Kenya & Tanzania

Birds & Big Game I

30th March to 16th April 2023 (18 days)



Plains Zebras by Rob Williams

Kenya and Tanzania are the quintessential African safari destinations and provide the ultimate birding and big-game experience. There exists nowhere else on the planet such an amazing volume and diversity of large animals; and, in addition to this, both countries each support over one thousand bird species, many of which are large, bright, colourful and easy to observe. Our tour is designed to maximize both the big game and birding experience by selecting the very best and most accessible destinations in these two vast and exciting lands.

We use a superb standard of accommodation throughout and comfortable safari vehicles with pop-up roof hatches to optimize viewing. This is an incredible and immensely rewarding birding safari augmented by some of the most outstanding mammal viewing on the continent; we greatly look forward to sharing the natural wonders of East Africa with you!

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Arusha**
Day 2	**Arusha to Tarangire National Park**
Day 3	**Tarangire National Park**
Day 4	**Tarangire National Park to Ngorongoro Crater**
Day 5	**Ngorongoro Crater**
Day 6	**Ngorongoro Crater to the Serengeti National Park via Oldupai Gorge**
Days 7 & 8	**Serengeti National Park**
Day 9	**Serengeti National Park to Arusha**
Day 10	**Arusha to Amboseli National Park**
Day 11	**Amboseli National Park**
Day 12	**Amboseli National Park to Mt. Kenya**
Day 13	**Mt. Kenya**
Day 14	**Mt. Kenya to Shaba National Reserve**
Days 15 & 16	**Shaba and Buffalo Springs National Reserves**
Day 17	**Buffalo Springs National Reserve to Lake Nakuru National Park**
Day 18	**Lake Nakuru National Park to Nairobi and depart**



Birding sites in detail

Tarangire National Park. The Tarangire ecosystem is the third largest in Tanzania, sprawling over a vast 20 000km^2 (over 7 700 miles^2). Seasonally, the park supports the second largest concentration of wildlife in Tanzania surpassed only by the Serengeti during peak migration! However, Tarangire is most famous for its huge numbers of African Elephant that congregate along the meandering Tarangire River. We will take time to observe these massive pachyderms and will be amazed at their tender family interactions. Other mammals likely to be seen include the stately Waterbuck, Impala, comical Common Warthog and (Maasai) Giraffe.



Superb Starling by Adam Riley

The Acacia woodland and Baobab studded grasslands also provide a home for a large number of birds, with the park total exceeding 500 species! During our time here we have the opportunity to find African Hawk-Eagle, the diminutive Pygmy Falcon, Double-banded Courser, Red-necked and Yellow-necked Spurfowls, Black-faced Sandgrouse, White-bellied Bustard, Meyer's and Red-bellied Parrots, Bare-faced Go-away-bird, Red-and-yellow and D'Arnaud's Barbets, Mottled Spinetail, Spotted Palm Thrush, Banded Parisoma, flocks of Northern Pied Babbler and delightful Red-cheeked and Blue-capped Cordon-bleus. Two major targets for the area are the Tanzanian endemic, Ashy Starling and East African endemic Yellow-collared Lovebird. We will also visit the vast Silale Swamp which is excellent for waterfowl. Species to look out for here will be African Openbill, Goliath Heron, Southern Pochard, Fulvous Whistling Duck, African Jacana and Long-toed Lapwing. If we are fortunate, we may spot a Black Coucal or flush out a secretive African Crake!

Night birding around our lodge can be fruitful for Slender-tailed and Freckled Nightjars and the diminutive African Scops Owl.

Ngorongoro Crater Conservancy. The vast Ngorongoro Conservation Area covering 8 300km^2 (3 200miles^2) is a World Heritage Site that protects Earth's largest intact volcanic caldera (260km^2 / 100miles^2) and one of the world's most scenically breath-taking natural areas. What's more, the crater is also home to one of the planet's densest populations of large mammals.



Rufous-tailed Weaver by Rob Williams

The fabulous forests that cloak the rim of this iconic site are home to a feast of Afro-montane forest species such as Hildebrandt's Francolin, Schalow's Turaco, the elusive Brown-backed Woodpecker, beautiful Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Mountain Greenbul, Brown-headed Apalis, Brown Parisoma, skulking Cinnamon Bracken Warbler, Dusky and White-eyed Slaty Flycatchers, busy flocks of Broad-ringed White-eyes and dazzling Tacazze, Golden-winged and Eastern Double-collared Sunbirds, Baglafecht Weaver and Streaky Seedeater.



