

## Holiday Highlights

### Tanzania

3 – 17 April 2022

**Guides:** Roy Atkins and Zul Bhatia

**Guests:** Jayne Behenna, Val Mulder, Alison Cawley, Rita Sammons, Di and Nigel Hardcastle

**Day 1:** We gather at Heathrow Airport and make our way through check-in and security, which all goes remarkably smoothly considering the paperwork we had to have in place re covid. We have a relaxed time before going to the gates and our flight is right on time - great! Tanzania here we come!!

**Day 2:** Having arrived in Addis Ababa, we have about three hours to kill, so we find some seats with a view and watch for birds. Amazingly we find some... including our first bird of the trip - White-collared Pigeon! None of us have even heard of it but apparently it is an Ethiopian endemic, so a great start. There are Speckled Pigeons here too and an occasional Rock Martin flitting around the buildings. In the distance there are raptors!! Yellow-billed Kite is nice to see and we can see a harrier quartering the ground but it is so far away it is hard to be sure which - it is one of the two slimmer species for sure and Roy suspects Pallid but we can't be certain. We get a poor view of a Long-crested Eagle and a Common Kestrel hovering the other side of the runway and Di and Nigel spot a couple of Sacred Ibis.

Our gate is finally announced and we head round to board the plane and wish we had come down here earlier as there are even more birds, many the same species but also several Hooded Vultures.

It is a much shorter flight from here to Kilimanjaro Airport and we get off the plane, surprised a little by the heat! As we walk to the terminal there is a steady flow of white and yellow butterflies - perhaps a species of Clouded Yellow - all migrating in the same direction. We also spot our first Tanzanian bird... a Superb Starling and it is gorgeous.

Once again there is plenty of paperwork to be shown but all runs smoothly and soon we are out the other side and meeting our local driver-guides outside – Edson and Geitan. There is a flock of Barn Swallows swooping round as we board the vehicles and get on our way. The first part of the journey is on tarmac and as we drive we spot a Long-tailed Fiscal and an astonishing 'dust devil' rising quite high into the blue sky. We take a dirt track towards the lodge and after a little while arrive to find gorgeous grounds and a friendly welcome. We also get to meet Anthony, who has done much of the organisation of this trip.

We have a few minutes in our rooms but we are very late for lunch being now 2pm, so we head straight for the dining area. Lunch is very nice and as we sit

enjoying the food a little group of Rufous-backed Manakins appears right beside us allowing great views. We are discussing when we should meet up again and the sky has got very dark... then it starts rumbling, then suddenly it is a deluge! None of us have seen rain quite like it for a long time and it is pouring off the roofs while the trees are blowing around angrily in the gusty wind.

We wait around wondering whether it might stop but in the end we give up and head to our rooms and decide to see what it is doing around 4.30pm.

It continues raining for a while and at 4.30pm it is still raining but the sky is brightening and it is looking hopeful. Then as the rain stops it seems to be the signal for the activity to start and suddenly we are seeing birds - and monkeys!! Blue Monkeys on the roof and in the trees and some great views too. We start making a list of birds, with African Pied Wagtail, Collared Sunbird, Black-crowned Bulbul and Hobbies which are passing overhead one after another. Much more astonishing, a Verreaux's Eagle Owl flies into one of the trees and we enjoy astonishing views through the scope, including the dark edge to the facial disk and those bizarre pink eyelids! What a bird!!!

The monkeys put on a great display and there are lots of them and with babies with them, all with that slightly surprised expression they seem to wear. We spot a Kendrick's Starling on top of a tree and also get fantastic views of Silvery-cheeked Hornbills, another very impressive bird and what a bill.

We wander down past our lunch spot and soon add more birds. In one tree we find Dark-capped Bulbul, several White-eared Barbets, a pair of Red-headed Weavers and several Thick-billed Weavers then a Cardinal Woodpecker flies in. More Hobbies are flying over - what a treat - and we enjoy some lovely views of delicate looking Palm Swifts.

We continue down to the lake and birds come thick and fast... some familiar birds like Moorhen and Little Grebe, others much more exciting such as African Jacana, Long-tailed Cormorant and Hamerkop. We notice a bunch of weaver bird nests in some tall sedges over the other side and there are Grosbeak (or Thick-billed) Weavers and several stunning, bright yellow, Taveta Golden Weavers. These are just spectacularly and look like they would continue to glow if you turned the lights off. We spot Black Saw-wing Swallows, cheeky looking Black Crakes with their yellow bill and bright pink legs and Jayne catches us up... she has hung back watching the monkeys and spotted a Brown-hooded Kingfisher.

A pair of Red-chested Cuckoos are calling noisily so we try playing a recording to see if they react. They fly across a bit closer but despite our best efforts all we can say is that we saw two in flight. Walking back along the shore we are delighted when two scarce African Black Ducks fly in and land then start feeding - very nice looking ducks, all dark but with white markings on their backs. We spot an Amethyst Sunbird on a treetop before starting to walk back and then stop again

when a Giant Kingfisher appears and promptly catches a huge fish, smacking it on the log before finally swallowing it whole

We are about to leave the lake when we hear the distinctive call of two Hadada Ibis flying in and landing in the trees on the island. We are watching them when suddenly they start calling frantically as an African Fish Eagle flies in and steals their perch. Wow - what a bird and what a stunning view of it - totally frame-filling through the scope. It suddenly takes flight, swoops down, and catches a small fish then flies to another perch to eat it providing an even better view!!

We see more Blue Monkeys as we walk back to the buildings, then stop for a final look at the eagle owl and as we watch a pair of enormous Silvery-cheeked Hornbills fly into the same tree. They seem upset by the owl but it looks totally unbothered by their presence.

Delighted with our sightings we have a break before meeting up again for a very nice evening meal and our first run through the checklist.

**Day 3:** We have decided to make the most of the mornings as it can get very hot by lunchtime and therefore have an early start with breakfast at 6.15am. It is a little overcast but a lovely temperature and as we enjoy breakfast we are aware of a movement in the trees and Jayne goes to investigate... finding Blue Monkeys almost above our heads. Moments later, a pair of Brown-hooded Kingfishers appears, calling from the dead branches close by and giving great views. On our way back to our rooms we check the big tree where the Verreaux's Eagle Owl was yesterday and are delighted to find it is still there. There are Hobbies on the move again and we see Dark-crowned Bulbul, White-eared Barbet and a couple of Black Saw-wings before we leave.

The drive to Arusha National Park is made all the more interesting by a stop for Zul to pick up some beans for his bean-bag camera support, as it means we make a stop at the local market, where it is fascinating to see what is for sale and pick up on some of the local ambience. It all looks busy and some of the fruit and veg on offer look fabulous! We even add House Sparrow to the list.

Back on our way it is not long before we reach the entrance to the Park and make a stop for the necessary paperwork to be done. While Edson and Geitan are doing that we check what birds are here and are soon identifying plenty! Variable and Collared Sunbirds, Grey-headed Sparrow, Lesser-striped and Red-rumped Swallows, Peregrine, Hobby and Jayne says she has found a black bird with a long tail... which turns out to be Bronze Sunbird! It is gorgeous and shiny with elongated central tail feathers, a male and two females, and they are incredibly tame. We also spot a large raptor over our heads... and despite it being close and right over our heads and having obvious markings such as a heavily barred underwings, we just can't clinch the identification. We'll work on it! (we did – and we can now say it was an unusually dark, immature African Harrier Hawk)

We get on our way, pausing to enjoy a large flock of Wattled Starlings on top of the bushes, some of which have obvious black wattles. We see our first Northern Fiscal and shortly arrive at a large open area with a scattering of mammals. Out in the middle is a large herd of African Buffalo, looking very impressive and scattered all around are groups of Zebra, lots of Bushbucks, Warthogs and a couple of Waterbucks. It is a lovely scene and we spend a while just soaking it in and realising we are actually here at long last! (this trip was postponed twice!) We drive slowly round the edge of the grassy area and discover a very close Saddle-billed Stork and a Black-headed Heron beside a small wet area and a pair of Egyptian Geese. An Augur Buzzard is gleaming in the sun in one of the treetops.

From here on it gets bushier and with more trees and we drive slowly watching out for anything as we go. In places the track seems to have a scattering of Olive Baboons all along it! They don't seem the least bothered as we drive by and some of the troops seem large with several males, lots of females and plenty of little babies too. Some of the males look pretty impressive!

The forest here is surprisingly lush and most of us are amazed how green everything is. There are so many butterflies - bright yellow, glittering blue and black, orange and black, some with orange bands, various swallowtails and all sorts... there is no way we'll be naming most of them but it is still spectacular. We spot Cinnamon-breasted Bee-eater and we're watching out for Red Duiker, spotting one that runs across the road and one in the forest. Edson spots a small group of Black-and-white Colobus Monkeys. They are spectacular with long fringes of fur along the sides and incredible looking bushy white tails. They are big too and we all agree they are perhaps one of - if not the - best monkeys we have ever seen! They seem remarkably shy though and trying to get a phot of their faces is remarkably difficult. High overhead two large raptors are soaring and we are delighted to realise they are African Crowned Eagles!!

We take a side road that leads up to an astonishing fig tree that is so big someone has cut a hole through it, so you can even drive through! You are allowed to get out here and we try for some birds, playing recordings of a couple of species. They don't appear but we spot African Dusky Flycatcher, Olive Sunbird, Mountain Greenbul and a very tame Olive Thrush. A Hartlaub's Turaco comes in but proves very hard to locate. Some people get a good view and the rest see it in flight before we leave.

As we drive back down we pause to look at an Emerald Spotted Wood-Dove, find more troops of colobus monkeys and the second vehicle get great views of a Hartlaub's Turaco. Back at the junction we make a stop for loos and drinks and while here also find a very tame Black-backed Puffback - which puffs up its back making it look white instead! Di spots a Golden-breasted Bunting here - a great find and Zul shows us some Giraffe droppings... astonishing us all with how hard they are.

We pass through another more open area with scattered bushes and there are lots of Bushbucks and Warthogs and we get good views of an Augur Buzzard circling on broad wings and almost no tail. There is a herd of Buffalo and a few Zebras, several Waterbucks and passing overhead is large flocks of what appear to be Common Swifts, with a few Little Swifts and Barn Swallows amongst them. There are Red-billed Oxpeckers on the Buffalo and some are close enough to see the bill colour easily. A little further on we find more baboons and we're astonished to see one of them is a creamy white colour... not an albino as it doesn't have pink eyes but it certainly looks Polar Bear like in colour... not in many other ways though. We pass Crowned Plovers that seem a bit agitated and one settles right by the track on a couple of eggs! Two others are not at all happy when they spot a Banded Mongoose. This one joins its clan and we realise there are at least eight running around at the back of the grassland - super looking little animals. Before we leave here we identify Grassland (African) Pipit and Red-naped Lark - but both distant. On our way to the nest spot we pause to look at our first rather distant Giraffes which are sat down and we can just see heads and necks. We glimpse a Red-collared Widowbird, all black with a very long tail.

We arrive at the shore of a large lake where we decide to have lunch while scanning for birds. There are Sacred Ibis here on the shore and Cattle Egrets, Blacksmith Plovers, Black-winged Stilts and out on the water astonishing numbers of Little Grebe, plus distant Southern Pochard and Cape Teal. On the far side is a mixed flock of White-breasted and Long-tailed Cormorants and Jayne is very pleased to spot our first Hippos in the water. This causes some excitement and we watch them through the scope as they submerge then reappear again repeatedly.

We walk up to a viewpoint and enjoy great views of Grey Crowned Cranes through the scope... what fantastic birds they are! We also find Baglafaecht Weavers, a Rattling Cisticola singing from the tops of the bushes. In the bushes nearby we find White-browed Robin-Chat, Chin-spot Batis, Speckled Mousebird and Yellow-breasted Apalis.

We drive on and follow the edge of the lake, pausing to check a group of birds which turn out to be Cape and Red-billed Teal, Common and Wood Sandpipers, Ruff and Three-banded Plover. We get superb views of a White-browed Coucal too - then a little further on we add March Sandpiper to the growing list. Hobbies are also starting to pass through again... and we start to hear thunder!

