

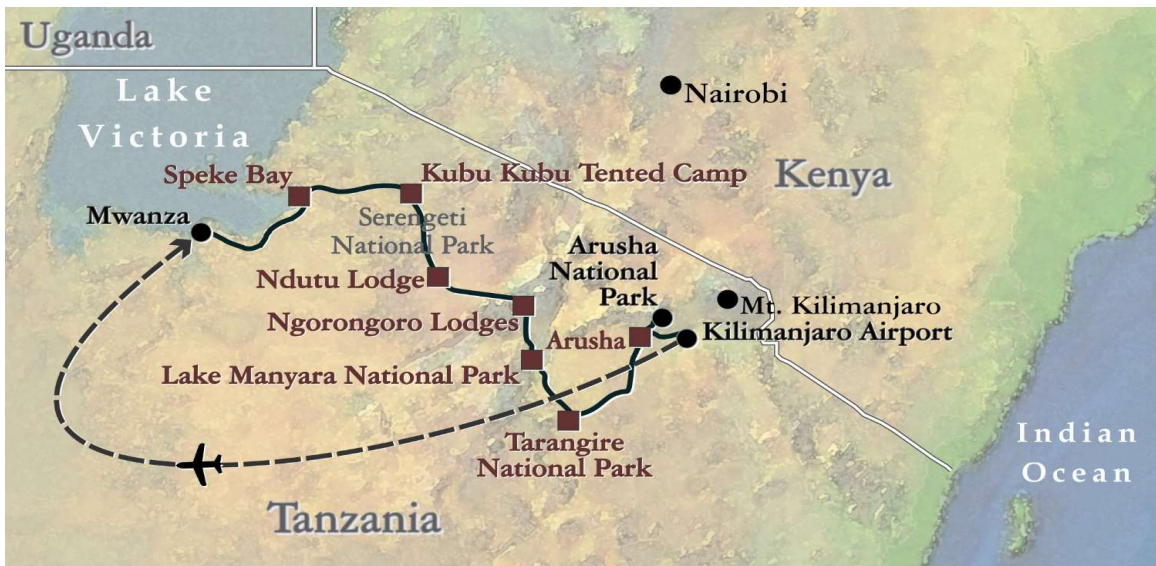


## NORTHERN TANZANIA

### BIRDING & WILDLIFE IN THE SERENGETI, NGORONGORO CRATER AND BEYOND

FEBRUARY 15–MARCH 5, 2025

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

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

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

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

- *Arusha National Park near our arrival point into Tanzania is a highland area of extinct volcanoes covered in thick forest, holding birds and mammals we are unlikely to encounter elsewhere.*
- *Tarangire National Park is justly famed for its abundance of bizarre baobab trees—absurdly thick-trunked and ill-proportioned. Here too are the best elephant-watching opportunities of the tour, with large herds roaming the open woodland habitats and riverbeds. We should have exceptional opportunities to watch the matriarchal family lives of these unique creatures. Tarangire also offers excellent birding, with several Tanzanian endemics likely.*
- *Lake Manyara National Park is a comparatively compact area nestled beneath the towering basalt cliffs of the Great Rift Valley. It encompasses spring-fed forests, thick acacia bush, and a soda lake, which at times holds a large variety of water birds from pelicans, cormorants and flamingos to herons, ibis, storks and ducks.*

*Several “off the beaten track” stops give us a chance for more and different aspects of Tanzania, including two nights at Speke Bay on the immense inland sea of Lake Victoria, and a special lunch and birding stop in the stunning gardens at Gibb’s Farm.*

*Apart from carefully choosing the itinerary, we have structured the time spent in each location to give adequate coverage to each area. In particular, by using a short charter flight to the Grumeti airstrip in the western corridor of the Serengeti, we avoid a lot of unnecessary travel over unpaved roads. Tanzanian lodge accommodation and food are now of a very good standard. We use roomy, purpose-built 4x4 vehicles driven by experienced local driver/guides. There is plenty of space for six passengers with everyone having a window seat, and of course a “pop-top” roof for you to stand up to view and photograph birds and game in the parks. By the end of the tour, we would expect a bird list exceeding 400 species and 40-50 species of mammals including Lion, Leopard, Cheetah, African Elephant, Black Rhino and other classic African big game animals.*

**February 15-16, Days 1-2: Travel to Kilimanjaro.** Participants should plan to depart the USA on February 15 and arrive Kilimanjaro International Airport (airport code JRO) on February 16. Upon arrival and after clearing customs, participants will be met at the airport by our local operator and transferred to our lodge.