Ngorongoro Crater vista by Rob Williams

The drive down to the Ngorongoro crater floor (600m / 1,970ft) is excellent for birding, and we will keep our eyes peeled for Variable Sunbird, Singing, Hunter's and the localized but dapper Lynes's Cisticolas, Cinnamon-breasted Bunting, Yellow-crowned Canary and Southern Citril.

The crater is deluxe 'Big Five' territory and a photographer's dream. Most of the animals are extremely relaxed and habituated to the presence of human admirers and the high crater walls, usually cloaked in a pure white frosting of clouds, make for dramatic back-drops to animal photography. In addition, the crater floor provides a mini-example of a complete African ecosystem with forests, lakes, grasslands, swamps and rivers. Between 25,000 and 30,000 large animals reside in the crater and great concentrations of Common Wildebeest and Plains Zebra are supplemented by smaller numbers of African Elephant (we hope to find some of the crater's famous Tuskers), African Buffalo, the highly endangered Black Rhinoceros, Common Hippopotamus, Eland and both Thomson's and Grant's Gazelles. The crater reputably boasts the world's highest concentration of predators and these include Lion, Cheetah, Leopard, Serval, Golden and Black-backed Jackals, Bat-eared Fox and Spotted Hyena.

The birding is equally rewarding and we can expect to find many of the picture-book species that make Africa so famous. Pink rafts of Greater and Lesser Flamingos on Lake Magadi, Common Ostrich striding over the grasslands, regal Kori Bustard (the world's heaviest flying bird), Saddle-billed and Yellow-billed Storks, the elegant Grey Crowned Crane and good numbers of raptors including the unique Secretarybird, Bateleur, Martial Eagle, Black-chested Snake Eagle and Augur Buzzard could all be found. Amongst the many other species that we may encounter, we hope to see the uncommon Shelley's Francolin, Black-bellied Bustard, Dusky Turtle Dove, White-headed Barbet, Pectoral-patch Cisticola, comical Anteater Chat, Black-crowned Tchagra, Orange-breasted Bushshrike, attractive and melodious Grey-capped Warbler, Yellow Bishop, the range-restricted Rufous-tailed Weaver, beautiful Rosy-throated and the East African endemic Pangani Longclaws, Fan-tailed Widowbird and the skittish Quailfinch, the latter probably more easily seen here than anywhere else!



Black Rhinoceros by Andre Bernon



Cheetah by Rob Williams

At dusk will attempt to track down Montane Nightjar.

Oldupai Gorge. As we approach Oldupai Gorge, we pass through an area that is home to the Maasai people. These tall, proud nomadic warriors are famous for their legendary prowess in battle and single-handed acts of bravery in fights with wild animals. Here, we have the opportunity for an optional (non-inclusive) excursion to a traditional Maasai village. A local guide will explain their unique culture as you watch the people busy about their daily chores. You will also be treated to a display of the famous Maasai dancing and will have unlimited photographic opportunities.

Our lunch venue will be the well-known Oldupai Gorge, so named after the wild Sisal plant that grows there. As a result of massive geological activities over the eons, Oldupai provides a unique record of countless years of fossilized creatures and plants in a series of stratified rock-layers. Most famous of all discoveries, which revolutionized thinking on hominid evolution, have been those of Australopithecine hominid remains found by the Leakey family. We will have time to explore the very informative museum at the site that exhibits replicas of the hominid fossils and extinct animals that used to inhabit the region, ranging from River Elephant and Giant Swine to Short-necked Giraffe!

A bird walk around the site may yield arid-country species such as Slate-colored Boubou, Red-fronted Tinkerbird, Rufous Chatterer, Kenya Sparrow, Vitelline Masked Weaver, White-bellied Canary, Southern Grosbeak-Canary and the beautiful Purple Grenadier.

Serengeti National Park. Extending for an incredible 15 000km^2 (5 790miles^2), the Serengeti is one of the world's largest natural sanctuaries. Despite the vast space, the numbers of game that we can expect to see is still astounding. The Serengeti, literally meaning 'Endless Plain' in Maasai, consists mostly of grasslands interspersed with Acacia woodlands and rocky outcrops. There is little permanent water in the park and this fact, combined with a fairly regular rainfall pattern, has resulted in the world-famous Wildebeest migration, when up to two million large ungulates move between the Serengeti in Tanzania and Maasai Mara in Kenya. Our visit is timed so that we might bear witness to unbelievable numbers of wildebeest, zebra and antelope, an unrivalled and primeval wonder of the natural world!



