

Tanzania Safari in Partnership with Becoming an Outdoors Woman



Trip Report
May 4-13, 2019

Table of Contents

[Table of Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Welcome to Tanzania!](#)

[Arusha National Park](#)

[Ngorongoro National Park](#)

[Serengeti National Park](#)

[Awake in the Serengeti](#)

[Ndutu-Olduvai Gorge & Maasai Village](#)

[Lake Eyasi Hadzabe & Datoga Tribes](#)

[Lake Manyara National Park](#)

[Tarangire National Park -- Elephants in the Rain](#)

[Fringe Animals a.k.a. The Cleanup Crew](#)

[The Baboon Incident](#)

[Index:](#)



Introduction

By Tara Short

Karibu! I had the pleasure of traveling with 11 women to Tanzania in May 2019. The expedition was like a story-book fairytale complete with magical rainbows and extraordinary animals.

We started at Arusha National Park with the end of a rainbow terminating in a green valley filled with zebras and an albino baboon, and ended the safari 9 days later with the end of another rainbow in a green valley filled with zebras at Maramboi Lodge.



We explored Arusha National Park, Ngorongoro Crater Conservation Area, Serengeti National Park, Lake Manyara National Park, and Tarangire National Park. We witnessed leopards appearing on red roads out of rainforest mist. We saw elephants dancing in the rain. We met with people who are living the same way their ancestors did hundreds of years ago. We sang songs with people who didn't know our language, and we shared an unforgettable experience together. Fairytales always have a happy ending, and for all of us it was looking back at our long list of species observed, reminiscing about Tanzania's beautiful landscapes, meeting people from cultures very different from our own, and getting to share it all with a great group of Adventure Buddies and now life-long friends.. Many of the participants on this trip came here not knowing each other. In the end, we have life-long friends of which we are now part of each other's story.

No trip is exactly like the other. That is why we put together this trip report. This is a summary of our experience and a collaborative effort from participants on the trip.

If you are reading this and are interested in joining us on a future trip please contact me for more details.

Asante Sana

Tara

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Above: Zebras at Arusha National Park at the end of the rainbow.

Welcome to Tanzania!

By Pearl Struminger

It is generally a bit unnerving arriving at a small airport in a foreign land on a faraway continent in the dark, especially when whatever will follow is an unknown, but Tara was perfectly aware of these circumstances and had made all the necessary arrangements. We walked out into the warm air at Kilimanjaro airport and immediately saw the Green Edventures sign and big welcoming smiles. Baraza, Karato and Vitalis introduced themselves to each of the six women arriving and the tension immediately dissipated. From that first moment I felt I was safe and in the hands of experienced and competent individuals. Let the adventures begin!

Diane's Notes: May 4, Saturday, Lake Duluti Lodge.

Slender mongoose, dik dik



Arusha National Park

By Lisa Meyers

Our first Tanzania Park experience. Upon entering this lush dense green tropical forest, we encounter a family gentle giants grazing on their favorite acacia trees it was so unbelievable to see them in their natural habitat. Nearby were Zebras and Wildebeests all happily grazing with one another.



Further along our drive we saw the beautiful Colobus Monkeys hanging out in the trees. The monkey's are known for their beautiful bushy white tails and are unfortunately hunted for their hides. There was some lakes that were teaming with hundreds of pink Flamingos. We ate our lunch beside a lake with Hippos bathing. Our trip out of Arusha Park ended with a rainbow over a herd of Zebra's. We saw much much more but I just included the highlights of my first Safari Day in Tanzania.

Below: Albino Baboon and Giraffe.



Diane's Notes: May 5, Sunday, Arusha National Park.

"Great North Road" to Egypt, toward Mt Moru. Hatari = Danger. 80% Christian, 10% Muslim. Maasai giraffes (necking), Augur buzzard, Cape buffalo, Zebra, Warthog – pumba. Group of giraffes = Tower; moving giraffes = journey.

Black/white shrike – butcher bird. Purple flowered sweet potato. Elephant poop 😊

Mt Maru horned chameleon. Cicadas. B/w colobus monkey – meaning crippled, b/c no thumb.

Blue monkey, waterbuck, gray headed kingfisher. Yellow bark acacia, indicates high water table. Pruned by giraffe. By lake: Egyptian (Nile) geese, pied raven, sacred ibis, ____ weaver, Blacksmith plover, ____ swallow.

Flamingo (pink), Greater flamingo (more white). Grunt like frog or pig. Bushbuck (smaller, red-brown vs gray waterbuck). Baboon, Crested Frankolin (like partridge), Crowned crane (national bird of Tanzania), Guinea hens

Crowned plover (chased baboons away from nest) Giraffe (males, horns stick out of tufts, plus forehead lump)

Cape buffalo (males, horns meet in the middle—called boss.) Albino baboon!

Rainbow over Arusha Park. “Little Serengeti” grassland. Egret, crowned crane.

