

ORNITHOLIDAYS' TOUR TO TANZANIA
Rift Valley, Crater & Plains

28 February – 15 March 2009



Leader: Nigel Jones

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A Personal Diary

Saturday, 28 February

Early morning sees me and Robin at Heathrow checking-in for the London flight to Amsterdam. A few hours later we are in the enormous modern airport and the group is complete with others either having travelled from regional airports or having stayed overnight in Amsterdam. We are soon winging our way towards Africa on the KLM flight and we settle back to films, meals and 40+ winks.

In the evening we arrive to a warm, star-filled night and make our way from the airport terminal at Kilimanjaro to the adjacent Kia Lodge. Those that don't go to bed immediately meet up in the bar for a quick drink before some much needed sleep.

Sunday, 01 March

One of the beauties of Kia Lodge is that the area by the swimming pool has a panoramic view over the grassy airstrip and tree top views of the acacias planted in the grounds. We all meet up there before breakfast, but Andrew already has tales of two Spotted Eagle-Owls and a Slender-tailed Nightjar! The birding here is excellent and a great introduction to African birds, showing the abundance and diversity of the Tanzanian avifauna. We soon clock up 50 species, with the highlights being Barred Warbler, Violet-backed Starling, Pangani Longclaw and both Montagu's and Pallid Harriers.

After breakfast we are ready to go and our three vehicles with drivers Joseph, Mtili and Lesikar are soon packed. Our drive takes us through Arusha, which is relatively quiet as it is Sunday. We make a quick stop at the offices of our agents to pick up radios for the vehicles and to spot our first Red-winged Starlings. We are aiming to reach our lodge in Tarangire National Park for lunch but as it's the first day there are many stops for birds. Once into the park we see our first game with Elephants, Olive Baboons, Impala and Warthogs. This slows us down even further and it is 2.30pm before we are taking lunch at the lodge!

A siesta in our tents now follows but most people are too interested in the Elephants browsing nearby and the abundant bird life, with Ashy Starlings (a Tanzanian endemic) being noisy and quite common. At 4pm we take our first game drive out into the park. We see close groups of Ostrich, Abdim's Storks and Cattle Egrets. The birds of prey are well represented and we notch up a good tally with Black-winged and Yellow-billed Kites, African Fish-Eagle, four species of vulture (African White-backed, Ruppell's, Lappet-faced and White-headed), Bateleur and Eastern Chanting-Goshawk. A rocky escarpment provides our first views of Rock Hyrax while nearby a Tawny Eagle eyes them as potential dinners. By the river we find a group of eight sleepy Lions, with one battle-scarred male; they look at us with little interest and continue to doze. Nearby we find a group of feeding Rufous-tailed Weavers, another local endemic.

We return from the drive as dusk approaches and many take the time for a cool drink out on the veranda by the restaurant. The lodge is perched on the edge of a river escarpment and we can look down on the river and forests and watch the animals and birds drinking, with the male Impala chasing off intruders to their harems. A magical place!

Monday, 02 March

Before breakfast there are Elands drinking in the river and Speckled Mousebirds calling near the swimming pool. A noisy pair of Hildebrandt's Francolins is by the veranda, but they disappear quickly as the throng arrives for food.

We game drive this morning passing enormous Baobabs, showing scarring from Elephants where they have attacked the tree to get at the pithy core. A group of five Black-winged Plovers are a good find on an area of short grass, newly grown where a fire has recently passed. New additions to the raptor list include Martial

Eagle, Secretary-bird, Pygmy Falcon and some distant Lesser Kestrels. Comical groups of Helmeted Guineafowl feed close to the road and seem to be forever fighting or running in their lop-sided gate. They must be designed to slip through the tall vegetation as they have a very flattened shape! Other game birds include Red-necked and Yellow-necked Spur-fowl and Crested Francolin. Cuckoos are represented by African and Diederik, with a lone White-browed Coucal skulking in the brush. A Southern Ground Hornbill lumbers through the grasses, pecking for locusts and frogs as it goes.

Common birds of Tarangire include the large flocks of shrieking Yellow-collared Lovebirds; the ubiquitous Ring-necked Dove; the beautiful Superb Starlings; and the herd following Wattled Starlings. Very few of the Wattled Starlings show their wattles, mainly being in a non-breeding plumage. The highlight of the morning is found by Joseph. It is a pair of amazing Verreaux's Eagle-Owls staring down at us from an acacia and winking with their pink eyelids. They are large birds, about the size of a buzzard, and their favourite prey is francolins and guinea-fowl. They pose well for the photographers and seem unconcerned at our presence.

After lunch and a siesta we meet again at 4pm and drive off. We have not gone far when we spy a pair of Spotted Thick-knees in the bush. One of the birds is sitting and has a piece of egg shell in its beak, so we assume she has just become a parent. We pass numerous pairs of Kirk's Dikdiks, a Steinbok, many Elephants, Defassa Waterbucks, Impala, Warthogs and Giraffes. There are so many photo opportunities! A group of four Black Storks is a nice find.

In the river valley we spend some time watching the feeding behaviour of a pair of Hammerkops following the progress of a large Monitor Lizard. The lizard is diving in the shallow waters of the river bed. The water level is low, and the lizard is obviously searching for fish or frogs. The Hammerkops follow the lizard as it disturbs potential prey and they are quick to stab at passing morsels.

Tuesday, 03 March

It's another lovely morning and we are soon off, on our way to Silale Swamp. A pair of Verreaux's Eagle-Owls produces an early stop and we watch and listen to the birds as they call a deep "ooh ooh" to one another. One bird is gripping the remains of its night-time snack, and it looks like an unfortunate francolin. A little further on we stop for a small group of Bat-eared Foxes sunning themselves, but they are wary and move off as the vehicles approach – or it could have been the Spotted Hyena that was close by.

Shrikes are well represented as we drive, with many Long-tailed Fiscals, Magpie and Northern White-crowned. As we move into an area of open grassland we find some hunting harriers and we get the chance to compare and contrast the plumages of male and female Montagu's and Pallid. They give a good display for us and even allow some reasonable photos to be taken. We now come across many hunting bee-eaters diving for insects and we are pleased to see that they are Blue-cheeked, with about 50 birds in total – a fantastic sight. Both European and Lilac-breasted Rollers are also much in evidence.

We finally arrive at the picnic area and take a break, with Joseph, Mtili and Lesikar laying out table cloths and setting out the food. Around us we can watch both Superb and Hildebrandt's Starlings, White-headed Buffalo-Weavers, Grey-headed Sparrows and Northern Pied Babblers. We have a vista overlooking the huge swamp and discussions are made regarding the river drainage and which way the water is flowing.

The marsh holds some good birds and we manage to spot African Jacana, Collared Pratincole, Long-toed Lapwing, two Grey-crowned Cranes, Striated, Squacco and Rufous-bellied Herons, Glossy Ibis, African Spoonbill, White-faced Whistling-Ducks, Spur-winged Goose, Hottentot Teal and African Fish-Eagles. The acacia scrub skirting the marsh is also very productive and we find male Straw-tailed Whydah, Red-throated Tit, Beautiful Sunbird, African Grey Flycatcher, Rattling Cisticola and African Cuckoo.

One more brief stop is made by the river and we find Plain and Banded Martins, Wood and Common Sandpipers and a few Greenshank. We return to the lodge, very pleased with our swamp visit.

Later in the afternoon we make another drive, this time to a different section of river valley. Joseph starts off very well by finding a pair of Heuglin's Coursers, not always an easy bird to find. They show well as they keep to the shade of some acacias. We park the vehicle on an escarpment and play the call of Pearl-spotted Owllet which excites many small birds to come and look for this diminutive (but unseen) predator. We attract

Speckled Mousebird, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, Brubru, Fork-tailed Drongo, Chestnut Sparrow, Red-billed Quelea, Green-winged Pytilia, and both Red-cheeked and Blue-capped Cordon-bleus.

A family of Olive Baboons always provide good viewing and we watch as they pick at the grasses eating roots, while other youngsters play, mothers suckle their babies and the large males stare at us and scratch. In the distance Elephants are watched tearing at branches, while Giraffes wrap their long blue tongues around succulent top shoots.

In the evening we take the bird list while a Common Genet creeps along the rafter above the bar. At night, while lying in bed, the calls of Lions and Hyenas can be heard – the magic of Africa!