Grey-crested Helmetshrike by Adam Riley

During our visit to the Serengeti we will explore the southern and central areas. Once again, we have the chance of finding the full complement of African mega fauna. We hope to see lazing prides of Lion, Leopard draped over large trees, aloof Cheetah resting on or near vantage points,



Purple Grenadier by Rob Williams

skulking Spotted Hyena, jackals and, if we are fortunate, the bizarre Bat-eared Fox. Several species of smaller cats such as Caracal, Serval or African Wild Cat may also be seen. Besides the wildebeest, the Serengeti supports huge populations of Plains Zebra, African Buffalo, (Maasai) Giraffe, Common Warthog, Thomson's and Grant's Gazelles, Impala, Tsessebe, Hartebeest, Bohor Reedbuck, Eland and smaller numbers of African Elephant, Common Hippopotamus, rubber-nosed Kirk's Dikdik, Oribi and Defassa Waterbuck.

Additionally, there will certainly be a veritable feast of superb birds to keep us very busy for our time spent exploring the park. Star birds include the East African endemics Grey-crested Helmetshrike, and Red-throated Tit, the striking Steel-blue Whydah and the highly localised Karamoja Apalis. Other specials are Grey-breasted Spurfowl, Fischer's Lovebird, Rufous-tailed Weaver, Usambiro Barbet and Athi Short-toed Lark.

These birds can be found together with a host of other species such as the magnificent Saddle-billed Stork, up to six species of vulture, the grotesque Marabou Stork, stately Secretarybird, Bateleur, Chestnut-bellied and Yellow-throated Sandgrouse, Kori and White-bellied Bustards, coveys of Coqui Francolin, Temminck's Courser, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Red-fronted Barbet, Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbill, the whimsical Southern Ground Hornbill, Abyssinian Scimitarbill, Black-lored Babbler, Taita and Grey-backed Fiscals, Magpie Shrike, Hildebrandt's and splendid Rüppell's Starlings, both species of oxpecker, Silverbird, the cute Buff-bellied Warbler, aptly named Beautiful Sunbird, Red-headed and Speckle-fronted Weavers, Grey-capped Social Weaver, Chestnut Sparrow, Blue-capped Cordon-bleu, Black-faced Waxbill and, if we are fortunate, Grey-headed Silverbill.

Not only is this a great place in which to find game and birds, but the wide green-gold savannas, dotted with thorn trees, also make it ideal for photography. The Serengeti is ravishingly beautiful and offers long, undisturbed views and utterly dramatic panoramas.

Arusha & surrounds. Near Arusha, vast tracts of Acacia woodland hold Red-throated Tit, Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird, Red-faced Crombec, African Penduline Tit, Golden-breasted Bunting, African Grey Flycatcher and Reichenow's Seedeater. The more arid, drier woodland may turn up Chestnut Sparrow, Rosy-patched Bushshrike, Spotted Palm Thrush, Northern Pied Babbler, Pygmy Falcon and Blue-naped Mousebird.



Serval by Julian Parsons

Afro-montane forest habitat in Arusha can produce Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, White-eared Barbet, Stripe-faced & Grey-olive Greenbul, Red-throated Twinspot, Black-throated Wattle-eye, African Emerald Cuckoo, Red-winged and Violet-backed Starlings, Retz's Helmetshrike, African Black Duck, Giant Kingfisher, Taveta Weaver, African Pygmy and



Martial Eagle by Rob Williams

Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Pallid Honeyguide, Mountain Oriole, Mbulu White-eye, Red-backed Mannikin, shy Rüppell's Robin-Chat and with a little luck, Mountain Wagtail along the stream.

Mammals we may see here include the white-throated sub-species of Blue Monkey (Zanzibar Syke's), Guereza (Eastern Black-and-white Colobus) and Ochre Bush Squirrel.

An optional night walk could produce African Wood Owl and Thick-tailed Greater Galago.

