

Kenya

Wildlife at Leisure

3rd – 13th November 2016

A Greentours Trip Report

Led by Ian Green & Seda Soylu

This trip report must come with a small caveat – we can't expect such amazing wildlife sightings on every trip here! To have seen six species of cat on this tour and with such great sightings of the larger cats in particular was incredible and add to that the many other rare and difficult to see mammals that we encountered. The sighting of twenty-six African Hunting Dogs is unlikely to be repeated. However Tsavo and Amboseli are those kind of places, you never know what remarkable wildlife you'll see...

Day 1 November 3rd to Nairobi

All arrived pretty much on time in Nairobi. We drove quickly to the Boma Inn, twenty minutes from the airport and checked in.

Day 2 November 4th Nairobi NP & Amboseli

We rose early and convened at breakfast in the Boma where all seemed capable of eating a good breakfast even though it was just dawning outside. Soon we were on the Nairobi merry-go-round that is the Mombasa Road but thankfully it only took us ten minutes to reach the entrance gate to the national park. Once inside we gazed across open expanses of grassland and Whistling Acacia savannah, these odd little trees hardly a metre or so high in many areas. Helmeted Guineafowl and Yellow-necked Spurfowl were immediately obvious and we soon found our first Superb Starling. A little farther along the first mammals started to appear – a mixed group of Thomson's Gazelles and Grant's Gazelles gave us chance to see the differences which here are harder to see than elsewhere in the region as Nairobi's Grants have a strong black flank stripe! There were also plenty of Coke's Hartebeest and Burchell's Zebras and soon enough the first of many Wildebeest. We stopped for various photographs of these and of Black-bellied Bustard, Little Bee-eater and Long-tailed Fiscals. We watched Ostriches and a distant but much appreciated Black Rhinoceros. Then news came of Lions ahead so we moved on rapidly, the front vehicle seeing three Lionesses as they faded slowly into the forest, the backmarker glancing often at two Cape Buffalo behind her. Then both vehicles came across two more Lionesses, one looking particularly interested in ungulates ahead of her, then a superb male Lion with a very presentable mane sauntered lazily along the sky line... There was still time to enjoy Secretary Birds, both White-backed and Rueppell's Griffon Vultures, and Black-winged Kites, before time started to eke away. On the way back to the gate we had a surprise in the shape of two adult and a baby Oribi.

Then it was the long haul down to Amboseli, initially along the Namanga road where we came across a small group of Lesser Kudu. A stop at a curio shop with toilets allowed us good views of Variable Sunbird

and Red-faced Croubler. Then it was along the marram road to Amboseli. Time was pressing so we couldn't really stop though we did manage a minute or so for half a dozen Gerenuk. However roadside Kori Bustard, Dik-dik and Brown Snake-Eagle failed to stop us.

We arrived at Ol Tukai lodge just in time to catch a late lunch, taken outside on the verandah with the wide expanse of Ol Tukai's swamp in front of us. Elephants were dotted everywhere, Buffalo too and there was a general abundance of birds and mammals – magical! The rooms were rather gorgeous too, and with similarly great views.

Our afternoon trip was just out to corners of the same swamp. We hardly made any progress such was the density of wildlife. Elephants were a major feature and towards the end of the evening two young males playing and fighting in the deep water as the sun set behind them gave great photographic opportunities. Hippopotamus were here and there and there were a number of Bohor Reedbuck. We photographed Impala and Yellow Baboons, and there were lots of Zebra, Buffalo and Wildebeest. The birds were exceptional with a host of wetland species. Pink-backed Pelicans were the largest, the Grey Crowned Cranes perhaps the prettiest though the several Malachite Kingfishers might oppose that view. There were lots of waders – Crowned Plovers, Blacksmith Plovers, Three-banded Plovers, Long-toed Plovers, Kittlitz's Plovers, Greenshank, Wood Sandpipers and Ruff. Herons included Grey, Black-headed. Squacco and Madagascar Squacco. Hottentot Teal was enjoyed whilst Collared Pratincoles flew over as did a Lesser Black Backed Gull. African Fish Eagles was photographed and Marsh Harrier scared the birds! Black Crakes were numerous. Other choice species included Painted Snipe, lots of Glossy Ibises, Night Heron, Water Dikkops and White-bellied Bustards.

Day 3 November 5th Amboseli

We started the morning at a quarter to six in the bar with tea and cakes. Taveta Golden Weaver was in the trees as we started out and as we left the cover of the lodge we were confronted with the spectacular sight of Kilimanjaro in all its glory. First we took pictures with Wildebeest and Zebras in the foreground then as the sun lit the snowy cone perfectly the iconic pictures of elephants and Kilimanjaro were realised. Soon after two Bat-eared Foxes cavorted across the low grass plains.

Further along we stopped to enjoy close-up camera work with Wildebeest and Gazelle of various species. Seda's vehicle spotted a Spotted Hyena and watched it walk across the round in front of them and then some Warthogs and the rest of us caught up with some Warthogs where a Saddlebill Stork was resting. Here Steve pulled something out of the bag with albeit distant views of a pair of Black-backed Jackals. Not to be outdone the front landcruiser then found three adult Bat-eared Foxes and the cutest of little baby foxes in a den by the road. Unfortunately the little fox didn't come many times and the adults scampered off into the distance! Then we had a concentrated session of wetland birds and animals for the next hour. There were so many Wildebeest and Zebra of course, and Buffalo and Hippos, but we concentrated for a while on the rather lovely Bohor Reedbuck, one of which had a little baby. Birds were superb not least for being so close to us. There were hordes of waders – Wood Sandpipers, Greenshanks, Marsh Sandpipers, Ruff, Long-toed, Blacksmith and Crowned Plovers, and Common Snipe. We enjoyed stellar views of Malachite Kingfishers and a Pied Kingfisher came close too. A Zanzibar Red Bishop was not in full plumage. We watched Hottentot Teal and various egrets too, the latter including Madagascar Squacco Heron. African Spoonbills and Glossy Ibis were enjoyed.

After a slap-up breakfast (my, we filled up those plates!) we went out for an hour or so's wander round the lodge grounds. We started with a Paradise Flycatcher then were soon enjoying Beautiful Sunbirds, Thrush Nightingales and a Grey Woodpecker. The Maasai guard was busy chasing Yellow Baboons and

Vervet Monkeys away! A superb Mother-of-Pearl Butterfly flew past and later we saw the False Diadem and Round-winged Orange-tips. The grounds are great for birds and we were soon watching Speckled Mousebirds, Eurasian Cuckoos and Black-hooded Orioles at close range. One tree had Mosque Swallows, Striped Swallows and Black Rough-wings in it! Later we flushed a Verreaux's Eagle Owl. A group of Red-billed Firefinches and Common Waxbills were joined by a White-browed Wagtail. Other birds seen included Hoopoe, African Cuckoo, Grey-headed Kingfisher and a superb male Paradise Flycatcher who dazzled us with his white tail!

The afternoon game drive again saw us marvelling at the magnificent views around us with Kilimanjaro appearing from time to time and the acacia and doum palm dotted areas separated by wide expanses of flat short-grass plains and swamps. We stopped soon enough for some Elephants and then drove through hordes of ungulates before stopping regularly along a swampy sections where we can across numerous new birds. This time with the Hottentot Teal there were Red-billed Teal and Garganey. We almost missed a Sur-winged Goose – it was probably so big that we didn't notice it! Waders were abundant and some of the Glossy Ibis were in beautiful plumage. There were of course Reedbuck and we'd just arrived at an amazing Hyena den where no less than seven rather cute little Hyenas were running about the entrance (and half a dozen adults were scattered about too) when we heard the call too Lions. We sped off across the landscape in search of the cats arriving a little late, three Lionesses having just melted in the thick grass. We waited awhile, noting Two-banded Courser and Pallid Harrier and then the call came again. So again we headed as the sun descended. This time we were amazed to find the Lions perfectly in view and also full of fun. For seven of the lions were little cubs, one of them really very tiny. We surmised that they must be young of three Lionesses, though six of them looked the same age. The gambolled round the two Lionesses who yawned good-naturedly and watched as they tumbled and play-fought. The tiny one got an almost continuous battering!

