

Expedition to cross the Okavango Delta

Media Pack
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ECHOES OF THE OKAVANGO

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Table of Contents

<u>Expedition Overview</u>	3
<u>Our mission</u>	4
<u>About the Delta</u>	5
<u>The route</u>	6
<u>Press release: Launch of Echoes of the Okavango Expedition</u>	7
<u>Contacts & Links</u>	8



Expedition Overview

Summary

The Echoes of the Okavango Expedition, set for Summer 2025, is a 300-kilometer kayak expedition through Botswana's Okavango Delta. Led by Jay Frain, an adventurer and medic, the expedition will document the Delta's unique ecosystems, explore its cultural heritage, and raise awareness about the effects of climate change.

The expedition will take 14 days of paddling to complete, with time spent completing a citizen science project, interviewing local communities and producing a short film about the Delta and the need to protect it.

About the Okavango Delta

The Okavango Delta, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, spans 15,000 square kilometers at peak flooding and supports over 2,000 plant and animal species. Its seasonal floods, fed by the Okavango River from Angola, sustain wildlife like elephants, lions, and the African wild dog, and support local communities who rely on it for survival.

- Location: Northwestern Botswana
- Size: Up to 15,000 square kilometers during peak flooding
- Unique Features: An inland delta with no sea outlet, fed by seasonal rains from Angola's highlands
- Biodiversity: Over 2,000 plant and animal species, including elephants, lions, and endangered wildlife like the African wild dog.
- Cultural Significance: Home to communities like the Bayei and Hambukushu, who have lived sustainably with the Delta for generations.

Our Story

Inspired by a passion for Africa's landscapes and a premier screening of 'Polars of the Okavango' by Ollie Pemberton at the Royal Geographical Society, expedition leader Jay Frain conceived this journey to merge exploration with advocacy. With years of experience in adventure and remote safety, Jay is committed to raising awareness of climate change's effects on this vital ecosystem.

Our Mission

To use storytelling to raise awareness of the importance of the Okavango Delta on its environment, the wildlife and the residents that rely on it - and the devastation that climate change is having on it.

Our mission

Our mission statement:

To explore the Okavango Delta by kayak, capturing its natural beauty and unique ecosystem to raise awareness of the urgent impacts of climate change on this critical region.

Through creative storytelling, we share the Delta's story with the world to deepen understanding of its environmental and cultural significance and inspire action to protect it for future generations. As a dedicated team, we will contribute to citizen science and creative projects to highlight the need to preserve the delta.

To achieve this, we will be carrying out the following:

Documentary Film:

We will be producing a short film showcasing the beauty, wildlife, and local voices of the Delta, highlighting the importance of its protection and the effects of climate change.

Photography Series:

We will curate a photo series that tells the Okavango's story, sharing it online or other outlets to connect viewers emotionally to its landscapes and challenges.

Interviews with Local Communities:

We will be interviewing local residents and conservationists, sharing their perspectives on changes in the Delta due to climate change and how they feel we should tackle it.

Social Media Mini-Stories and Visuals:

We will share mini-stories, short videos, and interactive posts on social media, to share the story of the delta, progress of the expedition and raise awareness of climate change.

Blog Series or Travel Journal:

We will maintain a blog or travel journal to share daily experiences, wildlife encounters, and reflections on environmental concerns throughout the expedition.

Citizen Science Project:

We are looking to partner with a conservation project to run a citizen science project. This could provide support to a project that may not be able to gather this data otherwise.

Educational Workshops & Talks:

Post-expedition, we will host workshops and lectures to share insights and stories, information on our expedition and raise awareness of the importance of conservation.

About the Delta

The Okavango Delta, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is a vast oasis in the heart of southern Africa, located in northwestern Botswana.

The world's largest inland delta, the Okavango spans roughly 15,000 square kilometers during peak flooding. This immense, dynamic wetland is fed by the Okavango River, which originates in the Angolan highlands, travels over 1,000 kilometers, and fans out into the Kalahari Desert to form a lush oasis.

Each year, seasonal rains from Angola swell the river, causing the Delta's floodplains to expand dramatically, sometimes doubling its area. This annual flooding creates a vast network of channels, lagoons, and islands, supporting a rich ecosystem and diverse habitats. Unlike most rivers, the Okavango has no outlet to the sea; instead, it empties into the sands of the Kalahari, making this unique delta a rare and vital source of freshwater in a largely arid region.

The Okavango Delta is home to an incredible array of wildlife, including Africa's "Big Five"—lion, leopard, rhinoceros, elephant, and African buffalo. Elephants thrive here in large herds, while leopards and lions are often sighted hunting along the grasslands and riverbanks. The endangered black and white rhinoceroses have been reintroduced, and African buffalo graze the floodplains in impressive numbers.

Beyond these icons, the Delta also shelters rare species like the endangered African wild dog and the Delta-exclusive slaty egret, along with Nile crocodiles and swamp-dwelling sitatunga antelope. This biodiversity hotspot is a haven for familiar and rare species alike, all facing increasing pressure from climate change and human activity.