Road to Arusha: Cultivate in road edges before agriculture starts in fields. Chickens, cows, goats. Bed frames for sale. Purple bougainvillea, orange flowered tulip trees. Marera Valley Lodge, Tamara’s birthday fun!

Below: Flamingos at Arusha National Park.



Ngorongoro National Park

By Sarah Sinkie

Ngorongoro, like many other names in Tanzania, came from Westerners mispronouncing Swahili words. Interesting that they would decide to go ahead with the German pronunciation rather than the name that was given by the local people. Regardless of what anyone calls it, It is absolutely incredible driving into this vast crater with the clouds falling over the rim, but only so deep, before they fade away to a vast green bowl of animals. We encountered a Cape buffalo

about 3 minutes in, and he was not happy to see us. We made it past the charging buffalo just in time to see a leopard staring at us from the middle of the road in front of the vehicle. We, of course, stopped and were all shocked while this majestic creature started walking right toward us. It was like he just magically emerged from the fog. He came right alongside the jeep, I think just to show us his beautiful face and coat, then veered off back into the jungle never to be seen again. He didn't seem very shy or elusive at all. After we picked our jaws up off the floor, we continued down into the crater. From above, it just looks like a gorgeous green bowl of earth. But once you reach the crater floor, it is a plethora of mammals living in harmony and putting their strongest foot forward. You can tell it is survival of the fittest in this land. We saw lions laying in the middle of the road completely unbothered by us and our two massive land rovers. We saw hyenas, wildebeests, antelope, caravel, cervil, warthogs, elephants, ostriches and rhinos! We saw all big five in one day! I am in awe of this crater and all of the beings that call it home. It is exactly where I would choose to live if I were living my life as an animal.

Diane's Notes: May 6, (Monday) Ngorongoro Crater Conservation Area.

Spotted hyena. Crested frankolin. Cape buffalo – edge of road, to avoid predators. Ready to fight at all times.

LEOPARD! Most likely to find in upland, not crater. (some got great video!)

Highland acacia, whistling thorn acacia. Conservation area and crater – 8300 sq km, multiple use: conservation, tourism, cultural use by Maasai – b/c they don't use wildlife.

West side, rock, dry. East, alluvial, damp forest. Crater was volcano – Ngorongoro was as big as Kilimanjaro. Microhabitats: lake, river, swamp, grassland, valley forest. 304 sq km. W to E 21 km, N to S 19 km. One of the Natural Wonders of the world, National Heritage site, UNESCO (as is Serengeti, Mangara).

Spectacled weaver & nests, wildebeest, zebra, grants gazelle, caracal cat, cinnamon breasted bee eater.

LION!



Eland, African hoopoe, cliff chat or mocking chat, thomson's gazelles, fiscal shrike, lappet faced vulture.

Zebra butts. Fork-tailed swallow. Crowned cranes: yellow for sunshine, black for people, red for blood of brotherland. Augur buzzard flying, underneath is cool!

Baby thomson's gazelles pronking and running. Mother eats feces so predators can't smell it. One was less than a month old.



Blacksmith plover, sacred ibis, Egyptian goose. Hyena stalking wildebeest! No success. Guinea hens.

Female lion on rocks! Cape buffalo sex. Thomson's gazelles too. Good time in Tanzania in May. Walking chat (white wings in flight, thin black legs)



Lounging female lions, drinking in ditch.

Two jackals. Flamingos, black headed heron, black heron, gray heron, hippos, egrets, black ibis, nomadic young male lions. Kory bustard is heaviest flying bird. Hartebeest. Male/female ostrich. Lilac breasted roller – beautiful! Superb starling. Kite.

Two black rhino! Color b/c soil wallowed in. Female/male or female/calf.

Elephants! (Big 5: Leopard, Cape buffalo, lion, black rhino, elephant)

Lunchtime – machete rescue of Tara's phone Splendid starlings and weavers hanging out while we ate, hippos in the pond.

After lunch, ostriches, baby zebra, elephant skull, guinea fowl. European stork.

Switchbacks driving out of crater! Lake in middle is from rain runoff. Only saw guided jeeps. Karato said private vehicles (4wd) could only go with a guide.

Road past Maasai village. Thatched round houses, cattle. Huge Montana-like landscape. “We are so small!” Thais.

Masai women at roadside selling honey and traditional medicine. Dromedaries for working Maasai.

Into Serengeti “Endless Plain” 15,000 km. Sense of anticipation! Dusty, bumpy road. Wildebeest migration! Secretary bird. Lazy male lion. Cerval cat, hartebeest. Termite mounds – cheetahs use for height advantage. Granite volcanic remnants, called Kopje or pride rocks. Beautiful. On cool nights, water condenses like oasis for animals.

Grassland, no game right now, looks like Wyoming. Beautiful white blue-gray almost stormy clouds, sun beaming around them. Washboard road to camp. ATTACH YOURSELF!