Wednesday, 04 March

We set off after breakfast all packed with our bags as we are now heading towards our next base near Lake Manyara. As we make our way towards the park exit we see a group of Banded Mongeese hunting in the short grasslands, and we stop for our last photos of Giraffes and Elephants in Tarangire Park. A group of three White-bellied Bustards is a good find, and a Gabar Goshawk gives us a brief view as it speeds between groups of acacias. Once outside the park gates we make a few stops and find both Black and Southern Red Bishops, Fischers Sparrow-larks and both Vitelline Masked and Speckle-fronted Weavers. A singing male Yellow-throated Longclaw is seen as we drive along the tarmac road.

The edge of the escarpment boarding Lake Manyara looms before us and it does not take too long until we are bouncing along the rutted track to our new home for two nights at Kirurumu. A Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush flies off from the track as we approach. There is a welcoming committee to meet us and take our bags to the rooms. This site is on the edge of the escarpment, which is actually part of the Great Rift Valley and it overlooks Lake Manyara. The rooms are canvas covered on permanent concrete bases and have all been refurbished since my last stay here – all very smart.

We take lunch at the dining area and watch birds as they come to the small pools of drinking water that are provided. Green-winged Pytilia, Purple Grenadier and Blue-naped Mousebird are all present. Later, we try for a walk but rain puts us off going too far, so the bar area, with its covered area and view down to the lake seems a good idea. In the distance we can spot Hippos, Buffalos and a few White Pelicans. Nearer to we find White-winged Widowbird, a male Pallid Harrier, African Citril Finch, and White-browed Robin-Chat. As the rain eases off we walk along the paths between the tents, finding Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike, Red-faced Crombec and Black-backed Puffback.

Dinner is accompanied by the sounds provided by a local band, backed by a louder chorus of frogs in the pond!

Thursday, 05 March

We leave this morning for nearby Lake Manyara, pausing for some birding in the fields by the camp where we spot Isabelline and Northern Wheatears, Rock Thrush, Village Indigobird and Red-fronted Tinkerbird. The short journey brings us to the entrance of the park where there is lush forest, fed by ground-water springs, which occasionally break to the surface as shallow streams. The tall trees hold many calling birds and we soon are watching some fantastic Silvery-cheeked Hornbills at close range. Olive Baboons are common, and they are joined here by another primate, the Blue Monkey.

We make our way to the Hippo Pools, passing Spur-winged Lapwings and many Helmeted Guineafowls. The pools are thronged with waterfowl and wading birds. We set up the scopes and lean on the new fence that has been put up to keep people at a safe distance. There are at least 50 Hippos wallowing in the water, with many small babies. Some are even out on the bank grazing, as the sun is not yet too hot to burn their skin; they have many attendant Red-billed Oxpeckers inspecting for ticks. We start to sort through the birds finding Marabou Storks, Sacred, Hadada and Glossy Ibis, African Spoonbill, White-faced Whistling-Ducks, Spur-winged and Egyptian Geese, Knob-billed Ducks, Hottentot and Red-billed Teal, as well as Grey and Goliath Herons, Intermediate, Little and Cattle Egrets. The waders are also well represented with Water Thick-knees, Collared Pratincoles, Blacksmiths Lapwings, a Common Snipe, a few Black-tailed Godwits, both Marsh and Common Sandpipers, Greenshank, Ruff and six Curlew Sandpipers, with a single Gull-

billed Tern and two Whiskered Terns. Quite an assemblage of wildlife, with a constant movement of birds and animals.

Reluctantly we leave the spectacle and make our way back towards the acacia woodlands and scrub. Out on the water the distant pink fringe is thousands of Lesser and Greater Flamingos, but they are quite far away as the water level in the lake is low this year. Overhead, we pick up a very showy Saddle-billed Stork and a Black-chested Snake-Eagle. A group of Dwarf Mongoose show from their home in a termite mound. Our destination is now the picnic site for lunch. There are tables here and we set out our fare, providing a focus for a tame Red-and-yellow Barbet that likes the look of the picnic. In the trees providing our shade we have Baglefecht Weavers, Grey-headed Sparrows and African Grey Flycatchers. As we finish our meal we are descended upon by hundreds of school children – a well timed exit is made. On the way back the star bird is a Giant Kingfisher, which is unfortunately not seen by all the party.

After a rest we meet at the bar where a thermalling group of six Yellow-billed Storks is a good find. We then have two Masai guides who take us for a walk past their village, showing us their fields and livestock, before leading us to the edge of the escarpment where we can look down on Lake Manyara, the ground-water forest and Mosquito town. The birds are scarce but we do find a male Pied Wheatear and two Yellow-spotted Petronias.

Friday, 06 March

We have our bags ready this morning and after breakfast we depart for our next exciting venue – the Ngorongoro Crater. We bird en route, stopping for three Temminck's Coursers, Village Indigobirds, Bronze Manakins, Yellow-fronted Canary, Yellow-rumped Seedeater and Rufous Sparrows. After reaching the park gate, we all have a leg stretch while Joseph obtains the necessary paperwork. A Crowned Eagle gives a great fly-by, but is not seen by everyone.

As we drive into the park, and have a clear view of the crater forests, the Crowned Eagle flies past the vehicles that missed him earlier! There are also Montane White-eyes and Cinnamon-chested Bee-eaters, showing we have gained some elevation since leaving Lake Manyara. We arrive at a view point which gives the group their first view of the crater – it is an awesome spectacle, and we look down on masses of game moving and feeding on the crater floor. We speculate how high the intact volcano might have been, certainly over 20,000 feet and perhaps higher? We follow the bumpy road along the rim of the crater and soon arrive at our lodge, the Sopa. Lunch is taken outside with a great view over the enormous caldera.

Later, we drive down to the crater floor for our first exploration of this amazing area. The crater floor is mainly short-grazed grassland, with some small patches of forest. There is a network of roads that must be followed, with no driving off the tracks. However, the game is so abundant and the viewing so good on the virtually flat crater floor, that there is little need to go "off piste". There are many Abdim's Storks feeding amongst the numerous Thomson's and Grant's Gazelles. African Buffalo are in large groups, with smaller numbers of Wildebeest. Common Zebra are common and small family groups of Warthogs move off with their tails up like radio aerials. Lions are very much a feature of the crater and we come across two groups, which comprise at least 16 animals. They are all relaxing and have full bellies, so they must have killed and fed recently. They doze as we watch them and then roll over and sleep some more. The cisticolas are a smaller feature of the crater and we hear many Pectoral-patch and see both Winding and Rattling. A pair of Lanners is sitting atop a dead tree snag eyeing up some feeding doves. The male launches off and flies right over the vehicles giving us all cracking views – the cameras click, but is it too fast for us to follow?

As we leave the crater we pass displaying Pin-tailed Whydahs and a fine male Steel-blue Whydah. We are looking forward to tomorrow where we can have a thorough exploration of this amazing area.

Saturday, 07 March

Our entry into the crater is delayed this morning as we stop to look at a group of squawking turacos near the lodge. We see two groups and some see red and blue wings, others red and green. We realise that we are watching two species, Schalow's and Hartlaub's. A Grey-capped Warbler pops out briefly for the lead vehicle, but is not seen well by the others.

Today we have brought a picnic lunch with us so have most of the day in the crater. There are no Giraffes in the crater as they have yet to make their way over the rim and down the steep sides – but surely they will one day? However, game is abundant here and we have a chance to do to watch and photograph many species. The most obvious animals are the Thomson's and Grant's Gazelles which seem to be everywhere; some have small babies. There are small herds of Wildebeest here as well – this population is non-migratory, being trapped in the crater. African Buffalo are not so numerous but we see breeding herds as well as groups of males, which seem to love to mud-wallow and dust-bathe. We even come across a solitary Elephant with large tusk. There are only males here on the crater floor, even though there are breeding herds in the forests on the rim.

We take our lunch at the waterhole where there are toilets and you are allowed to wander a little from your vehicle. This is the main picnic site for the crater and we are joined by quite a few other vehicles, but nowhere near as busy as it was when I was here last July. As we eat we are joined by hungry Helmeted Guineafowl and Speke's Weavers. Over the water we can watch a whole mix of martins, with Barn Swallow, Red-rumped Swallow, Plain, House and Banded Martins, Grey-rumped Swallow and a couple of Wire-tailed Swallows.