In the evening some of us went out for a night drive. And what a night a night drive. Within five minutes of leaving the lodge Seda had found us a superb Senegal Galago (Bushbaby) which we had amazing views of as it jumped from tree to tree. Then as we peered at a Bat-eared Fox another animal walked between us and it – a Serval! This sauntered slowly away stopping once to stare back at us. What a start! We headed out into the plain where predictably we had to learn the various eyeshine of Wildebeest, Gazelles, Zebra etc! We came across Spotted Hyenas at regular intervals and stopped by the den where all the youngsters came out to say hello and ended up under the vehicle! Some of the adults joined them. When we started the engine Hyenas erupted on all sides from us! Next up was a group of Spring Hares which gave us stellar views – we were even able to get photographs. What animals! Continuing we reached a marshy area where we hoped to see Serval, no Serval in sight, but we chanced upon an African Civet! Then on across the plains passing Slender-tailed Nightjars and lots of more Spring Hares before we finished off with superb views of White-tailed Mongoose and there were another four or so Galagos in the trees as we approached the lodge!

Day 4 November 6th Amboseli

During the night Mike and Val's room had been visited by a bat which they photographed – it looked like some kind of *Mops* free-tailed bat.

We started the morning at the Lions again. The had moved just a little and this time were closer and lit stunningly by the morning sun – a great photographic opportunity. The tiny cub and some of its cousins disappeared quickly into the palmerie but the other cubs sat contentedly in the sun...

Then we were off across the plain, stopping to photograph various animals – Elephants, Zebra and the like with Kilimanjaro as backdrop. We also stopped to photograph some of the commoner gazelle and there was a great Warthog who came close to us. In the background the first of several Spotted Hyenas loped off. Two-banded Courser was seen right by the vehicle and we enjoyed the chance to photograph this next to a couple of ‘vicious’ Sparrow-Larks. Then Peter spotted a couple of Black-backed Jackals. We watched these for some time – they are very delicate and beautiful animals. Another Spotted Hyena walked past behind them. Then we headed into some palms driving past hordes of Zebra and a few Elephants. Lilac-breasted Roller and Eurasian Marsh Harrier were our reward. Peter and John then took us over to Observation Hill where we walked up the shattered lava slopes (on steps) just five minutes to the top where we had a great view over the Amboseli basin and up to Kilimanjaro to the south. A group of perhaps five hundred Lesser Flamingoes sat in a tight group on an island below us with lots of White Pelicans and a few Darters and Long-tailed Cormorants. We also saw Great Cormorant, Lanner, White-backed Vulture and Alpine Swifts. On the hilltop there were abundant Taveta Golden Weavers rather hoping we’d bought along a packed breakfast – we hadn’t, but they posed for photographs anyway. Red-billed Queleas flew past and there were several Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse with babies on the downward slope. On the way back we passed yet more Spotted Hyenas! Stripey Five-lined Skinks were noted.

Wandering around the grounds several African Fish Eagles were seen and other good birds were Grey and Nubian Woodpeckers, Sulphur-breasted Bush-Shrike, Pangani Longclaw, Grey-backed Camaroptera, Brubru, and Didric Cuckoo! Narrow Green-banded Swallowtail flew past.

The afternoon drive took us out west. We started with two fine Kori Bustards waltzing around the first junction moving between Zebras and Wildebeest. Rather neatly we finished with five Kori Bustards on the plains near Observation Hill. In between we stopped to get pictures of Thompson’s Gazelles, Buffalo, Wildebeest and the like. There were as usual more Hyenas, we were not even stopping for some now. A highlight came when two Egyptian Mongooses scampered across the road and into cover. The second vehicle was mortified to miss these but luckily another animal came out and they had good views. They looked remarkably like Otter as they trundled across the turf, only their tails showing their true identity. Later we found another animal lurking in thick saltbush – a Bush Duiker – it didn’t have any of the characteristic face stripes of this species though! We made a stop by the first marsh just because an African Spoonbill was looking fantastic just metres away when an African Fish Eagle sailed over putting everything up. We had wonderful moments as many ducks and geese and waders flew hither and thither about us. A Black-chested Harrier Eagle soared over the savannah and we had good views of a Montagu’s Harrier and several Marsh Harriers. Flocks of Collared Pratincoles flitted past. Two Warthogs decided they wanted to get fit for the Olympics and ran hard off across the savannah with no discernible chaser in sight! We stopped to photograph Little Bee-eaters and Lilac-breasted Rollers and some Blue-naped Mousebirds disappeared before others could get a look at them. A Black-faced Sandgrouse looked great in the evening sun and we also saw Yellow-necked Spurfowl and Crested Francolin at close range.

Dinner was finished with a lovely cake and champagne – courtesy of the Ol Tukai Lodge – wonderful!

Afterwards some slightly drunken nightwalking saw us watching African Civets. We had remarkable views of these beautifully marked animals! Perhaps the alcohol might have explained the sheer number of Senegal Galagos we saw leaping from tree to tree – how do they cope with those acacia thorns? There were up to four per tree and I would think there must have been at least a dozen of them.

Day 5 November 7th Amboseli and via Tsavo West to Voi Safari Lodge

We had breakfast this bright and sunny morning before departing Ol Tukai at seven. We stopped by some Elephants before heading over to an area where first thing Cheetahs had been spotted. We could only see Spotted Hyenas which usually mean that Cheetahs will be far away, however a little while later there they were – three superb male Cheetahs. We watched one jump up on a log then the three sauntered off across the steppe. They seemed oblivious to the growing band of admirers which bizarrely included a large herd of mixed Zebra and Wildebeest. The Wildebeest in particular seemed to want to have a close up look and ran over to the Cheetahs, crowding round them (and blocking our view somewhat!). The Cheetahs however maintained their dignity and continued with their walking. They were a fabulous sight. Nearby a young Martial Eagle sat on a tree and lots of vultures, mostly White-backed, soared overhead.

Elated we headed towards the gate stopping briefly for herd of Elephants emerging from Kilimanjaro's shadow and for a Grasshopper Buzzard that caused us a deal of confusion regarding its identity.

Then it was out into the hinterland before arriving once again into a national park, this time Tsavo West. The scenery became increasingly varied inside this wonderful expanse of savannah that covers volcanic hills and plains including a large area of lava that erupted from a low cone here just a few hundred years ago. We started seeing Kirk's (Cavendish's) Dik-dik and also many hornbills, mainly Von der Decken's and Grey.

We stopped at Mzima springs where we wandered down to the waters. They are currently too low to see the Hippos swimming under the water in the upper pool – we only saw them further downstream. There was a big group of Syke's (Blue) Monkeys who were very willing to pose for photographs. Down by the water we spotted a small Crocodile, hardly more than a metre long and later a very tiny youngster on a waterside bough. Grey-headed and Brown-hooded Kingfishers were seen and there were Grey Hornbills, Violet Wood-Hoopoes, Black-hooded Oriole and Smaller Black-bellied Sunbirds too. Taveta Golden Weavers were making their nests from turquoise sedges!

Then it was to Kilaguni Lodge for lunch. It was difficult not to stop, but we managed it! We arrived at Kilaguni just as an Oche Bush Squirrel ran across the road. We were ushered into the expansive restaurant and partook of a most excellent and much needed lunch. The views out over Tsavo West National Park were exquisite – it is truly a beautiful park. The water hole below us was bereft of animals but birds were rather good. Pale (Eastern) Chanting Goshawk, Gabar Gosawk and Great Sparrowhawk all flew through and in the grounds we noted many Hornbills – Red-billed and Von der Decken's – and Paradise Flycatcher, Smaller Black-bellied Sunbird and Croaking Cisticola.

We left Kilaguni and headed across Tsavo West, passing through some great country, and trying not to stop as we had to get to the neighbouring national park. This was going great until we decided to stop to get a classic Baobab picture. I had only just got out the word stop when the brakes were applied far sharper than seemed necessary for a many hundreds year old tree. For Peter had spotted African Hunting Dogs lounging at the base of the Baobab. This was astounding for these are rare creatures in Kenya, there are just one or two places where regular encounters are made, and this was not one of them! It was four years since Peter had last seen Wild dogs, and he is out in Kenya's parks a lot. We marvelled at these handsome canids just metres from us. There were seven of them here, and they were enjoying the Baobabs shade, but at the same time were quite active. After we'd been photographing them for some time they suddenly all got up and we thought they were off, one or two wandering into the road in the sunlight. But no, they were merely making contact with the rest of the group for there were many more, including many youngsters just fifty metres away. We watched their greeting ceremonies and the comings

and goings for another half an hour – there were at least twenty six in this group! Eventually we just had to go, but what an incredible memorable encounter it had been.