Local communities, such as the Bayei and Hambukushu people, have lived harmoniously with the Delta's ecosystems for generations, relying on its resources for fishing, farming, and crafting. The Delta's environment shifts with seasonal flooding, which dictates animal migrations, plant growth, and local livelihoods.

Environmental and Cultural Significance

The Okavango Delta is not just an ecological marvel; it's vital to Botswana and southern Africa's environment and culture. It supports a rare freshwater system essential for biodiversity, which supports over one million people and over 2,000 species plants and animals.

However, this ecosystem is increasingly vulnerable due to climate change, which affects rainfall patterns and flooding dynamics.

Water scarcity and warmer temperatures are threatening animal migrations, impacting species diversity, and challenging the local communities who rely on the Delta. Urgent conservation efforts are necessary to protect this ecosystem and maintain its role in supporting livelihoods. Our expedition aims to spotlight these issues through storytelling, data collection, and visual documentation.

The Route

Our expedition will take us approximately 300km from the Northern Tip of the Okavango to its Southern base, Maun.

The journey is expected to take 14 days of paddling to complete with our added creative and fieldwork projects.

We will begin in Sepupa, kayaking down the Delta's eastern channels. Along the way, we'll stop at local settlements to engage with the local population and explore the impact of climate change that they have witnessed.

The delta evolves with each annual flooding, meaning that we'll be finding our own route – a true adventure.



The expedition will end in Maun, the gateway to the Okavango Delta and its most southerly point.

The Team

Jay Frain – Expedition Leader

Jay leads the Echoes of the Okavango Expedition, bringing expertise in adventure medicine and technical safety. With experience managing high-risk environments worldwide, including roles as medic and safety advisor for TV and film productions, Jay is committed to adventure and conservation. His passion stems from childhood memories of African wildlife documentaries, inspiring him to take action after seeing a film made by Ollie Pemberton titled 'Polars of the Okavango'.

Experienced Team of Explorers and Adventurers

The expedition will feature a skilled team of explorers, adventurers, and expedition kayakers chosen for their expertise. This diverse group brings experience in outdoor expeditions, wildlife navigation, and field research.

Members, to be announced soon, include conservationists, photographers, filmmakers, and adventurers.

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Team to Embark on Groundbreaking Kayak Expedition Across the Okavango Delta to Highlight Climate Change Impacts

Available as a word document [here](#).

In Summer 2025, a team of explorers will paddle through one of the world's most remarkable ecosystems, the Okavango Delta, to raise awareness of the urgent impacts of climate change and promote conservation efforts. The 300-kilometer kayak expedition, led by adventurer Jay Frain, will navigate the Delta's pristine waterways, bringing its unique beauty and ecological challenges to a global audience.

A Mission for Conservation and Storytelling

Dubbed Echoes of the Okavango, the expedition is more than an adventure; it is a mission to inspire action to protect this UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Okavango Delta, often called the "Heart of Southern Africa," spans up to 15,000 square kilometers during peak flooding, hosting a vast array of wildlife including elephants, lions, and endangered species like the African wild dog and the slaty egret. However, its delicate ecosystem faces increasing threats from climate change and human activity.

"This journey is about more than exploration," says Jay. "It's about capturing the Okavango's story—its breathtaking landscapes, resilient wildlife, and the people who depend on it—to inspire a global effort to safeguard its future."

Through photography, a documentary film, interviews with local communities, and a citizen science project, the team aims to document the Delta's ecological and cultural significance while highlighting the environmental challenges it faces. Their work will be shared through various platforms, including social media, an expedition journal, and post-expedition workshops and lectures.

An Immersive Journey Into the Delta

The expedition will span approximately two weeks, beginning at the Delta's northern tip in Sepupa and concluding in Maun. Team members will kayak through a labyrinth of waterways, stopping to interact with local communities and observe wildlife at iconic sites such as Chief's Island. Each day will combine paddling with fieldwork and creative storytelling projects.

Citizen Science and Collaboration

In collaboration with conservation partners, the team will engage in a citizen science initiative to gather critical environmental data. The findings will contribute to ongoing efforts to study the Delta's ecosystem and its responses to climate change.

A Call to Action

Echoes of the Okavango invites the global community to follow their journey and support their mission. The expedition's stories and findings will be shared in real-time through social media (@OkavangoEchoes) and later presented in workshops, educational talks, and a short documentary film.

Supporters can also contribute to the expedition through its Patreon page, helping to amplify the message of conservation and climate action whilst learning all the exclusive information about the planning and execution of the project.

Media Assets

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

All press releases, hi-res photographs, graphics and logos are available at okavangoechoes.com/press.

Our blog with latest news, articles and information:
okavangoechoes.com/expedition-journal

Join the Conversation

For media inquiries, interviews, or to learn more about the expedition, please contact:

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Visit the expedition's website at okavangoechoes.com for updates and additional information.

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