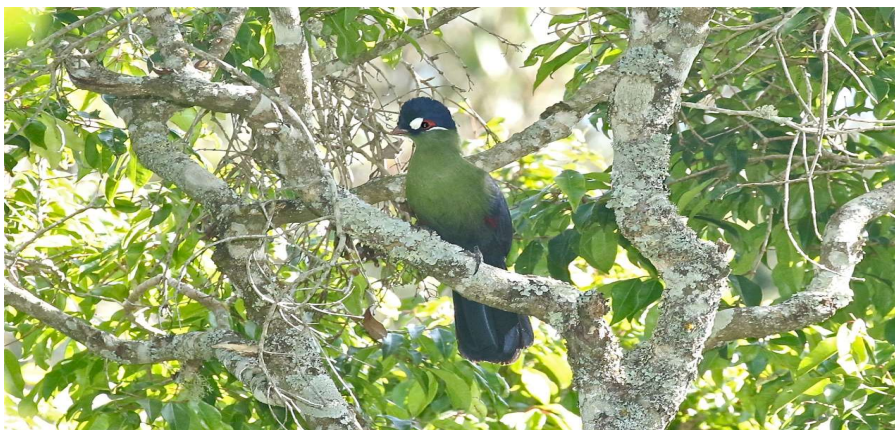
Those wishing to minimize the risk of misconnecting or delays, or to relax a little before the tour begins, are strongly encouraged to consider arriving a day or two before the start of our tour. Upon request, the VENT office will be happy to assist with any additional lodging arrangements at additional fees.

Usa River is a small community east of Arusha, and Ngare Sero is a peaceful and relaxing lodge in a rural setting which offers excellent birding for those arriving early. During previous tours, we have encountered not only troops

of Guereza Colobus and Blue (Sykes') Monkeys, but also found some great birds (many of which are unlikely to be found at other stops on the tour), including African Black Duck, Giant Kingfisher, Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, White-eared and Brown-breasted barbets, Retz's Helmetshrike, Mountain Wagtail, Kenrick's Starling, Peter's Twin-spot and Taveta Golden-Weaver. **For the past 10 years or more, most of our participants have chosen to arrive a full day ahead of the official start of the tour, both to recover from the long, overnight international flights, and, to enjoy a relaxed day of birding on the hotel grounds, with your leader.**

NIGHTS: February 15, Aboard Aircraft Enroute  
February 16, Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge, Usa River

**February 17, Day 3: Arusha National Park.** Our safari begins with much of the day spent in beautiful Arusha National Park. Dominated by rugged Mt. Meru (14,979 feet), this small jewel of a park (just 55 square miles) is close to Arusha, but remarkably "birdy", diverse and peaceful. Although many of the better-known big game animals are present, we'll concentrate on the outstanding birdlife and seek out mammal species we are less likely to find elsewhere: for example, Guereza Colobus, Blue (Syke's) Monkey, Harvey's Duiker, Suni and Bushbuck. There are open grasslands with small lakes holding a great variety of waterbirds and specialties such as Pangani Longclaw and confusing cisticola warblers. Other tracks will take us into thicker forests of mahogany, fig, cedar, and wild mango. Here we'll hope for raptors such as Crowned Eagle and Mountain Buzzard, colorful forest birds including Narina and Bar-tailed trogons, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Hartlaub's Turaco, raucous Silvery-cheeked Hornbills, White-headed Barbet, and White-starred Robin. If we are lucky, we may glimpse the snow-clad peak of Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa at 19,340 feet.



Hartlaub's Turaco © Kevin J. Zimmer

NIGHT: Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge, Usa River

**February 18, Day 4: Flight to Mwanza; Drive to Speke Bay.** Depending on flight schedules, today will likely start with a post-breakfast transfer to Arusha airport, to catch a charter flight (ca. 1 hour) to the Grumeti airstrip, located in the western corridor of Serengeti National Park. Here we will be met by our safari driver/guides, who will have driven here from Arusha the day before. Depending on the time of our arrival, once we've collected our bags and everything and everyone is loaded into the safari vehicles, we may get our first introduction to the Serengeti's birds by doing a short birding drive, prior to taking our lunch at a nearby lodge. After lunch, we'll begin birding our way out of the Serengeti, as we make our way through the western corridor, to the western gate of the national park. Upon exiting the park, it is less than a 20-minute drive to our lodge.

After arriving at the lovely Speke Bay Lodge, we may have time (again, depending on flight schedules, and, on how much time we spend on the birding drive out of the park) for a late afternoon bird walk through the extensive and easily birded grounds on the edge of immense Lake Victoria. Here, a good number of special birds not found elsewhere on our tour await us.

NIGHT: Speke Bay Lodge, Speke Bay

**February 19, Day 5: Speke Bay, Lake Victoria.** We will have the luxury of a full day and extra night at Speke Bay. This extra time will provide us the dual benefit of an extra day to find the many special birds of the Lake



Victoria Basin, while allowing us to enjoy this wonderfully “birdy” spot at a much more relaxed pace, an important consideration coming as it is, on the heels of 24 hours of air travel and given the significant time zone differences from home. We’ll have plenty of time to bird on foot along the nearby shores of the largest expanse of water in Africa—Lake Victoria.

Everything we need to find occurs within the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge, a wonderful location to opt out if you prefer to relax on the veranda and let the birds come to you. Over 200 species of birds have been recorded on the Lodge’s 250 acres of grounds. Birds of freshwater habitats—cormorants, Hamerkop, herons, egrets, ducks, and pelicans are sometimes prominent. The water margins and emergent vegetation of papyrus, reed and sedge will be of particular interest for the chance of finding birds less likely or impossible elsewhere on our route, such as African Openbill; Water Thick-knee;



Malachite Kingfisher © Kevin J. Zimmer

Blue-headed Coucal; Pied, Malachite, and African Pygmy kingfishers; Swamp Flycatcher; reed-loving warblers; Angola Swallow; Black-winged Bishop; and Northern Brown-throated, Slender-billed, Golden-backed (Jackson’s) and Black-headed (Yellow-backed) weavers. The gardens and taller groves of trees adjacent to the lodge can be literally heaving with birds at peak periods, with day-roosting Slender-tailed and Square-tailed nightjars, Verreaux’s Eagle-Owl, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Dideric Cuckoo, Black-billed Barbet, Black-headed Gonolek, African Paradise-Flycatcher, Gray-capped Warbler, Silverbird, Spotted Morning-Thrush, African Thrush, White-browed Robin-Chat, Red-chested and Scarlet-chested sunbirds and many, many more among the likely suspects.