We dropped down to the gate – noting Wahlberg's Eagle there – and then drove down the main Nairobi to Mombasa highway for a short time. The new railway under construction paralleled the road. Zebras were busy checking the embankments! Then it was into Tsavo East. The gate we entered meant an hour's drive across Tsavo East's dry savannah to Voi Safari Lodge. Due to those wonderful African Hunting Dogs we had little time to stop, so we just sat back and enjoyed the increasingly scenic journey as the sharp hills around lodge rose into view. We passed many Peter's (Grant's) Gazelles, Zebra, a few Gerenuk, Giraffes, Did-diks, Waterbuck and the like and Seda's vehicle stopped for two Lions. Then it was into the lodge itself with the sun already down but still enough light to understand what a magnificent savannah-scape panorama was viewable from the front of the lodge – and all the rooms.

Day 6 November 8th Tsavo East

We as usual convened at 05.45 for tea, coffee and biscuits and then set off at six. This was our first proper venture into Tsavo East and a measure of how rich the park is may be deduced by the few kilometres we covered in three and a half hours! Driving across the dry bush country we were impressed by the fine scenery with sharp steep-sided hills protruding from the red-earth flat lands. Cacti-like euphorbias were dominant on the steep slopes but in the dry country commiphora and acacia were common, the latter also reaching tree size with some impressive flat-topped specimens that always seemed to hold many weaver nests, indeed each seemed to hold many birds. Dik-diks melted away as we drove, our first impressions of the bird life was of hornbills – they were everywhere. Von der Decken's, Red-billed and Grey Hornbills were all abundant and we saw a single Yellow-billed Hornbill too. Red-billed Buffalo Weavers and those lovely Superb Starlings were common too. We soon started seeing animals. The local form of Grants Gazelle – Peter's Gazelle – were common and we saw many up close. Then there were the Coke's Hartebeest, numerous this year, and Impala, as always abundant. It didn't take us long to find our first Elephants. Tsavo's Elephants are famous for their redness and this is a very striking feature – the soil hereabouts soon removes white or grey from the agenda – even the Zebras tend to be orange and black striped! Suddenly we heard of Lions just ahead and sped to meet them – three Lionesses sitting back in the bushes – they could be seen well, but there Elephants heading towards them and it was clear that they would not stay long. Sure enough they became suddenly alert and realising that the Elephants were coming right over them quickly rose and slunk off. One Elephant went and stood for a while where they had lain moments before. You could almost sense the smirk! A little further and we headed into the Kanderi Swamp. At this season it is dry with grass. A Carmine Bee-eater drew much admiration. We spotted a Black-backed Jackal sauntering across the grassland. It disappeared into some bushes just around the same time that we spot a Lioness. This scattered a bunch of vultures from the ground (on a kill?) that included a Lappet-faced Vulture. Soon after we watched as three Lionesses met and greeted each other before settling down out of sight. Nearer at hand a bunch of Elephants walked through to some water dragging members of the Hartebeest and Peter's Gazelle groups with them for a while. Vultures were on many of the trees here and we also spotted several raptors – there were Steppe Eagle, Tawny Eagle, Booted Eagle, Gymnogene and a superb African Hawk Eagle with surprisingly large talons. We headed back towards the lodge but were interrupted by various birds including Kori Bustards and also by a mob of Banded Mongooses that moved like a vacuum cleaner across the savannah. Six superb Abyssinian Ground Hornbills walked across the track right in front of us – we marvelled at the heavily scarlet wattled alpha male! A Gerenuk was photographed doing its standing up on hind legs thing. Next

was a superbly brilliant Red and Yellow Barbet and then Seda's landcruiser had the good fortune to encounter some Golden-breasted Starlings, one of the most beautiful birds in Africa.

Breakfast was much needed! We watched Buffalo and Elephants from the table and admired the comings and goings of the nesting colony of Black-headed Weavers. After breakfast several of descended to the hide by the waterhole where we had a fabulous time watching the morning ablutions and interactions of various groups of Elephants at really close range. In this hide you are just three or four metres from the closest animals and you can see them looking at you – fabulous!

In the afternoon we did a checklists session – my what a lot of species – before heading out into the savannah again at 4pm. We soon encountered a Giraffe which had some rather severe but old injuries that looked to have been the result of a lion attack. Just up the road we found our first Desert Warthogs. The came down to a waterhole and looked fantastically red. One though changed to black as it just jumped in on arriving at the water! Next was a group of Fringe-eared Oryx which we watched for some time as they dug away in the red soil, the red dust flying up around them and making for marvellous pictures (we hope) with sun shining through from behind! We entered a grassland area where we could see many Hartebeest, Peter's Gazelles, and Zebra and then a Hartlaub's Bustard, this one first giving us great views then completing the job by flying up and displaying, coming back down to earth as if it was a white a parachute – quite extraordinary! A little further along and Peter spotted three Lions on a rock just above the road. The light, though now declining, was still superb on the animals, the two females posed in classic fashion, whilst the male, well, he just lay on his back and showed us that he was indeed a male! His great yellow eyes were really something when they stared back at us. We turned around just after spotting a Land Monitor lizard resting high in a tree. Two Bateleurs were perched nearby. As the sun disappeared we drove along the edge of a grassland hoping for Serval or Cheetah. We did indeed spot a Serval as it sauntered out onto the road, but it didn't stay for long... Then it was back to base, for rather later sundowners!

Day 7 November 9th Tsavo East

We headed west this morning with the dawn light silvering the dry grasses and with Rollers and starlings everywhere on the low bushes. Both European Roller and Lilac-breasted Rollers were very common. Starlings were represented by lots of Fishers, lots of Superb, a few Greater Blue-eared Glossy Starlings and one glorious Golden-breasted Starling. Additionally we saw both Red-billed and Yellow-billed Oxpeckers – the latter favouring Cape Buffalo, the former less stocky hosts. Animals seemed less obvious this morning though we did see lots of Impala, Hartebeest, Zebra and the like and also some good groups of Eland. Elephants were here and there until we reached some water holes late in the drive where we were treated to numbers at close range complete with a range of exciting vocalisations.

Dik-diks were very common and we stopped to photograph them occasionally. We also had several nice encounters with desert warthogs, two large males with manes bought to mind comparisons with some 1970s footballers – Kevin Keegan may not be too happy to be so compared! Two very fine Black-chested Harrier-Eagles were enjoyed but otherwise it was a quiet morning for raptors. Other birds though were excellent. D'Arnaud's Barbets were great fun and we watched several pairs dueting. There was one Red and Yellow Barbet high in a tree. Another flowering tree had both Hunter's Sunbirds and a male Amethyst Sunbird too. We saw our first Rosy-patched Shrike who sang sibilantly from the top of the bush – it was a fine male with a very striking red throat 'rip'. Soon we saw several more, then a lovely Somali Bee-eater then soon after a truly gorgeous black and white Paradise Flycatcher we watched Black-faced Sandgrouse at very close quarters as well as several lovely Black-headed Plovers. Seda's vehicle spotted a Cut-throat.

After lunch we headed out on a long round of the savannah. This was eerily quiet for animals for almost the entire journey. We saw White-bellied Bustards and near the end of the trip a superb male Hartlaub's Bustard who threatened to show us his display and then declined – a Kori Bustard walked by at the same time. We found a White-headed Vulture standing atop his nest and a little later a pair of Lappet-faced Vultures these with a full grown youngster occupying a nest which occupied the entire top of a short acacia! As the sun lowered Peter suddenly spotted a Leopard jumping p into an acacia. What a sight it was! The cat stretched itself out along a branch fifteen feet up and relaxed in true Leopard fashion, two legs and a tail dangling. Though the sun was waning it lit the Leopard superbly and we were able to take many superb pictures. It was a most fantastic lighting – hard to imagine seeing a Leopard in a more beautiful situation. We watched it for twenty minutes as it relaxed or watched things from its perch before it decided to climb down and wander of in to the bush. We'd had it for the whole time to ourselves. We did feel a mite sorry for the vehicle that arrived mere seconds after it had left!

