

## Triplog Tanzania Feb 6 to 21

February 6 Spent the night at the O'Hare Hilton for an early flight the next morning.

February 7 We had the day flight to London with no problems. We took a taxi to Hilton Heathrow Airport Terminal 5 for a comfortable night, though neither of us slept much.

February 8 On British Air, we took a day flight to Nairobi and easily found an official taxi into the town center to the Hilton Nairobi, about an hour drive. It's a lovely old art deco hotel that is well maintained, and the staff was very welcoming. We had less than 24 hours, and we were really tired, so we relaxed and enjoyed the hotel. There were lots of things that we would have liked to do in the area, but there just wasn't time.

February 9 The breakfast had lots of choices. We had pineapple mango yoghurt (really good), some spicy cooked vegetables (tasty but a bit too spicy for me), cooked mushrooms, some rather bland cooked plantains and scrambled eggs. There were lots of cheese choices and I took feta. They had brie and Stilton and a couple of other types, but I didn't have room to try them. There were several bread choices and I tried a small croissant drizzled with chocolate but it was dry and not so tasty. Steve had a sweet roll that was pretty good. About 3pm we headed back to the airport. As our taxi approached the airport we had to get out of the taxi and leave all of our stuff and walk through a metal detector. This was unnerving, to leave all our stuff in the taxi, so we were especially happy that we had used the official hotel taxi. We had a late afternoon flight on Precision Air to Kilimanjaro International Airport near Arusha. The plane was mostly empty, so when we got a view of Kilimanjaro, those of us on the right side of the plane were able to shift over to the left side for the view. We were met inside security and whisked through baggage claim to the waiting car.

We did not stay in Arusha, but at nearby Lake Duluti at the Serena Hotel. On the drive to the hotel we had good views of Mount Meru, which makes the local weather. There are lots of rice fields and orchards on the drive to the hotel. We had a very clean room with large windows that gave us a view down to the lake, and very large mosquito netting that ran on a track around the entire bed area (this was true of all the hotels that we stayed in). The grounds were beautiful, with lots of heliconia, some hibiscus, and other plants along the huts and sidewalks. We had time to have some laundry picked up before having dinner in the lodge. There was a salad and dessert bar, but soup and main course were ordered from the waiter (the procedure in all of the hotels). It was too much food of course, but good. The vegetables were extremely fresh and tasty, grown in the local area.

February 10 We were awake before dawn, and watched egrets lift off from the lake in large groups. There were cormorants on trees around the edge of the lake, too far away to see very well, and lots of birds in the bushes outside our window, including Mousebirds, Tropical and Common Bulbul, Northern Masked Weavers, and warblers. We spent the day relaxing and repacking. (We stored one piece of luggage each with the porter that included our winter coats, clothes for the plane flight home, and odds and

ends we would not need on the safari). We were offered various excursions, but felt it was most important to get rested. We had our meals in the lodge, and for the soup at dinner I ordered pumpkin soup.

February 11 We had breakfast and had the luggage out by 8:30am, then a lecture at 9, on the lawn, about general information and rules for the trip. We were given our assigned “jeep” mates, with 6 of us traveling in each vehicle (we were lucky to have very compatible people in our “jeep”). There was an academic lecture at 10 by our naturalist, Grant Nel, on “Serengeti – An Endless Plain”. We checked out at 11:30 and headed, via 2 medium-sized tourist buses, for a buffet lunch stop at a place called The Coffee Plantation (I had a delicious lentil dish, great cauliflower cheese and chunks of African Pumpkin. The desserts were not especially interesting). After lunch we changed over to our “jeeps” and we headed for Tarangire, the 6<sup>th</sup> largest national park in Tanzania. The drive to the park was about 3 hours, and we passed fields with goats, donkeys, zebra and wildebeests, as well as large numbers of egrets and Abdim’s Storks. At each park we had to wait while paperwork was done at the park office, which allowed a bathroom stop at most of the parks. On the drive into the park we immediately saw herds of elephants, many with tiny babies less than a month old. Larger “babies” were one or two years old, and these were just as protective of the tiny ones as the adults were. Frequently, the herds would surround the tiny elephants, protecting them. There were Baobab trees and termite mounds that added to the exotic vistas. We saw impala, waterbuck, warthogs with babies, and different birds, including Abyssinian Rollers, on the drive in.