Redbuck, umbrella acacia trees, marabou stork, southern ground hornbill (related to toucan), secretary bird making nest. Black backed jackals. Tiny dik dik.

In camp! Kory bustard, elephant, buffalo, spring hare, tiny lizards on tent.



Serengeti National Park

By Diane Lueck & Lori Anderson

Serengeti Hiku

Leopard, black rhino
Elephant, hippo, lion
All of the Big Five!
By Diane Lueck

Our first impression of the Serengeti (Endless Plain; 15,000 sq km) — Sense of anticipation.
What would we see?
How close would the animals be?
Would we catch the great migration?
Would we complete the Big 5?



The grassland initially reminded us of Wyoming. No game in sight. Dusty, bumpy roads for 20+ minutes. First animals we saw were the wildebeest in the great migration. Long line of single file gnu on the horizon, similar to a long line of army ants, as far as the eye could see! We came upon a lazy lion along the side of the road about 15 yds out. He posed. He yawned. Our first lion!!! We learned the granite volcanic remnants (outcroppings) are called kopje or pride rocks.

At night, the water condenses on the rocks making them an ecosystem of their own, a mini-oasis. The Serengeti adventure begins!!

Awake in the Serengeti

By Tara Short

Serengeti wakes me every morning with a chorus of wild voices: Chirping zebras, howling hyenas, grunting hippos, thumping Cape buffalo, and the whispers of lions. -- can you imagine not just the former, but the latter?

I am staying at a semi luxurious tent camp but I have no idea where I am actually at on a map other than knowing I'm in the Serengeti in the country of Tanzania (TAHNzanEEAH), on the continent of Africa.

I am awake.



Diane's Notes: Tues, May 7. Serengeti.

Lions at night! Morning birds alarm clock. Hippo, dik dik.

Injured wildebeest calf—food for lions. Herd of impalas. One male has huge harem, only mates and controls for one year. African short-tailed rat. White backed vulture.

Wildebeest babies Feb-April, then 2 month migration to Kenya.

Marabou stork – red airbag back of neck for when they fly above the clouds! wattled starling, lesser buzzard.

Sausage tree (can make beer from fruits)

Red hartebeest, secretary birds, brown snake eagle, banded mongoose, buffalo weaver, ground plover. White crowned shrike, lesser striped swallow, white backed vulture on carcass. Social weaver (rounder nest than spectacled), lilac breasted roller, whyda – long tail. Clubtail dragonflies. Ostrich – mate in dry season, males neck and legs more pink. Topi – beautiful suede hide, reddish, purple-gray patches, ochre sox.



Pale chanting goshawk, bobbit bird – red mouth inside, eats ants. Impala that was kicked out of bachelor group. Black striped butt. Rock hyrax, agama lizard. Abyssinian roller.

Elephants at research center! Mom w/TINY 3-mo baby. Fighty adolescents. Lost tusk, 18-y-o – won't regrow. When baby born, females gather and trumpet congrats. Elephant ear, shape of Africa. Tembo in Swahili. Wallowing elephants become charcoal color.

Crocodile in pond. Nile geese, blacksmith plover, black headed heron, lion w/cubs watching hartebeest. Baraza makes animal calls! Saw "rare East African log cheetah" Lori.

After lunch: Secretary bird, antelope, sparrow lark, Abyssinian roller, dragonflies, hartebeest, nesting lappet faced vultures, warthog, ground plover, two-banded kosa? Cose?

Hartebeest—horns like heart shape. Guinea fowl, hippo prints. Four lions lazing under tree, yawns! Hoopers long-tailed starling. Big bull elephant.



Hippo trail, exactly same coming and going. Tawny eagles. Nursing baby elephant. African rabbit scared out of bush by elephants eating, rip, rip! We are in the middle of a herd of elephants!

Amazing clouds all day.

Hippo pile, 30! Heron walking in sunshine, head like a snake. Wildebeest line. Brown snake eagle. Gazelle herd. Warthogs pumba.

Paynes gray cloud bank, rain. Red buck, Egyptian geese, European white stork. Kopke formations, fig trees growing in cracks. Thompson gazelles, hartebeest, black-shouldered kite diving to scare tawny eagle. Buffalos wallowing. African horned hoopoe. Gray hornbill. Giraffe herd, two dik dik.

Weds 5-8, Serengeti to Ndutu

In the night, hyenas, lions in the distance, buffalo eating right near tent. (I dreamed I had Decker with me and couldn't take him out b/c of all the wild things.)

Early rise – LIONESS and FIVE CUBS as sun rises! Crossing over to rock outcrop. There, klipspringer w/spongy pads on feet, like shock absorber. Bounces across rocks other antelopes can't. Rock hyrax, related to elephant.

Elephant mating season, males in "musth" chemical communication makes males rage. 22 month gestation.

Vervet monkey.

Wildebeest migration along ridge, from horizon to horizon. One ran back: Lori "rare east African salmon wildebeest" running against the tide.