At seven we went out for a night drive. This was a good learning experience on how to tell Diki-dik eyeshine from that of other perhaps more exciting species! However we soon started finding those too. We started with a rather difficult to see Common Genet, and later saw another one much better. Star animal of the night was an Aardvark though it took us all a while to realise that what we were seeing was one! Sat upon its haunches with black front legs showing and long ears we pondered dog kind and other options then as it turned to amble off a long white tail showed – White-tailed Mongoose some of us thought, but no – it was a young Aardvark! Nightjars were regularly seen and we saw several owls, one being a superb Verreaux's Eagle Owl. Indeed birds features strongly as we could see high densities roosting in some trees and also the ranger pointed ut a tree full of vultures and another with a roosting Ground Hornbill. We also spotted a Galago in a tree and later I thought I saw two more only for them to turn out to be a pair of Giraffes staring back at me! We saw some great Lesser Kudu and Gerenuk and Elephant were among the usual animal species. We found one Lion sitting quite close to the road, but no other cats. There were however canids – we saw one Bat-eared Fox and a couple of Black-backed Jackals. There were mongooses too – we saw a White-tailed Mongoose and there was also a Bushy-tailed Mongoose for Seda's landcruiser on the way back.

Day 8 November 10th Tsavo East

This morning we first headed to an area where three Cheetahs had been seen just before dusk the previous evening but they were not there so we went instead in the direction of Aruba. Now we were becoming familiar with the frequently seen wildlife of Tsavo East and perhaps also things were a little quiet this morning. No sign of any big cats and not many new species for us. However we did enjoy quality time with a some exciting species. Gerenuk made a big impression today. We saw double figures of this often scarce antelope and they played ball with the photographers too. A male and his harem of perhaps ten or so females were all around us at one point with several of these elegant and delicate looking gazelles doing that Gerenuk thing of standing up on their hind legs and grazing the upper branches of bushes thereby reaching the leaves that other gazelle can't. The male in particular put on a great show of this even at one point free-standing on his hind legs! Dwarf Mongooses also put on a great exhibition – the first group rather hid from us but a second group fossicked freely in the bushes with some posing beautifully on an stump worn red by elephant rubbing. A group of Banded Mongooses sped by...

Golden-breasted Starlings were quite simply stunning. Some suggest that these are the most beautiful birds in the world. For sure they are the most intense colours and we were able to photograph these at leisure today. The golden belly and iridescent blues and violets of the body and wings are incredible and this starling is the most elegant shape. A group of Wattled Starlings hd their yellow breeding wattles, and

there were plentiful Superb Starlings and Greater Blue-eared Glossy Starlings. We had great views of Buff-crested Bustards and there were lots of Crested Francolins. The Red and Yellow Barbet was again on his termite mound, this time with a friend, and he caught a rather large and tasty looking grasshopper that he didn't share with the other one! Several eagles on the ground comprised Tawny and Steppe Eagles and the vultures in the sky were Lappet-faced, White-backed and Rueppell's Griffons. Seda's landcruiser found a Bateleur Eagle eating the remains of a Warthog head! Speaking of Desert Warthogs we all enjoyed very much the family with very small young that trotted parallel to us for some time!

Breakfast was very much enjoyed and needed! Elephants seemed in larger numbers than usual down at the waterhole and the Buffalo had to wait. A Bateleur was quickly followed by a Verreaux's Eagle and a pair of Augur Buzzards...

The afternoon game drive took us along the pipeline road where we saw the usual selection of animals and indeed the usual selection of bustards – White-bellied, Kori's and Hartlaub's all visible from one spot. The Hartlaub's obviously missed us and walked over to have a close range look at us. We visited a Verreaux's Eagle Owl at his roost site – the bird was just three metres from us! Then we went to small cat alley in the hope seeing a small cat! Once again this remarkable section of road produced the goods though only Peter the driver had a good look at the Caracal that crossed the road in front of us. Several of the rest of us had a brief look but most missed it. We drive up and down searching but could no more sign of it or any other cats.

Day 9 November 11th Tsavo East

This morning we had breakfast a little after six and then just before seven we headed out on the long trek to the Galana River. Our route took us initially along the pipeline road where first Lesser Grey Shrike, then Lesser Kudu, then a Buffalo with something going on in the water and then two Lions playing tag in the grass delayed us. Just further along a Verreaux's Eagle Owl was sat in the grass with Tawny Eagle, Steppe Eagle and Pied Crows for company. We turned north and shortly Peter was at it again spotting a Leopard in a tree. This was probably the same young female as the other day as it was quite close by – unfortunately it didn't stay long enough for the second vehicle to enjoy it. Raptors featured as we continued with Pale Chanting Goshawk, Imperial Eagle, Bateleur and Gabar Goshawk. We saw few animals on the way, but birds were everywhere, however we were on a mission. Peter again spotted cats. This time more spotted cats – Cheetahs. They were right by the road. A female and three cubs. The cubs were not at all sure about the vehicle though and soon went off the mother rather reluctantly following. Both vehicles did get to see these! The three big cats under the belt and it wasn't yet eight-thirty!

Then it was down the Doum Palm-lined river. We got out and had a potter about the rocky river bed as the sun shone strongly. A Hippo eye us from quite close by the river and we could see another upstream with some Waterbuck. Yellow-billed Storks were common and there were Great White Egrets, Grey Heron, Spur-winged Plovers and a Common Sandpiper or two. The river cascades down through a narrow rocky defile here, a muddy brown torrent. Two superb Carmine Bee-eaters soared over us, landing in the trees for great scope views. A gang of White-crested Helmet Shrikes came by. There was also White-browed Scrub-Robin here as well as Namaqua Dove. The *Acraea* butterflies were not playing ball...

We moved a little downstream where we were able to walk again. This time to an overlook where a number of Nile Crocodiles were visible. Steve spotted a Nile Monitor whilst across the river on a rocky knoll were Black-lipped Rock Hyraxes. Wire-tailed Swallows were down by the river and there were Hammerkops to be seen.

Then we were off for the return journey. We saw a number of Lesser Kudu during the drive as well as encountering numerous Elephants and a few Giraffe. One Eland positively flew over the bank in a giant bound and another huge bull posed for us. Warthogs occasionally appeared and there were many Did-diks. Golden Orioles were in numbers in one tree and we saw Blue-naped Mousebirds too. Yellow-billed Hornbills were seen too. A Tawny Eagle was eating something in a tree – nearby there was a Bateleur and a Lesser Spotted Eagle. Probably the bird highlight of the morning was a superb Golden Pipit – a male – that gave us a great show on the road. As Shirley pointed out the books don't seem to be aware of the rich green of the birds back!

During lunch some Redwing Starlings were seen and a superb little Common Buttonquail was watched for some time.

The afternoon drive took us back to look for the ailing Buffalo. Unfortunately the poor animal had died giving birth. All the many animals in the area – the hartebeest, the Zebra, the Grant's Gazelle – seemed uneasy and many of them were running, however Peter said it was more likely the imminent rain that was making them like this rather than the Buffalo. We stopped in the open grassland nearby where three Lions were lazing. We watched them for a while, and the Kori Bustard that was displaying behind us. A Hartlaub's Bustard wandered past. Redwing Bushlarks sang melodically. Up past some waterholes where Elephants were getting their fill and we saw both Banded Mongooses and Dwarf Mongooses. A lovely white and black (mostly white) Paradise Flycatcher flounced about, and a Verreaux's Eagle Owl stared back at us from the upper branches of an acacia. We came across another couple of Lions, however these were so inactive that we didn't stay long instead going off in search of first Leopard and then the smaller cats – on both counts we were unsuccessful.

Back at the hotel we took dinner and set up the trap camera down at the waterhole (beats staying up all night!). I had a look round the carpark area and couple see Impala, Waterbuck and Dik-dik just outside, and then watched a Bushy-tailed Mongoose moving over the rocky terrain just above the fence.