We were checked into our tents, which had amazing vistas down to the river and across a large area of trees with elephants and giraffe wandering about. The tents were permanent tents with toilets and showers, but the electricity was only on for short periods and not much light. We had to make sure the tents were zipped so the monkeys couldn’t get in. Around the tent, we saw Grey-backed Fiscal, a snake eagle, Northern White crowned shrike, and a Brown African Scops Owl that mostly slept while we were in camp. There were also mongoose running around the area behind the tents.

Before dinner we were given a welcome reception on the terrace overlooking the river, then after dinner we went to sleep quickly, though didn’t sleep very well in the heat. (No electricity = no fans)

February 12 We were up early and had breakfast (more mundane than in Lake Duluti, of course) before an 8 am animal drive. There were lots of monkeys, including babies, in the camp. Oddly, I never got a good photo!! On the 4-hour drive, we were immediately greeted by lots of birds, including weavers, shrikes, and lilac-breasted rollers, and elephants (including lots more babies! ). Around a pond, we had crested cranes, heron, Hamerkop, ducks and geese. As we left the pond, there were lots of impala, a Yellow-necked Spurfowl, a jackal, warthogs, several Knob-billed ducks, and crowned plover. Along a small river were Egyptian Geese and Vervet Monkeys. Close to the bank of the river were 2 young lions (1-year old) and their mother, who was sleeping in some shrubbery. We watched them for a while, and then the 2 young ones joined their mother, so we couldn’t see any of them. Nearby in the river were elephants. As we drove away, there were more warthogs, impala, and large numbers of elephants.

As we drove near the river again, 2 young lions were drinking, and followed their mother up a small hill, past our “jeep” (if I had reached out my hand, I could have petted the closest one) and to the top of the hill. Also in the river were Saddle-billed Stork, crested cranes, and Yellow-billed Stork, and nearby were some Ibis and lilac-breasted rollers. As we headed back to camp, there were a lot more elephants, 3 giraffes at a distance, impalas and waterbucks.

We had lunch, then went to the pool, which had remarkably cold water, considering the heat, and repacked. A troop of baboons (with babies!) walked past the door of our tent and there was a Von der Decken’s Hornbill in a tree near our tent. The next drive was at 4, for 2 hours. We immediately saw more warthogs, and then a leopard in a tree!! Beautiful birds: White headed buffalo weavers, Ashy Starling and Sandgrouse, herds of impala and waterbuck. We stopped at a pond that had giraffes, including babies (about 2 weeks old) and lots of monkeys cavorting. And lots of birds, including crested cranes dancing, a Black-faced Sandgrouse, and Egyptian Geese. On the way back to camp we saw another large herd of elephants.

February 13. We were up early, in the dark. There was a little coffee ready for us, but not enough, and no rolls, which we had been promised. We loaded up in the dark so we could see the sun rise during the drive. Just before dawn, we saw a red-necked Spurfowl ( also called red-necked francolin). We saw 2 giraffes just at dawn, a fox dashed across the road, and there were lots and lots of birds: a fish eagle, a kingfisher, some white-headed buffalo weaver, a hawk, a Red-billed Hornbill, lovebirds, a Hoopoe, and hooded vultures and storks in trees. A family of mongoose cavorted in some tall grass. The high point was watching a heard of elephants washing. They played in a small pond, then threw dirt all over themselves. The reason seemed to be that the dirt actually keeps the water from evaporating; it acts as a sunscreen and bug-repellent etc.

We had breakfast back at the camp and checked out at 9 am. We were driven to a Maasai village where we were welcomed with a “welcome” dance, shown a school (the tiny children sang the ABC song for us), and the inside of one of the huts. We continued to the Lake Manyara Serena Safari Lodge where we were checked in and given a buffet lunch before a 2:30 departure for the Lake Manyara National Park.

At the park, we again needed to have paperwork filled in. When we finally entered the park, we were greeted by large bands of olive baboons and blue monkeys playing in the trees. We watched them for a long time. We then moved to an area that was a flat field, where we saw zebra and wildebeests, and lots of birds in ponds and rivers, including Jacana, geese, ducks, spoonbills, Northern Carmine Bee-eaters, Little Green Bee-eaters, Yellow-billed Stork, egrets, and coots. A Cape Buffalo wandered along the edge of a small river, and lots of hippopotami were playing in the river. On the way back out of the park there were a lot more wildebeests in the fields, and a few vervet monkeys and baboons as we left through the trees.

We had a little time to walk around the hotel grounds before dinner. The view was over the Rift Valley, with a glimpse of Lake Manyara in the distance.