One of our main aims today is to find a Rhino and we are not disappointed as we spot a distant group of three. These are Black Rhinos and we can make out a mother and baby and what is probably the male. Amazingly we lose one, as it crosses a ridge and lies down – how can such large animals disappear on such relatively flat ground? We snap off photos but they are quite distant, but their enormous bulk is obvious.

By the lake we watch the flamingos feeding. They are virtually all Lessers and near the edge there are a group of brown feathered juveniles. A Golden Jackal is stalking the edge and obviously hoping to prey on them but they seem too wary of this hunter. We take our eyes off the predator for a split second and he lunges at one bird and catches it! He runs off with his prize, now pursued by a second jackal.

We move off to drier ground only to see another Golden Jackal chasing a Scrub Hare. The chase is frenzied and the hare jinks and accelerates as the jackal leaps and bounds trying to catch up. The jackal makes a great subject for the photographer. The hare decides that our vehicles will make a good place to hide and it dives in by the wheels and then disappears. The jackal is too timid to approach too closely and we leave the hare hiding and panting in tall grasses near the track.

We drive out of the crater, very pleased with so many exciting sightings today. As we pass through the crater forest we stop to watch Bronze and Golden-winged Sunbirds and Brown Parisomas. We are back at the lodge to watch a fine sunset as we take late afternoon tea.

Sunday, 08 March

We plan on a half day in the crater, so the early morning finds us birding rim forests finding Rameron Pigeon, Cinnamon-bracken Warbler, Brown Parisoma, Yellow-billed Waxbills and both Bronze and Golden-winged Sunbirds.

As we drop down the side of the crater we pass displaying male Pint-tailed Whydahs and a fine male Crimson-breasted Longclaw. A Red-throated Pipit calls and we soon locate it feeding amongst the feet of the gazelles; it is not yet in full breeding plumage with just a hint of a red throat. In a few weeks it will be on its northern breeding grounds in the arctic tundra. A small group of Quailfinches are located coming to water in a narrow stream but they only show as they take flight and call.

Nearby we find some Lions with cubs. As they move through the tall grasses they flush a nightjar, but the views are too brief to work out which species. We manage to find the Rhinos again in virtually the same spot as they were in yesterday. The views today are better and we can see the same three animals. It's possible to get some reasonable photos this morning as the heat haze is not so bad. As we cross a culvert on the track we notice a Lion poking out of it! Often the culverts are used by Warthogs to shelter but equally the Lions may be sniffing Hyenas that have recently been in them. A fine male Lion is also in attendance. A tall stand of acacias houses another toilet, so we can leg stretch here and have tea and coffee. There are Collared Sunbird, a female Violet-backed Starling and some Golden Weavers. As we drive along the tracks we spot a pair of

Black-backed Jackals sniffing around another culvert – nearby is a Scrub Hare, and it is possible it has young nearby, or else the jackals have already had one youngster and are looking for more!

We return to the lodge as the plan for the afternoon is to visit a local Masai village. The group have a chance to wander around the village and talk with the people about their way of life and to see the small classroom and to go inside their dwellings – very cramped for such tall people! Later, some of us opt to walk back to the lodge, accompanied by two local guides. It is good to be able to stretch our legs and we manage a few views of Hartlaub's Turacos, as well as some African Stonechats and a few sunbirds. It is a dusty walk and we all need a shower by the time we arrive at the lodge – but the exercise has improved our appetite for dinner. Unfortunately, the farewell cake that is produced for us tonight, complete with singing and dancing group, does not get many takers.

Monday, 09 March

This morning we are all packed up and ready to depart. We drive along the crater rim, stopping at a couple of lookouts, where we find some colourful Malachite Sunbirds. As we descend from the crater on our road towards Ndutu and the Serengeti we enter grassland and rocky outcrops where there are Giraffes and our first Yellow-crowned Canaries and Long-billed Pipits. We also encounter Lanners, Steppe Buzzards and Tawny Eagles.

We are going to pass very close to Olduvai Gorge, so I decide we have time to visit this famous site where Leakey worked on early hominid man, and “Lucy” made her appearance. At the gorge we are treated to a very good lecture on the site (remember Oldupai not Olduvai) and have a chance to look around the museum at many of the artefacts found here. Consensus amongst the group is that on future tours it may be a good idea to spend more time here.

We leave the main rutted track, to take another rutted track across the grasslands of the black cotton soils. A group of four Cape Rooks are here at the turnoff. In the distance we can see the woods where our next camp, Ndutu lies. We come across a Tawny Eagle feasting on a newly killed female Montagu's Harrier. We pass flocks of over 120 Black-winged Plovers, while Red-capped Larks seem to be equally common.

We arrive at the camp in time for a 1.30pm lunch. We sit and enjoy the view across the savannah to a lake with a few flamingos. There are some bird baths just outside the restaurant and we are treated to noisy flocks of Fischer's Lovebirds.

After a siesta we leave on a game drive at 4.30pm, as some of the heat has abated. Grey-breasted Spurfowl is relatively common in this area and they are quite easy to see near to the lodge. We pass some Black-faced Sandgrouse and African Grey Hornbills. A noisy group of Green Woodhoopoes is a better find and we watch as they fly from bush to bush flashing the white in their wings. We find both Cardinal and Grey Woodpeckers, a male Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush, two Silverbirds and both Beautiful and Variable Sunbirds. The best is a group of 20 Grey-capped Social Weavers. Kirk's Dikdiks are frequently encountered in the bush, while a male Lion is another good find by Lake Masek. We return to Ndutu ready for a cold drink. In the evening, as we have our dinner, three Common Genets come to the food provided on their rafter dining table.

Tuesday, 10 March

Our plan today is to leave early and to head out onto the plains to see if we can connect with some of the Wildebeest migration, so at 6.30am we are on our way. We soon find some Bat-eared Foxes at their dens but they don't hang around and decide that underground is the best bet at present. The Lioness is still present near to the marsh. It takes a while to pass out of the woodland and onto the short grasslands that mark the start of the great plains that stretch all the way to the Serengeti and Masai Mara. A Hyena suckling cubs is another great find at a den.

We flush two Common Quail from the grassland and watch both Montagu's and Pallid Harriers quartering the savannah for their food. In a few weeks both these harriers will have moved north and will be on their breeding grounds. We stop for our picnic breakfast at “Three Trees” and marvel at the spectacle – we are amongst lots of game, with perhaps 5,000 Wildebeest and a 1,000 Zebra, plus Impala, Thomson's and Grant's Gazelles and even 80 Eland. Associated with this throng are Wattled Starlings, oxpeckers, Cattle Egrets,

vultures, Tawny Eagles, swallows, Yellow Wagtails, pipits and larks, and even Gull-billed Terns. This is just the edge of the Wildebeest migration, but it is just great to be standing amongst so much wildlife.

We start our return to the lodge but Joseph find two Verreaux's Eagle-Owls sat in a tree, which give great views. Sandgrouse are a feature of these grasslands and we find both Chestnut-bellied and Yellow-throated. Desert Cisticolas flush from in front of our vehicles, along with many Red-capped Larks. We also spot both Temminck's and Two-banded Coursers. As we arrive back at the lodge there are literally hundreds of small birds mobbing something near to the main car park. It appears there is a snake but the camp workers are not keen to investigate. However, I am, so I walk through the grass and find a large snake with a mouse protruding from its mouth. Joseph tells me that it is a Sand Snake. Once everyone realises that it is not dangerous they come closer for better views and photographs.

After lunch and a siesta we drive around Lake Ndutu. The mud bears testament to the recent movement of game with dead bodies of Wildebeest protruding from the lake's surface. The animals urge to move is so great that they will often try to "short cut" across shallow lakes, which is the undoing of many young animals. Out on the lake we spot Grey-headed Gulls, Ruff, Little Stints and about 20 Chestnut-banded Plovers. As we leave the lake edge and enter more bushy country we find both Yellow-fronted and White-bellied Canaries, as well as the ubiquitous Blue-capped Cordon-bleus.

In the evening we can hear the call of an African Scops-Owl, as well as some distant Lions.