Day 10 November 12th Tsavo and to Nairobi

Our early morning safari today took us fifty minutes direct drive northeast to Aruba. Of course we didn't manage to do a complete non-stop drive, a Spotted Hyena ensuring that, but managed to get there in good time. Straightaway we saw another two Spotted Hyenas. Here on the wide open short grass plains we found our quarry – the critically endangered Hirola. There are perhaps only a couple of hundred of these antelope left in the world and many of these are in hardly accessible parts of northeastern Kenya or Somalia. Twenty years ago a population was introduced into Tsavo in an attempt to safeguard these rare animals and though they almost died out there are still some here. We watched two of them for a while. They are superficially like the Hartebeest near which they were grazing, indeed we surmised it might be easy to miss them amongst their larger cousins, however they are much slighter, with a white tail and eye-surround and their horns a very different shape. We enjoyed them for half an hour, comparing them with the nearby Hartebeest. Two Black-backed Jackals were fun as they sped across the road in front of Seda's vehicle. Large flocks of Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse flew all around us calling and there were also smaller groups of Caspian Plover. Kori Bustard displaying in the distance. There were several White-throated Bee-eaters perched very close to us and a single Carmine Bee-eater. We started back to the lodge and it seemed that all Tsavo's animals had come down to the trackside to wish us farewell! It was difficult to keep going but we had to get back for breakfast so we just had the briefest of stops for Banded Mongoose, for a Secretary Bird, and for four magnificent tuskers – these four are well known here for having the largest tusks in the region, indeed Tsavo's elephants generally are famous for this! We just had

to make stop too for the many fabulous Fireball Lilies that had suddenly erupted into bloom with last night's showers.

After breakfast we had a little while to pack up and so goodbye to Voi Safari Lodge's wildlife and view and then we were the national park's tracks heading to the gate. The instruction was to not stop unless we saw something good – this proved a little tricky as the first few kilometres were packed in particular with birds. The concentration seemed linked to the rains that had fallen overnight. All of a sudden there were large numbers of Eurasian Rollers, sometimes double figures in a tree! Trees were also packed with Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters and Lilac-breasted Rollers too – it was a colourful sight. There were also plenty of Maribou Storks catching insects along the track and maybe it was the same prey that was interesting a large number of raptors congregated along the roads. Steppe, Tawny and Lesser Spotted Eagles were all present in some numbers! Sooty Falcons arced across the greening savannah! Then it was to the gate and the dreaded Mombasa to Nairobi truck park!

We stopped at Hunters Lodge on the way back to Nairobi. Here we took our packed lunches with tea and coffee from the Lodge to the accompaniment of a huge colony of African Golden Weavers busy building their nests. There was also a huge colony of Black-necked Herons in the tall Yellowbark Acacias. Pied Kingfishers fished the little lake.

Continuing on to Nairobi the journey dragged on and by late afternoon we were on the Athi plains with Zebra and Thomson's Gazelles giving some distraction from the awful traffic that included around a hundred armoured personal carriers being shipped in for the Nairobi Police! The traffic became terrible as we neared Nairobi and we slowed to a crawl. Being already behind schedule we missed the chance to go for dinner and had to head to the airport where everyone checked in before having the chance to eat!

Day 11 November 13th

Arrive home!

Systematic List Number 1

Mammals

The taxonomy follows Kingdon's 'Field Guide to African Mammals' (2015). The number out of 9 indicates the number of days a species was seen – e.g. 7/10 indicates that a species was noted on 7 days during the holiday – this includes the extension.

Small-eared Greater Galago	<i>Galago garnettii</i>	Steve and Nigel were lucky to see one by their room at Ol Tukai, Amboseli
Senegal Galago	<i>Galago senegalensis</i>	1 seen well on the night drive in Amboseli and around 12 seen on a night walk in the grounds of Ol Tukai. This little bushbaby is very active in the trees and bounces around very fast!
Vervet Monkey	<i>Cercopithecus aethiops</i>	widespread. 6/9
Syke's Blue Monkey	<i>Cercopithecus mitis albogularis</i>	a large group at Mzima Springs
Yellow Baboon	<i>Papio cynocephalus</i>	widespread. 9/9
Black-backed Jackal	<i>Canis mesomelas</i>	seen almost daily in all locations though maximum daily count only 4. 6/9
African Wild Dog	<i>Canis pictus</i>	an amazing encounter with 26 resting under a huge baobab in Tsavo West National Park was a highlight of the trip!
Bat-eared Fox	<i>Otocyon megalotis</i>	2 seen on first morning in Amboseli then later another 4 seen – 3 adults and a small baby that quickly went back down its hole. 1 on the night drive in Amboseli
East African Civet	<i>Civettictis civetta</i>	1 on the night drive in Amboseli and 2 seen well on the nightwalk at Ol Tukai lodge in Amboseli. 2/9
Common Genet	<i>Genetta genetta</i>	2 on night drive in Tsavo East
Bushy-tailed Mongoose	<i>Bdeogale paludinosus</i>	1 seen by one of the vehicles on the night drive in Tsavo East and 1 seen by IG in the grounds of Tsavo East lodge. 2/9
Dwarf Mongoose	<i>Helogale parvula</i>	Several family parties seen in Tsavo East. 3/9
Egyptian Mongoose	<i>Herpestes ichneumon</i>	a total of 4 seen in Amboseli. 2/9
Slender Mongoose	<i>Helogale sanguineus</i>	1 in Tsavo West. 2/9
White-tailed Mongoose	<i>Ichneumia albicauda</i>	1 on night drive in Amboseli was seen very well and also 1 seen well on the night drive in Tsavo East. 2/9
Banded Mongoose	<i>Mungos mungo</i>	large groups seen daily in Tsavo. Very entertaining mongoose! 5/9
Spotted Hyaena	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>	Up to 30 seen daily in Amboseli where this animal is exceedingly common. Also 3 seen on the last morning in Tsavo East. 4/9

Cheetah	<i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>	3 males were the focus of attention for us and some Wildebeest as they sauntered through the savannah in Amboseli. In Tsavo East we saw a female with 3 cubs on the drive to the Galana River.
Caracal	<i>Felis caracal</i>	One along 'small cat alley' was seen well by Peter the driver and briefly by a couple of us, but disappeared too quickly for most of the group
Serval	<i>Felis serval</i>	1 seen on the night drive in Amboseli and another seen briefly along 'small cat alley' in Tsavo East. 2/9
Wild Cat	<i>Felis sylvestris</i>	1 seen by Linda and Prue by the their room in Ol Tukai, three days previously Seda and I had seen one in the nearby Serena Lodge in Amboseli too
Lion	<i>Panthera leo</i>	A total of 45 seen! 34 - 36 different individuals in this. We started with 3 females and then 2 females and a distant but very impressive male in Nairobi National Park. Then two females with 7 cubs, probably three litters, with a single tiny one, in Amboseli. 2 were seen on the drive into Tsavo and the next day a total of nine seen there including two females and a male lounging elegantly on some rocks. On the night drive there we saw a single Lion. 8 were seen on the last but one day in Tsavo and on the last morning a farewell Lion was spotted too! 8/9
Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	1 seen very well in a tree as we drove out to the Galana River in Tsavo East, another, probably the same female, seen close by that area two days later! Also in a tree. 2/9
African Elephant	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	Locally common in both Amboseli and Tsavo. 9/9
Plain's Zebra	<i>Equus burchelli</i>	Also known as Burchell's Zebra. Abundant everywhere. 9/9
Black Rhinoceros	<i>Diceros bicornis</i>	one distant sighting in Nairobi NP
Yellow-spotted (Bush) Rock Hyrax	<i>Heterohyrax brucei</i>	common at Voi Safari Lodge and seen elsewhere on rocks (!) in Tsavo. 5/9
Black-necked Rock Hyrax	<i>Procavia johnstoni</i>	a few noted (with Bush Hyraxes) on some rocks west of Voi Lodge and also some by the Galana River

