

Tanzania – Photographic Tour

Rift Valley, Crater & Plains

Saturday 19 February – Sunday 06 March 2011

Leaders: Richard Coomber and local guides

2011 Cost: **£4,799** single room supplement **£430**

Saturday 18 February – Sunday 04 March 2012

Leaders: Nigel Jones and local guides

2012 Cost: **£4,999** single room supplement **£450**



The Ngorongoro Crater, the plains of the Serengeti, Lake Manyara and snow-capped Mount Kilimanjaro – these are all well known areas, frequently seen on wildlife programmes and dreamed about since childhood stories of adventures in darkest Africa. We have already visited this country at least a dozen times, and now it's your chance to see all of these sites at first-hand. Few areas of East Africa can surpass Tanzania for grandeur of scenery, variety of mammals and spectacular birdlife. The Serengeti has the greatest concentration of large mammals on Earth – perhaps in excess of two million. It is likely that we shall encounter Lion, Cheetah, Leopard and Black Rhinoceros during our visit, as well as about 40 other species. Even the Wildebeest should be migrating in vast herds, accompanied by their attendant predators, and this tour has been designed to give us the best chance of finding these vast herds. Overhead fly squadrons of vultures, while Bateleurs plane for mile upon mile looking for prey. Vast Kori Bustards display like exploding powder puffs, while diminutive sunbirds bustle from one brightly coloured flower to another, as they search for nectar. We visit a wide variety of habitats to ensure a good diversity of birds and game – from the dry acacia woodland of Tarangire and the dramatic cliffs of the Rift Valley to the vast open plains of the Serengeti. This tour is a birdwatcher's dream and the opportunities for photography will be fantastic. We visit Tanzania in "High Season" when the game viewing should be at its best and there should be many birds that are winter visitors to the area. Tanzania can still give you the thrill of the really wild East Africa – visit it now.



Bronze Sunbird

ITINERARY

Day 1

We leave London (or regional airports) in the morning on our scheduled flight to Kilimanjaro, via Amsterdam. We meet our transport at the airport and then transfer the very short distance to Kia Lodge, where we stay overnight.

Days 2 to 4

This morning we drive through superb scenery to Tarangire Safari Lodge, which will be our home for the next three nights. Tarangire National Park has a mixture of habitats, which we can explore during our time here: there is the dry, open acacia woodland beloved by rollers, bee-eaters and shrikes, where Secretarybirds stalk through the long grass and between the spiky shrubs looking for a small lizard or snake. The common birds here include Black-winged Kite, White-backed Vulture, Bateleur, Tawny Eagle, Helmeted Guineafowl, Blacksmith Plover, Laughing Dove, Speckled Mousebird, Lilac-breasted Roller, Common Bulbul, Common Fiscal, Grey-headed Sparrow and Red-billed Quelea. Giant baobabs stand as though planted upside down, and the grassy areas often hold secretive pairs of Heuglin's Coursers. Spot-flanked, D'Arnaud's and White-headed Barbets all occur here, together with Brown and Orange-bellied Parrots. The areas of open water and swamp around the Tarangire River hold Hamerkop, African Darter, Goliath Heron, African Spoonbill and Three-banded Plover. An endemic speciality of the area is the Ashy Starling. Game will be common and we can hope to see herds of Elephant, together with Giraffe, Waterbuck and the delightful Kirk's Dikdik.

Days 5 & 6

We leave Tarangire, and travel to Kirurumu Camp, overlooking Lake Manyara, where we stay for two nights. This tented camp has a small drinking pool next to the dining tables and we can look for Cut-throat Finch and Green-winged Pytilia amongst a host of other birds and small mammals that come to bathe and refresh themselves. We shall also visit the lake itself looking for Silvery-cheeked Hornbills and Syke's Monkey, both Lesser and Greater Flamingos,

White and Pink-backed Pelicans, and perhaps finding the famous tree climbing lions. The lakeside is often teeming with waterbirds and we can spend some time here identifying the many storks, herons, egrets, waders and ducks. Further along the shore rocky escarpments hold Klipspringer, while bushes along the tracks are home to the elusive Peter's Twin-spot.