Wednesday, 11 March

Our plan today is the same as yesterday's, to try and put ourselves amongst the migration, so it is another 6.30am departure. We pass through the woodlands finding Coqui Francolin, Great Spotted and Pied Cuckoos, Usambiro Barbets and at least three Long-crested Eagles. This morning there are many Zebra moving in line through the bush – they are all part of the migration and will soon be mingling with the Wildebeest out on the plains. Lots of vultures and eagles gathering points us towards a kill but when we find the carcass there are no cats present, and not much meat left. However, we are able to get close views of Tawny and Martial Eagles and Ruppell's, Lappet-faced and African White-backed Vultures.

We now move out onto the open plains and find many more animals than yesterday. Once again we stop for breakfast amidst what is probably 50,000 Wildebeest and thousands of Zebra and gazelles. The noise is fantastic, as they grunt all around us, and stare at these strange intruders in their midst. This is so much better than yesterday and we are all very pleased we got up early and made the trek, as this is one of the world's great spectacles and we are in its midst!

Some of the group return to the lodge while others decide to look at the edge of the woodland for the chance of finding some cats. We are not disappointed as two Cheetahs are spotted in the distance and we make haste to position the cars so we can watch them walk close to us. They are such majestic animals, with their long backs, and regal air. They walk towards the meagre shade of a bush and drop themselves down out of the sun – almost invisible, apart from the occasional twitch of a flying tail. Ester is now a happy lady! We get back to the lodge by 12.15pm and have lunch and relax after an amazing morning.

At 4pm we are out again, but this is the dustiest drive I have ever taken! However, we do manage to have some great sightings. John finds a Bearded Woodpecker, while David spots an Eastern Chanting Goshawk eating a snake. This bird is not perturbed at all by the vehicles and continues to snack on its reptile-meal while the cameras click away. A colony of Red-billed Buffalo Weavers is inspected and we look at their enormous untidy stick nests.

We move to the Great Marsh where we find three female Lions lazing. There are many waders scattered around the margins of the water and we find a pair of Greater Painted-snipe, at least 10 Three-banded Plovers, six Common Ringed Plovers and numerous Wood, Marsh and Curlew Sandpipers, as well as Ruff, Little Stint, Common Snipe and Greenshank. Two Western Marsh-Harriers are hunting over the marsh. A group of 13 banded Mongeese are amusing to watch as they deliberate, en masse, which direction they should be moving in. As we return to the lodge 12 Lesser Kestrels show that the northward bird migration is still underway.

Thursday, 12 March

We say our goodbyes to Ndotu this morning and leave for the Serengeti. We pass a Plain-backed Pipit by the lake and two Long-crested Eagles in the woodlands, before we reach the plains. Here an amazing migration is underway with perhaps 500 to 1,000 Lesser Kestrels feeding on a hatch of black beetles. The birds seem to be everywhere, swooping to the ground to catch the emerging bugs and also catching them in flight. The world population of this species is around 20,000 pairs so we are seeing a significant portion of this bird in this one area. They will be breeding in southern Europe in about three week's time.

At Nabi Gate we stop for new permits and to leg stretch and use the toilets. There are Red-throated Tits here and Red-rumped Swallows. As we press on we pass our first groups of Topi. Mtili now leaves the main track and we start to drive "cross-country" on a route I have not taken before. We are exploring lots of small rock outcrops (kopjes) and numerous marshes, looking for birds and cats. After an hour or more we come to a marsh where Ester spots a Cheetah. We look and see it is a female with three cubs. It is difficult to get a great view as they are well hidden and, as we round the far side of the marsh, we find two female Lions and at least two cubs – so the Cheetahs are hiding for a good reason, as the Lions would readily kill the baby Cheetahs. It begins to rain so we eat our picnic lunches in the vehicles while watching the Lions. They have killed two Wildebeest, so are staying with their kills while they gorge themselves. Four Hooded Vultures appreciate the kill as well.

We move on towards our lodge passing Grey-backed Fiscals, Grey Kestrel, many more Lions, and some lovely Ruppell's Long-tailed Starlings. At a marsh that holds Hippos, we find Black Crake and Yellow-billed Stork, plus a few Crocodiles. On the approach road to our lodge we make a last stop to watch Flappet Lark, a male Steel-blue Whydah and a Black Coucal. We arrive at our lodge in time to unpack and wash before a good dinner.

Friday, 13 March

The weather looks threatening but we start the day dry as we make our way from the lodge. We stop at the grassy area which was productive yesterday evening. A Broad-tailed Warbler is a good find and as we scan we find more interesting species: Black Coucal, Pin-tailed Whydahs, Cut-throat Finch, Black Bishop, Black-lored Babbler, Silverbird, Flappet Lark and Spotted Flycatcher.

We work our way through the bush and past Zebra and a few Wildebeest. The grass is long here and not really suitable for these short-grass grazers. This area will be where the main migration is in about six month's time. We make our way to the Retina Hippo Pools, passing Crested Francolin and many Helmeted Guineafowl. The pools are full to the brim with Hippos, as the water level is quite low. There is not much activity, even though they are packed in tightly. The smell is quite something, as they spray dung with their tails and the youngsters engage in mock fights. There are a few Crocodiles in the pool as well, plus some Common and Wood Sandpipers. We focus our attention on the swifts passing overhead – there are many Little but also at least one Horus, six White-rumped and an African Swift.

After lunch and a siesta we game drive but the weather is against us, as it begins to rain. We pass small herds of Wildebeest, some Waterbuck and a few Elephants. The highlight of the afternoon is found by Joseph as he spots a small feeding group of Eastern Grey Plantain-eaters. They are on the edge of their distribution range here and this is a good spot. We make our way back to the lodge with the skies looking very black. The short rains failed this year in Tanzania; so much of the country is looking forward to a deluge so that crops can be grown.

Saturday, 14 March

We are all packed and ready to go after breakfast as we have to make the transit to the nearby airstrip to catch our return flight to Arusha. As we leave the lodge we have one new species in the form of Fawn-coloured Lark. At the airstrip we say our goodbyes to our drivers and wing our way over the Ngorongoro Crater and to Arusha. We are met with new drivers and vehicles and taken to a hotel where we have the chance to relax and have a very tasty meal.

We then drive to Kilimanjaro Airport and stay, once again, at Kia Lodge where we all have the use of day rooms where we can repack and relax. Some of us birdwatch and check out the Barn Owl that is still at the same roost site. We have an early dinner before we depart for the airport and catch our return flight to

Amsterdam.

Sunday, 15 March

The morning sees us in Amsterdam, saying some goodbyes as some of the party are flying to regional airports rather than Heathrow. The London flight leaves on time and in less than an hour we are at Heathrow. Once the baggage all comes off the carousel safely we say our fond farewells.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Joseph, Mtili and Lesikar for being such great drivers and spotters. Also, thank you the group for always being so punctual and good humoured. We saw some fantastic birds and game and I don't think any of you will ever forget standing in amongst 50,000 Wildebeest that day. Thank you for providing the photos for the report and I hope you like the CD with everyone's top 20. I hope you'll join me on another Ornitholidays soon.

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June 2009

Itinerary and Weather

28 February	Transfer from regional airports to Amsterdam and then onwards to Kilimanjaro with KLM. Overnight at Kia Lodge. Fine 25C
01 March	Kia Lodge and transfer to Tarangire NP Fine 31C
02 March	Tarangire NP Fine 32C
03 March	Tarangire NP – Silale Swamp Fine 31C
04 March	Tarangire NP and transfer to Kirurumu Camp, Lake Manyara Fine 28C
05 March	Lake Manyara Fine 31C
06 March	Kirurumu Camp and transfer to Sopa Lodge, Ngorongoro Crater Fine 25C
07 March	Ngorongoro Crater Fine 14 to 26C
08 March	Ngorongoro Crater Fine 24C
09 March	Sopa Lodge and transfer to Ndutu Lodge. Pm Lake Masek Fine 29C
10 March	Ndutu and plains Fine, with a light shower 31C
11 March	Ndutu and plains Fine 29C
12 March	Ndutu Lodge and transfer to Serengeti Serena Lodge (via Masai Kopjes) Showers 23C
13 March	Retina Hippo Pools. Pm Hembe Fine and then showers 29C
14 March	Serengeti Serena Lodge and fly to Arusha. Kia Lodge. Fly to Amsterdam Fine 28C
15 March	Amsterdam to regional airports