Open acacia scrub just back from the shore holds still more possibilities, among them, the elegant Three-banded (Heuglin’s) Courser, Spotted Thick-knee, the endemic Gray-breasted Francolin, D’Arnaud’s (Usambiro) Barbet, Little Bee-eater, Gray-backed Fiscal, African Gray and Spotted flycatchers, Buff-bellied Warbler, White-bellied and Yellow-fronted canary, and more.

There will be more than enough to keep us occupied during our morning and late afternoon excursions, and the heat of mid-day and early afternoon will provide a perfect opportunity to relax in our lakeshore cabañas.

NIGHT: Speke Bay Lodge, Speke Bay

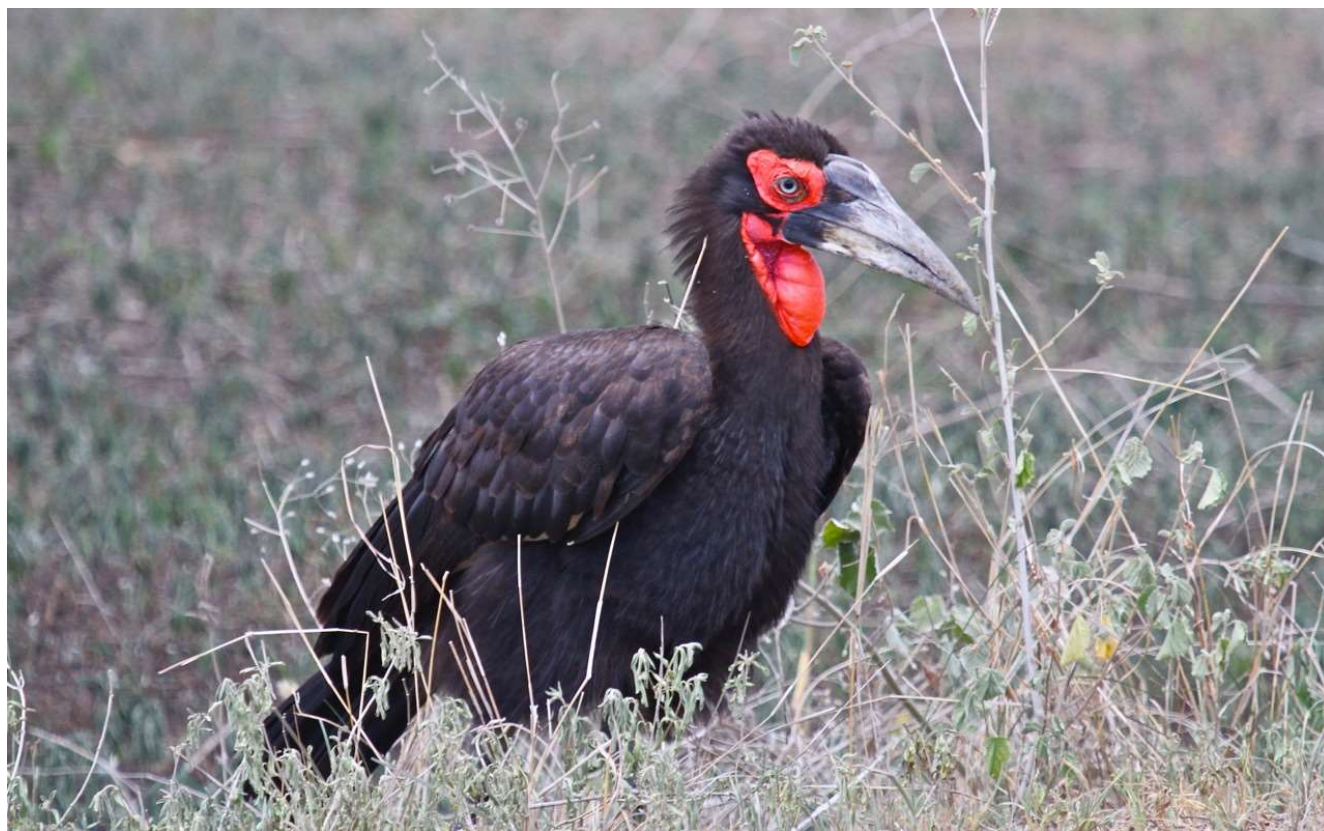
**February 20, Day 6: To the Central Serengeti.** After breakfast, we should have time for an additional few hours of birding the lakeshore and lodge grounds before it’s time to pack-up and vacate our rooms. We’ll likely pre-order an early lunch at the lodge, and then leave immediately after lunch, to drive the short distance (15-20 minutes) back to the western gate of Serengeti National Park and head towards the central Serengeti. Traveling slowly, we’ll take advantage of any wildlife and birding opportunities as we go, before reaching our lodge by early evening.

