

From: Rebecca Baldock

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Thanks for all your prayers. I had a lovely time with my family. My parents had spent three years living in Zambia before they had any children. They worked in a government hospital as pharmacists. We'd grown up hearing stories of there time, and seen pictures, but they'd never been back to Africa since this time. For my sister it was her first time

The wildlife here is just breath taking. As a child we used to watch lots of wildlife programs, and yet here I am able to see the animals live. I live right next to a game park, but it takes just over an hour to get from the hospital to one of the main parts of the park. Consequently it's a very good retreat for a day or two from the hospital. It's an amazing place, and because it's nature each time you go the experience is different. It took me a year and a half of being in Africa before I saw a lion, and then it was only through binoculars. It was quite funny as it was New Year and I was camping with a group of friends. I really wanted to see a lion so we organised to go on an early morning game drive. At 6.30 we set off and drove around the park. We eventually saw 3 lions far away, lying down in a field through binoculars. No pictures, but I was very excited to have seen them. When we arrived back at our tents we found out that a lion and her two cubs had been spotted right outside our tent just after we left, this means that they must have been there whilst we were getting ready. I couldn't decide whether I was pleased or not that we hadn't seen them.

This time we were really lucky. We went on a dusk game drive in a vehicle designed for game drives with an open roof. My dad had been hoping to see a lion, as they'd only seen one very sorry one in all their time in Zambia. The guide wasn't too sure if we would as they hadn't seen any for a few days. We'd driven for quite a long time, seen lots of elephants (zoe was very happy) and other animals, when we happened on a huge heard of buffalo. There were a few vultures in the air, so we took a different track past the buffalo. And there in the grass was a lion. The grass was long and it would have been easy to miss, but as we got closer, we were able to see more and more about 5 in total. They were sitting watching the buffalo. Every so often one of the lions would get up and go and communicate to the other one and then to the next. When the buffalo realised that the lions were close they grouped themselves together putting the strong males at the front. Then slowly then started moving forward towards the lions. They came closer and closer until finally the lions all got up and moved away. At this time of day the buffalo would be too strong for the lions. But very soon the darkness would come, when the lions would make their move and kill, as they have the advantage with their cat eyes at night. For then though the lions were forced back around a

bush. As we watched them we found that they'd recently made a kill of an antelope, the bones were collected on the ground and there was even a bit of flesh left which one of the lions picked up and took away to eat. It was amazing. Enhanced by the colours of the sky as the sun was setting.

Queen Elizabeth is also famous for its tree climbing lions. The park is huge, and in another area, about 4 hours drive away, the terrain changes, to have more trees. The lions here have adapted to climb the trees. This helps to keep the flees off them, but also gives them an advantage for hunting. Whilst they are in the trees they are usually unseen by other animals on the ground. This means that other animals are more likely to graze near them. It also gives them a great view of their prey. From a distance it just looks like the tree trunk is abnormally large in one area. Even the colour is the same. It isn't until you get really close that you can make out it's actually a lion. Its incredible how well hidden they are.

One of the best things about being able to camp in the national parks is how close to nature you feel and the amazing things you get to see. It also gives you a good dose of adrenalin, but they generally have guards around and let you make fires. One morning I was sitting with a friend outside our tents eating breakfast, when a load of mongoose (a lot like mere cats) walked past, and stood up really close to us. At New Year, just after I'd arrived at the park a family of elephants walked past and kept stopping to eat. At night the hippos come out of the water and munch the grass around the tents. They are huge heavy animals, and very noisy. Monkeys are the cheekiest. They get everywhere and are into everything, looking for food. It is so amazing to just sit and watch these animals.

Enjoy the photos

Love Becca

Prayer points

- Thank God for all the safe travel we've had. And the good time I've had with visitors.
- Joanne's (physio) year comes to an end at the end of August. Please pray for her as she goes back to Ireland and for us as we adjust to life here without her.
- Please continue to pray for the carpentry project, we are still in the planning phase and setting up.
- Tomorrow Kate, Sarah and Zephra are coming to visit for a couple of days. They are from my church in York and have been working in Kampala. Please pray for their health. Sarah has been poorly with a tummy bug, but is improving. Zephra has broken a small piece of her ankle bone.