfire the best place to be.</p>
AUGUST	<p>This is the baby boom month for hippopotamus! Many calves are born, and familiar sights include solitary females nursing their babies and protecting them from the dominating males.</p> <p>Increased sightings of elands, kudus, and nyala, including sightings of leopards, lions and painted dogs occurring.</p> <p>Waterholes are very busy with elephants mud bathing, warthogs and old buffalo dagga boys enjoying wallowing in the mud. Elephants swimming across the Zambezi to the islands is an everyday occurrence.</p> <p>The last week of this month usually brings in the Carmine bee-eaters, which create an amazing dazzle of red colour on the banks of the Zambezi where they nest.</p> <p>Evenings and early mornings remain cool until the sun rises when temperatures increase pleasantly.</p>
SEPTEMBER	<p>With the vegetation remaining dry as we await the arrival of summer rains, most animals continue to congregate along the Zambezi River. Large herds of buffalo are often seen in the early morning and late in the day.</p> <p>On the riverfront, the tigerfish are now spotted more regularly!</p> <p>The temperature continues to rise in the morning, getting hotter during the day, with temperatures at night pleasantly coolish.</p>

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<p>OCTOBER</p>	<p>As we near the end of winter, the landscape is dry, resulting in continued game movement towards the river with large herds of elephants and buffalo seen.</p> <p>Morning and afternoon boat cruises become more popular as most elephants cross the islands to forage.</p> <p>The fish also become more active, with tigerfish, tilapia and vundu often seen—preferred prey for birds like fish eagles and other predators.</p> <p>Daytime temperatures are now hot, with evenings warm—perfect swimming pool weather during the midday.</p>
<p>NOVEMBER</p>	<p>The summer rain clouds build up, creating evocative skylines of clouds. Colours are unique in the late afternoons as the sunsets for photography.</p> <p>The wildlife viewing is excellent across the Sapi Reserve. Early rains usually come in the second week of the month, and the animals start moving more inland now to waterholes and fresh vegetation that sprouts. The summer migratory birds start arriving with continual sunbird activity.</p> <p>It is a fantastic time of the year because most of our antelope give birth to their young ones, resulting in corresponding predator activity.</p> <p>New plant life appears, and beautiful scents waft from various trees' leafing.</p> <p>The temperatures continue to climb during the day, along with the humidity. Night-time temperatures are warm.</p>

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WILDLIFE NOTES

The Zambezi is the fourth longest river in Africa, after the Nile, Congo, and Niger Rivers. It is the longest east-flowing river in Africa and flows through six countries on its journey from its source in north-western Zambia to the Indian Ocean, an impressive 2 700 km.

Tembo Plains, being on the Zambezi River, evokes a sense of mystery and excitement. Few rivers in the world can match the Zambezi as it remains pristine or less explored.

With its spectacular scenery, stunning sunsets, bird watching, and great fishing and boating opportunities, the Sapi Reserve is one of the finest places on this planet. It is also close to the most spectacular Mupata Gorge. The weather here is mostly sunny and fine while the camp is open to guests. Even mid-winter days are warm.

Great opportunity of exploring down the river and enjoy the tranquillity. Excellent sightings of wildlife and bird viewing are experienced as the canoes slip silently past. Viewing of hippopotamus can be pretty exciting. The Zambezi River supports one of the most important wilderness areas in Africa.

The elephant, buffalo, kudu, eland and zebras populations are regularly seen during the drier months of July to October. The predator population continues to grow, and we are quite excited with a pack of painted (wild) dogs that regularly comes to hunt near Tembo Plains. Mana Pools National Park lies to the west of the camp.

The primary vegetation of the Zambezi Valley is dominated by the mopane woodlands and dry deciduous thickets known as Jesse Bush. More dense riparian vegetation can be found around water holes and seasonal tributaries that flow to the Zambezi. Small patches of more diverse woodland on the slightly higher ground of old islands or termite mounds can feature *Kigelia Africana*, *Trichilia emetica* or majestic specimens of *Ficus Bussei*. Further inland, giant baobabs are a common sight.

Along the river, common trees include Rain trees, Leadwood and *Boscia* species.