This introductory game and birding drive through the western corridor of the Serengeti will give us an opportunity to see the highly localized Karamoja Apalis, as well as the bizarre Eastern Plantain-eater. A stop at the Grumeti River should produce Hippopotamus as well as huge Nile Crocodiles. There will no doubt be many game animals such as Topi, Blue Wildebeest (Brindled Gnu), Common Zebra and Impala on the tall grass plains. Savannah birds such as Common Ostrich, Secretarybird, storks, raptors, bustards and Southern Ground-Hornbill should be conspicuous throughout the drive. Keep in mind, however, that we will be covering a lot of ground on this initial

drive through the “western corridor” of the Serengeti, and that we won’t be able to stop for every bird and mammal, or we won’t make it to our lodge before dark! This is essentially a travel day, providing an introduction and overview of the birds, wildlife and habitats that we’ll be investigating in depth over the coming days.

We will arrive at Kubu Kubu Tented Camp, our luxurious home for the next three nights, before dusk. Situated on a hilltop and ridge overlooking the vast plains of the central Serengeti, this recently opened (summer 2016) luxury tented camp is a delightful base of operations for our time in the Serengeti. The tents are incredibly spacious and well appointed, and are placed on permanent platforms, each with its own private balcony. In-suite, private bathrooms feature open-air showers with abundant hot water (dubbed “the world’s best shower” by more than one participant) and flush toilets, and the entire camp is solar-powered, with back-up generators providing 24-hour electricity. The camp is full board (including all drinks), and WiFi is available in the central area.

NIGHT: Kubu Kubu Tented Camp, Central Serengeti



Southern Ground-Hornbill © Kevin J. Zimmer

**February 21-22, Days 7 and 8: The Central Serengeti.** At 5,675 square miles, the Serengeti is a vast preserve—larger than the entire state of Connecticut! With a further 3,200 square miles protected in the surrounding Ngorongoro Conservation Area, the total is as large as Vermont or New Hampshire. While the Ndotu area typically holds the bulk of the famous wildebeest herds at this time of year, there are many other important habitats with different and special birds and wildlife to be found elsewhere. Having already traveled through the “western corridor,” we’ll want to explore more of this vast national park and will concentrate for the next two days on areas in the central part of the Serengeti. Here we can head off in any promising direction, depending on local conditions. The first differences we’ll notice in this area are the clusters of *kopjes* (pronounced “copies”)—large isolated, weather-smoothed and rounded lumps of granite, some the size of large houses. These interrupt the vast flatness of the plains and provide shelter and shade for all sorts of wildlife, including idle Lions; Klipspringer; hyrax; nesting vultures and Greater Kestrels; and gaudy pink, purple and copper-blue agamid lizards. The Seronera River area with its braided small meandering streams has associated groves of yellow bark acacias (“fever” trees). Here again we’ll note obvious changes as we find wallowing Hippopotami, secretive Bohor Reedbuck, maybe a Nile Monitor and



certainly many more bird species. It is also prime Leopard country and we'll be doing all we can to ensure finding this nearly mythical animal. Large herds of African Buffalo and smaller numbers of Topi and Kongoni (Red Hartebeest) are also found here, becoming scarce farther east.

Birds in this area and around our lodge should be plentiful. Bright little Purple Grenadiers, cordonbleus, and White-bellied Canaries peck seeds from the ground, while Golden-breasted and Cinnamon-breasted buntings sing their exuberant songs from the tops of stunted acacias along hillside slopes. Shrikes abound—Magpie Shrikes, various fiscal shrikes, Brown-crowned Tchagras, and migrant Red-backed and Isabelline/Red-tailed shrikes. Brightly colored Superb and Hildebrandt's starlings are commonplace, as are Wattled Starlings, Red-billed and Yellow-billed oxpeckers, White-headed and Red-billed buffalo-weavers, dull Swahili Sparrows, and African Gray Flycatcher. Raptors are a constant sight in the skies and this area is particularly fine for them. We have excellent chances of encountering anything from the huge Martial Eagle to the tiny Pygmy Falcon (smaller than some of the shrikes in this region), including snake-eagles, the iconic and striking Bateleur, Long-crested Eagle, wintering groups of Montagu's and Pallid harriers, and Lesser Kestrels.

NIGHTS: Kubu Kubu Tented Camp, Central Serengeti

**February 23, Day 9: To the Eastern Serengeti.** We'll head eastward this morning, approximately 50 miles out across the Serengeti and Triangle Plains to the Ndutu region, which, biologically, is part of the eastern Serengeti wilderness, but which, for administrative purposes, falls within the Ngorongoro Conservation District. Allowing most of the day for our journey will allow time to wander and visit any wildlife spectacles or concentrations on the way. You never know what surprises or excitement may dictate a temporary change of plan or route, so we'll be as flexible as possible to cater to the unexpected. This is an excellent day for chances of finding Lions, Cheetahs and Leopard. We'll be able to stretch our legs at a very good open-air visitor center (excellent for birds and hyraxes) and at Naabi Hills Gate, one of the official gateways to the national park, where we will officially exit the Serengeti National Park. Ndutu Lodge is set in acacia woodland out on the edge of



