NORTHERN TANZANIA

Serengeti, Ngorongoro Crater and Beyond

February 16 – March 5, 2027

The Serengeti, meaning "extended place" in the Masai language, is a vast, unspoiled rolling savannah of grasslands and open acacia woodlands which hosts the most spectacular concentration of animals on our planet. This world-famous area is a remarkable experience at any time of the year, but in February and March, it witnesses a phenomenal gathering of over one million Blue Wildebeest (along with a half- million Thomson's Gazelle and a quarter million Common Zebra) in tight, nervous herds of tens of thousands, concentrated together to calve on the short-grass plains prior to the rains. To foil the numerous predators and to ensure the best survival of their young, most of the wildebeests calve within a few short weeks, producing a glut of potential prey that overwhelms the dense gathering of predators.

Lions are often in large prides—it is not unheard of to see over 20 in a single day! Spotted Hyenas, often solitary, may appear in marauding packs; Leopards, Cheetahs and smaller predators and scavengers such as jackals and vultures are also much more readily seen at this time of plenty. Although never precisely predictable, we should be in the best areas of the Serengeti at the best time to capture this world- class spectacle, with plenty of opportunity to observe the big game and find many classic East African birds.

Equally world-renowned is the Ngorongoro Crater and nearby Oldupai ("Olduvai") Gorge—the "Cradle of Mankind," where the Leakeys discovered remains of primitive hominids dating back over three million years. Mankind could not have chosen a more spectacular starting point. Ngorongoro is the largest unbroken volcanic caldera in the world—10 miles across and 2,000 feet deep. Lush forests clad the crater rim where our lodge is situated, overlooking the grasslands and lakes of the Crater below. This is "Africa in microcosm." Apart from the breath-taking scenery, superb birding and great wildlife, it is particularly good for excellent photographic opportunities and one of the few safe havens in Africa for the endangered Black Rhinoceros, which, although not guaranteed in a short visit, we do expect to see here

To complement these superb sites, we visit three other fine national parks, all of which offer additional and subtly different birding and wildlife opportunities.

Arusha National Park near our arrival point into Tanzania is a highland area of extinct volcanoes covered in thick forest, holding birds and mammals we are unlikely to encounter elsewhere.

Tarangire National Park is justly famed for its abundance of bizarre baobab trees, absurdly thick-trunked and ill-proportioned. Here too are the best elephant-watching opportunities of the tour, with large herds roaming the open woodland habitats and riverbeds. We should have exceptional opportunities to watch the matriarchal family lives of these unique creatures. Tarangire also offers excellent birding, with several Tanzanian endemics likely.

Lake Manyara National Park is a comparatively compact area nestled beneath the towering basalt cliffs of the Great Rift Valley. It encompasses spring-fed forests, thick acacia bush, and a soda lake, which at times holds a large variety of water birds from pelicans, cormorants and flamingos to herons, ibis, storks and ducks.

Several "off the beaten track" stops give us a chance for more and different aspects of Tanzania, including a special lunch and birding stop in the stunning gardens at Gibb's Farm.

Apart from carefully choosing the itinerary, we have structured the time spent in each location to give adequate coverage to each area. In particular, by using a short charter flight to the Seronera airstrip in the central Serengeti, we avoid a lot of unnecessary travel over unpaved roads. Tanzanian lodge accommodation and food are now of a very good standard. We use roomy, purpose-built 4x4 vehicles driven by experienced local driver/guides. There is plenty of space for six passengers with everyone having a window seat, and of course a "pop-top" roof for you to stand up to view and photograph birds and game in

the parks. By the end of the tour, we would expect a bird list exceeding 400 species and 40-50 species of mammals including Lion, Leopard, Cheetah, African Elephant, Black Rhino and other classic African big game animals.

February 16-17, Days 1-2: Travel to Kilimanjaro

Participants should plan to depart the USA on February 16 and arrive at Kilimanjaro International Airport (airport code JRO) on February 17. Upon arrival and after clearing customs, participants will be met at the airport by our local operator and transferred to our lodge.

To minimize the risk of missing connecting flights or delays, and also to relax before the tour begins, participants are strongly encouraged to consider arriving a day or two before the start of our tour. Upon request, the VENT office will be happy to assist with any additional lodging arrangements at additional fees.

Bar-tailed Trogon © Geoff Lockwood

Usa River is a small community east of Arusha, and Ngare Sero is a peaceful and relaxing lodge in a rural setting which offers excellent birding. During previous tours, we have encountered not only troops of Guereza Colobus and Blue (Sykes') Monkeys, but also found some great birds (many of which are unlikely to be found at other stops on the tour), including African Black Duck, Giant Kingfisher, Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, Brown- hooded Kingfisher, White-eared and Brown-breasted barbets, Retz's Helmetshrike, Mountain Wagtail, Kenrick's Starling, Peter's Twinspot and Taveta Golden-Weaver.

NIGHTS: February 16, Aboard Aircraft on route

February 17, Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge, Usa River

February 18, Day 3: Evening reception and dinner.

The day will be mostly on your own today, with our first official gathering taking place this evening at 5:00 p.m. with a welcome reception followed by dinner.