Driving on we notice the next lake approaching and - oh my!! The entire near shore is pink. It is not pink sand, but thousands of Lesser Flamingos!! We drive closer and just park up and enjoy the spectacle and what a spectacle it is. They just look incredible and we can't stop taking photos. More are flying in all the time and often large sections of the flock move in unison as they walk like a river of flamingos through the rest of the flock. What a sight it is... we are simply thrilled. After a little while we notice there are a few other species here. Amongst the Lessers we realise there are about twenty or more Greater Flamingos - bigger

and paler with bicoloured bills. There are plenty of Cape Teal... perhaps over a hundred in total and on the mud are three Ringed Plovers, a couple of Little Stint and more Ruff. Hobbies are passing through one after the next - what a treat! Leaving the lake behind we make a stop to enjoy a close Giraffe. What an astonishing animal it is! It is close to the road and looks supremely elegant as it reaches up for leave on the higher branches. It is our first good view of one and spend a while just enjoying it.

Further round we enjoy great views of a perched Hobby and are delighted when a White-fronted Bee-eater appears in the tree beside it. This puts a great show perching up right beside us at eye level. We move on and drive round more lakes. At one there is a large flock of Cattle Egrets, plus single Little and Intermediate Egrets. We move on and find ourselves following a Giraffe down the road! It can't seem to get out of the way and we follow it for ages - with it stopping to browse now and then as it passes taller trees. We end up squeezing past while it feeds and enjoying astonishing close views and those stood in the vehicles are almost at eye level.

We are getting a bit late now and start moving a little faster but it is hard when wildlife keeps coming out to show itself! We get lovely views of a Kirk's Dik Dik - a delightfully cute little antelope. We make a stop for a superb view of a singing Moustached Grass Warbler, with a gorgeous male Variable Sunbird glittering in the sunshine, a Rattling Cisticola and a Little Bee-eater nearby.

Our final stop is at a spot where there seem to plenty birds in the trees but very hard to get a good view of any of them. We find another Mountain Greenbul and get views of what we think must be Black-headed Apalis but little else stays still long enough to identify it. We pass a lovely flock of Guinea Fowl as we drive on but we don't have time to stop for long - and our final birds of the day are back home - where we pass the lake on our way in and spot Great Egret and African Fish Eagle.

What a day!! It is amazing going through the list after we have enjoyed our evening meal. There is a praying mantis flitting around the lights, a House Gecko on the wall and we finish the day looking at the map and learning a bit more about Tanzania from Zul before finally heading to bed... I think we will sleep well tonight!

**Day 4:** Before breakfast a group of us take a short walk in the grounds heading down to the lake. Here we are pleased to see the Fish Eagle again and watch it catch another small fish. There are plenty of Hadada Ibis, Hamerkop and two Giant Kingfishers flying around. Many birds are the same as the other day - African Jacana, Black Duck, Taveta and Grosbeak Weavers but it is a little quiet, so we wander back up towards the lodge. Here we find White-eared Barbet and Collared Sunbird.

As we enjoy breakfast we are amazed to see Black-and-white Colobus Monkeys climbing through the nearby trees and they provide our best views so far! Amazing - right in our backyard. We gather our belongings and say goodbye to the staff but before we leave we discover Ochre-Bush Squirrels running through the trees and coming down to the lawn and Roy in particular is thrilled when Jayne points out a Chameleon!!! We are astonished and take lots of photos and decide to place it in a tree, where incredibly we find a second one! This is an ambition achieved for Roy who has wanted to see one in the wild for years. We then hear about all sorts of crazy beliefs and suspicions people in Tanzania have about them - very weird! We check into which species and discover she is a female Kilimanjaro Two-horned Chameleon.

We finally get on our way and have to make a stop in the middle of Arusha to get a tyre changed. As we are waiting for the work to be done a raptor flies through carrying a Feral Pigeon... and we are stumped as to its identify. It looks buzzard like in shape but is heavily barred beneath the wings with black and white. Going through the book nothing seems quite right. Zul is in the other vehicle getting something from town and when they return he tells us that Ayres Hawk-Eagle are being seen a lot in town these days! It is the exact match but we would never have thought of it reading the text which makes its sound scarce and out in the wilds.

Out of town we get on our way and spot various things along the way, such as Superb Starlings, Long-tailed Fiscal, lots of Pied Crows and various species we have already seen. We make a stop for loos and a coffee at a spot Zul knows and he tells us they have captive Shoebills out the back, so we can't resist a quick look. There is a small pond here and lots of weavers nesting and what stunning birds they are - Golden-backed Weavers with bright yellow backs and black heads. There are a few Grosbeak Weavers amongst them, a couple of Speckled Mousebirds here too and a small flock of Bronze Manakins fly in and perch on the fence. When we finally arrive at the spot where the Shoebill is we are astonished when a guy picks it up and brings it over to show us... it is absolutely huge and looks a little like he is carrying a crocodile it has such an enormous bill.

We enjoy a coffee then get on our way, watching out for birds as we go. We add White-naped Raven and a smart Black-chested Snake-Eagle and at a roadside pool we find Spur-winged Geese. At another roadside stop we find a flock of Golden-backed Weavers, a nesting colony of Black-headed Weavers, a stunning Southern Red Bishop, Chestnut Sparrow and White-headed Buffalo Weaver. We pass Red-billed Buffalo Weavers further on creating huge bundles of nests in the tops of the bushes.

We reach an area where Zul tells us they have cleared all the housing and left a corridor of open ground for the movement of migrating animals, especially Wildebeest and Zebras - and indeed we spot our first Wildebeests here and quite a few Zebra too.

We finally arrive at the gate to Tarangire National Park and as we enjoy lunch we still can't quite stop birding and spot a few birds as we eat such as Woodland Kingfisher and Northern White-crowned Shrike. After lunch we take a short walk spotting our first Ashy Starling, Von de Decken's and Red-billed Hornbills, Grey-headed Sparrows and some kind of cuckoo – either African or European. Our favourite may be the Yellow-collared Lovebirds which are astonishingly tame and we watch them coming in to drink at a very tiny pool of water, along with African Mourning Dove and Superb Starlings.

We decide we should head to the lodge, so we get on our way and once in the Park start seeing some mammals including lots of Impala, a few Grants Gazelles but much more impressive... Elephants!! They are just wonderful. Everyone loves Elephants don't they? They just look so amazing and impressive and we love seeing them amongst the enormous Baobab Trees for which this Reserve is famous. In fact there are Baobabs everywhere and some look astonishingly old and have enormous trunks - a bit like the elephants really. We spot one larger family and then a particularly impressive single male with very ragged ears.

We pause here and there to take photos and enjoy the animals and also add a few more birds, such as White-backed Vulture, Beautiful Sunbird, Red-billed Buffalo Weavers at their large communal nests, Bateleur, Magpie Shrike and our first Ostriches! Next we find a group of Eastern Dwarf Mongooses that appear to be living in a termite mound, their heads poking out of the top in a rather comical manner. We add Silverbird, Brubru and Fork-tailed Drongo, before we reach our destination.

We arrive at the lodge and wow!! It is truly stunning with breath-taking views out over the surroundings and down to the river. The lodge itself is beautiful too and we enjoy a drink while just scanning and taking in the view. There are Lesser Striped Swallows, Little Swifts, White-bellied Go-away-birds, Red-necked Francolin and more Elephants way down below us amongst the Baobabs. We head to our rooms and gather again less than an hour later, when we add Beautiful Sunbird, Alison spots an absolutely beautiful Gabar Goshawk and Di and Nigel spot Red-chested Cuckoo. Other cuckoos we are pretty sure are African Cuckoo including one that Roy identifies for sure. Before we take to the road we take a very short walk between the tents as one of the staff has told Zul where to see an African Scops Owl roosting - actually not just one but two and incredibly close!

Lots of photos later we get on our way and spot more Impala then pause when we spot a Black-shouldered Kite perched in one of the trees. We find a nice flock of Wattled Starlings and various other birds with them, such as Rufous-tailed Weavers, White-headed Buffalo-Weavers, Yellow-necked Spurfowl and Fischer's Sparrow-Larks. There is a Lilac-breasted Roller here too and shortly we spot more of these - beautiful enough when perched but simply incredible in flight! We spot more White-backed Vultures, Fork tailed Drongo and a nice Pearl-spotted Owlet... and the big fat trees look superb.



We arrive at a small pool where there are Wood Sandpiper, Ring-necked Dove, Fischer's Sparrow-Lark coming to drink. We get superb views of White-browed Coucals, Rattling Cisticolas, Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu, Ashy Starling and Wattled Starlings. There is a terrapin of some sort and more gorgeous Lilac-breasted Rollers.

A little further on, we make a stop and try playing a bit of Buff-crested Bustard call. There are Speckle-fronted Weavers on the road and Nigel spots a Purple Grenadier while we wait for a response. The bird calls back but doesn't appear and we drive on a little further. There is a Pale Flycatcher here and a lark or pipit appears with a pure white supercilium and short tail - we'll work on that one! (This turned out to be Foxy Lark - a recent split from Fawn-coloured lark. Looking at images on-line it looked perfect). We are trying to get everyone onto this bird when suddenly Edson points out that while we are focussed on the lark, the bustard is running down the road towards us! It is just astonishing and continues to run right down the road and right past our vehicles and away further on, allowing us the most incredible views of a species we never thought we would see at all.

Delighted with all this we turn round and head for home, pausing to enjoy the sight of Impala feeding in front of an enormous Baobab - what a lovely scene. Then we finish with another fabulous find when Edson somehow manages to spot an almost invisible Black-faced Sandgrouse. We enjoy fantastic views before finally heading back and some of us spend the last bit of daylight enjoying the view and watching Little Swifts as the light fades.

**Day 5:** After an early breakfast we are soon ready to get on our way but before we head off we take a quick look at a couple of Epauletted Fruit Bats in a tree by the accommodation... cute looking things with nice looking faces and little white tufts by their ears. There is a Red-chested Cuckoo here too and showing very well at last - which is great as we have been hearing them everywhere. We also spot Arrow-marked Babbler and the usual other birds plus an Eastern Grey Woodpecker in the car park.

We have not gone far when we make our first stop, spotting a lot of birds in one spot... Red-and-yellow Barbet, Grey Hornbills flying into the top of a Baobab, Speckle-fronted Weavers, Magpie Shrikes and on top of one of the trees a beautiful Pangani Longclaw. Perhaps best of all however is a Secretary Bird that shows very well walking through the long grass - and Rita is thrilled - this is the bird she most wanted to see.

We drive on slowly with birds appearing everywhere, including another Secretary Bird even closer than the first. We find a pair of Black-faced Sandgrouse right beside the road providing frame filling views, a Beautiful Sunbird shows well and there are lots of birds we have seen already like Ashy Starling, Superb Starling, Lilac-breasted Roller, Ring-necked Dove etc. We get great views of a Black-chested Snake-Eagle and there are some distant White-backed Vultures.

A Northern Pied Babbler shows well once we coax it out with the call and as we move off an Eastern Chanting Goshawk flies across in front of the vehicles.

We enjoy even more ridiculously close views of Secretary Birds as they stroll along just yards from the cars - now and again dashing forwards and stomping on something before eating it. They are literally just feet away. There is a small group of Southern Ground Hornbills in a huge Baobab, then further on we find Spotted Flycatcher, Striped Kingfisher and we coax in a Brubru. Roy is delighted to find another great new bird, Abyssinian Scimitarbill... like a small wood-hoopoe and a great find.

There are remarkably few mammals which is a bit disappointing but there are plenty of Waterbuck and Impala. A Leopard Tortoise is wandering slowly along the road... a superb looking animal but not a mammal not having a lot of fur so Jayne is not that impressed.

Driving on we stop when Geitan hears a calling Banded Parisoma, so we try playing the song and it instantly flies across and we shows well - a delightful little bird. Our next stop produced Nubian Woodpecker, Red-cheeked Cordonbleu, Pale Flycatcher and a fly by Brown Parrot.

We pause to enjoy the scene looking across to the river where a large group of thirty or so Elephants are relaxing - including one very small baby that looks very cute indeed. It is just a lovely scene with the Elephants and the river and all the enormous Baobab trees and termite mounds and perfect weather and even the lighting is just lovely. A short distance further on we spot another group and stop to enjoy these too, as well as at least three Giraffes. We also spot White-browed Coucal here, Lilac-breasted Rollers and a Croaking Cisticola is singing above the long grass. In the top of a palm we find a Grey Kestrel then further on we spot a Tawny Eagle in a large tree. We pause to look at a large colony of Black-headed Weavers, some Rufous-tailed Weavers and a flock of Chestnut Sparrows flies through. There is also a lovely Giraffe that seems to just watch us go by and we wonder whether it minds having up to five Red-billed Oxpeckers on its neck!