Leopard with prey, Serengeti NP © Kevin J. Zimmer

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

NIGHT: Ndutu Safari Lodge, Southeastern Serengeti

**February 24-25, Days 10-11: Ndutu Area.** We'll have two full days in potentially the prime area to watch one of the greatest wildlife spectacles on earth—the massed concentrations of calving Blue Wildebeest on the Serengeti. The wildebeest are at the end of their 500-mile circular migration here. Basically, they follow the rains and the resultant regeneration of green grasses all the way north to the Masai Mara area of Kenya. Then it's back again to rest in the ensuing long rains on the short-grass plains to the southeast of Serengeti around Ndutu, where they calve and rear their young to a stage when they can again move west and north by May or June. Hopefully we will witness many aspects of this dynamic ecosystem—from calving, through the inevitable predation by the concentrations of



Lions, Cheetahs, Leopards, jackals and hyenas, to the spectacle of five species of vultures scavenging and cleaning up the leftovers of the kill. The incredible abundance, variety, and action of the mammals alone will give us plenty to occupy our time here.



Cheetah with wildebeest kill, Ndotu © Kevin J. Zimmer

Of course, birding opportunities are legion. Very often while setting out to perhaps watch prides of Lions, Leopards with their prey cached in an acacia, or Spotted Hyaenas mud-bathing in the heat of the day, new birds will appear and be a pleasant distraction. The open grassland and scant acacia scrub hold many new species. Obvious are the Common Ostriches, Secretarybirds, noisy Crowned and Blacksmith lapwings, Lilac-breasted and European rollers, and Little Bee-eaters, along with raptors such as Long-crested Eagle and Dark and Eastern chanting-goshawks. Often, groups of Temminck's and Double-banded coursers, Fischer's Sparrow-Larks, Rufous-naped and Red-capped larks, Red-billed Queleas, Chestnut-bellied and Yellow-throated sandgrouse, and various cisticolas flush up from the grass as we move along. The endemic Gray-breasted Spurfowl, Fischer's Lovebird, and Rufous-tailed Weaver are common in the woodlands in this area, along with D'Arnaud's (Usambiro) Barbet, Green Woodhoopoe, Cardinal and Nubian woodpeckers, Black-lored Babbler, Beautiful and Mariqua sunbirds, and Wire-tailed Swallow, to pick a few examples.

NIGHTS: Ndotu Safari Lodge, Southeastern Serengeti

**February 26, Day 12: To the Ngorongoro Crater.** We'll leave the Ndotu area today, continuing on our eastern transect, and arrive at our spectacular lodge on the rim of famous Ngorongoro Crater by late afternoon. There is much to see and do on the way. We'll be out of the national park, but still in the conservation area and driving for miles across open short-grass plains still potentially full of vast herds of Blue Wildebeest, Thomson's and Grant's gazelles, Common Zebra, and all of their attendant predators. As we drive, we will be able to appreciate the huge scale of this ecosystem that we've been traveling through west to east for several days by now—all the more remarkable for being preserved almost fully intact. We will arrive at the archaeological site of Oldupai Gorge by lunchtime. Often called "The Cradle of Mankind," this is where Louis and Mary Leakey made their ground-breaking discoveries. Here we can pay homage to our ancestors, with a brief orientation talk and visit to the field museum overlooking the layered rocks of the gorge, where we can ponder the life and times of these early hominids. Shortly after lunch we will climb up into the hills and suddenly top a rise to find the immense caldera of Ngorongoro Crater

laid out before us. After descending to the crater floor, we will make our first game drive here as we cross the Crater to reach our lodge on the opposite rim, gaining our initial impressions of this remarkable place.

NIGHT: Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge, Ngorongoro Crater rim

**February 27, Day 13: The Ngorongoro Crater.** We will spend most of the day down in the Crater, sometimes called “the eighth wonder of the world.” A mainly resident population of Blue Wildebeest, African Buffalo, Thomson’s and Grant’s gazelles, Common Zebra, and Eland are on the menu for a high concentration of predators—especially Lions and Spotted Hyaenas. A major goal will be finding and observing some of the 30-35 Black Rhinoceros that survive here. Much of the crater floor is open short-grass savannah, so they are often easy to spot. Birding in the crater is also diverse and rewarding, with fresh and soda lakes, swamp, and thick yellow-bark acacia forest. We may see African Fish-Eagle and Black Kites (helping themselves to our picnic if we’re not careful!), Kori Bustard, migrant White and Abdim’s storks, elegant Gray Crowned-Cranes, Black Crake, White-browed Coucal, Rosy-throated Longclaw, Plain-backed Pipit, Northern Anteater-Chat, and Capped Wheatear, among others.