February 14 After breakfast (and repacking!) we had a lecture by Grant Nel, “Elephant Whispers – The Silent World of Elephant Communication” which was extremely interesting. We had our bags out by 10:30, checked out of the hotel, and were taken to

a nearby school for a tour and a visit with teachers and the children. Lunch was back at the Lake Manyara Lodge before leaving at 1:30 for Ngorongoro Crater (a World Heritage Site). We stopped briefly at a tourist store on the way.

We had the usual check in at the park entrance, then stopped on the rim, at 7800 feet, for an overview of the crater. The crater is 12 miles wide and covers over 100 square miles. It was so amazing to look down into the crater, 2000 feet below, at the vast area with tiny dots on the floor that were zebra, wildebeest and 2 rhinos. This completed our big 5 for the trip. On the drive to the lodge, we passed a herd of Cape Buffalo with babies.

We were checked into the Ngorongoro Serena Safari Lodge and when we went to our room, I immediately went out on the balcony and took photos of the view down into the crater. We sat on the balcony enjoying the view when a wind blew up and closed the door. We were getting cold so decided to go inside and get ready for dinner, but discovered that we were locked out. It was a 20 foot drop to the ground. The people on the next balcony were in our group so we called over to them and asked them to call up to reception and have someone come let us in. A staff member came and unlocked the door for us. We had our showers and went to dinner and had a nice time. When we got back to the room, the key was really sticky, and when we finally got in, we couldn't get the key out of the lock. So I called up to reception and a staff person came pretty quickly and fiddled with it and couldn't get it out so called and got a locksmith to come. He fiddled for a while and finally got it apart. Steve suggested that he oil it, which he did, and it worked for the night. They replaced the lock the next day while we were out on the drive.

February 15 After breakfast, we left about 8 am for the drive into the crater. We were driven 20 minutes or so along the rim to the entrance to the crater, and the drive down into the crater took another 20 minutes or so. The views were amazing. We almost immediately saw gazelles, topi, waterbuck and bushbuck. Halfway down the rim, we saw a group of Kori Bustard quite close to the "road". As soon as we got to the floor of the crater, we saw herds of zebra, gazelles and impala, with babies, and then a large herd of wildebeests with newborns, less than 15 minutes old. The zebra and wildebeest babies were trotting around, sleeping, and being watched very carefully by the adults. There were warthog families and a large number of ostrich. There were jackal running through the herds, and hippos in a small river with lots of birds around the edges. At one point, about 1 1/2 hours into the drive, we could turn 360 degrees and see animals in all directions. A group of hyena trotted along, and our driver parked right above their den, so we could watch them run into it. There was a large herd of Cape Buffalo wandering along, then they crossed to road and went into a large water hole. They were so protective of their babies that it was hard to get photos of them. In the distance, we saw a lion approaching us, and 2 jackals made a beeline for him and started trotting along behind him. The other animals were a little skittish, but obviously not really worried. The lion came quite close to us, then joined some other lions who were resting near some trees. It was wonderful to watch. Our next sightings were some elephant, zebra, and...more lions! We headed for a hippo pool and saw a few hippos, then people declared that we really needed a bathroom break, so we went to an area with actual washrooms and a lovely pond with lots of birds. It was now time for lunch,

and the driver was very evasive. I asked him if we could walk to the lunch spot or if we had to be driven, and he said they would look for a nice spot. He finally said we would drive, so we all got back in the “jeep” and he said that the driver who was responsible for the lunch had not brought it, so there was no lunch. We all said that this was fine, we would rather see animals than eat, so started pulling out snacks that we had brought. We were passing around peanuts and Marty had popcorn; I think someone had chocolate. The driver kept telling us to stop eating, and finally admitted that lunch had been sent down from the lodge. Apparently he wanted to surprise us. When we arrived at the lunch spot, they had set up tables with tablecloths, nice chairs, etc., and there was a full buffet set up with chefs presiding. It was a really nice lunch, but we were annoyed with the driver for lying to us, and of course we were not as hungry since we had been snacking. After lunch, we saw more zebra, wildebeests, birds, and lions, and then in a distance, 2 rhinos! More Cape Buffalo and a few elephants. It was amazing!!!!!!

Back at the lodge, Grant gave us a lecture, “Cats & Dogs – African Predator Dynamics”, and then we had dinner. We had to be up early, so repacked quickly and went to bed.