Just our chance to see them here. Heading north, others in western Serengeti. Maru ecosystem from Kenya to Tanzania. Wildebeest and zebra migrate without passports. Rain patterns control movement. Follow grass, need it short for predator sight and young learning to run. Milk rich in calcium and phosphorus. Short grass b/c volcanic magma can't support long grass and trees. April peak of calving.

Oxpecker birds all around and on beasts, take off ticks. We are surrounded by beasts! Tiny devil horns on calves. Jumping across ditch! Calves, so cute. They HAVE to keep up.

Topi fast, run long distances. Hartebeest. 3 spotted hyena. Giraffe, baboons, hyenas in mud wallow.



Lions in road, flies on face—b/c recent kill and blood on face. Hidden in grass, color of dried grass. In sunlight, leopard spots on side. Fat from feeding.

Saw leopard tortoise. (Small 5: leopard tortoise, white headed buffalo weaver, elephant shrew, ant lion, rhinoceros beetle)

Kopje “Island on sea of grass” hard granite, all around eroded and round. White bearded bustard, lilac breasted roller with aerial display.

Such a lion day! Young males, fat from feeding during migration.

Cheetah! Sitting in grassland, watching Thomson gazelles. Waiting patiently. Wild dogs came in. No harvest.

On rocks, resting beauty male lion. Agama (rainbow lizard). Such a perfect perch to observe and take a nap.



Topi, zebra. Hartbeest standing on termite mound, against beautiful clouds.

Zebras clustered in water, look psychedelic. Barking call! Guinea fowl clustered on leaning tree—wait! Lion lounging underneath. Hooded vulture. Lion face in the rocks.

Evening drive, wildebeest migration. Dwarf mongoose on termite mound. Elephant trees,

leaning over to feed on leaves. Keystone species, modifies habitat for other species. Digs water holes.



Warthog, backed into dens for protection. Maasai giraffe, browsing trees, spread front legs to lower self. All different markings. Latin name means mix of camel and leopard. Topi, hartebeest, zebra, grant's gazelle.

Hippos in camp on the way back to bed. Last night in Serengeti.

Ndutu-Olduvai Gorge & Maasai Village

Diane's Notes: Thurs May 9, Ndutu-Olduvai Gorge.

Warthog, impala, wildebeest. Black-backed jackel.

Cheetah and baby! Watched for a long while! Baby climbed tree, jumped on mom. Wow.

Zebras, hartebeest, buffalo with shoulder wound, ostriches, Zebra w/3-day old baby. Pale chanting goshawk w/bright orange legs. Giraffes, secretary birds. Elephants and baby, lioness, thomsons gazelles. Impala and waterbuck. Unstriped ground squirrel, topi. Little bee-eater! Gorgeous!

Female leopard in tree – masses of safari jeeps in either direction.

Hartebeest, simba kopje – palm tree where water is in a crack. Road grader! Amazing to see equipment way out here. Long beautiful road, wide open spaces with kopje and termite mounds, no trees except around kopjes.

After lunch, elephants, giraffes, lioness and young. Migration all along the horizon, gathered in road for water. Zebra, wildebeest, grants gazelles. Lappet faced and Rapells vultures on zebra carcass. Diff birds eat diff parts. Herds of Maasai cattle, goats, sheep. Hard pan rock, no trees. Thomson's gazelles depend on morning dew for water.

Lunch at Olduvai gorge, cradle of mankind, museum. Shivery feeling of being at the ultimate HOME. Abraham (interpreter) told about oldupai (sisal) plant, agave like, used in Maasai baskets.

Crow, Kory bustard, lots of flowers.

Maasai Village: Maasai women carrying babies wrapped on back. Traditional dance, visited school, home, market, unique experience. Multiple wives. People live on one side of home, baby animals on other. Dark. Fire and cooking pot. Cowhide cover for bed. Village at rim of Ngorongoro crater, we drove by it earlier. Woven bamboo houses covered w/mud. Live there 5 months, then move. Bricks made from termite mud b/c its sticky.



Crater overlook group picture – 2000' down! Ranger towers keep track of rhinos at all times. Slight flycatcher, olive baboons and babies. Red billed quelea flock. Oxen schlepping water. Heading toward Lake Eyasi, Seasonal river flows from highlands to lake. Farms: onions, rotation pepper, peas. Agric #1 economy of Tanzania. Tourism #2 and growing. Onions go to Kenya, Somalia. Landowner lives in city; manager on farm makes 10%. Rich volcanic soil, use irrigation. Warehouses to wait for good prices.

First baobab trees, upside down. Leaves off in April or so, grow in November. 6000 yrs old???
At Lake Eyasi lodge, shooting star! (and scorpion) Windy night.

Lake Eyasi Hadzabe & Datoga Tribes

Diane's Notes: Friday, May 10. Cultural tribes.