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING TOUR

No of days recorded	Locations	Abundance scale
1 2h means seen on 1day and heard on 2 other days	K = Kia Lodge T = Tarangire L = Lake Manyara (and lodge area) N = Ngorongoro S = Ndutu and the Serengeti	Maximum seen (on one day) 1 = 1-4 2 = 5-9 3 = 10-99 4 = 100-999 5 = 1,000+

Species	No of days recorded	Locations	Abundance Scale	Scientific Name
Common Ostrich	13	T N S	3	<i>Struthio camelus</i>
Great White Pelican	1	L	3	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>
Great Cormorant	1	T	1	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Long-tailed Cormorant	1	N	1	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>
African Darter	1	N	1	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
Grey Heron	7	T L N S	1	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Black-headed Heron	10	K T L N S	3	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>
Goliath Heron	1	L	1	<i>Ardea goliath</i>
Purple Heron	1	N	1	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Intermediate Egret	3	L N S	3	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>
Little Egret	2	L N	1	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Squacco Heron	3	T L N	2	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>
Rufous-bellied Heron	1	T	1	<i>Ardeola rufiventris</i>
Cattle Egret	8	K T L N S	4	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Striated Heron	1	T S	1	<i>Butorides striatus</i>
Black-crowned Night-Heron	2	L N	1	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Hamerkop	8	T L N S	1	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>
Yellow-billed Stork	3	L N S	2	<i>Mycteria ibis</i>
Black Stork	2	T	1	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
Abdim's Stork	9	T N S	4	<i>Ciconia abdimii</i>
White Stork	7	T N S	3	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>
Saddle-billed Stork	1	L	1	<i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i>
Marabou Stork	11	K T L N S	3	<i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>
Sacred Ibis	4	T L N S	3	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>
Hadada Ibis	1	L	2	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>
Glossy Ibis	3	T L N	2	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
African Spoonbill	2	T L	1	<i>Platalea alba</i>
Greater Flamingo	2	L	5	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>
Lesser Flamingo	4	N S	4	<i>Phoenicopterus minor</i>
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	1	N	1	<i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>
White-faced Whistling-Duck	3	T L N	3	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>
Egyptian Goose	12	K T L N S	3	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>
Spur-winged Goose	4	T L N	3	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>
Knob-billed Duck	2	T L	1	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>
Cape Teal	2	N	3	<i>Anas capensis</i>
Yellow-billed Duck	1	N	1	<i>Anas undulata</i>
Red-billed Teal	4	L N S	3	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>
Hottentot Teal	6	T L N S	3	<i>Anas hottentota</i>
Northern Shoveler	1	N	1	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
Black-winged (-shouldered) Kite	6	T L S	1	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
European Honey-buzzard	1	L	1	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>
Black Kite	3	T L	1	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
Yellow-billed Kite	10	K T L N S	3	<i>Milvus parasiticus</i>
African Fish-Eagle	4	T L	2	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>
Hooded Vulture	3	T S	1	<i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>
African White-backed Vulture	14	K T L N S	3	<i>Gyps africanus</i>
Rüppell's Griffon Vulture	10	T N S	2	<i>Gyps rueppellii</i>

Lappet-faced Vulture	9		T		N	S	3	<i>Torgos tracheliotus</i>	
White-headed Vulture	7		T			S	1	<i>Trionoceps occipitalis</i>	
Black-chested Snake-Eagle	4			L	N	S	1	<i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>	
Brown Snake-Eagle	3		T			S	1	<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>	
Bateleur	12		T	L	N	S	3	<i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>	
Western Marsh-Harrier	7		T		N	S	1	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	
African Marsh-Harrier	3		T			S	1	<i>Circus ranivorus</i>	
Pallid Harrier	9		K	T		N	S	2	<i>Circus macrourus</i>
Montagu's Harrier	11		K	T		N	S	3	<i>Circus pygargus</i>
Dark Chanting-Goshawk	4					S	1	<i>Melierax metabates</i>	
Eastern Chanting-Goshawk	5		K	T	L		S	1	<i>Melierax poliopterus</i>
Gabar Goshawk	5		T			S	1	<i>Micronisus gabar</i>	
Eurasian Buzzard	3				N	S	1	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	
Mountain Buzzard	3				N		1	<i>Buteo oreophilus</i>	
Augur Buzzard	7		T	L	N	S	2	<i>Buteo augur</i>	
Tawny Eagle	14		K	T	L	N	S	3	<i>Aquila rapax</i>
Steppe Eagle	2				N		1	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>	
Wahlberg's Eagle	2		T		N		1	<i>Aquila wahlbergi</i>	
African Hawk-Eagle	1		T				1	<i>Aquila spilogaster</i>	
Martial Eagle	4		T			S	1	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>	
Long-crested Eagle	3					S	1	<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>	
Crowned Hawk-Eagle	1				N		1	<i>Stephanoaetus coronatus</i>	
Secretary-bird	10		T		N	S	2	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	
Pygmy Falcon	6		T			S	1	<i>Polihierax semitorquatus</i>	
Lesser Kestrel	7		T			S	3	<i>Falco naumanni</i>	
Eurasian Kestrel	4			L		S	1	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	
Grey Kestrel	1					S	1	<i>Falco ardosiaceus</i>	
Lanner Falcon	3				N		1	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>	
Coqui Francolin	3	1h				S	1	<i>Francolinus coqui</i>	
Crested Francolin	4		T			S	1	<i>Francolinus sephaena</i>	
Scaly Francolin	1				N		1	<i>Francolinus squamatus</i>	
Hildebrandt's Francolin	3		T		N		1	<i>Francolinus hildebrandti</i>	
Yellow-necked Spurfowl	4		T				3	<i>Francolinus leucoscepus</i>	
Grey-breasted Spurfowl E	6		T			S	3	<i>Francolinus rufopictus</i>	
Red-necked Spurfowl	6		T			S	2	<i>Francolinus afer</i>	
Common Quail	1					S	1	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	
Helmeted Guineafowl	14		K	T	L	N	S	3	<i>Numida meleagris</i>
Grey Crowned-Crane	6		T		N	S	3	<i>Balearica regulorum</i>	
Black Crake	3					S	1	<i>Amaurornis flavirostris</i>	
Common Moorhen	1				N		1	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	
Red-knobbed Coot	1				N		1	<i>Fulica cristata</i>	
Kori Bustard	7				N	S	3	<i>Ardeotis kori</i>	
White-bellied Bustard	7		T			S	1	<i>Eupodotis senegalensis</i>	
Black-bellied Bustard	3				N	S	1	<i>Lissotis melanogaster</i>	
African Jacana	3		T	L	N		3	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>	
Greater Painted-snipe	1					S	1	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>	
Black-winged Stilt	4				N	S	3	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	
Pied Avocet	2				N	S	3	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	
Water Thick-knee	3		T	L			2	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>	
Spotted Thick-knee	2		T				1	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>	
Temminck's Courser	4			L		S	2	<i>Cursorius temminckii</i>	
Two-banded Courser	7		T			S	1	<i>Smutornis africanus</i>	
Heuglin's Courser	1		T				1	<i>Rhinoptilus cinctus</i>	
Collared Pratincole	3		T	L			4	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	
Long-toed Lapwing	2		T		N		3	<i>Vanellus crassirostris</i>	
Blacksmith Lapwing	3		T	L	N	S	3	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>	
Spur-winged Lapwing	1			L			3	<i>Vanellus spinosus</i>	
Black-winged Lapwing	3		T		N		4	<i>Vanellus melanopterus</i>	
Crowned Lapwing	13		K	T	L	N	S	3	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>
Common Ringed Plover	4		T			S	2	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	
Kittlitz's Plover	1					S	1	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	
Three-banded Plover	8		T			S	2	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>	
Chestnut-banded Plover	1					S	3	<i>Charadrius pallidus</i>	