Aardvark	<i>Orycteropus afer</i>	A young one seen on the night drive in Tsavo West – took us a while to work out what it was, though the long white tail and the exceptionally long ears might have been a clue!
Common Warthog	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>	A few in Nairobi NP a few daily Amboseli. 4/9
Desert Warthog	<i>Phacochoerus aethiopicus</i>	Quite common in Tsavo East. 5/9
Hippopotamus	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>	Seen daily Amboseli where quite common. Also three in the Galana River Tsavo East and one or two at Mzima Springs, Tsavo West. 5/9
Giraffe	<i>Giraffa camelopardalis</i>	Subspecies <i>tippelskirchi</i> ' (Maasai Giraffe) seen daily – the ones in Tsavo were what is known as the Galana Hybrids – intergrades between the massai Giraffe and the Reticulated Giraffe. 9/9
Coke's Hartebeest	<i>Alcelaphus busephalus</i>	Common everywhere except Amboseli. 7/9
Wildebeest	<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>	Abundant in Amboseli, also some in Nairobi NP. 4/9
Impala	<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>	widespread and abundant in all savannah areas. 9/9
Grant's Gazelle	<i>Gazella grantii</i>	widespread in Nairobi NP and Amboseli. 4/9
Peter's Gazelle	<i>Gazella petersi</i>	common in Tsavo. This is a recent split from Grant's Gazelle. 5/9
Thomson's Gazelle	<i>Gazella thomsonii</i>	widespread in Nairobi NP and Amboseli. 4/9
Gerenuk	<i>Litocranius walleri</i>	A few in the dry areas either side of Amboseli, but not in the park, also seen daily in Tsavo. 6/9
African Buffalo	<i>Syncerus caffer</i>	widespread – some considerable herds. 9/9
Common Eland	<i>Taurotragus oryx</i>	A few groups in Nairobi National Park. Quite frequent in both Tsavo East and Tsavo West. 6/9
Greater Kudu	<i>Tragelaphus strepsiceros</i>	1 seen by the front vehicle in Tsavo West NP
Lesser Kudu	<i>Tragelaphus imberbis</i>	3 seen en route to Amboseli and a scatter of sightings in both Tsavo West and Tsavo East. Both Kudu species much shyer than other antelope species. 5/9
Bush Duiker	<i>Cephalophus harveyi</i>	1 in bush on the west side of Amboseli. A strange animal as had no face stripes.
Oryx	<i>Oryx gazella</i>	Several impressive groups in Tsavo West and Tsavo East. 5/9
Kirk's Dik-dik	<i>Madoqua kirkii</i>	1 between Nairobi NP and Amboseli

Cavendish's Dik-dik	<i>Madoqua cavendishi</i>	very common Tsavo West and Tsavo East. 6/9
Oribi	<i>Ourebia oerebi</i>	3 seen in Nairobi National Park
Waterbuck	<i>Kobus ellipsiprymnus</i>	widespread. 8/9
Bohor Reedbuck	<i>Redunca redunca</i>	quite common in marshy areas of Amboseli. 3/9
Ochre Bush Squirrel	<i>Paraxerus ochraceus</i>	seen daily Tsavo West and Tsavo East. 6/9
Unstriped Ground Squirrel	<i>Xerus rutilus</i>	1 en route to Amboseli
Cape Hare	<i>Lepus capensis</i>	singles twice in the grounds at Ol Tukai, Amboseli. 2/9
Black-tailed Scrub Hare	<i>Lepus saxatilis</i>	scattered throughout. 4/9
East African Spring Hare	<i>Pedetes surdaster</i>	c.10 of these wonderful animals hopping around the savannahs of Amboseli on the night drive there

Systematic List Number 2

Birds

The nomenclature follows Stevenson & Fanshawe et al (2013). To give an idea of frequency of sightings we give a figure at the end of the comments section which indicates the number of days out of 9 on which a species was seen – 6/9 means that a species was noted on 6 days out of 9.

Masai Ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus massaicus</i>	common in Amboseli and Tsavo West and Nairobi National Park. 4/9
Somali Ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus molybdophanes</i>	common in Tsavo East. 5/9
White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	several on the island below Observation Hill, Amboseli
Pink-backed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>	frequent in Amboseli. 3/9
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	1 Amboseli
Long-tailed Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>	a few in Amboseli. 2/9
Darter	<i>Anhinga rufa</i>	a few in Amboseli. 2/9
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	scattered, mostly Amboseli. 4/9
Black-headed Heron	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	locally frequent. 5/9
Goliath Heron	<i>Ardea goliath</i>	a few in Amboseli. 2/9
Great White Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	locally frequent. 5/9
Yellow-billed Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	locally frequent. 4/9
Black Heron	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>	1 close to Ol Tukai, Amboseli
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	a few in Amboseli. 3/9
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Reasonably common in Amboseli. 4/9
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	Reasonably common in Amboseli. 4/9
Madagascar Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola idea</i>	a few in Amboseli. 2/9
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	frequent at night in Amboseli. 2/9
Hammerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>	scattered throughout. 6/9
Green-backed Heron	<i>Butoroides striatus</i>	1 close to Ol Tukai, Amboseli
Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>	1 at the lodge waterhole Tsavo East
White Stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	3 in Tsavo East
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	1 in Nairobi NP
Saddle-billed Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i>	a few in Amboseli. 3/9
Maribou	<i>Leptoptilus crumeniferus</i>	Scattered. 3/9
Yellow-billed Stork	<i>Mycteria ibis</i>	Scattered. 3/9
Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopica</i>	very common in Amboseli. 4/9
Hadada	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	locally noisy! 5/9
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	some large flocks in Ambosli, also noted Galana River, Tsavo. 5/9
African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>	a few in all wetland areas. 4/9
Lesser Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus minor</i>	c.500 on the island below Observation Hill, Amboseli
Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	2 Amboseli
Hottentot Teal	<i>Anas hottentota</i>	a few in Amboseli. 3/9
Red-billed Teal	<i>Anas erythrorhynchos</i>	a few in Amboseli. 2/9
White-faced Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>	large numbers in Amboseli. 3/9
Knob-billed Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>	2 in Amboseli
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>	widespread in low numbers. 9/9
Spur-winged Goose	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>	a few in Amboseli. 3/9

Secretary Bird	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	scattered throughout. 7/9
Rueppell's Vulture	<i>Gyps rueppellii</i>	mostly Tsavo East. 4/9
African White-backed Vulture	<i>Gyps africanus</i>	throughout. 7/9
Lappet-faced Vulture	<i>Torgos tracheliotus</i>	several in Tsavo East. 3/9
White-headed Vulture	<i>Trigonoceps occipitalis</i>	nesting pair Tsavo East
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1 in Amboseli
Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>	1 Amboseli
Sooty Falcon	<i>Falco concolor</i>	3 in Tsavo East
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Nairobi. Also Tsavo East as we left. 2/9
Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	Nairobi NP & Amboseli. 2/9
Verreaux's Eagle	<i>Aquila verreauxi</i>	4 in Tsavo West and 1 over Voi Lodge, Tsavo East. 2/9
Tawny Eagle	<i>Aquila rapax</i>	quite common. 8/9
Wahlberg's Eagle	<i>Aquila wahlbergi</i>	singles at exit gate from Tsavo West and in Tsavo East. 2/9
Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>	1 in Tsavo East on way to Galana River
Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>	scattered in Tsavo East. 5/9
Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila pomarina</i>	a few Tsavo East. 2/9
Grasshopper Buzzard	<i>Butastur rufipennis</i>	1 Amboseli caused some ID confusion!
Martial Eagle	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>	1 Amboseli, 1 Tsavo West and 1 Tsavo East. 3/9
Black-chested Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>	scattered. 3/9
Brown Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>	Nairobi NP
Bataleur	<i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>	frequent in Tsavo East, scattered elsewhere. 6/9
African Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>	frequent in Amboseli. 4/9
Augur Buzzard	<i>Buteo augur</i>	Tsavo East. 4/9
Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	single Tsavo East
African Hawk-Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus spilogaster</i>	noted almost daily Tsavo East. 4/9
Great Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter melanoleucus</i>	1 at Kilaguni Lodge, Tsavo West
Ovamp Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter ovampensis</i>	1 at Kilaguni Lodge, Tsavo West
Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	1 dead one in the lodge Tsavo East
Gabar Goshawk	<i>Melierax gabar</i>	Single in Tsavo East
Pale Chanting Goshawk	<i>Melierax poliopterus</i>	locally common. 4/9
Montagu's Harrier	<i>Circus pygargus</i>	1 Amboseli
Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>	scattered throughout. 4/9
Eurasian Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	almost daily in Amboseli. 3/9
Button Quail	<i>Turnix sylvatica</i>	1 at Voi Safari Lodge
Grey Crowned Crane	<i>Balearica regulorum</i>	Common in Amboseli. 4/9
Crested Francolin	<i>Francolinus sephaena</i>	Common. 6/9
Shelley's Francolin	<i>Francolinus shelleyi</i>	3 in Nairobi NP
Yellow-necked Spurfowl	<i>Francolinus leucoscepus</i>	AKA Shouty Bird. widespread. 8/9
Helmeted Guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>	widespread. 9/9
Vulturine Guineafowl	<i>Acryllium vulturinum</i>	a few groups in Tsavo East. 3/9
Black Crake	<i>Limnocolax flavirostra</i>	common Amboseli. 3/9
Kori Bustard	<i>Otis kori</i>	amazingly seen daily! Usually just 2-3 birds each day. 9/9
White-bellied Bustard	<i>Eupodotis senegalensis</i>	throughout. 7/9