Clear, beautiful morning. Kids in uniform on the way to school. Met our guide, Baraka (means blessing).



Cross seasonal river. Dry times, dig 15' to get clean water. Sunrise through baobab—trees NOT in Serengeti. Emerald spotted dove. Bushmen (Hazda Mmati?) few people, land is a preserve for them. Few animals. Hunt every day. Live among baobab, speak click languages. Shake hands with everyone. Chief said everyone's name! Charismatic person! Made fire w/friction and dung. Making arrows! My favorite! Shape sticks, fletch with sinew and frankolin feathers. Tip first, wrap, fold over and bite quill to length, wrap back. Cut point sharp, then spiral cut to slow arrow once it hits. Men wore baboon halo and vest. Chief wore beads instead. Hunted—they got several squirrels and rats. We followed quite a way into the bush. They made a fire and ate their breakfast. Returning to camp, danced and sang—women too. Small hut sleeps 4 men. Eland hide on floor. Lovely music on 2-string gourd instrument with a bow. Polygamous. Bride bought with 2 baboons and an eland. They don't keep track of age or birthdays. Time is "now" which is a great concept. Don't get tourists real often.

Hadzabe tribe, metalworkers. Visited with women in house. They asked where our men were.

Blacksmith melted brass, made arrows (WOW), bracelets. Bride costs 20 cows. Fine for murder is 49 cows. Monogamous tribe, wear black bracelet to indicate marriage. Lovely jewelry, amazing to see how quickly it is made. Most of us bought something.

Pastoral tribe, Datoga. Nomadic. Mud/stick homes made by men. Lots of women here for a new baby celebration—I thought of it being like the elephants. Women wore goat hid clothing, lots of beads. In their home, we ground masa, showed off tattoos. They sang and danced for/with us, we taught them “the hokey pokey.” Imagine the next white group that comes and they want to sing “our” traditional song. Prickly brush fences around the compound, another inside for young animals. Bride costs 40 cows, can do installments. Polygamous. Really loved this experience, women to women.



Darlene Watters www.creativewatters.com

Heading to hotel, dung beetle with ball squash-ball sized. Beetle 4-5 cm. Sunflower fields for oil, sorghum, millet. Stayed at Bougainvillea Lodge.

Lake Manyara National Park

Diane's Nates: Saturday May 11. Lake Manyara.

Drizzly low fog on hills. Driving through busy market streets in Karatu city (15K people, farmers). Rain brings the blessings. Bus to Arusha every 15 minutes, takes 2 hours. Census in

1961, Tanzania 9m people, now 50m. Census taken in villages. Baraza's farm in Karatu. Pigeon peas, wheat, sunflowers, corn, beans.

Cassia trees, yellow flowers, like locust. Non native.

Karibu means welcome, jambo = hello, asante sana = thanks much, polly polly = slowly, careful.

Stopped in village marketplace for traditional gifts.

Male bushbuck, rare to see. Baboons. Baobab tree w/ leopard orchid mass. Lake Manyara, stork colony in trees near lake, Marabou and yellow billed. White pelicans. Manyara is the euphorbia plant, candelabra tree. "Home of tree climbing lions" b/c to brushy to see prey otherwise. Troop of baboons w/ lots of babies, move every night to avoid leopards. Warm, tropical rainforest of rift valley. 3' to water, groundwater and streams.

Mahogany trees (can't cut in park, leave dead ones in forest).

Blue barked cordia trees, mango, quinine, Cordia Africana. Pigeon wood. Termite mounds build in wet season. Watercress in brook (source Ngorongoro crater & L. Victoria), fish, dragonfly. Baboons, blue monkey, vervet monkey, 400 spp birds!



Above: Baobab Tree.

Strangler fig, tamarind from India. Sycamore, fig, show high water table. Rain forest is below 4000', which is rare. Forest elephants, smaller and meaner. Close windows b/c spitting cobras. Hornbill. Speckled mousebird, emerald spot doves, guinea fowl, baboons & zebras together.

Maasai burn elephant dung, smoke is medicinal to babies, b/c elephants eat herbs.
Acacia tree seeds wait in ground 16 years.

Namaqua dove, gray hornbill with serrated bill edge. Snails nearly as large as my fist.
Warthogs, pelicans, young male impala. Baboons eat nuts, drop casing for impala to eat—and steal baby impala.

Non-migrant wildebeest, yellow billed storks, cape buffalo, hadada ibis (emerald sheen on wing like dragon scales). Heron, crowned cranes, African jacana w/huge feet, black winged stilt, white egret, gray headed heron, Nile monitor lizard 2' long – blue tongue. Yellow water lily, otillia. Tiny black crane.

Favorite: water thick knee – super camo on rocks, huge green eyes!