Amboseli National Park. Amboseli National Park lies at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak at 5 895m above sea level (almost 20 000ft), and the world's highest freestanding mountain. Kilimanjaro's snow-capped peaks dominate every aspect of this park and form a stunning backdrop to the wildlife here. During our exploration of the park's open plains, swamps and lakes, we will once again have the opportunity to enjoy superb game viewing. Amboseli is particularly well known for its huge population of African Elephant, which are part of the longest-standing elephant and conservation research program in the world. Possible new mammal species today include the localised Yellow Baboon (as opposed to Olive Baboon that dominates most of East Africa) and, if we are fortunate, Serval.

There is a good combination of arid and moist habitats in Amboseli. Dry-country specials we will look for include Buff-crested Bustard, Pink-breasted Lark, Tiny Cisticola, Mouse-colored Penduline Tit, Rosy-patched Bushshrike, Fischer's Starling and Grey-headed Silverbill. The moist grasslands of the park are good for Hartlaub's Bustard and Pangani Longclaw. We should also find a good selection of waterbirds including numerous waders, Greater Painted-snipe, several ducks and numerous species of herons and storks.

Mount Kenya. The geographical focus of the central highlands is Mount Kenya, the second highest mountain in Africa with a snow-capped peak rising to 5 199m (17 100ft) above sea level. Birding and game viewing from the balcony of our lodge can be spectacular – in fact, the localised Red-fronted Parrot, Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon, Kenrick's and Sharpe's Starlings, African Buffalo, Bushbuck and African Elephant can all sometimes be seen while we eat breakfast!



Mt. Kilimanjaro as seen from Amboseli NP by Glen Valentine

Once again we will have the opportunity of birding rich forest and forest edge habitats and species we will look for include Crowned Eagle (Africa's version of the Harpy Eagle),



Gerenuk by Glen Valentine

Mountain Buzzard, African Goshawk, African Cuckoo-Hawk, Hartlaub's Turaco (a stunning bird that is particularly common here), beautiful but secretive Narina and Bar-tailed Trogons, querulous flocks of White-headed Wood Hoopoe, impressive Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, Moustached and Yellow-rumped Tinkerbirds, the beautiful Black-throated, Chestnut-throated and Grey Apalises, African Hill Babbler (an accomplished songster), Black-backed Puffback, Mountain Oriole, Olive-breasted, Yellow-whiskered and Slender-billed Greenbuls, Grey Cuckooshrike, Mountain Yellow Warbler, White-tailed Crested Flycatcher, Brown Woodland Warbler, Slender-billed and Waller's Starlings, White-starred Robin, Rüppell's Robin-Chat, Abyssinian Crimsonwing, Kikuyu White-eye, Northern Double-collared Sunbird, Brown-capped Weaver, Thick-billed Seedeater, mixed flocks of Kandt's Waxbill and Red-backed Mannikin and, possibly, the shy Oriole Finch.

Mammals are also well represented on the slopes of Mt. Kenya and we will be looking for Eastern Black-and-white Colobus, Blue Monkey (the attractive local race is called Kolb's White-collared Monkey), Harvey's Duiker, Suni Antelope and Bushbuck. We will quite likely fall asleep tonight to the eerie calls of Montane Nightjar and Southern Tree Hyrax!

Mount Kenya to Shaba. This road passes through montane grasslands and fields where we hope to find Long-tailed, Red-collared and exquisite Jackson's Widowbirds.

Shaba and Buffalo Springs National Reserves. Shaba is known as one of the most scenically attractive reserves in Kenya, and together with neighbouring Buffalo Springs boasts a unique collection of game only found in this region, including (Reticulated) Giraffe, the attractive Grevy's Zebra, Lesser Kudu, giraffe-necked Gerenuk and Beisa Oryx. These reserves consist of rugged mountains, Acacia woodland and inhospitable lava plains dissected by strips of verdant riverine vegetation along the Ewaso Nyiro River, while isolated springs away from the river provide much needed water for the areas' faunal inhabitants.



Marabou Stork & Lesser Flamingo by Julian Parsons

Shaba, made famous by the late Joy Adamson and her leopardess Penny, has also gained media attention due to it being used to film parts of the Hollywood movie 'Out of Africa' and the reality show 'Survivor: Africa'. We will be spending nights in both Shaba and Buffalo Springs National Reserves.