February 19, Day 4: Arusha National Park

In preparation for our charter flight to Serengeti tomorrow morning our main luggage will be collected during breakfast and transferred by road to Serengeti, leaving us with only a small carry-on with overnight essentials to take on the flight. We spend much of the day in the beautiful Arusha National Park. Dominated by rugged Mt. Meru (14,979 feet), this small jewel of a park (just 55 square miles) is close to Arusha, but remarkably "birdy", diverse and peaceful. Although many of the better-known big game animals are present, we'll concentrate on the outstanding birdlife and also seek out mammal species we are less likely to find elsewhere: for example, Guereza Colobus, Blue (Syke's) Monkey, Harvey's Duiker, Suni and Bushbuck. There are open grasslands with small lakes holding a great variety of waterbirds and specialties such as Pangani Longclaw and confusing cisticola warblers. Other tracks will take us into thicker forests of mahogany, fig, cedar, and wild mango. Here we'll hope for raptors such as Crowned Eagle and Mountain Buzzard, colorful forest birds including Narina and Bar-tailed trogons, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Hartlaub's Turaco, raucous Silvery-cheeked Hornbills, White-headed Barbet, and White-starred Robin. If we are lucky, we may glimpse the snow-clad peak of Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa at 19,340 feet.

NIGHT: Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge, Usa River

February 20, Day 5: Flight to Seronera airstrip; Drive to Kubu Kubu Lodge

Depending on our scheduled flight time, today will start with a post-breakfast transfer to Arusha airport, to catch a charter flight (ca. 50 minutes) to the Seronera airstrip, located in the central Serengeti National Park. Here we will be met by our safari driver/guides, who will have driven here from Arusha the day before. Depending on the time of our arrival, once we've collected our bags and everything and everyone is loaded into the safari vehicles, we begin our introduction to the Serengeti's birds and mammals during our drive through to Kubu Kubu Lodge, where we will enjoy lunch.

After check-in, we will head out on an afternoon drive in search of the many special birds and animals that this area has to offer – including, if we are lucky, Southern Ground Hornbills, or perhaps a striking

Secretary bird. Predators, including lion and leopard, are often seen and we may have had sightings of one, or both of these cats before we return to the lodge for sundowners on the deck, followed by dinner.

Honeymooning Lions – Ndutu Marsh © Geoff Lockwood

Situated on a hilltop and ridge overlooking the vast plains of the central Serengeti, this recently-opened (summer 2016) luxury tented camp is a delightful base of operations for our time in the Serengeti. The tents are incredibly spacious and well-appointed, and are situated on permanent platforms, each with its own private balcony. In-suite, private bathrooms feature open-air showers with abundant hot water (dubbed "the world's best shower" by more than one participant) and flush toilets, and the entire camp is solar-powered, with back-up generators providing 24-hour electricity. The camp is full board (including all drinks), and Wi-Fi is available in the central area.

NIGHT: Kubu Kubu Tented Camp, Central Serengeti

February 21-22, Days 6 and 7: The Central Serengeti

At 5,675 square miles, the Serengeti is a vast preserve— larger than the entire state of Connecticut! With a further 3,200 square miles protected in the surrounding Ngorongoro Conservation Area, the total is as large as Vermont or New Hampshire. We begin our exploration of this vast national park, concentrating for the next two days on areas in the central part of the Serengeti. Here we can head off in any promising direction, depending on local conditions. The first differences we'll notice in this area are the clusters of kopjes (pronounced "copies")—large isolated, weather-smoothed and rounded lumps of granite, some the

size of large houses. These interrupt the vast flatness of the plains and provide shelter and shade for all sorts of wildlife, including idle Lions; Klipspringer; hyrax; nesting vultures and Greater Kestrels; and gaudy pink, purple and copper-blue agamid lizards.

The Seronera River area with its braided small meandering streams has associated groves of Yellow-bark Acacias ("fever" trees) plus the occasional, leafy Sausage Tree, and are favorite haunts for a dozing leopard, and we'll be doing all we can to locate one of these illusive cats during our stay! The wide range of habitats means we could find large herds of African Buffalo and smaller numbers of Topi and Kongoni (Red Hartebeest), wallowing Hippopotami, secretive Bohor Reedbuck, or maybe a Nile Monitor.

Leopard © Geoff Lockwood

Birds in this area, and around our lodge should be plentiful. Bright little Purple Grenadiers, Cordonbleus, and White- bellied Canaries peck seeds from the ground, while Golden-breasted and Cinnamon-breasted buntings sing their exuberant songs from the tops of stunted acacias along hillside slopes.

Shrikes abound—Magpie Shrikes; various fiscal shrikes; Brown-crowned Tchagras; migrant Red-backed and Isabelline/Red-tailed shrikes, and we will search for the range-restricted and highly comical Gray-crested Helmetshrike during our drives.

Brightly colored Superb-, Rüppell's- and Hildebrandt's Starlings are commonplace, as are Red-billed and Yellow-billed oxpeckers, White-headed and Red-billed Buffalo-weavers, dull-colored Swahili Sparrows, and African Gray Flycatchers. The plains below the lodge offer a chance of Fischer's Sparrowlarks, Double-banded Coursers and Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse.

Raptors are a constant sight in the skies, and this area is particularly fine for them. We have excellent chances of encountering anything from a Secretarybird to the tiny Pygmy Falcon (smaller than some of the shrikes in this region); snake-eagles, an iconic and striking Bateleur, Dark Chanting Goshawk, and possible wintering groups of Montagu's and Pallid harriers, and Lesser Kestrels.

Depending on conditions, and what we have already found, we could either take packed lunches – and be out for most of the day or otherwise return to the lodge for a leg stretch and our meals.