Swamp hens w/red wattle. Elephant grass thicket. Large 4' monitor lizard!
Squacco heron, pale cream w/lilac, streaky pretty. Purple heron, buffalo heron, black heron, huge hippos. Thousand of baboons! Yellow billed stork, pink like flamingos. Fish eagle – white head/cape. Nile geese, buffalo, zebra, impala, vervet monkeys. White pelicans, giraffe, vulture, lone flamingo, gray headed kingfisher, elephants.

After lunch, red yellow barbet, bulbul, slender billed greenbul (flycatcher looking). Forest elephants, reddish from mud. Perfect tusks, 25 y-o. Blue monkey, pretty face. Leaving park, rainbow.

Burunge Lodge – genet on porch, rhinoceros beetle.



Tarangire National Park -- Elephants in the Rain

By Tara Short

Watch the Video: <https://youtu.be/-3kITkcrZyY>

Just when you think you have seen it all (and this trip really had IT ALL) Mother Nature throws in a grand finale and then a spectacular encore presentation.

We spotted a group of elephants and had been following them around the park for a while. We observed juveniles playing in the mud, young males sparing, and massive matriarch patrolling. The blue sky day suddenly turned dark and cloudy. Drops of rain began to tap at the roof of the vehicle.

The herd of elephants (at least 20) started to move again. The guides followed them to a pond. There was a juvenile elephant trumpeting very loudly and running up and down the shore of the pond. Through my binoculars, I could see it was chasing a monitor lizard! It seemed very upset with the lizard. It vocalized with its trunk and tail held high in the air. -- It was a pretty funny sight to see.

The rain started to come down harder. It was the hardest rain of the entire trip. Our driver closed the roof because water was coming into the cabin quite steady.

I thought the game drive was over, now that the rain was coming down so steady. Then... the elephants went wild.

Elephants of all sizes and ages became excited by the rain. They were trumpeting, and grumbling. You could feel the grumbles and moans. Our guide told us that most of the sounds elephants make, the human ear can't even hear. -- There was no mistaking the sounds coming from these elephants.

Most of them stampeded into the pond that was surprisingly deeper than it appeared. They rolled in the water and splashed with their trunks. The rain coming down made them want more water!!

Were we witnessing elephants expressing joy? It sure seemed like they were having fun with each other.

I am not going to say it was a religious experience, but it sure felt like one. If anything, it was a blessing to witness.

Diane's Notes: Sunday May 12, Tarangire Park.

Best morning bird sounds! Bats, dik dik. Earthquake at 5:30. Scarlet chested sunbird, like redwing blackbird. 2000 y-o baobab, honey hive. Domestic hens and chicks. Thatch teepees

for roofs, drying in fields. Man walking along road w/live goat over his shoulders. Phosphate factory, industry in this area.

Tarangire park, marula tree – elephants shake and get drunk. Ebony tree 100 y-o 14" dbh, tough wood. If you cut one, must plant 10. Red billed hornbill, lovebirds. 6000 elephants in park, 2850 sq m.

Elephants greet us, young impala male like nubby buck. Bachelor group ready to challenge for harem. All different sizes and ages.

Oryx. Warthog family. Marshall eagle—can take baby impala. Giraffe, yellow throated spur fowl, guinea fowl on tangled ebony, many ostrich (ticks under chins). Chanting goshawk. Thais "baobab trees look like broccoli".

Grant's gazelles, looking at lioness. Big group of lions in distance. Hunting, kits left behind. BUT! 3 cubs come out, spoil the hunt. Lioness patiently walks them back, sit on termite mound. Superb starling. Lineup of ostriches. Hornbill, lilac breasted roller, steenbok, Egyptian geese, plover, buffalo herd of 1000. Newborn buffalo! Much lighter color. Cattle egrets, wattled starling, secretary bird, buffalo sex. White headed vulture, hooded vulture. Adolescent ostriches. Grants gazelles, w/ tiny newborn, 1 day old!



Spurfowl, aggressive buffalo with wallow and babies. Brief rainstorm bright sunshine. White necked vulture, tawny eagle, brown parrot, red-billed hornbill, red neck spur fowl, white crowned shrike, zebras with babies, guinea fowl, gang of banded mongoose, sparrow lark, yellow throated spur fowl. Long tailed shriek, grants gazelles.



Truck wallowing on the road like a rogue cape buffalo!

Fringe eared ground hornbill. Area called "small Serengeti," looked for cheetah.

Warthogs, ostrich, zebra, oryx w/small baby (stripe on side) large herd. Buffalo, baboon, hartebeest, vervet monkey, well-fed lioness (monkeys and hogs ran like crazy, guinea fowl alarm called).



Pantagosa bird, oryx herd returning to base, white knob duck, giraffes w/ birds on back.

After lunch: waterbucks, lions under bush, wet ostriches, warthogs, dikdik. Lions and cubs 15 yards away—beautiful gold watchful eyes. Bataleur eagle, colorful!

OMG mama cheetah w/3 cubs, nursing, playing on her back!

Photos: top lioness on the prowl, middle cheetah, bottom final double rainbow.

