



*Usambiro Barbet is endemic to northern Tanzania and neighbouring Kenya and is easily seen in the Serengeti where this pair were preparing to make a few more! (Nik Borrow)*

## NORTHERN TANZANIA

1 – 14 APRIL 2022

**LEADER: NIK BORROW**

This incredible tour through Arusha and Tarangire National Parks, the Ngorongoro Crater and finally over the seemingly endless plains of the Serengeti surely has to be the ultimate wildlife travel experience out of anywhere in Africa if not indeed the whole world! The journey is simply one of those 'must-do' pilgrimages that all ecotourists should make at least once in their lifetimes. Our visit was supposedly in the wet season but this year the rains had come early and then stopped so that the tour was mainly dry throughout. This had produced lush vegetation and high grass everywhere so game viewing was sometimes not so easy. During just fourteen days in the field, we managed to record colourful endemics such as Grey-breasted Spurfowl, Fischer's and Yellow-collared Lovebirds, Ashy Starling, Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbill and regional specialties such as Taveta and Rufous-tailed Weavers, the little-known Karamoja Apalis and the elusive Grey-crested Helmetshrike. To add to the bonanza of birds there was a wealth of mammals with cats featuring prominently during our game drives and we also gained a remarkable insight into the workings of this huge and almost untouched ecosystem. Under the panoramic skies and across the expansive plains of the Ngorongoro and Serengeti, we were able to witness one of the greatest concentrations of large mammals on earth. After all the wildlife documentaries that have been made on the area the first-time visitor

feels a sort of familiarity with the place but no widescreen television or Imax cinema can ever recreate or replace the amazing jaw-dropping and absolutely astonishing experience of actually being there! The sheer spectacle of being surrounded by grunting gnus and hee-hawing zebras combined with the obvious pleasures of a rich and vibrant avifauna, makes this tour a marvellous and deeply moving experience. Despite the huge number of tourists passing through the region it is still possible in this enormous space to escape the gaggles of vehicles that gather around sleepy lions, stealthy cheetahs or secretive leopards and set out in order to discover one's own wonders. It is indeed exhilarating to head off into the wide blue yonder in search of the next wildlife encounter travelling over huge tracts of country where one never sees another car or human being apart from perhaps the occasional Maasai warrior or cowherd draped in vivid red and striding purposefully across the apparently infinite landscape.



*You have to see the Ngorongoro Crater in order to believe it. The ever-changing light plays across the surface like an artist's brush and the animal encounters were amazing as always. (Nik Borrow)*

Our adventure began near Arusha at a lodge overlooking Lake Duluti which was a great base for visiting Arusha National Park where we found the near-endemic Broad-ringed White-eye as well as mouth-watering species such as Hartlaub's Turaco and White-starred Robin. The Momella lakes held good numbers of Lesser and some Greater Flamingos and a selection of wildfowl.

A morning visit to the plains at Engikaret gave us the exceedingly rare Beesley's Lark gaining some prolonged views of this seriously threatened bird and also found some Short-tailed Larks and even mammals such as Eastern White-bearded Wildebeest and Eastern Thomson's Gazelles both present. We then moved onto Tarangire National Park dominated by its enormous Baobabs, impressive gatherings of African Elephants and endemic Ashy Starlings and Yellow-collared Lovebirds whilst a night drive produced bouncing Spring Hares, Northern Lesser Galago and Bronze-winged and Three-banded Coursers.

Once again, this year we were able to drive right through Lake Manyara National Park and found colourful Southern Red, Black and Yellow-crowned Bishops all in breeding dress as well as spectacular Purple-crested Turacos en route. In the park we saw our first Hippos but high water levels meant that the hot springs and the actual hippo pools were completely submerged. At the end of the day, we climbed up the wall of the Great Rift Valley for an overnight stay and continued on to Ngorongoro where fortunately, the weather was clear for tremendous views of the crater and we managed to scope our first Black Rhinos from the crater rim! In the forests that cloak the slopes we found Brown-headed Apalis and on the high grasslands watched displaying Jackson's Widowbirds and glittering Malachite, Golden-winged and Tacazze Sunbirds and managed views of the unassuming Lynes's Cisticola. Down below we got closer to the rhinos and witnessed the mass of herbivores and attendant Lions which did not fail to impress.