Common Snipe	4			L	N	S	2	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>		
Black-tailed Godwit	1			L			2	<i>Limosa limosa</i>		
Marsh Sandpiper	7			T	L	S	2	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>		
Common Greenshank	9			T	L	N	S	2	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	
Green Sandpiper	4			T		S	1	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		
Wood Sandpiper	9			T		N	S	3	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	
Common Sandpiper	5			T	L	S	1	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		
Little Stint	10			T	L	N	S	3	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	
Curlew Sandpiper	2				L	S	2	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>		
Sanderling	1				L		1	<i>Calidris alba</i>		
Ruff	9			T	L	N	S	3	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	
Grey-headed Gull	1					S	1	<i>Larus cirrocephalus</i>		
Gull-billed Tern	5				L	N	S	4	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>	
Whiskered Tern	1				L		1	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>		
Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse	3					S	3	<i>Pterocles exustus</i>		
Yellow-throated Sandgrouse	3					S	3	<i>Pterocles gutturalis</i>		
Black-faced Sandgrouse	7				T	S	3	<i>Pterocles decoratus</i>		
Speckled Pigeon	8			K		N	S	3	<i>Columba guinea</i>	
Rameron (Olive) Pigeon	3					N	1	<i>Columba arquatrix</i>		
Dusky Turtle-Dove	4					N	3	<i>Streptopelia lugens</i>		
African Mourning Dove	5				T	S	3	<i>Streptopelia decipiens</i>		
Red-eyed Dove	1	1h			T	N	1	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>		
Ring-necked Dove	12			K	T	L	N	S	3	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>
Laughing Dove	10			K	T	L	S	3	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	
Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove	5					L	1	<i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>		
Namaqua Dove	7				T	L	S	2	<i>Oena capensis</i>	
African Green-Pigeon	2				T	N	1	<i>Treron calva</i>		
Fischer's Lovebird	6					S	4	<i>Agapornis fischeri</i>		
Yellow-collared Lovebird	5				T	L	4	<i>Agapornis personatus</i>		
Meyer's Parrot	2				T	S	1	<i>Poicephalus meyeri</i>		
Red-bellied (Orange-billed) Parrot	3				T	1	<i>Poicephalus rufiventris</i>			
Schalow's Turaco	2					N	1	<i>Tauraco schalowi</i>		
Hartlaub's Turaco	2					N	1	<i>Tauraco hartlaubi</i>		
Bare-faced Go-away-bird	5				T	S	1	<i>Corythaixoides personatus</i>		
White-bellied Go-away-bird	4			K	T	3	<i>Corythaixoides leucogaster</i>			
Eastern Grey Plantain-eater	1					S	2	<i>Crinifer zonurus</i>		
Pied (Black-and-white) Cuckoo	2					S	1	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>		
Great Spotted Cuckoo	4				T	S	2	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>		
Red-chested Cuckoo	1	4h			T	L	S	1	<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>	
Common Cuckoo	2					S	1	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>		
African Cuckoo	2				T	1	<i>Cuculus gularis</i>			
Diederik Cuckoo	10	1h		K	T	L	S	1	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	
White-browed Coucal	10			K	T	L	N	S	1	<i>Centropus superciliosa</i>
Black Coucal	2					S	1	<i>Centropus grillii</i>		
Barn Owl	2			K		1	<i>Tyto alba</i>			
African Scops-Owl	-	1h				S	1	<i>Otus senegalensis</i>		
Spotted Eagle-Owl	1			K		1	<i>Bubo africanus</i>			
Verreaux's Eagle-Owl	3				T	S	1	<i>Bubo lacteus</i>		
Pearl-spotted Owlet	1	2h			T	S	1	<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>		
Slender-tailed Nightjar	2			K	T	1	<i>Caprimulgus clarus</i>			
African Palm-Swift	6				T	L	S	3	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	
Eurasian Swift	6					N	S	3	<i>Apus apus</i>	
African Swift	4					N	S	4	<i>Apus barbatus</i>	
Little Swift	9			K	T	L	N	S	5	<i>Apus affinis</i>
Horus Swift	1					S	1	<i>Apus horus</i>		
White-rumped Swift	7			K	T	L	S	3	<i>Apus caffer</i>	
Speckled Mousebird	9				T	L	N	S	3	<i>Colius striatus</i>
Blue-naped Mousebird	3					L	3	<i>Urocolius macrourus</i>		
Grey-headed Kingfisher	3				T	L	N	1	<i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>	
Woodland Kingfisher	6				T	S	1	<i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>		
Striped Kingfisher	2				T	1	<i>Halcyon chelicuti</i>			
Giant Kingfisher	1					L	1	<i>Megaceryle maximus</i>		
Pied Kingfisher	4				T	L	N	1	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	

Little Bee-eater	12		K	T		N	S	3	<i>Merops pusillus</i>
Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater	3						N	2	<i>Merops oreobates</i>
White-throated Bee-eater	1						S	1	<i>Merops albicollis</i>
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	2			T				3	<i>Merops persicus</i>
European Bee-eater	6		K	T	L	N		3	<i>Merops apiaster</i>
European Roller	10			T	L		S	3	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>
Lilac-breasted Roller	12		K	T	L		S	3	<i>Coracias caudata</i>
Rufous-crowned Roller	2						S	1	<i>Coracias naevia</i>
African Hoopoe	8			T			S	3	<i>Upupa africana</i>
Green Woodhoopoe	2			T			S	3	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>
Abyssinian Scimitar-bill	7			T			S	1	<i>Rhinopomastus minor</i>
Red-billed Hornbill	6			T			S	3	<i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>
Von der Decken's Hornbill	8			T			S	2	<i>Tockus deckeni</i>
Crowned Hornbill	2			T	L			1	<i>Tockus alboterminatus</i>
African Grey Hornbill	12		K	T	L		S	3	<i>Tockus nasutus</i>
Silvery-cheeked Hornbill	1				L			1	<i>Ceratogymna brevis</i>
Southern Ground-Hornbill	2			T	L			1	<i>Bucorvus leadbeateri</i>
Red-fronted Tinkerbird	2	1h		T	L			1	<i>Pogoniulus pusillus</i>
Black-throated Barbet	2				L			1	<i>Tricholaema melanocephala</i>
White-headed Barbet	1			T				1	<i>Lybius leucocephalus</i>
Red-and-yellow Barbet	4			T	L		S	1	<i>Trachyphonus erythrocephalus</i>
Usambiro Barbet	4						S	1	<i>Trachyphonus usambiro</i>
Lesser Honeyguide	2			T				1	<i>Indicator minor</i>
Nubian Woodpecker	6			T	L		S	1	<i>Campethera nubica</i>
Golden-tailed Woodpecker	1			T				1	<i>Campethera abingoni</i>
Cardinal Woodpecker	5			T			S	1	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>
Bearded Woodpecker	3			T	L		S	1	<i>Dendropicos namaquus</i>
Grey Woodpecker	7			T			S	1	<i>Dendropicos goertae</i>
Singing Bushlark	-	1h		T				1	<i>Mirafra cantillans</i>
Rufous-naped Lark	11			T	L	N	S	3	<i>Mirafra africana</i>
Flappet Lark	2						S	1	<i>Mirafra rufocinnamomea</i>
Fawn-coloured Lark	1						S	1	<i>Mirafra africanoides</i>
Fischer's Sparrow-Lark	12			T	L	N	S	4	<i>Eremopterix leucopareia</i>
Red-capped Lark	7				L	N	S	4	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>
Bank Swallow (Sand Martin)	2						S	1	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
Plain Martin	6			T		N	S	3	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>
Banded Martin	5			T		N	S	2	<i>Riparia cincta</i>
Common House Martin	2					N	S	1	<i>Delichon urbica</i>
Grey-rumped Swallow	2					N	S	3	<i>Hirundo griseopyga</i>
Rock Martin	5				L	N	S	3	<i>Hirundo fuligula</i>
Barn Swallow	14		K	T	L	N	S	4	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Wire-tailed Swallow	3					N	S	1	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>
Lesser Striped-Swallow	6			T	L		S	3	<i>Hirundo abyssinica</i>
Red-rumped Swallow	13		K	T	L	N	S	3	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>
Black Saw-wing	4					N		3	<i>Psalidoprocne holomelas</i>
African Pied Wagtail	7		K		L	N	S	2	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>
Yellow Wagtail	7				L	N	S	3	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Yellow-throated Longclaw	3			T			S	1	<i>Macronyx croceus</i>
Rosy-breasted Longclaw	2					N		1	<i>Macronyx ameliae</i>
Pangani Longclaw	1		K					1	<i>Macronyx aurantiigula</i>
Plain-backed Pipit	2						S	1	<i>Anthus leucophrys</i>
Grassland Pipit	10				L	N	S	3	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>
Tree Pipit	1	1h				N		1	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>
Long-billed Pipit	1					N		3	<i>Anthus similis</i>
Red-throated Pipit	2					N	S	1	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>
Common Bulbul	10		K	T	L	N	S	3	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>
Yellow-bellied Greenbul	2				L			1	<i>Chlorocichla flaviventris</i>
Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush	7			T	L		S	2	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>
Olive (Mountain) Thrush	1					N		1	<i>Turdus olivaceus</i>
Hunter's Cisticola	3	1h				N		2	<i>Cisticola hunteri</i>
Rattling Cisticola	13		K	T	L	N	S	3	<i>Cisticola chiniana</i>
Winding Cisticola	2					N		1	<i>Cisticola galactotes</i>
Croaking Cisticola	1						S	1	<i>Cisticola natalensis</i>