At water hole, 20+ elephants. Adolescent chased monitor lizard across pond, trumpeting, got everyone stirred up! Play! Play! One slipped in mud, could be catastrophic such a huge critter. Ending day—double rainbow ending in zebras again, at Maramboi Lodge. Such a wonderful celebration before leaving tomorrow.

Monday May 13, Maramboi lodge—to airport Arusha.

Wildebeest rolling in front of our tent. Early morning walk with Duma, Maasai naturalist and botanist, down to lake. Lots of info about a nightshade-family plant and other herbs. Leaving lodge, impala, zebra, giraffe...so hard to leave this wonderful place.

Fringe Animals a.k.a. The Cleanup Crew

By Robin Jack-Jensen

When guests come to Africa they are typically hoping, even expecting, to see the “Big Five”. These animals are breathtaking to see and experience. There is no doubt that being a mere ten feet away from an elephant or a lion can be a life-changing event. But who cleans up after the lions, cheetahs and leopards, thusly preventing the potential spread of disease? These are just as important in the cycle of life as the roles played by the bigger, more impressive creatures. We know that lions, leopards and cheetahs help to reduce the number of old, sick or injured animals, but they are incapable of consuming everything on the bodies of the creatures that they take down. This would go to waste without the help of hyenas, jackals, vultures and, to my great surprise, marabou storks. Photo: double rainbow. Hard to see in picture.

Hyenas

Hyenas are fascinating. Did you know that they are most closely related to the cat and viverrid (genet and civet) families? They are behaviorally most like dogs and similar canines, so it is easy to mistakenly think that those are their closest relatives. Then there are the differences between the types of hyenas that one can find. In Tanzania the hyenas that we saw were all spotted hyenas,



while striped hyenas are native to the more northern climes of the African continent. Striped hyenas are what Disney portrayed in The Lion King and they are truly the scavengers that we associate with the name hyena. The other two types are the aardwolf, which we were not fortunate enough to see and the brown hyena, which can be found in some of the other African countries and in the African continent southwest coastal areas.

The spotted hyena is actually a hunter, as we saw on the day with the cheetah. They kill as much as 95% of their food. They are also not above chasing bigger hunters away from their kills in order to get an easier meal. The way that they capture their prey is one of the ways that they are similar to canines in that they catch their prey with their teeth instead of claws, due in part because their claws are non retractable and therefore not sharp enough. The spotted hyenas are most likely to be seen in the early morning and are very gregarious compared to their striped cousins.

Jackals

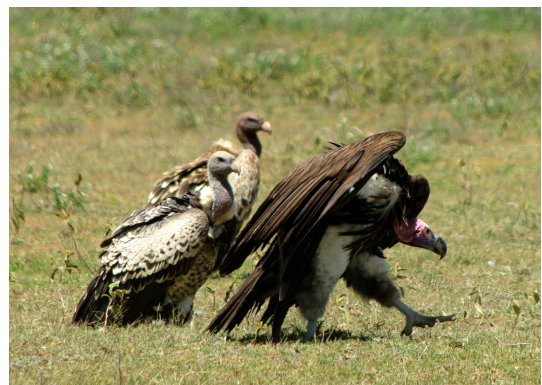


The black-backed jackals that we saw are members of the subspecies known as the East African Jackal. The black-backed are a species that has existed in its current form since high on the Pleistocene era. They are very territorial with a strong family structure. They are monogamous, with the elder offspring staying with the parents to help raise their younger siblings. Their diet consists of insects, rodents, young antelopes, carrion and occasionally

fruit and berries. So typically they are the hunters, taking down their prey in the usual canine fashion of attacking the legs, loins and throat, but they won't turn their nose away from some other hunter's kill; to the point that they will, just like hyenas, chase larger animals such as cheetahs away for an easier meal.

Vultures

The most commonly seen vultures in Tanzania are the white-backed and lappet-faced. Both are very large birds with the white-backed weighing in at between 9 to 15 lbs with a wing span of 6 to 7 feet and the lappet-faced being 15 to 30 lbs with an enormous wingspan of 8 to 9.5 feet. Being that size makes them easy to spot from a distance as they circle above a potential meal left by a four-footed hunter. Unfortunately, they circle as much over the victims of the two-footed poacher as well. I have



discovered that this has resulted in vultures being prey to poacher poisoning. According to a website called Tanzania Experience, this is now making them one of the fastest declining groups of birds in the world. Poison left in a large carcass can theoretically kill up to 100 birds.

The white-backed vulture is now on the critically endangered species list due to a number of reasons; farmers poisoning their dead livestock to deter lions, hyenas and other predators; dead livestock also having veterinary chemicals that become concentrated in too-high doses in the carrion eaters; and of course the severe decline in the number of available nesting sites. Along with the reduced number of nesting areas, there is less area in which to find food and more competition for its consumption. When they do find food they are not picky about the sort of creature they are consuming. If they are lucky and the carcass is large enough, they will gorge themselves until they are too heavy to fly and then rest with their wings spread and their backs to the sun.