We cross a bridge over the river and pause here to see what is around. There are Banded Mongooses and a Hamerkop but few other birds, but we are delighted to find an impressive Nile Monitor Lizard... greenish with thin yellow stripes. As we follow the river along we find Greenshank, lots of Impala crossing the river nervously and single Bohor Reedbuck - a rather delicate looking species. Driving on, we pause to look at a flock of Bare-faced Go-away-birds and also find two Hildebrandt's Starlings and European Bee-eaters. We are also pleased to see more Giraffes with three visible from here.

Our next stop is to check some rocks by the road and Geitan brilliantly spots two faces poking out of a hole! They are Rock (Bush) Hyraxes and very cute. We spot Bateleur from here and a circling Tawny Eagle, then yards further on a Tawny-

flanked Prinia and Woodland Kingfisher. Back at the river bridge we glance downstream and notice there is a large flock of what all appear to be White-backed Vultures and a couple of Marabou Storks. We see a superb male Elephant walking towards us and pause to enjoy it as it comes closer and closer then crosses the road just feet in front of our vehicles - absolutely wonderful!

We head back for lunch and as we eat there are Ashy Starlings around, Speckled Mousebirds and we are delighted to see Green-winged Pytilia come down to drink, as well as Yellow-collared Lovebirds. There are distant White-backed Vultures, Bateleur and Tawny Eagle, while down below are at least a couple of groups of Elephants. As the last couple of people finish chatting and are about to leave a Rüppell's Vulture circles overhead. We see both Unstriped Ground Squirrel and what Ochre Bush Squirrel - a slimmer animal more in the trees. According to the notice board here they are Huet's Bush Squirrel but a bit of research once home revealed that they are the same thing!

A small group of us decide we can't bring ourselves to quit stop birding and take a wander in the grounds. It is surprisingly busy with birds given the heat and we get a few new ones too! The Scops Owl is still there in the same place, then we find Marico Sunbird, Willow Warbler, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Diederick Cuckoo, Cardinal Woodpecker and Lesser Masked Weaver. There are several Speckled Mousebirds and a few Vervet Monkeys, then at the far end we find a Green-backed Camaroptera and down below us on the riverside a group of at least fifteen Banded Mongoose!

We meet up again in the late afternoon and head out for a drive. It is still very hot but there are a few birds as we drive and we stop to check a flock of tiny birds some of which are Cordonbleus. Checking the others suddenly Roy can't believe his eyes as there - right beside the road - is a Violet-tipped Courser!!! Wow! What a find - and what an absolutely stunning bird! We watch it for ages as it wanders nervously around on its long red legs. This is a nocturnal species that is usually very hard to find and without doubt the best bird of the day and we are thrilled.

We are well on our way back when we make stop to look at some Dwarf Mongooses in a termite mound - including two tiny babies that do look rather cute. There are Warthogs here, Yellow-necked Spurfowl and a few Ostriches and Elephants in the distance. Heading for home we just enjoy the scenes - enjoying the beautiful evening light on the Baobabs as we drive.... they really are magnificent and we are told some are 1,000 years old. We think Alison may have photographed all of them!

**Day 6:** We gather for a slightly later breakfast this morning and enjoy the view, wishing we were staying longer. What a beautiful place it is. As we are gathering together we are pleased to spot Mottled Spinetail Swifts from the veranda - very like Little Swifts but with a distinctive shape and flight, and usefully we see them both together

After saying our farewells we walk to the car park before one of the staff tells us he has located the African Scops Owl again. We decide to go for one last look and follow him round only to find it has gone! As we are looking however Roy picks out a Spotted Palm Thrush in the low bushes and we get views of that while the guy amazingly manages to relocate the owl. We enjoy wonderful close up views before heading round to the bus, pausing enroute to look at Dwarf Mongooses with a couple of babies, Ochre Tree Squirrels and a Red-necked Spurfowl.

We get on our way and are passing birds that are becoming very familiar now then to our delight a pair of Black-backed Jackals cross the road ahead of the first vehicle and we watch them walking out through the grass and then pause as if to check what we are doing. After a few minutes they lie down and since that means they are hidden by the grass we eventually move on. A Terrapin also crosses the road but it is proving hard to work out exactly which species.

We make more stops here and there as we spot things... a huge flock of Barn Swallows is feeding above the grass and we pause to check them and are surprised to see two Lappet-faced Vultures in the trees. A Martial Eagle flies overhead very high up - an immature, which causes some momentary confusion as the pattern is like an Egyptian Vulture - but not the shape. We are delighted to find a small flock of Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters flying around and perching up in the bare branches looking gorgeous against the blue sky.

We finally arrive at the gate and take a short walk as the bushes here can sometimes be productive. We enjoy astonishingly good views of Red-chested Cuckoo in the first tree - Zul says he has never had such a good view of one. A Tawny Eagle flies over, there are some delightful cuddling Yellow-collared Lovebirds, several Northern White-crowned Shrikes, Red-billed Hornbill and a cuckoo which, after careful examination of tail and bill, we declare to be European Cuckoo. As we are about to leave we find White-browed Sparrow-Weavers building their nests, then from the car park a pair of Wire-tailed Swallows and a nesting pair of Speckled Pigeons. As we drive out of the entrance there is a small flock of Yellow-rumped Seedeaters at the side of the road and Edson spots a D'Arnaud's Barbet

We are soon on the main road and passing herdsmen with their flocks of goats and cows, small villages, even rings of Maasai huts - and the birds are more familiar now... Northern Fiscal, the various doves, Pied Crow and more. We pass a few Zebra and Wildebeest as we pass through the migration zone and spot a few fly by Eastern Paradise Whydahs with amazing tails.

It is not too far before we arrive at our next destination... Lake Manyara National Park and we pause to buy coffee and use the loos before the entrance. The Park is famous for the studies made here of Elephants and also for its tree climbing Lions... but Zul tells us this is a rare thing these days and he has personally not witnessed it for perhaps 25 years!

We start into the Park with lots of White-backed Vultures flying overhead - and pass through some beautiful lush looking forest. There are amazing numbers of Olive Baboons and we count almost 40 in one group, plus a couple of Blue Monkeys. In one stream there are amazing numbers of butterflies licking at the sand along the edge - white and yellow ones, swallowtail types, orange tips and striped ones and they are fluttering around and attracting in a Mountain Wagtail that makes sudden dashes to catch them and amazingly eats them whole, wing and all!

We travel on and pause to enjoy Crowned Hornbills. There are quite a few Southern Red Bishops, then a beautiful pair of Lanner Falcons. We come to some Elephants beside the road and enjoy the antics of a little baby running around and wallowing briefly in the mud, sliding over and then dashing off again - he is sooo cute - and they are so close!! It is a beautiful scene and we are pleased to see two impressive Southern Ground Hornbills too.

We speed off. It all seems a bit odd and we are rather surprised by the speed that the drivers drive the tracks here and are beginning to get suspicious when we come to a tree and there, lying on the branches, are three Lions!!! We are astonished and can't believe our luck. Zul is amazed and tells us that we are unbelievably lucky to see this here and we spend a long time just enjoying watching them. They are magnificent and so close and we just relax into watching them lying there looking astonishingly comfortable. One has its legs dangling either side of the big branch she is lying on. Every now and then one lifts a head and looks at us, appearing not the least bit bothered by our presence here and shifts position and goes back to sleep. It is hard to explain how easy it is to just sit and watch them for so long!

There are a few birds around now and then too. An Eastern Paradise Wyan flies past, there are Southern Red Bishops and best of all a beautiful looking Violet-backed Sunbird and at the other extreme – a Spotted Flycatcher!

We finally say our farewells to the Lions and head for lunch to a picnic site with a wonderful view down towards the lake. Way down below us we can see African Buffalos on the shore and surprisingly flying around in front of us are three House Martins. Down below us two Mousebirds fly in and Roy is surprised when he looks at them to see blue! They are Blue-naped Mousebirds - and very attractive with Waxwing like faces. There is a shout from the drivers and they point skywards and call, "Palm-nut Vulture!" And sure enough there it is looking astonishing with all the black and white patches in the wings. This was pretty unexpected and we are thrilled. A flock of European Bee-eaters flies over and as we come to leave Roy spots a Yellow-spotted Petronia.

From here we drop down towards the lake and work our way through the various little tracks through the bushes near the shore. There are plenty of Elephants in here and we get some wonderful close up views. They are a rather a rusty colour due to the colour of the soil here as they do dust bath and

wallow in it when it is wet. We see some impressive tuskers, as well as some delightful baby ones and spend a little while just watching them. There is a single Zebra here with a bad foot and on the shore a large herd of African Buffalo. They have plenty of Cattle Egrets in attendance and in the background, on the shore, are lots of Gull-billed Terns, a single Whiskered Tern and a Grey-headed Gull. In the bushes are lots of Vitelline Masked Weavers and we watch one weaving its nest - which looks quite dexterous! There are more Southern Red Bishops, a single Foxy Lark, two Southern Ground Hornbills and as we leave a European Roller is in one of the dead trees.

Driving back towards the entrance we stop to enjoy another Mountain Wagtail and both Crowned and Silver-cheeked Hornbills in the taller trees. We are passing the big group of Olive Baboons when we hear horrible screaming and realise that one of the big male baboons has a little baby in his fist. He is treating it horribly, walking with it in his hand so it gets dragged and squashed under his weight and even deliberately beating it against the floor. The whole thing looks to be some sort of rivalry between this male and another one and we wonder what the situation is here. Edson has a theory that the baby belongs to the other male and this male is proving he is the stronger by demonstrating he can do what he likes to the other male's baby. If it is such a power struggle it seems very harsh on the poor baby one who is getting shaken, dragged on the ground, squashed and generally beaten up! It is painful to watch and I think we all feel a bit shocked by the behaviour - and in honesty, as we drive away, I suspect we all wonder whether the baby is going to survive this.

We finally leave them to conclude this thing however they will and are well behind the other vehicle now, so we drive fast to catch up - but as we come round a corner there are two Elephants in the road! We have to wait while they feed on the vegetation at the roadside and it is quite a while before they finally move off sufficiently for us to get past.. We are late now but I think we perhaps all rather enjoyed the experience.

Driving fast now on the main road we are heading to our hotel for the night, which is not far but between setting off and arriving we add two more new birds... Straw-tailed Wattlebirds, a small flock of females with a single lovely male, and Abyssinian Wheatear - with two pairs at a quarry beside the road.

Our hotel is just gorgeous and we enjoy a super evening meal before another run through the checklist and chat about the coming few days. Another amazing day!!

**Day 7:** Some of us meet for an early breakfast so we can enjoy a walk round the gardens of the hotel before we leave. This proves quite fruitful with some great birds, including great views of Fischer's Lovebirds, Purple Grenadier, a very smart African Paradise Flycatcher and a White-eye of some sort. Recent changes in taxonomy mean that some research is required later to find out exactly which, and it seems there are three species in this region one of which is bright yellow underneath, another has a massive white eye ring and the third looks just like our bird and

more Chiffchaff like - which makes it Abyssinian White-eye. The gardens are lovely!

We say our farewells to the staff at the hotel then get on our way, soon arriving at the entrance to the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Zul takes us to see a 3D model of the area, so we see the shape of the land, where the crater is and where we are going for the rest of today. The crater is in fact a caldera and although it is huge it looks tiny on the map and looks much more like an extinct volcano. We will be skirting the rim for some of today before we head towards the Serengeti. We head back outside and try for one or two birds but find very little, so with the paperwork done we get going again, pausing briefly to look at Crowned Hornbill. Alison spots White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher as we drive and we pass a couple of Streaky Seedeaters.