Zitting Cisticola	5	4h	T	L	S	3	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
Desert Cisticola	5		T		S	3	<i>Cisticola aridulus</i>
Pectoral-patch Cisticola	4	1h			N S	3	<i>Cisticola brunnescens</i>
Tawny-flanked Prinia	10		K	T	L N S	3	<i>Prinia subflava</i>
Yellow-breasted Apalis	2		T		N	1	<i>Apalis flavida</i>
Grey-capped Warbler	2				N	1	<i>Eminia lepida</i>
Grey-backed Camaroptera	11		K	T	L S	3	<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>
Cinnamon Bracken Warbler	1				N	1	<i>Bradypterus cinnamomeus</i>
Broad-tailed Warbler	1				S	1	<i>Schoenicola brevirostris</i>
Lesser Swamp-Warbler	1				N	1	<i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>
Eastern Olivaceous Warbler	4		K	T	L	1	<i>Hippolais pallida</i>
Yellow-bellied Eremomela	1		T			1	<i>Eremomela icteropygialis</i>
Red-faced Crombec	3		T	L		3	<i>Sylvietta whytii</i>
Northern Crombec	1		K			1	<i>Sylvietta brachyura</i>
Willow Warbler	8	1h	T	L	N S	1	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Garden Warbler	1				S	1	<i>Sylvia borin</i>
Barred Warber	1		K			1	<i>Sylvia nisoria</i>
Brown Parisoma	2				N	1	<i>Parisoma lugens</i>
Banded Parisoma	4		T		S	1	<i>Parisoma boehmi</i>
Silverbird	5		T		S	2	<i>Empidonis semipartitus</i>
African Grey Flycatcher	11		T	L	S	2	<i>Bradornis microrhynchus</i>
White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher	4				N S	3	<i>Melaenornis fischeri</i>
Spotted Flycatcher	6		T	L	N S	1	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
African Dusky Flycatcher	4				N	1	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>
Cape Robin-Chat	6				N	3	<i>Cossypha caffra</i>
White-browed Robin-Chat	4			L	N S	1	<i>Cossypha heuglini</i>
Spotted Morning-Thrush	4		T	L		1	<i>Cichladusa guttata</i>
White-browed Scrub-Robin	4	1h	T	L		1	<i>Cercotrichas leucophrys</i>
Whinchat	1				N	1	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
African Stonechat	4				N	2	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>
Northern Wheatear	9		T	L	N S	3	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
Pied Wheatear	3		T	L		1	<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>
Capped Wheatear	6				N S	3	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>
Isabelline Wheatear	4			L	N	1	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>
Northern Anteater Chat	3				N	1	<i>Myrmecocichla aethiops</i>
Mocking Cliff-Chat	1			L		1	<i>Thammodia cinnamomeiventris</i>
Chin-spot Batis	5		T	L	N	1	<i>Batis molitor</i>
Black-lored Babbler	4				S	3	<i>Turdoides sharpei</i>
Northern Pied-Babbler	3		T			3	<i>Turdoides hypoleucus</i>
Arrow-marked Babbler	2		T		S	3	<i>Turdoides jardineii</i>
Red-throated Tit	2		T		S	1	<i>Melaniparus fringillinus</i>
Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird	1		T			1	<i>Anthreptes orientalis</i>
Collared Sunbird	1				N	1	<i>Hedydipna collaris</i>
Olive Sunbird	3				N	2	<i>Cyanomitra obscura</i>
Amethyst Sunbird	2		T			1	<i>Chalcomitra amethystina</i>
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	6		T		N S	2	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>
Tacazze Sunbird	3				N	1	<i>Nectarinia tacazze</i>
Bronze Sunbird	2				N	1	<i>Nectarinia kilimensis</i>
Golden-winged Sunbird	3				N	3	<i>Nectarinia reichenowi</i>
Malachite Sunbird	1				N	1	<i>Nectarinia famosa</i>
Eastern Double-collared Sunbird	4				N	3	<i>Cinnyris mediocris</i>
Beautiful Sunbird	10		T	L	S	3	<i>Cinnyris pulchellus</i>
Mariqua Sunbird	2		T	L		2	<i>Cinnyris mariquensis</i>
Variable Sunbird	8		K	T	L S	3	<i>Cinnyris venusta</i>
Montane White-eye	3				N	1	<i>Zosterops poliogaster</i>
Abyssinian White-eye	1		K			1	<i>Zosterops abyssinicus</i>
Red-backed Shrike	4			L	S	1	<i>Lanius collurio</i>
Daurian Shrike	3			L	S	1	<i>Lanius phoenicuroides</i>
Grey-backed Fiscal	3				S	3	<i>Lanius excubitoroides</i>
Long-tailed Fiscal	4		K	T		3	<i>Lanius cabanisi</i>
Taita Fiscal	3				S	1	<i>Lanius dorsalis</i>
Common Fiscal	6			L	N	3	<i>Lanius collaris</i>
Magpie Shrike	8		T		S	3	<i>Corvinella melanoleuca</i>

