

The Predators of Mashatu

Lion



The lion is the largest of Africa's feline predators and they are frequently seen at Mashatu both during the morning and evening drives. Lion are most active after sunset and can often be heard calling throughout the night. During the day they generally rest in the shade and show very little interest in the Mashatu safari vehicles.

Leopard



Leopard are seen almost daily at Mashatu and, as a result, Mashatu is recognised as having some of the finest leopard viewing Africa. It is not uncommon to see two different leopards on a game drive. They generally inhabit the riverine vegetation along the seven rivers on Mashatu. Whilst leopard are commonly nocturnal, they are often viewed in the late afternoon when the excellent sunlight makes for great photographic opportunities.

Cheetah



Mashatu has excellent cheetah viewing. Cheetah are mostly viewed during the day in open areas. Since Mashatu is situated on the eastern fringes of the Kalahari Desert, the wide open spaces and flat terrain lends itself to prime cheetah habitat. Being viewed during daylight hours means that many Mashatu guests are fortunate enough to see cheetah on a kill. [Click here](#) to see Sally Hinton's video on Mashatu's cheetahs.

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Cheetah



Recognised as the most abundant predator on Mashatu, it is unlikely that a guest will leave without having seen numerous cheetah whilst out on a game drive. Their haunting calls are frequently heard throughout the night. Cheetah are commonly known as scavengers and seldom will one witness lions on a carcass without cheetahs in close attendance doing their best to intimidate the lion to move away from the kill. This is very exciting to witness as the sounds which the cheetah make are extraordinary. [Click here](#) to watch an exciting video clip filmed at Mashatu by Aquavision.

Black-backed Jackal



These wily little members of the Canis family, will silently come together to form a pack and hunt prey substantially larger than themselves. This occurs mainly during the dry season when smaller prey, such as frogs and mice are limited. The black-backed jackal will be seen daily whilst out on safari and first impressions are of a medium sized dog demonstrating a certain subservience to the bigger predators. These bigger predators are often spotted as a consequence of the jackal acting as the “town crier” with their mobbing calls, announcing the presence of the larger predators to the whole bushveld.

African Wildcat



Some individual African wildcats were first domesticated about 10,000 years ago in the Middle East and are the ancestors of the domestic cat. It is at Mashatu that you may well see the forefathers of your own domestic cat at home. A small predator that targets small mammals and birds, these cats are solitary and are dispersed most widely throughout Mashatu. African wildcats are extremely well camouflaged in the bush and seldom viewed during the day, but spotlight safaris at the end of the evening drive is when these small cats are often found hunting for mice and birds.