Some special birds that we will search for through the desolate, but beautiful semi-desert scrub and riverine vegetation during these two days include Somali Ostrich, the strange and colourful Vulturine



Reticulate Giraffe by Julian Parsons

Guineafowl, Somali Courser, Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse, White-throated and Somali Bee-eaters, Grant's Wood Hoopoe, the localised White-headed Mousebird, Nyanza Swift overhead, Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill, Greater Honeyguide, Black-throated Barbet, Fan-tailed Raven, Red-winged, Pink-breasted and Williams's Larks, Ashy Cisticola, Brown-tailed Rock Chat, Northern Crombec, Yellow-vented Eremomela, Grey Wren-Warbler, the strange scrub-dwelling Red-fronted Warbler, Rufous Chatterer, Pygmy Batis, Acacia Tit, Northern Puffback, Rosy-patched Bushshrike, the breathtaking Golden-breasted and quirky Bristle-crowned Starlings, Golden Pipit, Black-bellied and Hunter's Sunbirds, Straw-tailed Whydah, Black-capped Social Weaver, White-headed Buffalo Weaver, Donaldson Smith's Sparrow-Weaver, Golden Palm Weaver, Chestnut Weaver, Crimson-rumped Waxbill, African Silverbill, Cut-throat Finch, Parrot-billed Sparrow and Somali Bunting.

Lake Nakuru National Park. Originally declared a national park because of its vast flamingo population, Lake Nakuru is also known for supporting populations of both species of African rhinoceros. The levels of the blue-green alkaline waters of the lake vary annually and this, with other accompanying environmental changes, causes considerable variation in the flamingo population (from millions to none at all). However, when they are present en masse the lake turns a gorgeous rosy pink and the Lesser Flamingos usually form a pink wall along the entire length of the lake. Our lodge offers a unique vantage point overlooking this amazing spectacle.

A game drive through the park is likely to produce African Buffalo, Plains Zebra, the glamorous (Rothschild's) Giraffe, several antelope species and Lion and Leopard may be found. Aside from flamingos, other waterbirds abound and we can expect to find both species of African pelicans (Great White usually present in large numbers), cormorants, egrets, herons, ibises, ducks, African Spoonbill, the regal African Fish Eagle and noisy groups of Pied Kingfisher. Other species we may encounter include Coqui and Hildebrandt's Francolins, White-fronted Bee-eater, Green Wood Hoopoe, Red-throated Wryneck, Eastern Grey and Nubian Woodpeckers, Red-rumped and Mosque Swallows, Mocking Cliff Chat, Little Rock Thrush, Arrow-marked Babbler, the scarce Grey-crested Helmetshrike, Rüppell's and Greater Blue-eared Starlings, and Speke's Weaver.

Kinangop Plateau. We make a short stop in the upland grasslands on the Kinangop Plateau to search for the rare endemic, Sharpe's Longclaw.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Undemanding. Suitable for all birding / wildlife interest levels and mobility capabilities.
Birding Ease		Undemanding. Most species provide good visuals in open conditions. Forest edge birding is limited.
Accommodation		Very comfortable.
Walking / Trails		Very little walking, mostly around lodge gardens.
Vehicles / Roads		Comfortable safari vehicle with pop open roof. Mostly flat sealed roads between major towns. Dirt roads within most wildlife areas.
Photography		Excellent. From vehicle and in lodge gardens. No dedicated hides.
Annoyances		Can be bright and hot. Biting Tsetse fly are encountered.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to lunch on day 18;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursion to a traditional Maasai village;
- Optional guided forest walks;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes made need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- To ensure your comfort and that of your companions, please limit yourself to one medium-sized suitcase or duffel bag (20 kg / 44 lb) and one carry-on bag, as space in the vehicles is limited.
- Due to the presence of potentially dangerous game, we will be spending much of this tour in vehicles, including birding time.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour starts with a welcome dinner on the evening of day 1. As this is an arrival day, you are free to arrive at any time. The tour will conclude in the late afternoon of day 18.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Kilimanjaro International Airport, Arusha (IATA: JRO) in Tanzania and Nairobi International Airport, Nairobi (IATA: NBO), in Kenya are the main port of entry and exit for this tour. The most reliable and regular routes for North American and European travellers flying out of Kilimanjaro is via Amsterdam (KLM) or Nairobi.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements. The following website provides detailed information about visa eligibility and assistance with online applications options where viable: Visa HQ for Travel

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.