Northern White-crowned Shrike	11		T	L		S	3	<i>Eurocephalus rueppelli</i>
Brubru	9		T			S	1	<i>Nilaus afer</i>
Black-backed Puffback	2			L	N		1	<i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>
Black-crowned Tchagra	3			L	N	S	1	<i>Tchagra senegala</i>
Brown-crowned Tchagra	6		T	L		S	1	<i>Tchagra australis</i>
Tropical Boubou	4				N		1	<i>Laniarius aethiopicus</i>
Slate-coloured Boubou	6		T			S	1	<i>Laniarius funebris</i>
Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike	1			L			1	<i>Telophorus sulfureopectus</i>
Grey-headed Bushshrike	1			L			1	<i>Malaconotus blanchoti</i>
White-crested Helmetshrike	1					S	1	<i>Prionops plumatus</i>
Fork-tailed Drongo	10		T	L		S	2	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>
Cape Rook	2					S	1	<i>Corvus capensis</i>
Pied Crow	4	K		L		S	3	<i>Corvus albus</i>
White-naped Raven	4	K			N		3	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>
Wattled Starling	9		T			S	4	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>
Greater Blue-eared Glossy-Starling	1		T				11	<i>Lamprotornis chalybaeus</i>
Rüppell's Long-tailed Starling	3					S	3	<i>Lamprotornis purpuropterus</i>
Superb Starling	14	K	T	L	N	S	4	<i>Lamprotornis superbus</i>
Hildebrandt's Starling	8		T	L		S	3	<i>Lamprotornis hildebrandti</i>
Violet-backed Starling	3	K		L	N		3	<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>
Ashy Starling E	4		T				4	<i>Spreo unicolor</i>
Red-winged Starling	2			L			3	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>
Red-billed Oxpecker	11		T	L	N	S	3	<i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>
Yellow-billed Oxpecker	4		T		N		3	<i>Buphagus africanus</i>
House Sparrow	4	K					3	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Rufous Sparrow	4		T			S	3	<i>Passer motitensis</i>
Grey-headed Sparrow	7	K	T	L		S	3	<i>Passer griseus</i>
Swahili Sparrow	5					S	3	<i>Passer suahelicus</i>
Chestnut Sparrow	3		T				3	<i>Passer eminibey</i>
Yellow-spotted Petronia	1			L			1	<i>Petronia pyrgita</i>
Yellow-throated Petronia	2			L	N		1	<i>Petronia superciliaris</i>
Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver	9		T			S	3	<i>Bubalornis niger</i>
White-headed Buffalo-Weaver	6		T			S	3	<i>Dinemellia dinemelli</i>
Speckle-fronted Weaver	8		T	L		S	3	<i>Sporopipes frontalis</i>
Rufous-tailed Weaver E	10		T		N	S	4	<i>Histurgops ruficauda</i>
Grey-capped Social Weaver	1					S	3	<i>Pseudonigrita arnaudi</i>
Baglafaecht Weaver	6			L	N		3	<i>Ploceus baglafaecht</i>
Lesser Masked Weaver	5		T	L			3	<i>Ploceus intermedius</i>
Black-necked Weaver	2		T				1	<i>Ploceus nigricollis</i>
Holub's Golden Weaver	2			L	N		1	<i>Ploceus xanthops</i>
Vitelline Masked-Weaver	6		T	L		S	2	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>
Black-headed Weaver	3					S	3	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>
Speke's Weaver	2				N		3	<i>Ploceus spekei</i>
Red-headed Weaver	1		T				1	<i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>
Cardinal Quelea	1		T				1	<i>Quelea cardinalis</i>
Red-billed Quelea	2	K	T				3	<i>Quelea quelea</i>
Black Bishop	5		T	L		S	2	<i>Euplectes gierowii</i>
Black-winged Bishop	1			L			1	<i>Euplectes hordeaceus</i>
Southern Red Bishop	4		T	L		S	1	<i>Euplectes orix</i>
Yellow Bishop	4			L	N		3	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>
Fan-tailed Widowbird	1				N		3	<i>Euplectes axillaris</i>
White-winged Widowbird	1			L			1	<i>Euplectes albonotatus</i>
Red-collared Widowbird	2				N		1	<i>Euplectes ardens</i>
Grosbeak Weaver	2			L	N		3	<i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>
Green-winged Pytilia	6	K	T	L			1	<i>Pytilia melba</i>
Red-billed Firefinch	4	K	T	L			1	<i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>
African Firefinch	2		T		N		3	<i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>
Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu	9		T	L		S	3	<i>Uraeginthus bengalus</i>
Blue-capped Cordon-bleu	11	K	T	L		S	3	<i>Uraeginthus cyanocephalus</i>
Purple Grenadier	5	K		L	N		2	<i>Uraeginthus ianthinogaster</i>
Yellow-bellied Waxbill	2				N		3	<i>Estrilda quartinia</i>
Crimson-rumped Waxbill	2			L			1	<i>Estrilda rhodopyga</i>
African Quail-Finch	1				N		2	<i>Ortygospiza atricollis</i>

Bronze Mannikin	1		L		2	<i>Lonchura cucullata</i>
Cut-throat Finch	1	T		S	3	<i>Amadina fasciata</i>
Village Indigobird	2		L		3	<i>Vidua chalybeata</i>
Steel-blue Whydah	2			N S	1	<i>Vidua hypocherina</i>
Straw-tailed Whydah	1	T			1	<i>Vidua fischeri</i>
Pin-tailed Whydah	7	T	L	N S	3	<i>Vidua macroura</i>
Yellow-crowned Canary	1			N	1	<i>Serinus canicollis</i>
African Citril	4		L	N	3	<i>Serinus citrinelloides</i>
Yellow-fronted Canary	5		L	S	3	<i>Serinus mozambicus</i>
White-bellied Canary	4		L	S	3	<i>Serinus dorsostriatus</i>
Yellow-rumped Seedeater	4		L	S	3	<i>Serinus reichenowi</i>
Streaky Seedeater	4			N	3	<i>Serinus striolatus</i>
Thick-billed Seedeater	1			N	1	<i>Serinus burtoni</i>

Taxonomy and nomenclature mainly follows *Birds of East Africa* (revised in 1996), the official list of East African birds, originally published in 1980 by Britton, P.L.; it is followed by Stevenson and Fanshawe in *Field Guide to the Birds of East Africa* (2002), along with recent updates.

Taxonomic notes:

The Eurasian Buzzards seen are of the migrant Steppe form *vulpinus*, which some authorities argue should have specific status.

The Red-billed Hornbill seen in the Serengeti is considered by many to be an endemic species Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus ruahae*.

The Fawn-coloured Lark seen on the last day in the Serengeti may be split in the future as Foxy Lark *Mirafraga alopex*.

The thrushes encountered at Ngorongoro are considered by some to be a split species Mountain Thrush *Turdus abyssinicus*.

MAMMALS

Yellow-winged Bat	4	T		S	1	<i>Lavia frons</i>	
Black-faced Vervet	9	T	L	S	1	<i>Cercopithecus aethiops</i>	
Blue Monkey (Sykes' Monkey)	2		L	N	1	<i>Cercopithecus mitis</i>	
Olive Baboon	9	T	L	S	1	<i>Papio anubis</i>	
Golden Jackal	4			N	4	<i>Canis aureus</i>	
Black-backed (Silver-backed) Jackal	7	T		N	2	<i>Canis mesomelas</i>	
Bat-eared Fox	2	T		S	2	<i>Octocyon megalotis</i>	
Common Genet	4	T		S	3	<i>Genetta genetta</i>	
Dwarf Mongoose	3	T	L		1	<i>Helogale undulata</i>	
Large Grey Mongoose	1			S	3	<i>Herpestes ichneumon</i>	
Slender (Black-tipped) Mongoose	1			N	1	<i>Herpestes sanguineus</i>	
Marsh Mongoose	1		L		1	<i>Atliax paludinosus</i>	
Banded Mongoose	6	T		N	1	<i>Mungos mungo</i>	
Spotted Hyena	7	1h	T	L	N	3	<i>Crocota crocota</i>
Cheetah	2			S	3	<i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>	
Lion	8	T		N	3	<i>Panthera leo</i>	
African Wildcat	1			S	1	<i>Felis silvestris lybica</i>	
Tree Hyrax	1	T			1	<i>Dendrohyrax arboreus</i>	
Rock Hyrax	3	T			3	<i>Heterohyrax brucei</i>	
African Elephant	11	T	L	N	3	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	
Black Rhinoceros	2			N	1	<i>Diceros bicornis</i>	
Burchell's (Common) Zebra	11	T	L	N	4	<i>Equus burchelli</i>	
Hippopotamus	6		L	N	4	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>	
Warthog	14	T	L	N	3	<i>Phacochoerus aethiopicus</i>	
Common Giraffe	9	T	L	S	3	<i>Giraffa camelopardalis</i>	
Coke's Hartebeest (Kongoni)	7	T		N	3	<i>Alcelaphus buselaphus cokii</i>	
Wildebeest (White-bearded Gnu)	10		L	N	6	<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>	
Topi	2			S	3	<i>Damaliscus korrigum</i>	
Steinbok	3	T		S	1	<i>Raphicerus campestris</i>	
Kirk's Dikdik	10	T		S	3	<i>Madoqua kirkii</i>	
Defassa Waterbuck	8	T	L	S	3	<i>Kobus ellipsiprymnus/defassa</i>	
Bohor Reedbuck	3	T		S	3	<i>Redunca redunca</i>	
Impala	11	T	L	S	4	<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>	
Thomson's Gazelle	7			N	4	<i>Gazella thomsonii</i>	
Grant's Gazelle	9	T		N	4	<i>Gazelle granti</i>	
Bushbuck	1		L		1	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>	
Eland	7	T		N	3	<i>Taurotragus oryx</i>	
African Buffalo	13	T	L	N	4	<i>Syncerus caffer</i>	
Ochre Bush Squirrel	1	T			1	<i>Paraxerus ochraceus</i>	
Cape Hare	3			N	1	<i>Lepus capensis</i>	
Scrub Hare	2			N	1	<i>Lepus saxatilis</i>	
African Savanna Hare	1			S	1	<i>Lepus microtis</i>	
Grass Mouse	2			S	1	<i>Lemniscomys sp</i>	

Other WILDLIFE:

Crocodile
 Monitor Lizard
 Leopard Tortoise
 Flap-necked Chameleon
 Sand Snake

These lists represent those birds and other animals seen by party members of this tour.

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Verreaux's Eagle-Owl



Martial Eagle



Kori Bustard



Water Thick-knee



Elephant



Wildebeest



Golden Jackal



Hippos fighting

**Front cover: Grey-crowned Crane
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