

AFRICA

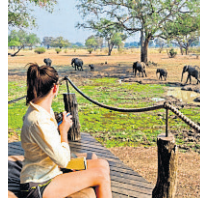


LIFE IN THE RAW  
Visitors may also spot wild dogs in Selous reserve, below



10 PLACES TO SEE AFRICAN WILD DOGS

**SOUTH LUANGWA NATIONAL PARK, ZAMBIA**  
A population of around 200 dogs roams the valley, divided into 10 packs.



**LIUWA PLAINS NATIONAL PARK, ZAMBIA**  
See the pack the BBC filmed for its popular *Planet Earth* series.

**MOREMI GAME RESERVE, BOTSWANA**  
Botswana is home to 30 per cent of Africa's wild dogs and the Moremi is the best place to look for them.

**MANA POOLS NATIONAL PARK, ZIMBABWE**  
Has about 120 dogs, with especially good sightings likely around Vundu Camp.

**HWANGE NATIONAL PARK, ZIMBABWE**  
Hwange's healthy population has stabilised at between 150 and 200 individuals.

**SELOUS GAME RESERVE, TANZANIA**  
Boasts an 800-strong population spread out across a reserve bigger than Switzerland.

**SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK, TANZANIA**  
Home to around 300 dogs but they're not that easy to find.

**RUAHA NATIONAL PARK, TANZANIA**  
Tanzania's biggest national park holds Africa's third-largest wild dog population.



**MADIKWE NATIONAL PARK, SOUTH AFRICA**  
Doing well since they were first introduced from the Kruger National Park in 1994.

**TSWALU PRIVATE WILDLIFE RESERVE, SOUTH AFRICA**  
Only two packs but very good chance of seeing them.



One of the places offering their best chance of survival is Tswalu, a private reserve in South Africa that is twice the size of Norfolk and has conservation goals based upon the restoration of the Kalahari and its biological diversity. In the past there had been reported sightings of wild dogs there but it wasn't until 2013 that four males and three females were introduced from KwaZulu Natal. "At first they were kept in a holding camp to give them a chance to acclimatise to their surroundings – and learn to respect electric fencing," says Gus van Dyk, Tswalu's director of conservation. "Then, once released, they are more likely to stay with us and not wander off into the neighbouring farmland." Shortly after their release in May 2014, the seven-strong pack denuded and had their first litter of puppies. In their second year, they continued to flourish, successfully hunting antelopes such as tsessebe and red hartebeest that would not have been available to them in KwaZulu Natal, and produced another litter of five. Today there are two packs, one with four adults and five yearlings, and the other with a lone male and two females. The latest news is that the alpha female of the nine-strong pack has just given birth and everyone is waiting to see how many pups emerge from the den in the next few days. It shows how, along with other threatened species such as cheetahs, pangolins and black rhinos, Tswalu continues to provide a haven where wild dogs can flourish and visitors can watch them streaming in full flight across the endless Kalahari dunes.

Where the wild dogs are

PAWS FOR THOUGHT

*Tswalu in South Africa is one place where this endangered species has found a safe haven,* says **Brian Jackman**

It's early morning in southern Tanzania's vast Selous Game Reserve. Already the heat is building and vultures are circling as we stop to scan the hills for life. A sudden movement had caught my eye – a herd of impala dashing down a distant hillside. What had caused them to panic? My first thought was a leopard hidden in the rocks. But then I heard a mournful hooting and knew straight away what it was: the contact call of wild dogs. In the Selous they have a Swahili nickname: chaka-chaka – "the ones that trot" – referring to the loping gait they maintain for miles, running down their prey in a remorseless chase to the death. But wherever they are found, their presence is guaranteed to raise the pulse of any



true safari aficionado. The reason is partly down to their rarity. For decades, wild dogs were despised as vermin, loathed for the way they disembowelled their living prey: a classic case of give a dog a bad name, for which they were dispatched by farmers, hunters and game departments alike. So widespread was their persecution that in the whole of Africa, barely 5,000 wild dogs remain. Unlike other dogs,

ESSENTIALS

Journeys by Design (01273 623790; [journeysbydesign.com](http://journeysbydesign.com)) offers a five-night stay at Tswalu from £5,818 per person sharing. The price includes return economy flights with BA from London to Johannesburg, all domestic flights into Tswalu and VIP fast-track through Johannesburg Airport.

they have only four toes on each foot, and despite their unsavoury reputation they are extraordinary creatures. With their Mickey Mouse ears and dappled coats, they are easy to recognise and their Latin name, *Lycan pictus*, describes them to perfection: the painted wolves of Africa. Weighing up to 70lb and

capable of running at 35 miles per hour, these fleet-footed hunters are notoriously difficult to track down. They live in packs and possess no territories, turning up one day where they have not been seen for months, only to vanish again as mysteriously as they arrived. The best chance to spot them is when the bitches whelp and the pack must hunt in the vicinity of the den until the pups are old enough to travel. Even where wild dogs still exist, habitat loss and conflict with humans continues to drive them towards extinction. After the Ethiopian wolf they are Africa's most endangered carnivores, and what they need most today is the space that only the biggest of the continent's protected wilderness areas can provide. In the arid regions of southern Africa a single pack will need at least 1,300 square miles (3,360 sq km) to survive, and whenever they stray beyond their last remaining sanctuaries they are at risk of being shot or poisoned, or of picking up rabies from domestic dogs.

**EASY LIVING**  
Guests at Tswalu, above, can stay in elegant suites with a heated pool and sun decks

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