We drive up the steep road through forest and with cover both sides of the road, then suddenly we are at the crater viewpoint - and wow!!! It takes us completely by surprise and is simply breath-taking! What a view. We get out for a look and are on the edge of the caldera looking down from the rim to the bottom about two thousand feet below us. It looks a very long way down - and the far side a very long way away! It is just beautiful and the cloud that is swirling down into the crater adds to the atmosphere. Scanning down below we can see herds of Zebra and Wildebeest scattered everywhere. There are a couple of Ostriches and some Buffalo beside a small lake... they look like tiny toy animals! Roy sets up his scope and scans more carefully and is delighted to find two Black Rhinos! They are not common and can be hard to find here, so we are very pleased and through the scope they look fabulous. Val is especially pleased as these are her first ever wild Rhino ever. Nigel finds another that seems to be lying flat on its side... which doesn't look good - but it is still moving and we think it is actually ok. Hopefully it is just pining for the fjords! We spend time just enjoying the view and enjoying the 'little animals' so far below and also spot a couple of Streaky Seedeaters and a fly by Olive Pigeon - but we have a long way to go so finally we have to drag ourselves away.

We take the road that follows round the rim of the crater for a little way before heading away towards the Serengeti. It feels very high with stunted bushes and grassy slopes where the Maasai have rings of huts and are out watching over flocks of goats and cows. The scenery is wonderful and as we drive we spot lots of birds. Northern Anteater Chat, Abyssinian Wheatear, Dusky Turtle Dove, a fly-by Malachite Sunbird, Capped Wheatear, Red-capped Lark, White bellied Canary, African/Common Stonechat and many other species punctuate our journey.

In some areas Wildebeest and Zebra are migrating through the scene and passing the flocks of goats and cows - it is just wonderful. Our only slight problem is that whenever we stop to check out some bird or other children come running over hoping for handouts. It feels horrible ignoring them but we are told not to give them anything.

More birds keep coming. We get our best view so far of Augur Buzzard, African Grey Flycatcher and we get great views of Rufous-crowned Roller. We get three species of shrike in quick succession - Lesser Grey Shrike, Isabelline Shrike and Taita Fiscal. There are capped Wheatears everywhere and flocks of larks all over the place. They are mainly Fischer's Sparrow-Larks but also a few Red-capped Larks and a scatter of Rufous-naped Lark which don't have rufous napes and look huge! We do a brief loo stop at the junction to Olduvai Gorge and spot Rock Martin here, Grey-headed Sparrow and our first Thomson's Gazelles – oh and a sculpture of two enormous early hominid skulls! We take this turn and spot Kori Bustard and Thomson's and Grant's Gazelles together, a nice comparison, on our way to visit this famous archaeological site where the Leakeys discovered remains of early hominids and their stone tools.

We continue down to the gorge where we are met by a guide who is going to talk us through what was discovered here and the history of the place. He is very good and makes a details explanation of why the rocks here are such a good place to look for such remains, with so many layers going far back into the past – but it was the chance discovery of other fossils that started the search here. From the 1930s to the late 1950s Louis and Mary Leakey, along with others, visited this site finding making excavations that uncovered four different early hominid species, as well as masses of stone tools and other artefacts plus several places where hominid footprints were preserved. It is fascinating and after hearing what our guide has to say we also have time to explore the museum – not failing to also notice nesting Lesser Masked Weavers, Variable Sunbird, Speckle-fronted Weaver, Rock Martin, Little Swifts and Speckled Pigeon.

We get back on our way with a long way to go, so Roy has to be blinkered so we don't keep stopping! We race along at speed, only stopping now and then for anything particularly good. Although we see a few things as we race along we don't add anything new and we arrive at the Park gate and pause for a break - and even an ice cream! This proves a very nice spot with quite a few trees and we find Banded Parisoma, Black-lored Babbler and Blue-crowned Cordon-bleu as well as singing Willow Warbler - at last a song we recognise!

Now in the Serengeti National Park it feels exciting but with a long way still to go we belt along at speed, only pausing for the more notable things - and this includes a flock of at least 45 Ostriches! There are plenty of gazelles and we pass Yellow-throated Longclaw, Lesser Kestrel, White Storks, Lapped-faced Vulture, European and Lilac-breasted Rollers, Tawny Eagles and much more.

Now that we are well into the Serengeti we start to see large herds of Wildebeests, which seem to be migrating in very, very long lines. Some lines stretch off either side of the road into the distance and others are broader groups in their hundreds or perhaps thousands. There are Zebras too - also in large numbers and sometimes with the Wildebeests. Sometimes the Wildebeest seem determined to cross the road as we approach - just like British sheep often do! They dash across in front of the vehicles racing to get over before we arrive and



sometimes running alongside us for a while as they try to get ahead and cross in front of us. Why they don't just wait a moment and cross behind us I have no idea... no brains perhaps. There are thousands and it is an amazing sight and particularly beautiful to see them wandering off towards the setting sun - the dust stirred up by their restless hooves creating a haze with the animals themselves almost silhouetted and backlit by the setting sun. It is incredibly atmospheric.

Zul's vehicle spot Black-bellied Bustard, and both Greater Kestrel and Red-naped Falcon while Roy's get a brief Dark-chanting Goshawk. The acacias are lovely too, adding enormously to the scene and we find Spotted Hyena and two or three Topis before we finally arrive at our camp. Tonight, we are in tents again and it feels like we are in the middle of nowhere!! The tents are great with flush loos, showers and proper four poster beds and electricity all the time - even wi-fi - how do they do that!? After our meal and run through the checklist we head to bed to the sound of Hyenas!

**Day 8:** We wake to the sound of Lions! Some people have been hearing them during the night as well as the Hyenas - some of us didn't hear a thing! As we gather for an early breakfast we spot a few birds outside the dining tent including Rüppell's Long-tailed Starling, Hildebrandt's and Superb Starlings, Eastern Grey Woodpecker, Fork-tailed Drongo and Grey-capped Social-Weavers which even come into the dining room with us! As we eat breakfast we notice a long line of Wildebeests running past in the distance.

We get on our way, pausing after a very short distance to look at a pair of Coke's Hartebeests. Zul has said today we are hoping to find cats, so we are all looking keenly... which means we spot lots of birds! There are birds everywhere but many we are familiar with, however we haven't gone far when we find a pair of White-bellied Bustards - superb looking birds and pretty tame allowing us very close views. A little further on we get good views of two Topi, which are a similar shape to the hartebeests but much darker with dark grey blotches. We spot Usambiro Barbet and a Bateleur before we move on.

Birds keep coming - Rufous-naped Lark, Silverbird, Lesser Grey Shrike and fantastic views of Grey Kestrel... what a stunner. Nigel spots a Pygmy Falcon, a gorgeous little bird and really very small for a falcon at only 8". Our next stop however is to look at a group of Hippos with perhaps a dozen or so looking as amusing as they generally do and very close and smelly. We watch them flicking water over their backs with their tails which looks funny and apparently suggests the water is too shallow to submerged themselves. The weather is glorious - perfect with blue skies, a few clouds and a nice breeze, so we aren't too hot. The scenery is beautiful savannah with scattered acacia trees - and palms showing us where there is water. We keep checking the trees for Leopards tails hanging down from the big branches but with no luck.

Moving on we spot a few Fischer's Lovebirds, Val spots a Bare-faced Go-away-bird and we get good views of Grey-breasted Spurfowl. We find a nice flock

of Guineafowl, a pair of Kirk's Dik-diks, Grey-backed Fiscal, Little Bee-eaters and then a big male Elephant comes wandering across from the distant trees. It is amazing how rapidly they seem to cover the ground without any effort and soon it is crossing the road right behind the vehicles.

We spend a bit of time just enjoying watching a nice group of Elephants with babies of all sizes. They are delightful to watch and the youngest tiny one is very amusing the way it runs around, ears flapping wildly and trunk waving! We spot Lappet-faced Vultures, Tawny Eagles, an African Hoopoe flies through and we get nice views of Brown Parrot by a stream. Crossing a bridge, we find a nice collection of waders including Little Stint, Three-banded Plover, Wood Sandpiper and Ruff as well as two Egyptian Geese and a pair of Blacksmith Plover. We drive a short loop not finding much, then as we pass back over the bridge again we notice two Black-winged stilt and there are two hippos we hadn't really paid any attention to first time we crossed. This time however, just as we are passing, they decide to do a complete barrel roll - feet in the air - which is much more entertaining and makes everyone laugh it looks so bizarre! At another nearby pool we find a superb Blue-headed Wagtail.

We drive on and suddenly, there in front of us on the track, are three Lionesses!! Wow - what a surprise! We follow them along the track for some way, then they head off the track a little and we get to overtake them and watch them coming towards us - a fabulous sight. They are superb and we watch them for a while, then suddenly the lead vehicle speeds off and we are quickly following behind. We race along the tracks bouncing along but we are given no clues as to why and we exchange glances wondering if, whatever it is maybe it might have spots! And sure enough we arrive to find a Leopard up a tree! We get into a suitable position to see it and within a minute or so it suddenly stands up and walks down the branch, drops from the tree and vanishes! Wow - thank goodness we got here so quickly!

We wait around for a little while hoping it might reappear, then start heading back, thrilled with our sighting and as we pass the spot we saw the Lions we are thrilled to find them still here - but in the meantime one has caught a baby Warthog. One has possession, another is pulling at a leg and the third seems to be left out. With a leg ripped off, one stays and eats the other runs off carrying the rest and hides, while the third seems to just wander after it. We watch it search and eventually find the Lion with the food and get short shrift with a bit of a fight briefly, before wandering off leaving the Lion in possession to eat alone. It is all pretty spectacular

We head back for lunch pausing to look at some Hooded Vultures and Tawny Eagles enroute and pause to enjoy a very large group of Zebra and Wildebeest right by the road, arriving in time for lunch and a have a break in the heat of the day - it is pretty hot!!

We head out again at around 3.30pm, finding a Spotted Palm Thrush on the way to the vehicles. We make a stop to look at some very close Topi - rather strange looking animals with their dark colour and odd horns, then we arrive at the same large group of Zebra and Wildebeest either side of the road. They are wonderful to see so close and they seem pretty unbothered by our presence.

One vehicle heads down to watch some Zebra that are heading down to a stream and we wonder if we will see them cross. Then we notice two, maybe three, big Crocodiles and it seems the Zebra see them too as they become very noisy and skittish. At times they all pile up close to the water's edge then the Crocodile moves and they all race away back up the track. It is fabulous to watch and the sounds of panic they make add to the atmosphere and tension. They head further downstream and look like they might try another spot then some start to drink and it is as if they have now lost interest in crossing the stream - or maybe they just wanted to drink all along?

Our next stop is at the Serengeti Visitor Centre, where we follow a short trail that explains about the Wildebeest and Zebra migration, but we are quickly distracted by Rock Hyraxes on the rocks here. We see at least three on the rocks and occasional birds though nothing different. We find a spectacular purple and blue Mwanza Flat-headed Rock Agama who is soon much photographed. We come out at the picnic area where we enjoy a cold drink and suddenly realise there are more Rock Hyrax - one in a bush and three on the roof. There is also a Laughing Dove, plenty of White-rumped Swifts and a Rock Martin. Another birdwatching group is here - led by Nick Borrow and there is some amusement when we realise they have come over as they had heard Zul playing Klass's Cuckoo and thought it was the real thing. But since Zul was trying to coax in the real thing - we try playing it some more and suddenly it flies in right in front of us and we get stunning views of this beautiful iridescent green and white bird. Before we leave we also find Brown Parrots, Yellow-fronted Canary and a rather elegant mongoose appears - a Slender Mongoose of the dark morph - very slim with a very long tail and almost completely black.

We start working our way slowly back and pause to look at a spot where there are lots of birds moving around. Most are birds we have seen plenty of times but one is an Abyssinian Scimitarbill. There are Yellow-rumped Canaries, Beautiful Sunbird, three Black Crakes and a Blacksmith Plover. Edson brilliantly spots a Long-crested Eagle on a distant tree and as we drive back we see Grey Kestrel in the same tree as it was earlier and there are Little Bee-eaters flying up from the road. The scenery gets even better as the sun sinks lower and we pass more Zebra, Topi and Wildebeest before we finally arrive home

**Day 9:** We have a long drive today so we have our usual 6.30am breakfast and get on our way... though before we even have breakfast we have added a new species - Buff-bellied Warbler. As we come to leave we notice at least six Giraffes out across the grassland from the dining tent and also a tiny Cisticola in the tops

of the tall grasses. At one point it is chased by a Rattling Cisticola and it looks half the size!! Checking the book we identify it as Pectoral-patch Cisticola.