NIGHTS: Kubu Kubu Tented Camp, Central Serengeti

Secretarybird © Geoff Lockwood

February 23, Day 8: To the Eastern Serengeti

We'll head eastward this morning, approximately 50 miles out across the Serengeti and Triangle Plains to the Ndutu region, which, biologically, is part of the eastern Serengeti wilderness, but which, for administrative purposes, falls within the Ngorongoro Conservation District. Allowing most of the day for our journey will allow time to wander and visit any wildlife spectacles or concentrations on the way. You never know what surprises or excitement may dictate a temporary change of plan or route, so we'll be as flexible as possible to cater to the unexpected. This is an excellent day for chances of finding Lions, Cheetahs and Leopard. We'll be able to stretch our legs at a very good open-air visitor center (excellent for

birds and hyraxes) and at Naabi Hills Gate, one of the official gateways to the national park, where we will officially exit the Serengeti National Park.

Ndutu Lodge is set in Acacia woodland out on the edge of the short-grass plains, far from other lodges and tucked away as close to the main gatherings of plains game as we can get. We may well encounter our first huge gatherings of wildebeest today. There is a wonderful feeling of remoteness here and this region should be a true highlight.

NIGHT: Ndutu Safari Lodge, Southeastern Serengeti

February 24-25, Days 9-10: Ndutu Area

We'll have two full days in potentially the prime area to watch one of the greatest wildlife spectacles on earth—the massed concentrations of calving Blue Wildebeest on the Serengeti. The wildebeest are at the end of their 500-mile circular migration here. Basically, they follow the rains and the resultant regeneration of green grasses all the way north to the Masai Mara area of Kenya. Then it's back again to rest in the ensuing long rains on the short-grass plains to the southeast of Serengeti around Ndutu, where they calve and rear their young to a stage when they can again move west and north by May or June. Hopefully we will witness many aspects of this dynamic ecosystem—from calving, through the inevitable predation by the concentrations of Lions, Cheetahs, Leopards, jackals and hyenas, to the spectacle of five species of vultures scavenging and cleaning up the leftovers of the kill. The incredible abundance, variety, and action of the mammals alone will give us plenty to occupy our time here. Of course, birding opportunities are legion. Very often while setting out to perhaps watch prides of Lions, Leopards with their prey cached in an acacia, or Spotted Hyaenas mud-bathing in the heat of the day, new birds will appear and be a pleasant distraction. The open grassland and scant acacia scrub hold many new species. Obvious are the Common Ostriches, Secretarybirds, noisy Crowned and Blacksmith lapwings, Lilac-breasted and European rollers, and Little Bee-eaters, along with raptors such as Long-crested Eagle and Dark and Eastern chanting-goshawks. Often, groups of Temminck's and Double-banded coursers, Fischer's Sparrow-Larks, Rufous-naped and Red-capped larks, Red-billed Queleas, Chestnut-bellied and Yellow-throated sandgrouse, and various cisticolas flush up from the grass as we move along. The endemic Gray-breasted Spurfowl, Fischer's Lovebird, and Rufous-tailed Weaver are common in the woodlands in this area, along with D'Arnaud's

(Usambiro) Barbet, Green Woodhoopoe, Cardinal and Nubian woodpeckers, Black-lored Babbler, Gorgeous- and Mariqua Sunbirds, and Wire-tailed Swallow, to pick a few examples.

NIGHTS: Ndutu Safari Lodge

Wildebeest on the move – Ndutu © Geoff Lockwood

February 26, Day 11: To the Ngorongoro Crater

We'll leave the Ndutu area today, continuing our eastward transect. We'll be out of the national park, but still in the conservation area and driving for miles across open short-grass plains still potentially full of vast herds of Blue Wildebeest, Thomson's and Grant's gazelles, Common Zebra, and all of their attendant predators. As we drive, we will be able to appreciate the huge scale of this ecosystem that we've been traveling through from west to east for several days — all the more remarkable for being preserved almost fully intact. Our first stop will be at the world-renowned Oldupai Gorge - site of some of Louis and Mary Leakey's ground-breaking paleo-anthropological discoveries. The bones of early hominids found here date back over 1.7 million years and provided

Wildebeest and Zebra drinking © Geoff Lockwood

early evidence that the ancestors of our species, Homo sapiens, arose in Africa. Indeed, Oldupai (or Olduvai) is often referred to as “The Cradle of Mankind” as a result. After birding the grounds of the field museum, we will receive an orientation talk about the history and significance of the site and then spend time walking through the museum – obtaining an insight into the life and times of these early ancestors.

Shortly after leaving Oldupai, we begin a steady climb up into the hills. and suddenly top a rise to find the immense caldera of Ngorongoro Crater – the largest such geological structure on the planet, spread out over 2000 ft below us. The views are breathtaking, and after a precipitous descent we begin our exploration of the unique ecosystem that has evolved in this incredible place. The range of habitats – grasslands: an alkaline lake: freshwater springs, streams, and pools, and thickets of Yellow-thorn Acacias support one of the largest concentrations of large mammals on the planet – elephants, buffalo, eland, wildebeest and zebra as well as numbers of the smaller antelope species. Large predators such as lions and Spotted Hyaena occur, and are often seen, and the crater is also one of the last refuges of the Northern Black Rhinoceros.