February 16 A very long lovely day. We had breakfast at 6, putting the luggage out as we went to breakfast, and left at 7. Grant rode with us, which was a treat. We were immediately rewarded with giraffe by the side of the road, and then a nice group of Yellow-billed Stork. Our first stop was at Oldupai Gorge, where we had a lecture, were taken down to the site where Mary Leakey discovered the skull of Zinjanthropus, and the Leakey family discovered a 1.8-million-year-old Homo habilis. We had a short time in the museum.

Then we drove into the Serengeti and spent the rest of the day looking at animals and birds. All together 11 hours from lodge to lodge. Once we were in the Serengeti, we almost immediately came upon a group of vultures. They were mostly Hooded Vultures, but there was also a Marabou Stork, and a trio (parents with a baby) of Lappet-faced Vultures. We were able to watch them for a while and found the interactions very interesting, and were able to take some great photos of landing vultures. We then had some great zebra near a river, and then some giraffe. Then more crested cranes and...lions!! A large group of young males under trees. We now needed a bathroom break, so went behind some bushes away from the lions. Our lunch was picnic boxes, which we ate standing up, with the boxes on the hood of the “jeep”. There was of course a lot more food than any of us could eat, but the driver was hungry, so we all gave him our leftover cookies, bananas, and chips. We then had a lovely jackal under a tree and then two wonderful young cheetahs under a tree!! They were so beautiful and posed for us, stretched, walked around, rested, then wandered off into the brush where only their ears were visible. So if we had been half-an-hour later, we would not have known they were there. Then more lions under a tree, which we watched sleeping for a while, then some secretary birds. And then elephants and zebra (with babies), a lot of gazelle, a few topi, jackals... Oh, My!!! We were checked into the Serengeti Serena Safari Lodge quickly (but had no hot water in our room, which they finally fixed, but it took overnight to heat up.) and had dinner.

February 17 Up early for breakfast, then an 8 am departure for a 4-hour drive. We immediately came upon a very large herd of impala and then a Tawny Eagle with zebra and Cape Buffalo nearby. As we drove near a tiny river, Steve suddenly said, "Stop! Back up!" He had found our first crocodile, moving along the bank. We then saw some young male lions, and then a group of baboons with babies. The babies clambered around the adults, jumping on their backs and being swept up into the adults' arms. Next was a large herd of zebra with babies, followed by impala and a stork in a tree, probably a Marabou Stork. We then saw a large number of hippos in a small river, with a stork on the bank. Next was a group of Hartebeests and then Hartebeests and zebra together. And then a leopard in a tree, which we watched for a long time. It was lying sprawled along a tree branch, then sat up for a bit, then sprawled out again. It's amazing how much fun watching a leopard sleep can be. More Hartebeests and zebra and then a lion in a tree!! We had really really wanted to see a lion in a tree, so this really made the day. We watched it for a long time, as it slept, sat up, slept some more. We had more zebra, then two beautiful cheetahs asleep under a tree, then a group of lions asleep under a tree. (As always, the cheetahs and lions slept, rolled over, stretched, slept...). On the way back to the lodge, we saw a large group of Marabou Stork on the bank of a small stream, with a herd of Thompson gazelles. Our last sighting was a group of topi, then we were back at the lodge for lunch.

At 4 pm we met at the parking lot for a drive to a hippo pool in a river. There was a large number of hippos moving around in the water, including babies. Two crocodile were on the rocks around the pool, and one slid into the water at one point. A monitor lizard meandered about the rocks. As we drove back to the lodge, we saw a hyena and a herd of impala. Then suddenly a baby leopard sauntered across the "road". By the time I turned on the camera, it was already hidden in the tall grass. It was incredibly fuzzy. Back at the lodge we showered and went to dinner. We could see dikdik (tiny deer) from our room.

February 18 We were told that the migration had moved further north than they expected, so we had breakfast and left at 7 am in search of the migration. We almost immediately came upon a tree filled with Marabou Storks, then a gorgeous lion with a thick mane, then a hippo wandering along. A family of giraffe let us watch them for a while, and then we found a tree full of baboon, with several with babies on the ground, as well. Next was a family of elephants with a baby, then a large number of zebra, Cape Buffalo and impala with lots of birds flying around the herds. The number of zebra continued to increase, and then finally, there were wildebeests from horizon to horizon. We stopped at a rest stop (with real bathrooms!) and we were allowed to get out and watch the progress of the herds. This was not the main migration, but a splinter group, but it was huge. After watching for a while we continued and saw more elephants and giraffe, then an extremely large group of zebra and some wildebeests at a watering hole, calmly taking turns in the water. There were baboons overhead in the trees and on the ground, and we were completely surrounded by the zebra. It was amazing. It was especially fun to watch the babies, who were running in circles around the adults and dashing off. As we left this area, we saw more zebra and giraffe, and stopped in an area of granite outcrops called kopjes. When we left this area, we again saw large groups of zebra, and then as we headed back to the lodge, a lion sauntered down the road

between the “jeeps”. (The main migration had moved into a roadless mountain area, so we couldn’t reach it.)