Descending from the crater rim the road led us down through stunted Whistling Thorn (*Vachellia drepanolobium*) and spiky wild Sisal (*Sansevieria ehrenbergii*) with amazing vistas towards the Serengeti itself where enormous numbers of Serengeti White-bearded Wildebeest and Plains Zebra were grazing. Our stay was split with three nights in the Seronera region in the heart the Serengeti and three nights at Ndutu on the borders with the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. We did well for cats generally and had multiple encounters with plenty of Lions, 3 Leopards, 4 Cheetahs, 1 Caracal and 1 Serval! We also scored well with the bird specialties and found Karamoja Apalis, a family of Grey-crested Helmetshrikes, both Melodious and White-tailed Larks and endemic Grey-breasted Spurfowl, Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbill and Fischer's Lovebirds. Other noteworthy species seen during the tour included Hildebrandt's Spurfowl, Montane Nightjar, Nyanza Swift, Hartlaub's Bustard, Yellow-throated and Black-faced Sandgrouse, Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon (heard only), Chestnut-banded Plover, Von der Decken's Hornbill, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Moustached Tinkerbird (heard only), Spot-flanked, Red-and-yellow, Emin's (sometimes split from D'Arnaud's) and 'Usambiro' Barbets, Eastern Grey Woodpecker, Greater Kestrel, Amur Falcon, Red-bellied Parrot, Black-fronted Bushshrike, Long-tailed and Taita Fiscals, Red-throated Tit, Fischer's Sparrow-Lark, Foxy Lark, Athi Short-toed Lark, Mountain, Stripe-faced and Grey-olive Greenbuls, Trilling and Hunter's Cisticolas, Bar-throated Apalis, Brown-tailed Apalis, Black-headed Apalis (heard only), Grey-capped Warbler, Grey Wren-Warbler, Banded Parisoma, Pale, Mbulu and Broad-ringed White-eyes, Rufous Chatterer, Black-lored and Northern Pied Babblers, Hildebrandt's and Kenrick's Starlings, Bare-eyed Thrush, Silverbird, Rüppell's Robin-Chat, 'Schalow's' Abyssinian Wheatear, Eastern Double-collared and 'Gorgeous' Beautiful Sunbirds, Yellow-throated Bush Sparrow, Chestnut, Kenya and Swahili Sparrows, Grey-capped Social Weaver, Speke's and Golden-backed Weavers, 'Layard's' Village Weaver, Grey-headed Silverbill, Abyssinian Crimsonwing, Blue-capped Cordon-bleu, Red-throated Twinspot, Steel-blue and Straw-tailed Whydahs, Southern Citril and Southern Grosbeak-Canary.



*Serengeti White-bearded Wildebeest and Common Zebra rest for a while in the savannah on the edge of the Serengeti during their incredible migration! (Nik Borrow)*

The tour started at an extremely comfortable lodge overlooking the picturesque Lake Duluti. a small crater lake that nestles between the cultivation, busy towns and the peak of Mount Meru. We set out straight after

breakfast boarding our sturdy Landcruiser with its open top roof hatches that took us to the nearby Arusha National Park encompassing the volcanic slopes of Mount Meru, an impressive peak reaching some 4566m (14,979ft). It was a somewhat damp morning after overnight rain and we initially spent some time in the entrance gate area familiarising ourselves with some of the birds whilst wide-eyed Maasai Giraffes stared at us wondering what we were doing. A bedraggled Scaly Spurfowl was a good start and so was the near-endemic Taveta Weavers carrying nesting material. Also seen was Singing Cisticola, the first representative of a much-maligned group of birds, although we wondered at the species name, as this is certainly no diva of the bird world! During our visit we also added Trilling, Rattling, Winding and Short-winged Cisticolas to the list. Entering the park, we passed an area known as Serengeti Ndogo or 'Small' Serengeti where our first large mammals were grazing and included Plains Zebra, Common Warthog, Ellipsen Waterbuck, Bushbuck and many Olive Baboons that included a snowy leucistic individual.