We see plenty of wildlife as we cruise along the tracks - Impala, Giraffes, Topi and herds of Zebra and lots of birds. We are trying not to stop for too many of the birds as we have so far to go but we can't resist a few of them and here and there we also try for some of the local specialities. We get good views of a Yellow-throated Longclaw and a flock of Grey-backed Shrikes, Red-backed Shrike and Lesser Grey Shrike and stop to look at a huge Leopard Tortoise wandering down the track. We see our first White-headed Vulture, a few Bateleur, and our first Flappet Larks.

At one spot we try for a rare apalis species but with no luck, however we try playing the call of a small owl and the result is amazing with quite a lot of birds appearing almost instantly, including Black-headed Oriole, Red-faced Crombec, Red-breasted Tit, Yellow-breasted Apalis and Brown Parrot and we spot another Flappet Lark before we leave. Passing a small stream we are pleased to find Wattled Lapwings and a flock of White-faced Whistling-Ducks, as well as Grey-headed Kingfisher

We make a lovely stop to just enjoy watching Elephants for a while. There is quite a large family of them and they are enjoying shredding a tree... ripping off bark and entire branches and apparently eating not just the leaves but the entire woody branches too!! It is quite incredible to watch and we spend a while here just taking them in - and even hear a proper elephant trumpet! While here we also try playing the call of Eastern Grey Plantain-eater and amazingly, despite being quite distant, they fly in and land in one of the bigger trees. We pass several groups of Giraffes and really enjoy them, stopping to watch a very large male and a group of at least fifteen further on. We also spot our first Defassa Waterbucks, a subspecies without a white ring round their bottom but white patches either side instead.

We pass groups of Buffalos and Impala and find a large group of Bare-faced Go-away-birds. The scenery is lovely with scattered acacia trees. At one small bridge over a stream we find Red-billed Firefinch and Crimson-rumped Waxbill. We pass through an area with a lot more animals again and enjoy large herds of Zebra, Impala, Wildebeests, Topi, Warthogs and more Giraffes including a group of fifteen many of which are rather young animals. There are one or two Tsetse flies too... well maybe a few more than one or two!! We are pleased to see a couple more Defassa Waterbucks - mothers with very young calves.

We are on our way to the airstrip where we intend to have lunch and cross a river pausing to look at the large Crocodiles here which look impressive. A couple are lying with their mouths open in a small 'waterfall' - mouths open waiting for fish! At another little patch of water we find Malachite Kingfisher - a gorgeous little bird. We enjoy lunch at the airstrip on benches in the shade - it is very hot! There are White-rumped Swifts and Lesser Striped Swallows where but

little else out and about in the mid-day heat. Then we get back on our way and crossing the river again the crocs are even more numbered now and there are lots of Hippos too and a Yellow-billed Stork.

As we continue it becomes a little more wooded and we spot African Grey Hornbill, Common Cuckoo and Zul's vehicle spot Black-and-white and Diederik Cuckoos, Alison spots a Brown Snake Eagle then we are thrilled when Geitan points out a Pin-tailed Whydah! It flies across the road and lands in full view - fabulous! Arriving at the Park gate we have a coffee but it is quiet for birds, then we are suddenly back on the tarmac road and it suddenly feels weirdly civilised as we pass through quite a large town where it is clearly market day! We pass through the colourful streets almost mesmerised by all the goings on but still notice a few birds... though nothing different there are some we haven't seen for a couple of days.

We receive a very warm welcome at our next lodge on the shores of Lake Victoria but find it hard to concentrate on what the nice man is telling us due to all the birds. We head to our rooms and have a short break before meeting up for a wander in the grounds... and wow - what a list of birds we soon create here. There seem to be weavers everywhere with Slender-billed and Northern Brown-faced Weavers both new. We find Red-chested Sunbird, a local speciality, and Sedge Warbler. The local guy from the lodge tells us he can show us Square-tailed Nightjar and leads us to an area of dead leaves beneath the trees. After a bit of a search he finds one and tries to point it out, but it flies and instead we enjoy great flight views. We identify African Thrush, Grey-capped Warbler, White-browed Robin-chat, Willow Warbler, Black-headed Gonolek and Swamp Flycatcher.

We decide to see what is on the lake and find loads of birds flying to roost. Cattle Egrets are passing in numbers with a few Little Egrets and there are dozens of Pied Kingfishers - they really are in remarkable numbers! There are Long-tailed Cormorants, Open-billed Storks, a Fish Eagle flies over, Glossy Ibises, a flock of White-faced Whistling Ducks and the entire scene is just beautiful with the sun setting behind the reeds. It has been another fabulous day and though some of us are a little disappointed in the lack of big cats - the birds and other wildlife have hopefully made up for it as they have been remarkable.

**Day 10:** We decide to have a birding session before breakfast and it is very civilised to enjoy a coffee and a bun before we head out - so at 6.30am we are watching birds over the lake as we sip our coffee feeling very happy and relaxed. Pied Kingfishers, Cattle and Little Egrets are leaving their roosts, along with the odd Open-billed Stork and Glossy Ibis. There are 16 Slender-billed Weavers exploring the thatched roof above us and we can't help wondering what they are finding to eat there!

We make a start and a Fish Eagle flies in carrying nest material and we realise we have been pretty much sat under their nest! There are lots of birds at a bottle

brush plant, including Red-chested Sunbird and lots of weavers including Spectacled which is new. We find Grey-capped Warbler again and African Thrush, Beautiful Sunbird, Spotted Palm-Thrush, African Mourning Doves calling everywhere and we spot Swamp Flycatchers under several trees and just out into the grassland we find a pair of Spotted Thick-knees in the shade of the bushes.

The weather is perfect, sunny and a light breeze and a perfect temperature as we walk round through the trees and bushes. At the end of the buildings we scan the reeds and find lots of Pied Kingfishers - it really is remarkable just how many there are here. We are excited to spot Fan-tailed Widowbirds in the tops of the reeds, then after they fly they are replaced by a flock of Southern Red Bishops. There is a Blue-crowned Cordon-bleu, Common Sandpiper on the shore and out over the water both Whiskered and White-winged Black Terns. We see Grosbeak Weaver here then amazingly it is time for breakfast - time flies and all that

It is idyllic sitting enjoying breakfast with a view out over Lake Victoria which feels like being at the sea! There is a pleasant breeze and we are feeling nicely relaxed - and a few Slender-billed Weavers even come into the breakfast room to check out what we are having.

Talking to the local guide and looking at the checklist we realise that Angola Swallow is a possibility, so we check the swallows skimming all around us... amazed to find they are all Angola Swallows!! As they flit round the rooves you can see the much larger tail spots, shorter tail streamers and brilliant blue back. It is interesting that once out into the grassland area it is all Barn Swallows. As we set off we find a stunning African Paradise Flycatcher but frustratingly it vanishes quickly. We get lovely views of both Woodland and Grey-headed Kingfisher then George, the local guide, brilliantly spots a Square-tailed Nightjar. We set up the scope and enjoy full frame views of this amazingly well camouflaged bird.

Walking further round we spot a Long-crested Eagle on top of one of the bushes and enjoy astonishing full frame views through the scope... and wow what a crest! Roy is thrilled to find a beautiful African Pygmy Kingfisher, a stunning bird with a lovely violet patch behind the eye and bright red bill. The Fish Eagle keeps flying over carrying sticks and we spot a Water Thick-knee sat on a patch of sand. It gets up and walks a little way away and we realise it was sat on a nest with two beautiful eggs so we leave it be.

We walk out across the grassland and scattered trees with George searching hard for a courser. We spot Blue-naped and plenty of Speckled Mousebirds. We spot a Grey-breasted Spurfowl, then find Golden-backed Weaver and Bronze Manakin - the same pairing of species we had the day we stopped for coffee on the main road! We are amazed when two Yellow-winged Bats fly out from the bushes - wow - what an amazing colour they are! One hangs up in a tree and we get the scope on it.

George has vanished from sight and we are finding a few odds and ends though nothing new when suddenly we hear him shout... he is beckoning and we are delighted that his persistence has paid off - he has found two Heuglin's Coursers!! As we walk towards where they are we flush a third bird - it is gorgeous! This is our third courser species of the holiday and we have enjoyed outstanding views of all of them - remarkable!! Roy suddenly realises that in the tree above one of them is a Greater Honeyguide.

Thrilled with our success we start walking back, pausing to enjoy Little Bee-eaters and then a superb Black-headed Gonolek. There are Spotted Flycatchers, Swamp Flycatchers and Silverbirds as we reach the lodge and we are delighted to find another African Paradise Flycatcher which performs very well this time. Back at the lake we spot a large raptor working its way through the trees and realise it is an immature African Harrier Hawk.

After lunch we enjoy a nice relaxed couple of hours or more free time to just chill out before we gather again for a walk at around 4pm. It is still remarkably hot and seems a bit quiet at first, though the terns are very active out over the lake and perching in a dead tree near the shore. They are nearly all White-winged Black Terns in both breeding and non-breeding plumage, with a small number of Whiskered Terns amongst them. Both White-breasted and Long-tailed Cormorants are out on a small island. At one point the terns all fly past and with them are around half a dozen Grey-headed Gulls and single Lesser Black-backed Gull which here will be the fuscus race sometimes called Baltic Gull. There is a large breeding colony of Black-headed Weavers here

We start walking into the bush, working our way round the trees and soon spot another Paradise Flycatcher - though it proves quite tricky to get any view of it. There are a couple of Beautiful Sunbirds and African Grey, as well as Spotted Flycatcher. We find Bronze Manakin, Blue-crowned Cordon-bleu, Usambiro Barbet, Golden-backed Weavers and Blue-naped Mousebirds. Two Scarlet Chested Sunbirds show very well on top of the bushes and a small flock of Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters fly over.

George starts peering into the bottom of a large bush and tells us that Slender-tailed Nightjar sometimes roosts in here. He spends a long time looking and even works his way in a little way before finally he beckons and looks pretty pleased with himself! There - again very well camouflaged indeed - is a Nightjar totally confident in its camouflage and just sitting while we take turns to have a good look and even get photos. We check these later and realise that in fact it is the same species as we saw earlier - Square-tailed Nightjar.

As we walk on we disturb four Spotted Thick-knees and we are delighted when three Pink-backed Pelicans fly round in a big circuit a couple of times providing great flight views. We find a couple of Purple Grenadiers and a Common Waxbill while trying to relocate a possible Black-winged Bishop which we never do find again. As we walk back we get great views of Brown-crowned Tchagra, Chin-spot

Batis, Red-faced Crombeck, more Blue-naped Mousebirds and a Laughing Dove... as well as plenty of other common birds and a little troop of Dwarf Mongooses.

**Day 11:** Today is our big travelling day as we have a long way to drive back to the Ngorongoro Crater area - so after an early breakfast we get on our way as soon as we are ready. It is not long before we are back in the Serengeti National Park entrance and, as always, we have to stop for the paperwork to be completed, so while they are doing that we have a look round - but it seems very quiet. Initially all we can find is a Willow Warbler but then Roy wanders around a bit further and is very pleased to discover three Green Wood-Hoopoes clambering around the trees - superb birds!

We are soon on our way driving through the Western Corridor under instructions not to stop for anything unless we are sure it is something new or something we are very keen to see. We notice that we are driving much faster than usual too- we really do have a long way to travel! We spot lots of mammals as we drive - Wildebeests, Zebras, Topi, Impala, a large herd of Elephants and a single big bull Elephant, Warthogs and in the more open areas small groups of Thomson's and Grant's Gazelles.

We spot a Dark-chanting Goshawk perched close to the road and definitely have to stop for that - a real quality bird if ever there was one! Roy noticed something black and rufous as they continue and after a brief hesitation asks to stop or reverse back for it - a Black Coucal and a great bird indeed. The other vehicle also comes back but it vanishes - but as we get going again we find a second.

We pass a large group of African Buffalo, some very smart Topi and a few Giraffes; we glimpse a Kirk's Dik-dik and get good if brief views of a male Eastern Paradise Whydah with the most amazing tail. We are surprised to see three Leopard Tortoises in fairly quick succession.

We make a quick stop to play the song of Karamoja Apalis - and to our surprise after the failed attempts when going the other way - they call back and come flying in! This is a very range restricted bird, so a good one to see and we enjoy some nice views before we move on. We pass a Brown Snake Eagle as we continue and two Von de Decken's Hornbills.