NIGHT: Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge, Ngorongoro Crater rim

Schalow’s Turaco, Ngorongoro © Geoff Lockwood

February 27, Day 12: The Ngorongoro Crater

We will spend most of the day down in the Crater, sometimes called “the eighth wonder of the world.”. We descend via a different route, and a major goal will be finding and observing some of the 30-35 Black Rhinoceros that survive here. Much of the crater floor is open short-grass savannah, so they are often easy to spot. Of the larger plains game we have already seen, only giraffe are absent (due to the absence of suitable acacia trees to browse), and we should have repeat views of many by now familiar friends – but this time in one of the world’s most spectacular settings! With a healthy predator population, sightings of lion or cheetah are possible, and with luck we may even encounter a ‘kill’ with the cats still feeding!

Birding in the crater is also diverse and rewarding, we may see African Fish-Eagle and Black Kites (helping themselves to our picnic if we're not careful!), Kori Bustard, migrant White and Abdim's storks, elegant Gray Crowned-Cranes, Black Crake, White-browed Coucal, Rosy-throated Longclaw, Plain-backed Pipit, Northern Anteater-Chat, and Capped Wheatear, among others. Depending on the rains, the air may be full of insects – with a mass of swallows – Barn-; Grey-rumped-, Swallows, Western House-; Banded- and Red-throated Crag Martins, along with flocks of Nyanza- and Little Swifts enjoying the abundant meal. The main alkaline lake supports flocks of Greater- and Lesser Flamingos; both Great White- and Pink-backed Pelicans, as well as a variety of waterfowl and shorebirds and we will search this, plus the other aquatic habitats on the crater floor carefully for any surprises!

The grounds of the lodge are 2,000 feet above the crater floor, set amidst a very distinct moss-draped acacia forest. Here we'll want to spend further time birding for specialties of the highlands. Brown-backed Woodpecker, Black- backed Puffback, White-necked Raven, Gray Cuckooshrike, White-eyed Slaty and African Dusky flycatchers, Mountain Yellow-Warbler, Cinnamon Bracken-Warbler, Hunter's Cisticola, Brown-headed and Bar-throated Apalis, African Hill Babbler, White-starred Robin, Streaky and Thick-billed seedeaters, Eastern Double-collared and flashy Golden-winged- and Tacazze Sunbirds are all possible. If the fig trees are fruiting, we may also find birds like Red- fronted Parrot, Rameron (African Olive) Pigeon, Schalow's Turaco, Olive Thrush, Eastern Mountain Greenbul, Mbulu (split from Montane or Broad-ringed) White-eye, and Kenrick's and Waller's starlings.

NIGHT: Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge, Ngorongoro

Bronze Sunbird © Geoff Lockwood

February 28, Day 13: Ngorongoro Highlands

After awakening to the loud duetting of Tropical Boubous and the complex songs of Cape Robin-Chats, we will bird the edge of the tangled mountain forest before driving the Crater perimeter rim road to the park exit. Among the possibilities in this habitat are Crowned Eagle, Mountain Buzzard, Schalow's Turaco, Crowned Hornbill, Brown-backed Woodpecker, Cinnamon Bracken-Warbler, Brown Woodland- Warbler, Brown-headed- and Bar-throated Apalis, Red-cowled Widowbird, Yellow-bellied Waxbill and other commoner highland species.

Our next stop is an artisanal coffee and honey farm where we will be taken through the process of planting-, growing-, harvesting- and then processing and roasting the coffee beans. The wild honey produced on the farm is made by stingless bees, and has an incredible, unique flavor. After this fascinating glimpse into 'the story of coffee', we will travel to our nearby lodge for lunch and, depending on weather conditions, some birding in the lodge grounds, or along the forest edge close to our lodge.

NIGHT: Tloma Lodge, Ngorongoro-Karatu

Red-and-yellow Barbet © Geoff Lockwood

March 1, Day 14: Lake Manyara National Park

This morning, a short drive will take us to the steep escarpment of the Great Rift Valley, below which is nestled Lake Manyara National Park. Centered on a soda lake below the cliffs, Manyara is a small park with

a wide variety of habitats and many possibilities for birds and mammals. Upon entering the park, we pass through a beautiful groundwater forest fed by streams rising from the base of the escarpment above. This cool and shady area offers possibilities for such localized species as Purple-crested Turaco, Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, Yellow-bellied Greenbul and more. Here too, we'll encounter large troops of Olive Baboons. In the more open acacia scrub fringing the lakebed are found most of the classic animals of East Africa, including African Elephant, comical Common Warthogs - trotting through the bush with tails raised and some very large Giraffes. Here, we will look for a number of birds more typical of drier acacia woodlands, among them, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Red-and-yellow Barbet, Brown-crowned Tchagra, Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird and Yellow-spotted Bush Sparrow (Petronia), Depending on water levels, we may find a nice variety of waterbirds, perhaps including Yellow-billed and Marabou storks, Pink-backed Pelican, Sacred Ibis, African Spoonbill, Black- headed and Black heron, Spur-winged Goose, Blue-billed Teal, and a mix of resident and wintering shorebirds.

In the afternoon we will return to our lodge on the rim of the Rift Valley in time for an optional walk around the grounds, where possibilities include Red-fronted Tinkerbird, Pallid Honeyguide, Gray-headed Bushshrike, Abyssinian White- eye and even the magnificent Verreaux's Eagle, a pair of which typically nests somewhere nearby, and which can sometimes be seen patrolling the rim of the Rift, in search of their favored prey, the Rock Hyrax.