Buff-crested Bustard	<i>Eupodotis ruficrista</i>	daily in Tsavo East. 5/9
Black-bellied Bustard	<i>Eupodotis melanogaster</i>	scattered in Nairobi NP and Amboseli. 3/9
Hartlaub's Bustard	<i>Eupodotis hartlaubii</i>	Tsavo East. 3/9
Jacana	<i>Actiphilornis africanus</i>	locally common in Amboseli. 3/9
Painted Snipe	<i>Rostratula bengalensis</i>	single males twice in Amboseli. 2/9
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	locally common in Amboseli. 3/9
Water Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>	A total on 3 Amboseli. 2/9
Spotted Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>	1 on night drive in Tsavo East
Two-banded Courser	<i>Rhinoptilus africanus</i>	a few in Amboseli
Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	locally common in Amboseli. 3/9
Little-ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Amboseli
Kittlitz's Sandplover	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	locally common in Amboseli. 3/9
Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>	locally common in Amboseli, also at the lodge waterhole Voi. 4/9
Caspian Plover	<i>Charadrius asiaticus</i>	common near Aruba Tsavo East
Blacksmith Plover	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>	throughout. 5/9
Black-headed Plover	<i>Vanellus tectus</i>	scattered in Tsavo East. 3/9
Spur-winged Plover	<i>Vanellus spinosus</i>	scattered throughout. 5/9
Crowned Plover	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>	AKA 'Steve's enemy!'. Widespread. 9/9
Long-toed Lapwing	<i>Vanellus crassirostris</i>	locally common in Amboseli. 3/9
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	locally common in Amboseli. 2/9
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	locally common in Amboseli. 2/9
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	scattered in Amboseli. 2/9
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	local in Amboseli. 23/9
Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	throughout. 6/9
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	a few in Tsavo East. 3/9
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	locally common in Amboseli, also noted Tsavo. 4/9
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	a few Tsavo East. 2/9
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	probably the same individual noted twice at Amboseli
White-winged Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	a few in Amboseli. 2/9
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	locally common in Amboseli. 2/9
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	singles twice Amboseli. 2/9
Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles exustus</i>	a few Amboseli and lots at Aruba, Tsavo East. 2/9
Black-faced Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles decoratus</i>	frequent Tsavo East, also noted Amboseli. 4/9
Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>	scattered. 4/9
Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>	Common in drier parts of Tsavo. 4/9
Emerald-spotted Wood Dove	<i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>	scattered. 4/9
Mourning Dove	<i>Streptopelia decipians</i>	locally common. 5/9
Ring-necked Dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	locally abundant, especially Tsavo East. 7/9
Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	commonest in Tsavo East. 5/9
Orange-bellied Parrot	<i>Poicephalus rufiventris</i>	a total of 4 in Tsavo East. 3/9
White-bellied Go-away Bird	<i>Corythaixoides leucogaster</i>	scattered throughout. 6/9

Yellowbill	<i>Ceuthmocheres aereus</i>	1 in Ol Tukai grounds, Amboseli, was a surprise!
White-browed Coucal	<i>Centropus superciliosus</i>	scattered throughout. 6/9
Eurasian Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	common Ol Tukai, scattered elsewhere. 4/9
African Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus gularis</i>	at least one bird Ol Tukai. 2/9
Didric Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	1 Ol Tukai
Verreaux's Eagle Owl	<i>Bubo lacteus</i>	1 in Ol Tukai and seen daily at Tsavo East. 5/9
Slender-tailed Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus clarus</i>	noted on the night drive in Amboseli. Also Voi Safari Lodge, Tsavo East. 3/9
Dusky Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus fraenatus</i>	1 on night drive, Tsavo East
Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	common, less so in Tsavo. 6/9
Alpine Swift	<i>Apus melba</i>	2 Observation Hill, Amboseli
Horus Swift	<i>Apus horus</i>	common in Amboseli, also noted Tsavo West. 4/9
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	widespread and common. 6/9
Blue-naped Mousebird	<i>Urocolius macrourus</i>	one group Amboseli, quite frequent in Tsavo East. 5/9
Speckled Mousebird	<i>Colius striatus</i>	common. 9/9
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	<i>Halycon albiventris</i>	singles Kilaguni and Tsavo East. 2/9
Grey-headed Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>	widespread in low numbers. 9/9
Malachite Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo cristata</i>	frequent at Amboseli wetlands. 3/9
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	a few at Amboseli wetlands. 4/9
Little Bee-eater	<i>Merops pusillus</i>	widespread in low numbers. 9/9
Carmine Bee-eater	<i>Merops nubicus</i>	almost daily in Tsavo where max daily count was 2. 4/9
Somali Bee-eater	<i>Merops revoilii</i>	noted only once in Tsavo East
White-throated Bee-eater	<i>Merops albicollis</i>	near Aruba, Tsavo East
White-fronted Bee-eater	<i>Merops bullockoides</i>	1 seen between Amboseli and Tsavo West
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	<i>Merops persicus</i>	scattered records from Tsavo West and Tsavo East. 3/9
Eurasian Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	scattered throughout. 3/9
Eurasian Roller	<i>Coracias garrulous</i>	widespread. 9/9
Lilac-breasted Roller	<i>Coracias cordata</i>	widespread. 7/9
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	Subspecies 'africana'. Daily in Ol Tukai, Amboseli, also noted Tsavo East. 5/9
Violet Wood-Hoopoe	<i>Phoeniculus granti</i>	a couple of groups in Tsavo West
Abyssinian Scimitarbill	<i>Phoeniculus minor</i>	1 Tsavo East
Crowned Hornbill	<i>Tockus alboterminatus</i>	Tsavo East – near Galana River
Grey Hornbill	<i>Tockus nasutus</i>	reasonably common in both Tsavos. 6/9
Yellow-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus flavirostris</i>	scattered in Tsavo East. 3/9
Von der Decken's Hornbill	<i>Tockus deckeni</i>	common in Tsavo. 6/9
Red-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>	vcommon in Tsavo. 6/9
Southern Ground Hornbill	<i>Bucorvus cafer</i>	6 Kanderi Swamp, Tsavo East. 3/9
D'Arnaud's Barbet	<i>Trachylaemus darnaudii</i>	quite common in Tsavo. 4/9
Red and Yellow Barbet	<i>Trachyphonus erythrocephalus</i>	Scarcer than above species in Tsavo but seen most days there. Max count of 3. 3/9