Days 7 to 9

We leave Lake Manyara and head towards the vast natural amphitheatre of the Ngorongoro Crater. On the way we pass through dry country where we look for sandgrouse, finch-larks and Rosy-patched Bush-shrike, before arriving at our base, the Ngorongoro Serena Lodge, where we stay for three nights. The Crater is perhaps one of the most famous game areas in the world, as well as being one of the biggest calderas, covering an area of over 250 sq kms and varying between 600 and 750 metres in depth. The bottom is mainly grassy plains with much fresh and brackish standing water in areas. One large sheet of water, called Lake Magadi, plays host to Greater and Lesser Flamingos, waterfowl and shorebirds; the numbers, which fluctuate from one year to the next, may run into many thousands of birds. Animals include Lion, Leopard, Cheetah, Black Rhinoceros, Zebra, Hartebeest and Hippopotamus. The Elephants include many large-tusked bulls that may be over 50 years old. The bird list is long and includes Ostrich, African Harrier-Hawk, Verreaux's Eagle, Black-winged Plover, Olive Pigeon, Lilac-breasted Roller and Rosy-breasted Longclaw. Birding around the camp is not to be ignored and we might well encounter Hildebrandt's Francolin, Cape Robin-Chat, Tropical Boubou and the beautiful Tacazze and Golden-winged Sunbirds.

Days 10 to 12

This morning we leave the Ngorongoro Serina Lodge and head for N'dutu Lodge, just on the edge of the Serengeti National Park. The lodge is set near N'dutu Lake amongst beautiful acacia trees. The bird and animal life here is rich, and one of the highlights will be the genets that walk along the rafters while we are taking dinner! The birds are rewarding and range from bulky Kori Bustards to tiny Red-throated Tits. We will be looking for

migrating raptors, wheatears and shrikes amongst the resident Martial Eagles, Yellow-throated Sandgrouse, Von der Decken's Hornbill, White-tailed Lark, Yellow-throated Longclaw and Magpie Shrike to name but a few. All the vulture species are represented here – Rüppell's, African White-backed, Lappet-faced, White-headed, Egyptian and Hooded. The endemic Rufous-tailed Weaver and Grey-breasted Spurfowl are both easily seen around the lodge.

Days 13 & 14

Later, we head northwards into the Serengeti National Park and then stay for two nights at the Serengeti Serena Lodge. The lodge is set on a hillside with views across the plains and woodlands. Hildebrandt's Starlings are common in the grounds, and the morning chorus resounds with calls of hornbills, thrushes and weavers. The Serengeti National Park covers some 12,000 sq km of grassy plains in northern Tanzania and forms a super wildlife sanctuary with the Masai Mara on the Kenyan side of the border. In our time here we can only scratch the surface of this truly remarkable area, but thankfully our local guides visit the area many times during the year and have the best places staked out. Many species are creatures of habit, but with any wildlife viewing nothing can be guaranteed. At this time of the year over two million Wildebeest should be on their migration in this area, and we can hope to see Lion and Cheetah, as they attend the moving herds. Being the Serengeti, there will be many animals present and one of our quarry species will be the Leopard – perhaps with its tail hung from a branch like a bell-pull. The Serengeti is always an adventure, and the photographer and birder will literally have a field day.

Days 15 & 16

We have some time in the morning to further sample the delights of the Serengeti, before we make our way to Serenera where we catch our return flight to Arusha (thus eliminating a long, dusty return drive). We transfer from Arusha to Kia Lodge where we have day rooms for changing. Later, we transfer to nearby Kilimanjaro Airport for the late evening flight to London, via Amsterdam. The flight arrives into London (or regional airports) early next morning.



Burchell's Zebras fighting in Ngorongoro Crater



Golden-winged Sunbird

Outline Itinerary

- Day 1** Depart London and transfer to Kilimanjaro
- Days 2-4** Tarangire National Park
- Days 5-6** Lake Manyara
- Days 7-9** Ngorongoro Crater
- Days 10-12** N'dutu
- Days 13-14** Serengeti National Park
- Day 15** Depart Kilimanjaro
- Day 16** Arrive London

Party Size

Maximum of 12 clients.

Accommodation

Comfortable accommodation in twin/double and single rooms with private facilities at camps, lodges, and hotels.

Transport

By land-cruisers, land-rovers and minibuses

Includes

All flights, meals, accommodation, transport, entry fees, services of the leaders, airport taxes and tips.

Gradings

- Good/Tented
- 350
- Warm
- Moderate
- Special
- Relaxed
- Excellent
- Easy
- Scheduled



Grey-breasted Francolin