We returned to the lodge for a late lunch and had a couple of hours to repack before Grant gave a lecture, “Why the Tropics Matter”. We had an area set up outdoors for a special last dinner, and just as we were supposed to go out, it started to rain! It only rained a few minutes and then misted occasionally.

February 19 Our last day in the national parks. We were up by 4:30 and had coffee at 5:30 and started out for an early morning drive. We almost immediately came upon three cheetahs, a mother and her two one-year olds, and watched them for an hour or so until they became bored with us and wandered off. On the way back to the lodge, we saw a secretary bird and an elephant, then a herd of impalas. We had a dikdik outside our window at the lodge and a Bare-Faced Go-Away-Bird.

Breakfast was at 8:30, and then we had time to finish up our packing and put our luggage out by 11:30. At 12:30 we had lunch, then at 1:45 left for the airport. The charter flight to Arusha left around 3:30, and it was very interesting to be able to see so much of the terrain. It was a tiny 11-seat plane, and you had to bend over to get to the seats. When we arrived in Arusha, buses were waiting for us to take us to Lake Duluti. We collected our left luggage, then finally got keys for our room, and took showers and rested before dinner.

February 20 We got up early enough to see the flocks of egrets taking off from the lake, then went to breakfast. I spent the morning repacking the luggage and we had lunch at the lodge. At about 2:30 we decided we were set and called to have our luggage taken up to the main building, checked out, and found that our driver was already waiting to take us to Kilimanjaro airport. At the airport, all the luggage was scanned, then we checked in with Precision Air, and they were able to check our luggage all the way through to Chicago. This was important because it meant that we did not have to go through immigration in Nairobi, but could stay in the transit area. We then got into a very long customs line which took long enough to get through that we made friends in the line (a woman from South Africa, a man who needed a pen to fill in his departure form...). The advantage was that we didn’t have very long to wait when we got to the gate. The flight to Nairobi was uneventful, and we did not have to go through customs or buy a visa, so could go directly to Qatar Airways and check in.

February 21 A very uncomfortable 6-hour over-night flight to Doha gave us a couple of hours’ layover before the 15-hour flight on to Chicago.

Tarangirie



Baby elephant



Jackal



Crested Cranes



Lions



elephants



Hamerkop



Leopard



Waterbuck and Impala



Giraffe



Vervet Monkeys



Lake Manyara



Baboons



Blue Monkey



waterbird



Hippopotami

Ngorongoro Crater



Kori Bustard



Male Ostrich



Female Ostrich



New babies: Warthogs, zebra, Thompson Gazelle



New babies: Hippos and Wildebeests



Hyena



Cape Buffalo



Lion



Rest stop



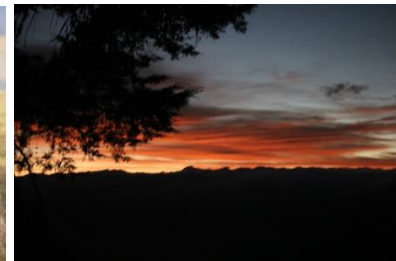
Lunch



Warthogs



Rhino



Sunset

Oldupai



Discovery site of Zinjanthropus



Oldupai Museum

# Serengeti



Serengeti Gate



Hooded Vultures, Marabou Stork



Zebra



Lions



Hyena



Cheetah



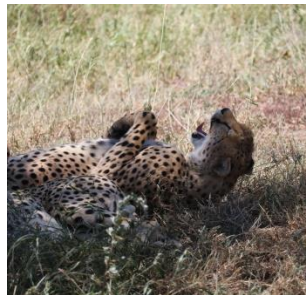
Secretary Birds



Leopard



Lion in a tree



Cheetah



Lions



Marabou Storks



Topi



Hippopotami



Lion



The migration: wildebeests and zebra



Elephants



giraffe



wildebeests and zebra



Zebra



Bare-faced Go-Away Bird



Cheetah