Passing through an area of wide-open grassland we notice what we guess are Kestrels hovering, then as one flies by we are puzzled to see a face pattern more like a Hobby! They don't hover though, so what on earth can they be? There are several birds which on closer inspection we realise are indeed Common Kestrels but some are all grey on top and we realise with surprise they are Amur Falcons! This is fantastic - none of us were expecting that and a stunning male flies towards us and right over our heads. Zul says this is a very rare bird in this area.

We continue on and pass a Defassa Waterbuck, three Ostrich's and more Giraffes then we make another stop, this time to try for Grey-crested Helmet-



Shrike. We are delighted when, after playing the call a little, a group of five of them come flying in! We get to enjoy some fabulous views of this strange looking bird moving round together as a tight flock before continuing again.

We stop for lunch and in the car park are several Bush Hyrax - including one munching on a teabag! At the picnic site we spot lots of birds and some are clearly used to being fed and come to our feet! Grey-capped Social-Weaver are the most numerous but there are also Rufous Sparrow and what we think may be Swahili Sparrow - very similar to Grey-headed but darker underneath and with a greyer back. A Hildebrandt's Starling comes in too and looks absolutely stunning in the sunshine. We see Klass's Cuckoo, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Purple Grenadier, Blue-crowned Cordon-bleu, White-rumped Swift, Usambiro Barbet and we are pleased to add Red-fronted Barbet. Above us two Tawny Eagles circle overhead and a small group of Vervet Monkeys come over to see what we might have dropped

We make a slight detour to go and see a pair of Lions that have been reported and arrive to find them up a tree! The female is flopped over a large branch and the big male stood on the branch beside her before he too flops down in what doesn't look to be a very comfortable position at all. He is very impressive but once they have settled down we decide to leave them be and continue on our journey. We also make a very short stop at a Hippo pool with lots of Hippos in the water and round the edge we find a few waders, including Little Stint, Ruff, Wood Sandpiper and Three-banded Plover and at least four Collared Pratincoles.

We arrive at the gate and go to do more paperwork, as we want to try for Cheetah in an area that can be very good for them. What a palaver!!! They seem to have some odd rules but we get there in the end and get on our way. There are Silverbirds here, Rufous-tailed Weaver and a fabulous view of twelve Lesser Kestrels perched on a pylon.

I think for many of us the scene here is more like we expected for the Serengeti... there are animals everywhere, scattered over the entire view! Many are Thomson's Gazelles, the Cheetahs favourite food - but there are also Zebra, Grant's Gazelles, Topi, Coke's Hartebeest, Eland and Wildebeest. It is a wonderful scene and we enjoy just driving through here, stopping here and there to scan for Cheetah, but sadly with no luck. Somehow Grassland Pipit, Rufous-naped Lark and Pectoral-patch Cisticola don't cut the mustard! It is great just to be here though and while we don't see any Cheetahs we are not too upset.

We start heading back to the main track and pass Lappet-faced Vulture close to the track, our first Black-backed Jackal then two Golden Jackals - now known as either Golden Wolf or African Wolf, as it is now realised it is not even the Golden Jackal of Eastern Europe's closest relative!

We continue to pass lots of mammals as we drive, with lots more Wildebeest in particular, plus plenty more Giraffes and some distant Elephants. We start

to gain height as we head up towards the rim of the crater and pass Capped Wheatears, Northern Anteater Chat, Augur Buzzard and get a few brief glimpses of the crater again. Time is really flying by, so we don't dawdle and have to phone ahead so they don't shut the gate on us! After a very long drive - apparently 364km with the vast majority on dirt roads - it is late when we finally arrive at our lovely hotel - but we have seen some great wildlife on the way. Many thanks to Geitan and Edson for their excellent driving!

**Day 12:** After driving up to the entrance gate to the Ngorongoro Crater we wait while the paperwork gets done and see what we can find. There is a very close White-naped Raven in the trees and a brief Black-backed Puffback, as well as a probable Mountain Greenbul but little else of note - except for a large troop of Olive Baboons... which led to an astonishing moment when suddenly there is a Baboon inside the vehicle next to ours! There are three children inside and there is lots of screaming and frenetic panic with kids climbing into the front seats from the back and the dad pulling the doors open and grabbing the kids. His face is a picture! Meanwhile, the Baboon exits via the same back window it used to get in, carrying their lunch bag and heads for the trees where it sits exploring the contents and eating whatever it can open! I think the pot of yogurt lasts about two seconds! It must have been pretty scary for the kids but what an amazing cheek for a wild animal to risk going into such a confined space to steal food even with people inside the vehicle!

We get on our way and drive to the point where the road splits off to go down into the crater and here we have to show more papers... which is great as it gives us the chance to spot both White-eyed Slaty-flycatcher and Eastern Double-collared Sunbird. As we drive down the road we flush a Yellow Bishop from the road side and we keep getting wonderful glimpses of the view as we gradually get lower and lower into the crater. We make a stop at some toilets where we see Yellow-billed Kite and White-backed Vulture.

We are feeling very excited about being in the crater at last - it is such a famous place! It is interesting to see how at one end of the crater there is a bank of cloud over the rim and the slopes are covered in lush tree cover, this being the end from where the wind comes and therefore the air rises and forms clouds. But the other side is in the 'rain shadow' and gets little rain, resulting in this side being virtually treeless and more barren.

As we start our drive round the bottom of the crater we pass two Saddle-billed Storks, Lesser Grey Shrike and spot a Marshal Eagle perched in one of the tree tops - when it takes flight it looks massive! We follow the road round towards the lake and pass our first Black-backed Jackal and pause to enjoy the sight of Kori Bustards with five birds here. As we approach the lake we spot a Hippo wandering along the shore and it is nice to see one out of the water. There is a Pink-backed Pelican in the water here and lots of Flamingos of both species. A Banded Martin is perched amongst the vegetation, our first of the trips! We start seeing lots of animals too with Zebra in small groups, larger herds of

Wildebeest, plenty of Thomson's Gazelles and some quite big groups of Grant's Gazelle, Warthogs and some large groups of African Buffalo.

We make a stop at a small pool where there is an African Spoonbill asleep - four more fly in and the resident one instantly attacks one of them and scares it off! There are Sacred Ibis here, plenty of Blacksmith Plovers, Egyptian Geese and a Ruff. There are plenty of Buffalo in the background and suddenly we notice a Black-backed Jackal that seems to have appeared out of nowhere - but even more of a shock is the back-end of a spotty cat vanishing into the sedges! It is a Serval but once hidden in the sedges it never reappears despite us waiting quite a while - so frustrating.

We finally reach the shore of the big lake and pause to scan the water's edge. We are in luck as the water levels are high and so the lake is close to the road... and there are lots of birds! On the water are lots of Little Grebes, there are a few Cape Teal and Egyptian Geese and lots of waders. The majority are Little Stints but there are also plovers and we quickly find out first Chestnut-banded Plovers - a species we are very keen to see and they seem to be here in numbers which according to the driver guides is unusual.

Both species of flamingos are here in numbers and we find Red-knobbed Coot, Black-winged Stilt, a single Curlew Sandpiper, Red-billed Teal, a small number of Marsh Sandpiper, quite a few Chestnut-banded Plovers, Ringed Plover, Ruff, Wood Sandpiper, some lovely Kittlitz's Plovers and perhaps the biggest surprise - a Lesser Sandplover. We are also pleased to pick out a couple of Grey-rumped Swallows amongst the Barn Swallows. There is a Hippo right out of the water here and a Hyena that seems to have fallen asleep in the shallows. We get some fabulous views of both Golden Wolf and more Black-backed Jackals. On another smaller pool we find another Lesser Sandplover, lots of Ruff, an Avocet and then a Grey Crowned Crane right beside the road - what an amazing bird.

We pass a large marshy area with tall vegetation where there are loads of Cattle Egrets a few Intermediate and Great Egrets and lots of what look like American Red-winged Blackbirds but are in fact Fan-tailed Widowbirds flying around. There are Whiskered Terns, Glossy Ibises and a single Yellow billed Stork.

We pause to watch another Golden Wolf which is trying to catch grass rats. It stares at the ground up ahead, ears forwards and then suddenly leaps into the air and pounces on the spot... though it doesn't seem very successful. We get fantastic close up views of Rufous-naped and Red-capped Larks and a great view of Pectoral-patch Cisticola

Geitan has a nice term that he introduces us to.... a 'cocktail herd' of animals - with a mix of Zebra, Wildebeest, Thomson's Gazelles and Grants Gazelles and several Eland all mixed up together.

Roy suddenly shouts for the vehicle to stop as he has spotted something in the grass. All he knows is it is not a gazelle - and he is thrilled when he realises it is a Serval!! We watch as it walks towards us - ears pricked high as it walks and head and shoulders above the grass but then vanishes in the grass and refuses to show itself again.

We spend a while waiting to see if it reappears with no sign but we find a smart Winding Cisticola and a bit further on spot a group of Hyenas in a hollow and in the distance a group of Lions. It is lunchtime but we don't want to head for lunch before we see these Lions close up and we drive round quickly. There are nine quite close to the road, including a superb big male. He looks magnificent as he looks around - panting in the heat. Two others are nearby guarding what appears to be something big they have killed – perhaps a Buffalo. A Lioness appears out of the tall reeds in the background and wanders over to the pride and it is lovely to watch the social interaction as she walks round almost the entire group and they rub heads. It is a great scene and looking round there are also very close Grey Crowned Cranes and several big Elephants with Cattle Egrets on their backs, a few Spur-winged Geese and a couple of Hottentot Teal on the pool in the background... what a wonderful place!

We drive round to a picnic area where we are allowed out of the vehicles to enjoy our lunch, though Zul has suggested we stay in the cars as apparently the Yellow-billed Kites act like seagulls here! We munch our lunch enjoying close up views of Speke's Weavers, Rufous-tailed Weavers, Yellow-billed Kite and a few Hippos in the lake. An enormous Marabou Stork is trying to raid someone's picnic - quite an imposing sight!!

Back at the Lions we spend a little while watching them but they have now fallen asleep so shortly we move on, passing several Coke's Hartebeests and Grey Crowned Cranes as we go. We drive slowly, just enjoying the scenes around us until we come to a large area of marshes and shallow pools where a White Pelican is circling overhead. There are plenty of birds here and we scan the wetlands picking out plenty of birds we have seen before such as Little Stint, Marsh Sandpiper, Ruff, Sacred Ibis and Lesser Flamingo – but also a couple of new ones – Long-toed Lapwing and African Yellow-billed Duck. There are several Hippos too and they seem to make good perches for the ibises and Cattle Egrets.

We drive slowly round towards the road back up the side of the crater – though we don't want to leave! We find a Hildebrandt's Francolin beside the road - then as we start heading up the road out of the crater we are astonished to see a raptor on the side of the road eating something. It looks odd with a supercilium and pale eyes but we quickly realise it is a Honey Buzzard - and an amazing view of one - and not only that but it is eating a piece of a wasp nest.

At the top of the rim we are back into some lush forest and with a few minutes to spare we try for a one last bird. We find a White-eyed Slaty-Flycatcher as we park up, then try playing Schalow's Turaco - which would be fabulous to see. We

soon have one calling back from a large very leafy tree but trying to find it in there is a difficult job. After much searching it suddenly takes flight, so we get a good flight view but nothing more - still, better than nothing. We drive down to the gate and our hotel feeling elated after an amazing day.

**Day 13:** We have a chance for a slightly later start leaving the hotel at 8am. It all feels quite relaxed and we head down the road with a drive of about two hours or a bit more to get to the spot where will have a chance for a bit of shopping and lunch at the Cultural Heritage Centre. And wow, what a place, with an amazing selection of things to buy from fridge magnets right through to almost full-sized metal giraffes! It is worth a visit just to see the carvings and sculptures and everything and some of the artwork in the gallery here is fabulous. Anthony joins us for lunch, which is very good indeed and we are feeling in relaxed mode - which feels nice after quite a full on trip so far.

It is quite a long drive still to get to the Maasai Steppes and after lunch we get going, with an interesting drive as we pass through villages see the general day to activities taking place. We pass through a large market with so many fruits and vegetables and other stalls selling all kinds of things! There are Maasai cattle and goats being herded, women in beautiful coloured clothing and hundreds of motorbikes, tuk-tuks and decorated lorries.