NIGHT: Manyara Serena Lodge, Lake Manyara

Yellow-collared Lovebird © Geoff Lockwood

March 2-3, Days 15-16: Tarangire National Park

After breakfast we will head east along excellent paved roads to Tarangire National Park, arriving at the park gate well before lunch. Here we will likely encounter two Tanzanian endemics, the Yellow-collared Lovebird and Ashy Starling, as well as other new birds like Mottled Spinetail, Mosque Swallow, Northern Pied Babbler and Green-winged Pytilia. Tarangire is a dry region, subject to seasonal rains and drought, but it should be at its finest at this time of year, the grasslands lush and green and the trees and bushes leafed out. The entire area is studded with giant baobab trees, useful stores of moisture for the elephants during drier seasons, and their gargantuan trunks are scarred from generations of gouging by elephant tusks.

Running through the center of the park is the Tarangire River, with wide grassy floodplains dotted with trees, but there are many other habitats too. A main interest here will be the large African Elephant herds, but our game drives will also take us past Impala, Common Zebra, Giraffe, Waterbuck and other plains game. The area often produces sightings of predators, perhaps a Leopard resting in a tree during the heat of the day, or Cheetahs hunting in the grasslands.

Black-faced Sandgrouse © Geoff Lockwood

Tarangire is also exciting birding territory, the possibilities ranging from Common Ostrich, Southern Ground-Hornbills and bustards to tiny cisticolas and bishops. Among the many birds typically present are Saddle-billed Stork, Hamerkop, five species of francolins, Double-banded Courser, lots of raptors from large to

small, Black-faced Sandgrouse, cuckoos, Pearl-spotted Owlet, African Scops- Owl, Woodland Kingfisher, Red-and-yellow Barbet, White-rumped and Magpie shrikes, Slate-colored Boubou, Spotted Morning-Thrush, Red-headed Weaver, and many others. Our time here will undoubtedly pass all too quickly.

NIGHTS: Tarangire Sopa Lodge, Tarangire National Park

March 4, Day 17: Return to Arusha; Departure for Home

This morning, as we exit Tarangire, there is always a last-minute chance for that final Leopard or new bird for our extensive list before making the short journey back to Arusha, arriving in time for lunch. There may be time for some optional last-minute shopping before transferring to the Ngare Sero Lodge where private day rooms will be provided to wash, change, and pack prior to departure. A group transfer will be provided to Kilimanjaro International Airport (airport code JRO) in time for evening departing flights home.

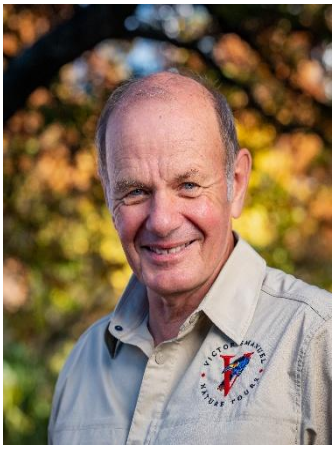
DAY ROOMS: Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge, Usa River

March 5, Day 18: Flights arrive home.

ESSENTIAL TOUR INFORMATION

TOUR SIZE: This tour is limited to 6 tour participants. However, VENT reserves the right to increase the tour limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space is available.

TOUR LEADER(s): This tour is led by Geoff Lockwood with local guides



Geoff Lockwood's interest and involvement with birds dates back to his early years at school and forms part of a wider interest in the biodiversity of the Southern African sub-region. After leaving school, he began a career as a bird artist, illustrator, and author. In 1981, he published Garden Birds of Southern Africa and later also contributed half the illustrations to the 5th and 6th editions of Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa. Geoff is currently based at the Delta Environmental Centre in Johannesburg where he acts as part-time manager and education officer, working to instill an environmental ethos in teachers and school groups that visit the Centre. For the past 40 years he has been involved with local

birding organizations and has served on the Council of the Southern African Ornithological Society—now BirdLife South Africa, for most of that time. He travels widely in the region, presenting lectures, talks, and courses on bird identification, ecology, and behavior, and was also involved in the training of local bird guides as part of a BLSA initiative to give communities a vested interest in the conservation of their local birds. With 874 species listed within southern Africa, Geoff is amongst the region's top birders. He has led tours to many destinations in Southern and Central Africa, as well as Kenya and Israel.

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOUR FEE: $18,995 per person based on double occupancy or **$19,975** for a person requiring single accommodation. This includes all meals from dinner on Day 3 through lunch on Day 17, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, all ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare to nor from the starting/ending city; however, flights within the tour (if any) are included. The fee also excludes laundry, personal expenses, and other items of a personal nature. For information about gratuities, please see the "TIPPING" sub-section below. If the minimum group size is not met, each participant will be charged a small-group supplement—shared equally and communicated in advance—to allow the tour to proceed.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: You may register for this tour through the VENT website or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The initial deposit for this tour is $1,000 per person. At 180 days VENT will collect a second deposit that brings the total deposit amount to 40% of the tour price. We accept MasterCard and Visa for both deposits.

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days (October 19, 2026) prior to the tour departure date.

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: Tour prices are based on the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If rates change drastically, it may be necessary to impose a surcharge. If a surcharge is

necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges have been passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

FUEL SURCHARGES: Our prices are based on fuel prices at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

TIPPING: An important part of the value of a VENT tour is knowing that tips for local service providers at our destinations—restaurant staff, hotel staff, drivers, local guides, and various other support staff—are included in your tour fee. If you would like to offer any of your local guides an additional tip, $5 to $10 a day is a common amount.