Nubian Woodpecker	<i>Campethera nubica</i>	singles twice at Ol Tukai
Cardinal Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>	just two seen Voi Safari Lodge, Tsavo East
Grey Woodpecker	<i>Mesopicos goertae</i>	Ol Tukai, Amboseli. 2/9
Red-capped Lark	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>	Amboseli
Fischer's Sparrow-Lark	<i>Eremopteryx leucopareia</i>	Quite common in Amboseli. 4/9
Singing Bush Lark	<i>Mirafra cantillans</i>	common in Nairobi NP
Rufous-naped Lark	<i>Mirafra africana</i>	Nairobi NP
Red-winged Bush Lark	<i>Mirafra hypermetra</i>	a few in Tsavo East. 3/9
Pink-breasted Lark	<i>Mirafra poeasilocerna</i>	quite common in drier areas of Tsavo. 6/9
Rock Martin	<i>Hirundo fuligula</i>	Voi Lodge, Tsavo East
Eurasian Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	locally common everywhere. 9/9
Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>	rather scarce. 3/9
Mosque Swallow	<i>Hirundo senegalensis</i>	A few in Amboseli. 2/9
Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>	scattered. 5/9
Lesser Striped Swallow	<i>Hirundo abyssinica</i>	locally common. 6/9
Banded Martin	<i>Riparia cincta</i>	Amboseli
African Sand Martin	<i>Riparia fuligula</i>	Amboseli
Black Rough-wing	<i>Psalidoprocne pristopectera</i>	Amboseli. 2/9
Grassland Pipit	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>	Amboseli. 2/9
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Ol Tukai, Amboseli. 2/9
Long-billed Pipit	<i>Anthus similis</i>	scattered. 3/9
Golden Pipit	<i>Timothylacus tenellus</i>	only 1 seen Tsavo East
Yellow-throated Longclaw	<i>Macronyx croceus</i>	1 Nairobi NP.
Pangani Longclaw	<i>Macronyx aurantiigula</i>	Scattered in Amboseli and Tsavo East. 3/9
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	a few Amboseli. 2/9
African Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>	widespread but not common. 6/9
Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	widespread and very common. 8/9
Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	widespread. 8/9
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	frequent in Tsavo. 5/9
Pied Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>	a few in Tsavo East. 2/9
Spotted Morning Thrush	<i>Cichladusa guttata</i>	scattered. 3/9
Thrush Nightingale	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>	a few at Ol Tukai, Amboseli. 2/9
Rufous Bush Chat	<i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>	Tsavo East
White-browed Scrub-Robin	<i>Cercotrichas leucophrys</i>	Tsavo East
Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Hippolais pallida</i>	scattered throughout. 5/9
Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	1 Ol Tukai, Amboseli
Croaking Cisticola	<i>Cisticola natalensis</i>	Kilaguni Lodge, Tsavo West
Winding Cisticola	<i>Cisticola galactotes</i>	common wet areas of Amboseli. 2/9
Grey Wren Warbler	<i>Calamonastes simplex</i>	Tsavo East
Grey-backed Camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>	Ol Tukai, Amboseli and hear at Voi Lodge. 3/9
Red-faced Crombec	<i>Sylvietta whitii</i>	scattered in Amboseli. 3/9
Banded Parisoma	<i>Parisoma boehmi</i>	2 at entrance gate to Tsavo West
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	widespread. 8/9
Grey Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa microrhynchus</i>	Ol Tukai, Amboseli. 2/9
Chin-spot Batis	<i>Batis molitor</i>	1 Tsavo West
Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	scattered throughout. 5/9
Northern Pied Babbler	<i>Turdoides hypoleucus</i>	Nairobi NP

African Penduline Tit	<i>Remiz caroli</i>	Tsavo East
Variable Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia venusta</i>	Amboseli
Smaller Black-bellied Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia nectarinioides</i>	Kilaguni Lodge, Tsavo West
Beautiful Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia pulchella</i>	Amboseli. 2/9
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia senegalensis</i>	Amboseli. 2/9
Hunter's Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia hunteri</i>	scattered in Tsavo East. 3/9
Amethyst Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia amethystina</i>	Tsavo East
Black-headed Oriole	<i>Oriolus larvatus</i>	scattered. 2/9
Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	a large influx on last but one day in Tsavo
Rosy-patched Shrike	<i>Rhodophoneus cruentus</i>	Noted almost daily in Tsavo East. 4/9
Brubru	<i>Nilaus afer</i>	Ol Tukai, Amboseli
Sulphur-breasted Bush Shrike	<i>Malaconotus sulfureopectus</i>	1 Ol Tukai, Amboseli
Slate-coloured Boubou	<i>Laniarius funebris</i>	scattered records. 3/9
Taita Fiscal	<i>Lanius dorsalis</i>	quite common throughout. 7/9
Long-tailed Fiscal	<i>Lanius cabanisi</i>	widespread and common. 9/9
Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i>	1 Tsavo East
Curly-crested Helmet Shrike	<i>Prionops plumata</i>	a couple of large groups by the Galana River and 1 bird near Voi Safari Lodge, all Tsavo East. 2/9
White-crowned Shrike	<i>Eurocephalus rueppelli</i>	scattered throughout. 5/9
Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	widespread. 8/9
Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	scattered. 5/9
Cape Rook	<i>Corvus capensis</i>	2 in Tsavo
Red-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>	Voi Safari Lodge, Tsavo East
Greater Blue-eared Glossy Starling	<i>Lamprotornis chalybaeus</i>	several noted Tsavo East. 3/9
Yellow-billed Oxpecker	<i>Buphagus africanus</i>	quite common. 6/9
Red-billed Oxpecker	<i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>	much less common, noted Nairobi and Tsavo. 3/9
Superb Starling	<i>Spreo superbus</i>	abundant throughout. 9/9
Fischer's Starling	<i>Spreo fischeri</i>	quite common in Tsavo. 4/9
Golden-breasted Starling	<i>Cosmopsarus unicolor</i>	a number daily in Tsavo East. 5/9
Wattled Starling	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>	locally common. 5/9
Grey-headed Sparrow	<i>Passer griseus</i>	The 'griseus' subspecies. Tsavo East. 5/9
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Reasonably common in lodges and towns. 6/9
Yellow-spotted Petronia	<i>Petronia pyrgita</i>	scattered. 3/9
White-browed Sparrow Weaver	<i>Plocepasser mahali</i>	common throughout. 8/9
Black-capped Social Weaver	<i>Pseudonigritta cabanisii</i>	scattered in Tsavo. 2/9
Red-billed Buffalo Weaver	<i>Bubalornis niger</i>	common in Tsavo East. 5/9
White-headed Buffalo Weaver	<i>Dinemellia dinemelli</i>	a few in Tsavo East. 5/9
Black-headed Weaver	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>	The 'bohndorfi' subspecies. Common in Tsavo particularly at the lodge! 5/9
Taveta Palm Weaver	<i>Ploceus castaneiceps</i>	common Amboseli. 3/9
Golden Weaver	<i>Ploceus subaureus</i>	a colony at Hunters Lodge
Red-headed Weaver	<i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>	1 at Mzima Springs, Tsavo West
Zanzibar Red Bishop	<i>Euplectes nigroventris</i>	Small numbers Amboseli. 3/9
Red-billed Quelea	<i>Quelea quelea</i>	widespread and very common. 8/9
Green-winged Pytilia	<i>Pytilia melba</i>	a few in Tsavo East. 2/9

Red-billed Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>	Ol Tukai, Amboseli
Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu	<i>Uraegnithus bengalus</i>	scattered in Tsavo East 4/9
Purple Grenadier	<i>Uraegnithus ianthinogastor</i>	2 Nairobi NP
Crimson-rumped Waxbill	<i>Estrilda rhodopyga</i>	Ol Tukai, Amboseli. 2/9
Grey-headed Silverbill	<i>Lonchura griseicapilla</i>	1 Tsavo West
Cut-throat	<i>Amadina fasciata</i>	1 Tsavo East
Pin-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>	2 Amboseli
Acacia Paradise Whydah	<i>Vidua paradisaea</i>	A few noted in Tsavo East including a couple of males in breeding plumage. 2/9

Systematic List Number 3

Reptiles

The taxonomy follows Spawls 'Reptiles of East Africa.

Yellow-bellied Hinged Terrapin *Pelusios castanoides*

probably this species in a waterhole in Tsavo. Another terrapin seen briefly in Nairobi NP

Tropical House Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus mabouia</i>
Rainbow Skink	<i>Mabuya margaritifer</i>
Five-lined Skink	<i>Mabuya quinquetaeniata</i>
Striped Skink	<i>Mabuya striata</i>
Black-lined Plated Lizard	<i>Gerrhosaurus nigrolineatus</i>
Red-headed Rock Agama	<i>Agama agama</i>
White-throated Savanna Monitor	<i>Varanus albigularis</i>
Nile Monitor	<i>Varanus niloticus</i>
Nile Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>
Plumbeous Centipede-eater	<i>Aparallectus lunulatus</i>

lodges
Voi Lodge
Amboseli – Observation Hill
Tsavo where common
Spectacular beast! Voi Lodge
widespread and very common
two seen resting in trees in Tsavo East
1 seen by the Galana River, Tsavo East
at Mzima Springs and in the Galana River
one of these slender snakes in a rock pile
outside the restaurant window at Kilaguni
Lodge, Tsavo West