We finally arrive at the Maasia Steppes, slightly puzzled as it is certainly not steppe but more like scrubby bushes and trees. They are apparently a different kind of tree and bush to other places we have been - a finger of very arid habitat coming down into this area and nowhere else around. As a result it is a tiny area in which a different selection of birds more common further north can be found.

We get out of the vans and Anthony starts playing a bit of Pearl-spotted Owlet call... and wow - birds appear from all around and we are suddenly in a fluster as we all try to see the various birds he is calling! There are Hunter's Sunbirds, which look very similar to Scarlet -chested Sunbird but with a black throat, Tsavo Sunbird - which is a split from Purple-banded Sunbird, Grey Wren-Warbler, Red-headed Weaver, Pale White-eye and more. We can hear a calling Pygmy Batis and after playing the call a little it flies in above our heads.

We walk along the road a little and find a pair of Eastern Violet-backed Sunbirds then get great views of a pair of Black-throated Barbets and shortly call in a Red-fronted Tinkerbird. A Pringle's Puffback is calling - a name which makes us laugh given we have seen Pringles advertised just about everywhere we've been! We try playing the call and get a few glimpses but further down the road we finally get a better view and can hear a calling Grey-headed Bushshrike but only get glimpses in flight, which is not good enough to really say we have seen it. We do however get fabulous views of Red-fronted Prinia - its tail cocked and waggling around as it calls! As we walk back towards the vehicles we get good views of a Somali Golden-breasted Bunting - what a beautiful bird that is! There

is much more here no doubt but we have run out of time and get back on our way, spotting a Pink-breasted Lark and a Red-backed Shrike as we leave.

From here it is over an hour to get to the lodge but it flies by and once we have unloaded the bags and everything we gather to say a huge thank you to the two drivers Geitan and Edson. They really have been truly excellent, driving amazingly on some of the bad roads and always cheerful with a good sense of humour and alert to spotting birds and mammals - we couldn't have wished for better.

We gather about 45 minutes later for our evening meal and amazingly it rains again! This is the first time we have seen rain since our first afternoon here... maybe it always rains here!?

**Day 14:** Today there are options! Some of us choose to get up very early for breakfast and drive out to the 'Lark Plains' the other side of Arusha. The rest have a leisurely breakfast and just relax around the grounds of the lodge. I think we all understand that the appeal of somewhere known as the 'lark plains' might not be for everyone!

Team Lark have a fairly long drive, spotting the occasional Northern Fiscal and other birds on the wires, lots of Pied Crows and Superb Starlings etc before finally arriving at the plains. This is an area of short vegetation, with a few scattered bushes and we drive slowly down the track before heading out off road. Our first bird is a beautiful one - a Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse right in front of the vehicle on the track. We are delighted and then add several Kori Bustards also very close and looking very stately.

Now we are on the search for larks and pipits and we soon start finding them, starting with Grassland (African) Pipit. We get superb views of two Short-tailed Larks, a very distinctive lark with dark vertical marking on the face and a long bill. There are Capped Wheatears everywhere and we are surprised to see Zebra and Wildebeest as well as both Thomson's and Grant's Gazelles. Our next lark is Athi Short-toed Lark, a recent split from Somali Short-toed Lark. We spot a distant Lanner Falcon and then a Montagu's Harrier appears and flies past looking so elegant. Time is racing away but we still have one big target species - Beesley's Lark, a recent split from Spike-heeled Lark and one of the rarest birds in the world, with less than a hundred of them - and all of them here! We continue to drive round searching and just as we are beginning to give up hope suddenly there it is, right in front of us. It is a little more elusive than the others hiding behind bushes and constantly on the move, but eventually we get some great views. As we head back out, we pause to check some small birds in the bushes and they turn out to be Yellow-bellied Eremomelas, another new bird - what a successful mission!

Meanwhile back at the lodge people are enjoying a nice relaxed time finding a nice selection of birds, including White-eared Barbet, Red-headed Weaver, African Jacana, African Fish Eagles, African Black Duck, Variable Sunbird and some

great views of Silvery-cheeked Hornbills and add Black-crowned Night-Heron to the list. There are also Black-and-white Colobus Monkeys down by the pond showing very well indeed and apparently the best views yet!

We enjoy lunch down at a lovely spot they have set up for us by the lake and while there watch the Fish Eagles hunting and see Long-tailed Cormorant and Brown-hooded Kingfisher. We also do our traditional 'roundup' in which everyone gets to choose a favourite species - well five in this instance - a favourite place and 'magic moment' they will never forget from the trip.

It is always interesting hearing what people choose and why and between us we choose an astonishing 28 species! For many trips there is a small number of species that really stand out but on this trip we have seen so much and enjoyed so many wonderful species, the choice is amazingly wide... from tiny birds like some of the sunbirds, though various raptors to bigger birds like flamingos and cranes - then right through various mammals to enormous Elephants!! There are too many species to list them all here, but a few species get more than one vote and these include Lesser Flamingo, Grey-crested Helmet-Shrike, Violet-tipped Courser, Elephant and Serval. Black-and-white Colobus Monkeys score three votes - but the overall winner if there is such a thing, with five votes, is Lion. How lucky we were to see them doing such interesting things like climbing trees, arguing over a kill and greeting each other - they were wonderful to watch and we felt very lucky to get such fabulous sightings.

Favourite place, for the vast majority of people was Ngorongoro Crater - from the viewpoint right through to seeing so many animals down at the bottom. It was an incredible experience being there and people commented how it was amazing to be somewhere that they had known about for so much of their lives - and that it totally lived up to expectations. This was also true of the Serengeti, which also got a mention while a couple of us chose the wonderful Baobab and Elephant rich view from the Tarangire Lodge.

Magic Moments are always very personal and this was the case this time with almost everyone choosing something different. In fact this is what was so lovely about hearing them - that every one of them was so different and so special, showing what a fabulous trip we have had. The Zebras going to cross the river then realising there were Crocodiles and panicking... the Lions fighting over the Warthog they had caught... the Hippo rolling over on its back... following a Giraffe down the road... the first Lions up the tree... the huge flocks of Lesser Flamingos all get a mention, while two people said how much they had been impressed with the huge numbers of Wildebeest migrating and crossing the road in huge lines as we headed down into the Serengeti... an astonishing sight.

It has certainly been a fantastic trip and we thank Zul for all his guiding and interesting background knowledge, before we decide to head for a final coffee before we go to the airport. As we enjoy this last coffee we see White-eared Barbets, Black-backed Puffback, Silvery-cheeked Hornbills - trying to squeeze out

every last moment - but astonishingly, even at this last second, we add another new bird!! A Brown-breasted Barbet appears in the bushes right in front of us and what a bruiser of a bird with that big bill.

We also meet Silver, who is taking us to the airport along with Geitan and we say goodbye to the staff here and get on our way, soon arriving at the airport for our flight back home.



**BIRDS**

Common Ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus</i>	Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>
Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Pink-backed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>	Helmeted Guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	Scaly Francolin	<i>Pternistis squamatus</i>
White-breasted Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>	Hildebrandt's Francolin	<i>Pternistis hildebrandti</i>
Long-tailed Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo africanus</i>	Crested Francolin	<i>Dendroperdix sephaena</i>
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Yellow-necked Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis leucoscepus</i>
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Grey-breasted Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis rufopictus</i>
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	Red-necked Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis afer</i>
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>	Black Crake	<i>Amauromis flavirostra</i>
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>
Intermediate Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	African Jacana	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Grey Crowned Crane	<i>Balearica regulorum</i>
Black-headed Heron	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	Kori Bustard	<i>Ardeotis kori</i>
Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>	White-bellied Bustard	<i>Eupodotis senegalensis</i>
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	Buff-crested Bustard	<i>Eupodotis gindiana</i>
Yellow-billed Stork	<i>Mycteria ibis</i>	Black-bellied Bustard	<i>Lissotis melanogaster</i>
African Open-billed Stork	<i>Anastomus lamelligerus</i>	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Saddle-billed Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i>	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
Marabou Stork	<i>Leptoptilos crumenifer</i>	Spotted Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>
African Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	Water Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>
Hadada Ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	Two-banded Courser	<i>Rhinoptilus africanus</i>
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	Heuglin's Courser	<i>Rhinoptilus cinctus</i>
African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>	Violet-tipped Courser	<i>Rhinoptilus chalcoperus</i>
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>
Lesser Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus minor</i>	Blacksmith Lapwing	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	Spur-winged Lapwing	<i>Vanellus spinosus</i>
Spur-winged Goose	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>	Long-toed Lapwing	<i>Vanellus crassirostris</i>
White-faced Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>	African Wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus senegallus</i>
Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhynchal</i>	Crowned Lapwing	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>
Hottentot Teal	<i>Anas hottentota</i>	Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>
Cape Teal	<i>Anas capensis</i>	Chestnut-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius pallidus</i>
Yellow-billed Duck	<i>Anas undulata</i>	Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>
African Black Duck	<i>Anas sparsa</i>	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Southern Pochard	<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>	Lesser Sandplover	<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>
Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus aegyptius</i>	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>
Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Secretary Bird	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
African Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>	Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Palm-nut Vulture	<i>Gypohierax angolensis</i>	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
Hooded Vulture	<i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
White-headed Vulture	<i>Trigonoceps occipitalis</i>	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
White-backed Vulture	<i>Gyps africanus</i>	Grey-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus</i>
Rüppell's Vulture	<i>Gyps rueppelli</i>	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>
Lappet-faced Vulture	<i>Torgos tracheliotos</i>	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
Black-chested Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>	White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
Brown Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>
Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	Black-faced Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles decoratus</i>
Pallid Harrier?	<i>Circus macrourus</i>	Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles exustus</i>
Eastern Chanting Goshawk	<i>Melierax poliopterus</i>	Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>
Dark Chanting Goshawk	<i>Melierax metabates</i>	Olive Pigeon	<i>Columba arquatrix</i>
Gabar Goshawk	<i>Micronisus gabar</i>	White-collared Pigeon	<i>Columba albitorques</i>
African Harrier-Hawk	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>	Emerald-spotted Wood Dove	<i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>
Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	Ring-necked Dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>
Augur Buzzard	<i>Buteo augur</i>	Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>
Mountain Buzzard	<i>Buteo oreophilus</i>	African Mourning Dove	<i>Streptopelia decipiens</i>
Tawny Eagle	<i>Aquila rapax</i>	Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>
Ayre's Hawk-Eagle	<i>Hieraetus ayresii</i>	Dusky Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia lugens</i>
Bateleur	<i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>	Brown Parrot	<i>Poicephalus meyeri</i>
Long-crested Eagle	<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>	African Orange-bellied Parrot	<i>Poicephalus rufiventris</i>
Martial Eagle	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>	Fischer's Lovebird	<i>Agapornis fischeri</i>
African Crowned Eagle	<i>Stephanoaetus coronatus</i>	Yellow-collared Lovebird	<i>Agapornis personatus</i>
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Hartlaub's Turaco	<i>Tauraco hartlaubi</i>
Lesser Kestrel	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	Schalow's Turaco	<i>Tauraco schalowi</i>
Greater Kestrel	<i>Falco rupicoloides</i>	White-bellied Go-away-bird	<i>Corythaixoides leucogaster</i>
Grey Kestrel	<i>Falco ardosiaceus</i>	Bare-faced Go-away-bird	<i>Corythaixoides personatus</i>
Pygmy Falcon	<i>Polihierax semitorquatus</i>	Eastern Grey Plantain-eater	<i>Crinifer zonurus</i>
Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	Black-and-White Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>
Red-necked Falcon	<i>Falco chicquera</i>	African Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus gularis</i>
		Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>