Tips for your VENT tour leader(s) are not included, but it is customary to tip one or both if you feel that you have received exceptional service. To assist in your planning, we recommend tipping your VENT tour leader(s) $15 to $20 per day, or the equivalent of approximately 2–4% of the tour fee.

If you plan to give tips by cash, they should be given directly to your tour leader at the end of the tour and not sent to the VENT office. Some of our tour leaders use mobile payment applications such as Venmo, PayPal, and Wise. If you would like to use this method, please ask your tour leaders directly whether they can accept tips through such an application.

We emphasize that tipping is optional and that these amounts are only recommendations. The amount you decide to tip is based entirely on your experience and at your discretion.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS

CANCELLATION BY PARTICIPANT:

- **More than 120 days prior to the tour start date:** A refund of all monies paid will be issued, less 50% of the deposit (including initial and second deposit)
- **120 days or fewer prior to the tour start date:** No refund will be provided.
- **Optional add-ons:** Some tours offer optional add-ons that are designated as non-refundable. Any such add-ons are clearly identified as non-refundable at the time of booking. By selecting and purchasing an optional add-on, the participant acknowledges and accepts its non-refundable status. Fees paid for non-refundable add-ons are not refundable under any circumstances, regardless of when the tour is cancelled.

This cancellation policy applies to all participants and all tours (Pre-Tours and Extensions are considered self-contained tours separate from the main tour). Because unexpected events can occur, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance.

CANCELLATION BY VENT:

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A "Force Majeure" event means any act beyond VENT's control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of $50,000. CST #2014998-50.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Please refer to the Travel Document section of this itinerary for details on Tanzania's Government mandate for Travel Insurance.

ADDITIONAL, OPTIONAL INSURANCE COVERAGES

SUGGESTED OPTIONS: To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Travel Protection as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its comprehensive Ripcord plan, which includes a medical evacuation benefit. With this in mind, it is important to note that medical evacuation is not offered by Redpoint as a stand-alone policy or benefit. For travelers not interested in comprehensive travel insurance, VENT recommends Medjet and its MedjetAssist® plan. Medjet is not an insurance company, and Medjet Assist is not an insurance product; rather, Medjet is a membership-based air-medical transport company specializing in moving hospitalized travelers from an admitting hospital to a medical facility of choice. Medjet does not provide medical evacuation service from the point of injury or illness; yet, the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

About Redpoint Travel's Ripcord Plan

Ripcord is a completely integrated travel insurance program with single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims. Critical benefits include comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice; medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion, and a "Cancel for Any Reason" benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.*

For a price quote or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: **Ripcord Travel Insurance**; or click the Ripcord logo on our website (click Help > Preparation and Insurance > Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, second deposit, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The "pay as you go" approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that

the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to "pay as you go," you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a Coronavirus FAQ page on its website that addresses questions and concerns travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

About Medjet's MedjetAssist Plan

MedjetAssist is a membership program that functions like AAA for motorists. The company's primary service is air medical transport. Critical benefits of MedjetAssist include a staff on call and ready to provide assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; all-expenses-paid air medical transport in the United States and internationally to medical facility of choice, regardless of medical necessity; repatriation of remains; and no exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

For travelers under 75, MedjetAssist may be purchased as Short-Term Memberships of 8, 15, 21, and 30 days, or Regular Annual Memberships from 1 to 5 years. For travelers 75–84, Medjet offers a Diamond Membership that is the same program but with a few additional conditions.

For a price quote or to purchase MedjetAssist, please visit: Medjet.com/VentBird or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and term of membership.

GETTING THERE & REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

AIR TRAVEL: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: $50 domestic; $75 international.* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through

Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.

*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

BAGGAGE: Please limit baggage to one medium, soft-sided roller bag or duffel bag and one carry-on, as storage space in the vehicles is very limited. The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your pre-departure materials and/or airline to find out specific weight restrictions.

Luggage space on the charter flight from Arusha to Seronera is minimal. In fact, what we typically do, is to send our larger bags ahead with the drivers to the Serengeti, and just fly with our carry-on bags. For this reason, it's a good idea to pack a small duffel or day pack, in which to have an extra change of clothing, and any necessary toiletries or medications for the 24-48 hours (depending on whether you arrive a day early) that we will be without our big bags at Ngare Sero. When packing, keep in mind that good laundry service is available at all of the lodges you will be visiting, meaning that laundry can be done at any location where we spend two or more nights. Any luggage or clothing not needed while on safari may be left in Arusha/Usa River (at Ngare Sero), where it will be safely stored.

As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, toiletries, medications, important travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on bag. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security, we recommend that you check the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for information pertaining to permissible carry-on items.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

TANZANIA GOVERNMENT INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS:

Mandatory Travel Insurance for Mainland Tanzania effective 01 Oct 2026.

From 1st October 2026, applicable foreign visitors entering Mainland Tanzania will be required to hold valid Inbound Travel Insurance under the Insurance (Inbound Travel Insurance) Regulations, 2026 - Government Notice No. 256. The requirement applies to entry through airports, seaports and land borders.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Standard Adult Premium: USD 44 equivalent in TZS.

Validity: Up to 92 days, including multiple entries.

Purchase: Online before travel or upon arrival.

Cover: Emergency medical treatment, medical evacuation, repatriation and loss of luggage.

Infants: 0 - 2: Free.

Children: 3 - 17: 50% discount.

Groups of 10+: Adults receive 10% discount.