**Black Rhinoceros, Ngorongoro Crater © Kevin J. Zimmer**

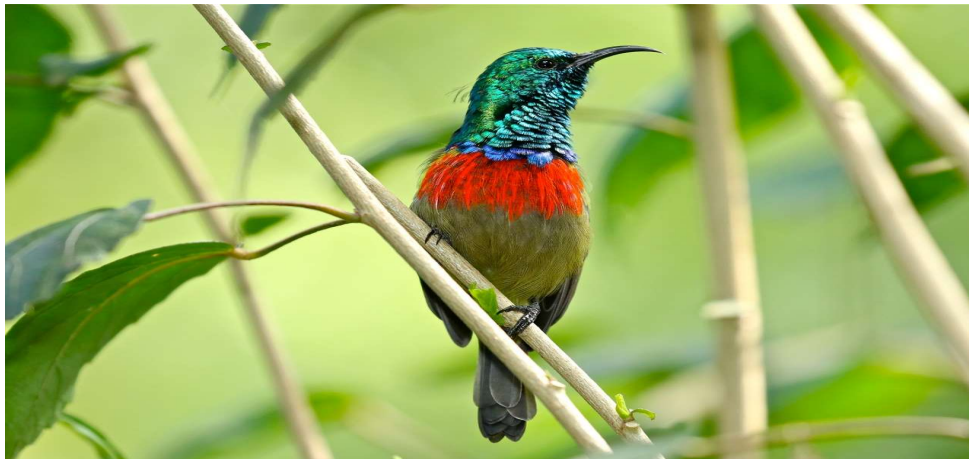
The grounds of the lodge are 2,000 feet above the crater floor, set amidst a very distinct moss-draped acacia forest. Here we’ll want to spend further time birding for specialties of the highlands. Brown-backed Woodpecker, Black-backed Puffback, White-necked Raven, Gray Cuckooshrike, White-eyed Slaty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

NIGHT: Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge, Ngorongoro



**February 28, Day 14: Ngorongoro Highlands.** After awakening to the loud duetting of Tropical Boubous and the complex songs of Cape Robin-Chats, we will bird the edge of the tangled mountain forest before driving the Crater perimeter rim road to the park exit. Among the possibilities in this habitat are Crowned Eagle, Mountain Buzzard, Schalow's Turaco, Crowned Hornbill, Brown-backed Woodpecker, Cinnamon Bracken-Warbler, Brown Woodland-Warbler, Brown-headed and Bar-throated apalis, Red-cowled Widowbird, Yellow-bellied Waxbill and commoner highland species.

Our next stop is a very special one, at Gibb's Farm, a coffee plantation on the lower flanks of the Crater highlands. Awaiting us is an incredible lunch using the wide variety of foods grown on the farm, plus great birding in a lovely setting with beautifully laid-out ornamental gardens. Here we should be able to observe birds at close range, perhaps including Tambourine Dove, Klaas's Cuckoo, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Red-fronted Tinkerbird, African Paradise-Flycatcher, Arrow-marked Babbler, Gray-capped Warbler, many sunbirds, Grosbeak Weaver, and hopefully the beautiful and delicate White-tailed Blue-Flycatcher, a local specialty. In the late afternoon we will travel the short distance (5-10 minutes) to our lodging for the night.



Eastern Double-collared Sunbird, Gibbs Farm © Kevin J. Zimmer

NIGHT: Tloma Lodge, Ngorongoro-Karatu

**March 1, Day 15: Lake Manyara National Park.** This morning a short drive will take us to the steep escarpment of the Great Rift Valley, below which is nestled Lake Manyara National Park. Centered on a soda lake below the cliffs, Manyara is a small park with a wide variety of habitats and many possibilities for birds and mammals. Upon entering the park, we pass through a beautiful groundwater forest fed by streams rising from the base of the escarpment above. This cool and shady area offers possibilities for such localized species as Purple-crested Turaco, Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, Yellow-bellied Greenbul and more.



Red-and-yellow Barbet, Lake Manyara NP © Kevin J. Zimmer

Here too we'll encounter large troops of Olive Baboons. In the more open acacia scrub fringing the lakebed are found most of the classic animals of East Africa, including African Elephant, comical Common Warthogs trotting through the bush with tails raised, and some very large Giraffes. Here, we will look for a number of birds more typical of drier acacia woodlands, among them, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Red-and-yellow Barbet, Brown-crowned Tchagra, Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird and Yellow-spotted Bush Sparrow (Petronia), Depending on water levels, we may find a nice variety of waterbirds,

perhaps including Yellow-billed and Marabou storks, Pink-backed Pelican, Sacred Ibis, African Spoonbill, Black-

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

NIGHT: Manyara Serena Lodge, Lake Manyara



African Elephants, Tarangire NP © Kevin J. Zimmer

entire area is studded with giant baobab trees. Useful stores of moisture for the elephants during drier seasons, their gargantuan trunks are scarred from generations of gouging by elephant tusks.

Running through the center of the park is the Tarangire River, with wide grassy floodplains dotted with trees, but there are many other habitats too. A main interest here will be the large African Elephant herds, but our game drives will also take us past Impala, Common Zebra, Giraffe, Defassa Waterbuck and other plains game. The area often produces sightings of predators, perhaps a Leopard resting in a tree during the heat of the day or Cheetahs hunting in the grasslands. Tarangire is also exciting birding territory, the possibilities ranging from Common Ostrich, Southern Ground-Hornbills and bustards to tiny cisticolas and bishops. Among



Common Zebras at waterhole © Kevin Zimmer

the many birds typically present are Saddle-billed Stork, Hamerkop, five species of francolins, Double-banded Courser, lots of raptors from large to small, Black-faced Sandgrouse, cuckoos, Pearl-spotted Owlet, African Scops-Owl, Woodland Kingfisher, Red-and-yellow Barbet, White-rumped and Magpie shrikes, Slate-colored Boubou, Spotted Morning-Thrush, Red-headed Weaver, and many others. Our time here will undoubtedly pass all too quickly.