Red-chested Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>	Grey-rumped Swallow	<i>Pseudhirundo griseopyga</i>
Diederik Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	African Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>
Klaas's Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>	Mountain Wagtail	<i>Motacilla clara</i>
White-browed Coucal	<i>Centropus superciliosus</i>	Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Black Coucal	<i>Centropus grillii</i>	Yellow-throated Longclaw	<i>Macronyx croceus</i>
Verreaux's Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo lacteus</i>	Pangani Longclaw	<i>Macronyx aurantiigula</i>
Pearl-spotted Owlet	<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>	Grassland (African)Pipit	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>
African Scops Owl	<i>Otus senegalensis</i>	Dark-capped Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus tricolor</i>
Square-tailed Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus fossii</i>	Mountain Greenbul	<i>Andropadus nigriceps</i>
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	White-browed Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha heuglini</i>
White-rumped Swift	<i>Apus caffer</i>	Olive Thrush	<i>Turdus olivaceus</i>
Eurasian Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	African Thrush	<i>Turdus pelios</i>
African Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	Northern Anteater Chat	<i>Myrmecocichla aethiops</i>
Mottled Spinetail	<i>Telacanthura ussheri</i>	African Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>
Speckled Mousebird	<i>Colius striatus</i>	Capped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>
Blue-naped Mousebird	<i>Urocolius macrourus</i>	Abyssinian Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe lugubris</i>
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	Spotted Palm Thrush	<i>Cichladasa guttata</i>
Striped Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon chelicuti</i>	Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>
Grey-headed Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>	Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>	Buff-bellied Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus pulchella</i>
Giant Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle maxima</i>	Red-faced Crombec	<i>Sylvietta whytii</i>
Woodland Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>	Yellow-bellied Eremomela	<i>Eremomela icteropygialis</i>
Malachite Kingfisher	<i>Corythornis cristatus</i>	Banded Parisoma	<i>Sylvia boehmi</i>
African Pygmy Kingfisher	<i>Ispidina picta</i>	Mustached Grass Warbler	<i>Melocichla mentalis</i>
Little Bee-eater	<i>Merops pusillus</i>	Pectoral-patch Cisticola	<i>Cisticola brunnescens</i>
Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater	<i>Merops oreobates</i>	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	Croaking Cisticola	<i>Cisticola natalensis</i>
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	<i>Merops persicus</i>	Rattling Cisticola	<i>Cisticola chiniana</i>
White-fronted Bee-eater	<i>Merops bullockoides</i>	Winding Cisticola	<i>Cisticola marginatus</i>
Lilac-breasted Roller	<i>Coracias caudatus</i>	Tawny-flanked Prinia	<i>Prinia subflava</i>
European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	Red-fronted Warbler (Prinia)	<i>Spiloptila rufifrons</i>
Rufous-crowned Roller	<i>Coracias naevius</i>	Grey-capped Warbler	<i>Eminia lepida</i>
Green Wood-hoopoe	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>	Green-backed Camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>
African Hoopoe	<i>Upupa africana</i>	Grey Wren-Warbler	<i>Calamonastes simplex</i>
Abyssinian Scimitarbill	<i>Rhinopomastus minor</i>	Yellow-breasted Apalis	<i>Apalis flavida</i>
Northern Red-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>	Karamoja Apalis	<i>Apalis karamojae</i>
Von der Decken's Hornbill	<i>Tockus deckeni</i>	Black-headed Apalis	<i>Apalis melanocephala</i>
African Grey Hornbill	<i>Lophoceros nasutus</i>	White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis fischeri</i>
Crowned Hornbill	<i>Lophoceros alboterminatus</i>	African Grey Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis microrhynchus</i>
Silvery-cheeked Hornbill	<i>Bycanistes brevis</i>	Pale Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis pallidus</i>
Southern Ground Hornbill	<i>Bucorvus leadbeateri</i>	Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
White-eared Barbet	<i>Stactolaema leucotis</i>	African Dusky Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>
Red-fronted Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus pusillus</i>	Swamp Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa aquatica</i>
Red-fronted Barbet	<i>Tricholaema diademata</i>	Chin-spot Batis	<i>Batis molitor</i>
Black-throated Barbet	<i>Tricholaema melanocephala</i>	Pygmy Batis	<i>Batis perkeo</i>
Brown-breasted Barbet	<i>Lybius melanopterus</i>	African Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>
D'Arnaud's Barbet	<i>Trachyphonus damaudii</i>	Silverbird	<i>Empidonis semipartitus</i>
Usambiro Barbet	<i>Trachyphonus usambiro</i>	Arrow-marked Babbler	<i>Turdoides jardineii</i>
Red-and-yellow Barbet	<i>Trachyphonus erythrocephalus</i>	Black-lored Babbler	<i>Turdoides sharpei</i>
Greater Honeyguide	<i>Indicator indicator</i>	Northern Pied Babbler	<i>Turdoides hypoleuca</i>
Nubian Woodpecker	<i>Campethera nubica</i>	Red-throated Tit	<i>Nelianiparus fringillinus</i>
Cardinal Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>	Pale White-eye	<i>Zosterops flavilateralis</i>
Bearded Woodpecker	<i>Chloropicus namaquus</i>	Abyssinian White-eye	<i>Zosterops abussiiicus</i>
Eastern Grey Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos spodocephalus</i>	Bronze Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia kilimensis</i>
Rufous-naped Lark	<i>Mirafra africana</i>	Malachite Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia famosa</i>
Flappet Lark	<i>Mirafra rufocinnamomea</i>	Eastern Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris mediocris</i>
Athi Short-toed Lark	<i>Alaudala athensis</i>	Amethyst Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra amethystina</i>
Red-capped Lark	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>	Olive Sunbird	<i>Cyanomitra olivacea</i>
Short-tailed Lark	<i>Pseudalaemon fremantlii</i>	Marico Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris mariquensis</i>
Foxy Lark	<i>Calenulauda aolpex</i>	Tsavo Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris tsavoensis</i>
Pink-breasted Lark	<i>Mirafra poecilostema</i>	Scarlet-chested Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>
Beesley's Lark	<i>Chersomanes beesleyi</i>	Hunter's Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra hunteri</i>
Fischer's Sparrow-Lark	<i>Eremopterix leucopareia</i>	Beautiful Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris pulchellus</i>
Rock Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne fuligula</i>	Red-chested Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris erythrocerca</i>
Plain Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>	Variable Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris venustus</i>
Banded Martin	<i>Riparia cincta</i>	Collared Sunbird	<i>Hedydipna collaris</i>
House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes orientalis</i>
Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>	Northern Fiscal	<i>Lanius humeralis</i>
Lesser Striped Swallow	<i>Cecropis abyssinica</i>	Taita Fiscal	<i>Lanius dorsalis</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Long-tailed Fiscal	<i>Lanius cabanisi</i>
Angola Swallow	<i>Hirundo angolensis</i>	Grey-backed Fiscal	<i>Lanius excubitoroides</i>
Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>	Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>
Black Saw-wing	<i>Psalidoprocne pristoptera</i>	Isabelline Shrike	<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*  
 Magpie Shrike *Urolestes melanoleucus*  
 Tropical Boubou *Laniarius major*  
 Black-headed Gonolek *Laniarius erythrogaster*  
 Slate-colored Boubou *Laniarius funebris*  
 Brubru *Nilaus afer*  
 Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla*  
 Pringle's Puffback *Dryoscopus pringlii*  
 Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis*  
 Northern White-crowned Shrike *Eurocephalus ruppelli*  
 Grey-crested Helmet-Shrike *Prionops poliophus*  
 Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*  
 Pied Crow *Corvus albus*  
 Cape Crow *Corvus capensis*  
 White-naped Raven *Corvus albicollis*  
 African Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus larvatus*  
 Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus africanus*  
 Red-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhynchus*  
 Ashy Starling *Lamprotornis unicolor*  
 Red-winged Starling *Onychognathus morio*  
 Kendrick's Starling *Poeoptera kendricki*  
 Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea*  
 Rüppell's Long-tailed Starling *Lamprotornis purpuroptera*  
 Superb Starling *Lamprotornis superbus*  
 Hildebrandt's Starling *Lamprotornis hildebrandti*  
 House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*  
 Rufous Sparrow *Passer rufocinctus*  
 Chestnut Sparrow *Passer eminibey*  
 Speckle-fronted Weaver *Sporopipes frontalis*  
 Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus*  
 Swahili Sparrow *Passer suahelicus*  
 Yellow-spotted Petronia *Gymnoris pyrgita*  
 Whit-browed Sparrow-Weaver *Plocepasser mahali*  
 Rufous-tailed Weaver *Histurgops ruficauda*  
 Grey-capped Social Weaver *Pseudonigrita araudi*  
 White-headed Buffalo Weaver *Dinemellia dinemelli*  
 Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger*  
 Black-headed Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*  
 Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius*  
 Vitelline Masked Weaver *Ploceus vitellinus*  
 Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis*  
 Speke's Weaver *Ploceus spekei*  
 Baglafaecht Weaver *Ploceus baglafaecht*  
 Slender-billed Weaver *Ploceus pezelni*  
 Golden-backed Weaver *Ploceus jacksoni*  
 Northern Brown-throated Weaver *Ploceus castanops*  
 Taveta Golden Weaver *Ploceus castaneiceps*  
 Thick-billed (Grosbeak) Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons*  
 Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*  
 Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps*  
 Red-collared Widowbird *Euplectes ardens*  
 Fan-tailed Widowbird *Euplectes axillaris*  
 Yellow Bishop *Euplectes capensis*  
 Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix*  
 Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba*  
 Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus bengalus*  
 Blue-capped Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus cyanocephalus*  
 Purple Grenadier *Uraeginthus ianthinogaster*  
 Red-billed Firefinch *Hypargos senegala*  
 Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*  
 Crimson-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda rhodopyga*  
 Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura cucullata*  
 Black-and-white Mannikin *Lonchura bicolor*  
 Eastern Paradise Whydah *Vidua paradisaea*  
 Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*

Straw-tailed Whydah *Vidua fischeri*  
 Yellow-fronted Canary *Crithagra mozambica*  
 White-bellied Canary *Crithagra dorsostrata*  
 Yellow-rumped Seedeater *Crithagra reichenowi*  
 Streaky Seedeater *Crithagra striolata*  
 Golden-breasted Bunting *Emberiza flaviventris*  
 Somali Golden-breasted Bunting *Emberiza poliopleura*

#### MAMMALS

African Elephant *Loxodonta africana*  
 Bush Hyrax *Procavia capensis*  
 Blue Monkey *Cercopithecus mitis*  
 Vervet Monkey *Chlorocebus pygerythrus*  
 Eastern Black & White Colobus *Colobus guereza*  
 Olive Baboon *Papio anubis*  
 African Hare *Lepus microtis*  
 African Grass Rat *Arvicanthis niloticus*  
 Ochre Bush Squirrel *Paraxerus ochraceus*  
 Unstriped Ground Squirrel *Xerus rutilus*  
 Serval *Leptailurus serval*  
 Lion *Panthera leo*  
 Leopard *Panthera pardus*  
 Eastern Dwarf Mongoose *Helogale parvula*  
 Slender Mongoose *Herpestes sanguineus*  
 Banded Mongoose *Mungos mungo*  
 Spotted Hyena *Crocuta crocuta*  
 Large-spotted Genet *Genetta maculata*  
 Golden (African) Wolf *Canis aureus*  
 Black-backed Jackal *Canis mesomelas*  
 Plains Zebra *Equus quagga*  
 Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis*  
 Common Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus*  
 Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius*  
 Coke's Hartebeest *Alcelaphus buselaphus*  
 Red Duiker *Cephalophus natalensis*  
 Blue Wildebeest *Connochaetes taurinus*  
 Topi *Damaliscus lunatus*  
 Thomson's Gazelle *Eudorcas thomsonii*  
 Common Waterbuck *Kobus ellipsiprymnus*  
 Defassa Waterbuck *Kobus ellipsiprymnus ssp. defassa*  
 Kirk's Dik-dik *Madoqua kirkii*  
 Grant's Gazelle *Nanger granti*  
 Bohor Reedbuck *Redunca redunca*  
 Impala *Aepyceros melampus*  
 African Buffalo *Syncerus caffer*  
 Common Eland *Tragelaphus oryx*  
 Bushbuck *Tragelaphus scriptus*  
 Giraffe *Giraffa camelopardalis*  
 Yellow-winged Bat *Lavia frons*  
 Epauleted Fruit Bat sp *Epomophorus minimus*

#### REPTILES

Leopard Tortoise *Stigmochelys pardalis*  
 Common Agama *Agama agama*  
 Mwanza Flat-headed Agama *Agama mwanzae*  
 Kilimanjaro Two-horned Chameleon *Chamaeleo dilepis*  
 House Gecko *Hemidactylus mabouia*  
 Nile Monitor *Varanus niloticus*  
 Nile Crocodile *Crocodylus niloticus*  
 Terrapin sp *Pelusios sp?*