WHO IS EXEMPTED?

Current NIC guidance lists Tanzanian residents, valid work/residential permit holders, diaspora, diplomats, transit passengers, and residents of EAC or SADC Partner States as exempted.

WHICH INSURANCE SHOULD YOU APPLY FOR, MAINLAND TANZANIA (NIC) OR ZANZIBAR (ZIC)?

If arriving Mainland Tanzania first → Applicable visitors should obtain NIC Inbound Travel Insurance. Visitors travelling to Zanzibar next do not require to purchase the Zanzibar (ZIC) Insurance. Please keep a copy of the NIC insurance certificate available for verification.

If arriving Zanzibar first → Guests who have already obtained valid ZIC Inbound Travel Insurance do not need to purchase the NIC Mainland insurance again. Please keep a copy of the ZIC insurance certificate available for verification.

Apply Online - Official NIC Portal

https://inbound.nicinsurance.co.tz/apply

PASSPORTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Tanzania is required.

VISAs: Visas are required for U.S. citizens traveling to this destination (acquired online at Tanzania eVisa - Welcome). If you hold a passport from another country, please check with your consulate or embassy for the most accurate guidance.

IMPORTANT: The visa details above are current for U.S. citizens as of September 22, 2026. Because entry requirements can change without notice, we kindly remind all participants to double-check the latest information before traveling. Travelers using non-U.S. passports are responsible for confirming any entry requirements that apply to their home country.

CLOTHING: Depending on weather, heat, and your susceptibility to the sun, you could bring a mix of T-shirts and long-sleeved- and lightweight blouses or shirts. Similarly, it is OK to wear shorts in most situations, but light weight, washable pants (especially those that convert into shorts by unzipping legs) are preferable, because they offer additional protection from sun, thorny plants, and biting insects. A light sweater/sweatshirt for cooler evenings and a light, easily packable rain shell is advised. Neutral colors (grays, tans, and khakis) are most appropriate. Easily washable, quick-drying clothes are useful. And remember, all lodges have reasonable laundry services so you can pack lightly! Alternatively, to lighten your load, you may consider bringing some clothes you plan to discard. These can be worn on the tour and left behind—and are very well received by local staff that we meet. Some lodges have swimming pools, so bring swimwear if you wish. There are few opportunities for any serious hiking, so lighter walking shoes should be adequate. A sunhat and sunglasses are advised. Casual clothes are adequate throughout and leave the fancy jewelry at home!

EQUIPMENT: Having the right equipment makes the travel experience more enjoyable. Your leader will carry a spotting scope for all to use. Since most birding will be done from vehicles, there is very limited use for such scopes, so you should strongly consider leaving this bulky and heavy piece of equipment at home. A small daypack for carrying your essentials in vehicles on game drives is useful. You should bring all the camera equipment and spare batteries and digital storage media that you need as these items may not be available in Tanzania.

There are abundant excellent photographic opportunities for mammals and birds, so be sure to bring plenty of digital storage media. Also bring a small flashlight or headlamp for walking between your room and the

dining areas at night. Please bring an alarm clock for early-morning wakeups. A few dust masks are advised in case we encounter excessively dry and dusty roads.

Binoculars: We strongly recommend you bring a pair of good binoculars of 8x32, 8x42, or 10x42 magnification. Please do not bring mini binoculars of any kind. Some people like them because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. You will find that 8x32 binoculars are compact and light enough.

Spotting Scopes: Your tour leaders will have scopes available for group use throughout the trip, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

DESTINATION INFORMATION & LOCAL CONDITIONS

CLIMATE & WEATHER: The rainy and dry seasons have become less well-defined and predictable in recent years. However, we are expecting mainly dry, warm to hot weather with daytime temperatures ranging from 77°to 88°F. In the crater highlands evenings can be chilly, with cool, misty mornings when temperatures may be down to the mid-50s. Generally, the temperatures and climate are considered pleasant and comfortable—sometimes hot, but not humid. The only exception is at Speke Bay, which is typically hotter and more humid. Tarangire, lying at a lower elevation, is also hotter than other sites, but it is dry, not humid. We could experience some rainstorms with the onset of the rainy season, but this rarely affects our program and activities.

CONDITIONS: Accommodations throughout are very good: clean, comfortable rooms with private bathrooms, and all within lovely locations. There are swimming pools at several lodges (Ngare Sero, Kubu Kubu, Ngorongoro Sarena Lodge, Tloma Lodge, Manyara Serena Lodge and Tarangire Sopa Lodge); laundry service; good shops offering gifts, clothing and practical items; well stocked bars; and excellent service.

FOOD & WATER:

Food: Abundant and mostly safe, with self-sufficiency above 100%, but some rural poverty and malnutrition persist.

Water: Generally safe in cities and tourist zones; rural access is improving but quality can vary. Tap water is safe in most places, but bottled water is recommended in rural or remote areas.

CURRENCY & SPENDING: There are opportunities to exchange small amounts of U.S. dollars for Tanzanian shillings at some of the lodges, but you will not need large amounts. Almost all places (including souvenir and gift shops) will accept U.S. dollars and major credit cards. There are ATM machines in Arusha—bring your PIN number! Please note that it is nearly impossible to exchange (or use as payment) U.S. paper currency of any denomination that was printed prior to 2013 – neither banks nor merchants will accept these older style bills that lack the most recent anti-counterfeiting designs.