NIGHTS: Tarangire Sopa Lodge, Tarangire National Park

**March 2-3, Days 16-17: Tarangire National Park.**

After breakfast we will head east along excellent paved roads to Tarangire National Park, arriving at the park gate well before lunch. Here we will likely encounter two Tanzanian endemics, the Yellow-collared Lovebird and Ashy Starling, as well as other new birds like Mottled Spinetail, Mosque Swallow, Northern Pied Babbler and Green-winged Pytilia. Tarangire is a dry region, subject to seasonal rains and drought, but it should be at its finest at this time of year, the grasslands lush and green and the trees and bushes leafed out. The





Yellow-collared Lovebird, Tarangire NP © Kevin J. Zimmer

**March 4, Day 18: Return to Arusha; Departure for Home.** This morning, as we exit Tarangire, there is always a last-minute chance for that final Leopard or new bird for our extensive list before making the short journey back to Arusha, arriving in time for lunch. There will be time for some optional last-minute shopping before transferring to the Ngare Sero Lodge where private day rooms will be provided to wash, change, and pack prior to departure. A group transfer will be provided to Kilimanjaro International Airport (airport code JRO) in time for the evening KLM flight to Amsterdam arriving in the morning of Day 19 in time for connecting flights to the US.

DAY ROOMS: Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge, Usa River

**March 5, Day 19: Arrive Home.**

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

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour will be limited to 10 participants. However, VENT reserves the right to increase the tour limit by one in order to accommodate a couple when only one space is available.

**TOUR LEADER:** Kevin Zimmer with the assistance of local guides



**Kevin Zimmer** has authored three books and numerous papers dealing with field identification and bird-finding in North America. His book, *Birding in the American West: A Handbook*, deals with finding and identifying birds in the western United States. Living in Alaska contributed to his affection for the Far North, where he has anchored VENT's tour program since 1986. For the past 30+ years he has concentrated his attention on the Neotropics, particularly on Brazil, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela. He has directed VENT's Brazil program since 1991. In the past decade, he has rekindled a love affair with the birds and wildlife of Africa, an interest that began as a young boy (watching Marlin Perkins on *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom*), but which blossomed with his first trip to Kenya in 1987 and leading several tours there through 1998. Following his return to Africa after a hiatus of more than a decade, his yearly tours to Africa have taken him to Tanzania, Uganda, and Ethiopia. Kevin has a PhD in biology (research emphasis in Avian Evolutionary Ecology) from New Mexico State University, and is a Research Associate of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, an elective member of the American

Ornithologists' Society (AOS), and a member of the A.O.S. South American Classification Committee (SACC). He formerly served two terms on the American Birding Association (ABA) Check-list Committee, and is a regular contributor to Cornell's Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds. He has authored numerous technical papers on the taxonomy, distribution, and behavior of Neotropical birds, particularly those of the Amazon Basin. In 2003 he completed (with co-author Mort Isler) the major chapter on the *Thamnophilidae* (antbirds) for the prestigious *Handbook of Birds of the World* series. In 2006, he and Curtis Marantz coauthored a six-CD compilation of *Bird Voices of Alta Floresta and Southeastern Amazonian Brazil* (produced by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds) that represents the most comprehensive set of commercially available bird recordings for any part of the Amazon Basin. He and Andrew Whittaker are currently at work on a comprehensive field guide to the birds of Brazil, to be published by Princeton University Press. Kevin lives in Atascadero, California with his wife, Susan. Their daughter, Marina, is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT). She and her husband, Ryan, and their children, Brinn and Clayton, are now living in Napa, California.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for Northern Tanzania is **\$16,995** per person in double occupancy from Arusha. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 3 to lunch on Day 18, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, the flight between Arusha and Mwanza on Day 4, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Tanzania and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$975**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The initial deposit for this tour is **\$1,000** per person. A second deposit of **\$3,000** is due 210 days prior to departure (July 20, 2024). If you prefer to pay your deposits using a credit card, the deposits must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. If you would like to pay your initial deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at <https://ventbird.com>) should be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

**PAYMENTS:** All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 150 days (September 18, 2024) prior to the tour departure date.

**MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE REQUIREMENT:** This tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may **NOT** be available. **For this reason, travel insurance which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour.** This coverage is included in the **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™** program. Through Ripcord, "emergency evacuation" can be purchased as a stand-alone benefit or as part of a comprehensive travel insurance policy. If you choose not to purchase insurance through Ripcord, you are required to obtain it through another provider.

**EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES:** In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.



## **CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:**

### **Cancellation by Participant:**

Refunds, if any, for any cancellation by a participant are made according to the following schedule: If participant cancels 210 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$500** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months from the date of participant tour cancellation, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made between 209 and 151 days before departure date, the deposit is not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the tour fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 150 days before departure date, no refund is available. **For participants' protection, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance that covers trip cancellation/interruption.**

#### If participant cancels:

210 days or more before departure date

209 to 151 days before departure date

150 days or less before departure date

#### Participant's refund will be:

Your deposit(s) minus \$500\*

No refund of the deposits, but any payments on the balance will be refunded

No refund available

\*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months from the date of participant tour cancellation, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person. To qualify, cancellation must occur 180 days or more before departure date; deposit transfers must be made at the time of cancellation; and one transfer per deposit.