The lappet-faced vulture, like most vultures, is a scavenger, feeding on animal carcasses. They don't always wait for animals that were taken by other animals as they have such power that they are able to start the consumption on their own. Due to their aggression, groups of other types of vultures may cede a carcass to a single lappet-faced. If not feeling aggressive, it will wait until the others are finished and then consume the tougher bits that the other vultures can't. This power and aggression means that they will even occasionally take down a small or sick animal themselves, flying down from a height and using the impact to stun their prey. Like the white-backed vulture, the lappet-faced is also suffering from a swiftly decreasing population and is currently on the endangered species list.

A couple of "fun" facts about vultures from animalia.bio/white-backed-vulture:

"Food poisoning does not affect a vulture because its stomach acids are very acidic, with a pH of nearly zero. These acids prevent the spread of disease."

"New World vultures hunt using smell, detecting a decaying carcass by the gas Mercaptan, which is given off when decay begins."

"Old World vultures belong to the same family as hawks and eagles, which cannot smell their food, hunting by sight only."

Marabou Stork

Although a stork, except for the long legs, the marabou looks more like the vultures that it spends so much time with. The bald head means cleaning is easier when consuming the carrion that is such a large part of its diet. It is more opportunistic than vultures in that it will also try to eat anything that it can swallow including other birds, fish, frogs, insects, eggs, small mammals and reptiles. Sadly, because they can digest such a wide range of food, they are now starting to



also eat human garbage and some are becoming dependent upon it, spending their time around dumps.

There are other creatures that help to keep Tanzania clear of carcasses, ranging from insect to rodents to lizards, but the hyenas, jackals and vultures were the ones that I was most interested in seeing on this trip of a lifetime. I feel so fortunate to have been able to see them with my own eyes and was inspired to research them even more after returning home. I hope that you find the above information as interesting as I did!

Resources:

en.wikipedia.org

animalia.org

datazone.birdlife.org

www.iucnredlist.org

www.pbs.org

The Baboon Incident

While stopped at a park gate, a window was left down and a large baboon jumped in with the 5 passengers in the vehicle. The baboon incident reminds us that we need to remember we are surrounded by wild animals and to make sure we follow directions from our guides. Nobody was hurt and the baboon was out of the vehicle within 2 or 3 minutes. The following narrative was from the perspective from the other vehicle. Below is a photo of the reenactment of when the baboon was in the middle of the truck.



By Tamara Struminger

We pulled into the parking lot at the park gate, and Baraza said we should all roll up the windows, as the baboons were accustomed to being fed by the tourists, and could be persistent. As if on cue, a female baboon jumped up on the hood of our truck and peered at us through the windshield.

Baraza hopped out to go handle our exit paperwork, while we observed the baboons from our truck, noticing a family with a very young baby, and a large

male.

We were parked behind Karato's truck, and as I glanced over, I noticed the big male baboon sitting very close to the left hand side, near the middle of the vehicle. As I watched, it hopped up onto the side of the truck and looked into the window, at which point I realized the window was open. It sat on the edge, facing in, with its tail hanging out, and as I started to yell "monkey! truck! window!", it disappeared inside.

Our whole truck began to panic, as Baraza arrived back from the guard house. He opened the door, and we all yelled "there's a baboon in the other truck!!!" He looked over, looked back at us and said "they're not in the truck", thinking everyone had gotten out. We replied "No! They're all in the truck!" and he swiftly closed his door and started toward the other vehicle. As he was about halfway there, we saw the baboon leap out of the truck and onto the ground, and scamper over to the rest of it's troupe.

Both vehicles drove out of the lot, as we all speculated what might have happened, but it wasn't until we reached our destination that we were able to hear the other side of the situation. As if our trip wasn't exciting enough, we all knew we had just witnessed a story that we were sure to remember!

Index:

Trip link: <https://greenedventures.com/tours/africa-tanzania-serengeti-safari-for-women/>

Detailed Itinerary:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1z2kxLuOnsYB_XUIdF5inIFw41TCi5MamefmzSiTRNQ4/e/dit#

Photos:

https://www.facebook.com/pg/WomensAdventuresWorldwide/photos/?tab=album&album_id=2363034153731810

Map Points:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1xQE3LgQd0qmjbzR05AO5w1APbS8d_JUv&usp=sharing

What others have to say...

Lori Anderson: If are on the fence about whether or not to do this trip... DO IT!! I traveled with Tara's Tanzania group last May. I began the trip as a solo traveler and ended it with a dozen plus friends!! By far, the most amazing trip I've ever taken. Seeing the animals, meeting the people....Africa is like no other. Do it. You will not be disappointed!!

Ellyn Hartzell Connor: Tara's Green Edventures are always the best trips I ever go on, 6 trips so far, but the trip to Uganda and Tanzania, the the best ever. Don't miss this one!