ELECTRICITY: Electricity - 220/240 volts; plugs may be round or square 3-pin, fused or unfused

INTERNET ACCESS: Internet is available at all lodges, but is not always reliable, and in some spots, may be restricted to the central reception & bar/dining areas.

LANGUAGE: Kiswahili and English are the official languages

TIME: 7 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry service is available at all of our lodges. Fees apply.

HEALTH & SAFETY

HEALTH: VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

COVID-19: We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to

Date" with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance for avoiding COVID-19.

SUN EXPOSURE: The sun's ultraviolet rays are dangerous under prolonged exposure (sometimes only a matter of minutes), even in winter and early spring. Anytime you are outdoors you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. A severe sunburn is potentially very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and be sure to bring an ample supply of high SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

INSECT REPELLENTS: There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- **DEET:** (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.
- **Picaridin:** A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- **Herbal insect repellents:** Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

Insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- **Permanone®** (Permethrin): is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for pre-treatment of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done

outdoors, so it is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment must be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.

- **Insect Shield® apparel:** Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta Georgia. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636), or you can check their website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

SUGGESTED READING & TRIP PREPARATION

A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend **www.amazon.com** which has a wide selection; **www.buteobooks.com** and **www.nhbs.com** which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and **www.abebooks.com** for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

FIELD GUIDES:

Birds

Fanshawe, J. and T. Stevenson. Birds of East Africa: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. Second Edition. 2020. This book is the one to buy if you do not already have the Zimmerman field guide. Well-illustrated, up to date, and recommended. Note that this is the greatly revised Second Edition, and is part of the Princeton University Press Field Guides line-up.

Van Perlo, Ber. Collins Illustrated Checklist: Birds of East Africa. Collins, 1995. This is a much more compact, yet complete coverage of East African birds. Illustrations are small, but generally good, though there is little back-up text. An excellent compromise for light and easy field use.

Zimmerman, Dale A., Donald A. Turner and David J. Pearson. Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996. This is a detailed, comprehensive and well-illustrated field guide – very good for birding this region and no larger than the Stephenson guide. The smaller paperback edition is more suitable for field use.

Mammals

Kingdon, Jonathan. The Kingdon Field Guide to African Mammals. London: Academic Press, Harcourt Brace and company, 1997. A complete and informative guide to African mammals; full of information and good illustrations.

Kingdon, Jonathan. The Kingdon Pocket Guide to African Mammals. London: Christopher Helm, 2004. A much smaller, lighter pocket version of the excellent field guide above, but still with excellent information and the same illustrations. Suggested if you are on a mission to reduce weight!

Stuart, Chris, and Tilde. Southern, Central and East African Mammals: A Photographic Guide. Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 1998. For those wanting a much lighter reference, this is your book! Excellent photos and good brief text to most of the mammals we are likely to see in a very compact pocket-sized format.

Estes, Richard Despard. The Behavior Guide to African Mammals. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. A splendidly detailed book with masses of information on the ecology of all the wonderful large mammals we shall see.

BIRDING RESOURCES AND GENERAL NATURE:

S. Spawls, K. Howells, R. Drewes & J. Ashe. A Field Guide to the Reptiles of East Africa. Academic Press, 2002. A super-comprehensive, though large and heavy, guide to reptiles.

S. Spawls, K. Howells, & R. Drewes. Pocket Guide to the Reptiles and Amphibians of East Africa. Christopher Helm Publications (in UK), 2006. 144 pages, 230 color plates. This is a lightweight and portable guide, partly adapted from the popular and highly acclaimed field guide reviewed above. Covering the most

prominent 150 reptiles and 80 amphibians found in the region (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi), with concise text, photographs and a map for each, this is a convenient and attractive pocket guide for a diverse and often conspicuous group of animals.

Bill Branch. A Photographic Guide to the Snakes, Other Reptiles and Amphibians of East Africa. Struik, 2005. A very handy, slim yet fairly comprehensive little guide to reptiles and amphibians.

Blundell, M. Wild Flowers of East Africa. New York: HarperCollins Pub Ltd, 1999. A handy field guide with good photographs for anyone especially interested in the botany.

Available in Tanzania are small booklets for each of the national parks. Produced by the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania and African Wildlife Foundation, they are highly informative, very well-illustrated and extremely readable accounts giving interesting details of all wildlife, plant life, ecological relationships and conservation aspects. Recommended!

CLO Apps

eBird. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Among the largest and most successful citizen science projects in existence, eBird is an essential tool in promoting bird study and conservation. Among a range of benefits, eBird allows users to keep a variety of lists in a single application. When taxonomic splits are incorporated, lists are automatically updated. Additionally, trip leaders can share daily lists, so one only need accept a shared list and it will upload to your files. Highly recommended.

Merlin Bird ID. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Merlin is an app designed as a birding coach for beginning and intermediate birdwatchers. Excellent for use in the field, Merlin asks the observer a series of questions about his or her bird sighting, including date and location, and color, size, and behavior of a bird. Merlin then processes the viewer's responses to present a shortlist of possible identifications, from which the user can choose the likely bird. Species profiles include a brief physical description, photographs, and sound samples. The Photo ID feature allows anyone with a camera to snap a photo and obtain a list of suggestions. Merlin's Sound ID feature allows identification of birds through audible recognition. To use Merlin, download the app and the appropriate regional "pack." Highly recommended.

TERMS, CONDITIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, "VENT") act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane

and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on July 27, 2026 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "Airline") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

View the complete Terms and Conditions on our website.

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