### **Cancellation by VENT:**

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

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

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

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

**FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES:** In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE:** To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Travel Protection as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through

Redpoint, we recommend its **Ripcord** plan. Designed for all types of travelers, Ripcord is among the most comprehensive travel protection programs available.

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

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

\*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, mid-payment, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip cost in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

#### **Coronavirus (COVID-19):**

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

Please visit the **Coronavirus FAQ** page at the following link: [https://redpointtravelprotection.com/covid\\_19\\_faq/](https://redpointtravelprotection.com/covid_19_faq/).

**AIR INFORMATION:** Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.\* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

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

**ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTERNET ACCESS:** Accommodations throughout are very good: clean, comfortable rooms with private bathrooms, and all within lovely locations. There are swimming pools at several lodges (Ngare Sero, Kubu Kubu, Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge, Tloma Lodge, Manyara Serena Lodge and Tarangire



Sopa Lodge); laundry service; good shops offering gifts, clothing and practical items; well-stocked bars; and excellent service. Internet is available at all lodges, but is not always reliable, and in some spots, may be restricted to the central reception & bar/dining areas.

### **BAGGAGE:**

The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your airline to find out specific weight restrictions. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security we recommend that you check the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for the most updated information: <http://www.tsa.gov/>.

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

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

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

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

**DOCUMENTS:** A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Tanzania is required for United States citizens to enter the country. A visa is also required for United States citizens to enter. For further information, you may contact the US State Department for the most current and up-to-date visa requirements, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>. Or you can contact Travel Document Systems, a company which

handles visa procurement at <https://pinnacle.gettraveldocs.com/expedited-visa-services> or 888-838-4867. Non-United States citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

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

**There are abundant excellent photographic opportunities of mammals and birds, so be sure to bring plenty of digital storage media.** Also bring a small flashlight or headlamp for walking between your room and the dining areas at night. Please bring an alarm clock for early-morning wakeups. A few dust masks are advised in case we encounter excessively dry and dusty roads.

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

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

**COVID-19:** We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance regarding recommendations for avoiding COVID-19. Please visit the **Coronavirus Travel Update** page of our website <https://ventbird.com/covid-19> for our official statement regarding COVID-19 and the operation of our tours. Please visit the CDC website for the most up to date information about COVID-19 and associated guidance for proper health and hygiene: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

**Insect Repellents** – There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

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

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

An insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:



- Permanone® (Permethrin) is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for **pre-treatment** of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment has to be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.
- Insect Shield® apparel: Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

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

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

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html> (click on Travel Health).

**MISC:** Departure Tax - None

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

Language - Kiswahili and English are the official languages

Time - 9 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time

**TRANSPORTATION:** The group will be traveling in specially built four-wheel drive Landcruiser (six window seats in each) with a driver and guide in each vehicle.

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

**Birds:**

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

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

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

**Mammals:**

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

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

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

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

#### **Reptiles:**

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

S. Spawls, K. Howells, & R. Drewes. *Pocket Guide to the Reptiles and Amphibians of East Africa*. Christopher Helm Publications (in UK), 2006. 144 pages, 230 color plates. This is a lightweight and portable guide, partly adapted from the popular and highly acclaimed field guide reviewed above. Covering the most prominent 150 reptiles and 80 amphibians found in the region (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi), with concise text, photographs and a map for each, this is a convenient and attractive pocket guide for a diverse and often conspicuous group of animals.

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

#### **Plants:**

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

**General:** There is a wealth of material available for this region. Suggested good “general” reading about Africa, the wildlife, history and former lifestyles include:

- Douglas-Hamilton, Iain. *Among the Elephants*. New York: Viking Press, 1975.
- Grzimek, Bernard. *Serengeti Shall Not Die*. New York: Dutton, 1968.
- Matthiessen, Peter. *The Tree Where Man Was Born*. Penguin Press, 1995.
- Moss, Cynthia. *Portraits in the Wild: Animal Behavior in East Africa*. (2nd ed.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- Packer, Craig. *Into Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Reader, John. *Africa: A Biography of a Continent*. Penguin, 1998.
- Schaller, George. *Serengeti Lions a Study of Predator-Prey Relations*, 1976.
- Zimmerman, Dale A. *Turaco Country*. Portal, Arizona: Sky Island Press, 2015. This recently published book is a masterfully written memoir of the author’s 30 years of fieldwork in east Africa (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda). Zimmerman writes extensively of birds, mammals, butterflies and plants, from both the perspective of a professional biologist and an accomplished birder and natural historian, and includes detailed accounts of several of the stops on our tour (Ngorongoro Crater, the Serengeti, Lake Manyara, Arusha National Park, etc.). Much attention is given to the author’s early visits to the region in the early 1960s, and, as such, provides an evocative account of a time when visitors on safari could tent camp virtually anywhere. This book makes excellent pre-and-post-tour reading (and the photographic selection is remarkable), but it is too big and heavy to carry with you on tour.

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

**TIPPING:** Tipping (restaurant staff, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that tips are not expected and are entirely optional. Tips should be given directly to your tour leader; they should not be sent to the VENT office.

**RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT:** Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, “*VENT*”) act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

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

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

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

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on July 20, 2024, and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

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

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

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