*Colourful Hartlaub's Turaco (left) and White-starred Robin (right) brightened up a dull morning in Arusha National Park. (Nik Borrow)*

We entered the forest zone where shaggy-coated Guereza Colobus gathered leaves in the treetops and enormous Silvery-cheeked Hornbills sailed overhead leaving us in no doubt that we were really in Africa! As was to be expected, the dark, damp forest did not reveal its secrets easily but we did manage to coax some superb Hartlaub's Turacos into view although other vocal species such as Narina Trogon, Moustached Tinkerbird and Black-headed Apalis refused to show. At the Ngurdoto crater rim we had more luck and spotted the brightly-coloured Black-fronted Bushshrike and White-starred Robin whilst a dowdy Kenrick's Starling showed briefly. Our main target was the near-endemic Broad-ringed White-eye that initially played hard to get but ultimately, we all saw well and other forest species included White-eared Barbet, Chinspot Batis, Black-backed Puffback, Tropical Boubou, Black Cuckooshrike, African Paradise Flycatcher, White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher, African Dusky Flycatcher, Stripe-faced Greenbul, Black Saw-wing and Rüppell's Robin-Chat. On the crater floor itself were large numbers of African Buffalo.

The rest of the day was spent exploring the Momella lakes and their surrounds. Here we found a good group of Southern Pochard on the waters alongside numbers of Little Grebe with smaller numbers of Cape and Red-billed Teals. Most impressive however was the large gathering of mainly Lesser Flamingos with smaller numbers of the larger, whiter Greater Flamingo and we spent some time marvelling at the tightly packed groups as they went about their business of siphoning algae and diatoms from the alkaline waters. Also on the lakes were a selection of Palearctic migrant waders including Black-winged Stilt, Common Ringed Plover, Ruff, Little Stint, Wood Sandpiper and Common Greenshank whilst other waterbirds spotted included Blacksmith Lapwing, Reed and White-breasted Cormorants, African Sacred and Hadada Ibises, Western Cattle and Intermediate Egrets, Grey and Black-headed Herons, Hamerkop and the majestic African Fish Eagle. Colourful White-fronted Bee-eaters had gathered by the lake shore and a flock of European Bee-

eaters joined them for a while. It was a great first day and other species noted included Helmeted Guineafowl, African Palm and Nyanza Swifts, White-browed Coucal, Jacobin Cuckoo, Red-eyed Dove, Tambourine Dove, Grey Crowned Crane, Crowned Lapwing, Saddle-billed Stork, Marabou Stork, African Harrier-Hawk, Palm-nut Vulture, Augur Buzzard, Speckled Mousebird, European Roller, Spot-flanked Barbet, Nubian Woodpecker, Cardinal Woodpecker, Eurasian Hobby, Orange-breasted Bushshrike, Brown-crowned Tchagra, Northern Fiscal, Rufous-naped Lark, Dark-capped Bulbul, Brown-throated Martin, Wire-tailed Swallow, Lesser Striped Swallow, Moustached Grass Warbler, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Red-winged Starling, Red-billed Oxpecker, Cape Robin-Chat, African Stonechat, Collared Sunbird, Olive Sunbird, Bronzy Sunbird, Variable Sunbird, Baglafaecht Weaver, Spectacled Weaver, Yellow Bishop, Red-backed Mannikin and Northern Grey-headed Sparrow.



*Tightly packed Lesser Flamingos on the Momella Lakes in Arusha National Park. (Nik Borrow)*

At night in the gardens of our lodge we found Small-eared or Garnett's Greater Galago (a type of bushbaby) and after a welcome nights sleep we departed early the next day and travelled north out of Arusha, gradually descending lower and lower until we reached our destination near the small settlement of Engikaret on the Lariboro Plains that is home to the incredibly rare endemic Beesley's Lark. One wonders how long this taxon will survive as perhaps only c.63 of these birds are thought to survive and sadly, despite evidence that supports the validity of the species (IOC have split it) this taxon is not currently recognised as such by BirdLife International.

The plains were green with recent rain and a Foxy Lark was present right by our car. At first the Maasai guide was nowhere to be seen until a distant figure bedecked with binoculars was seen striding towards us from the other side of the vast open plain. We walked towards and greeted him and he suggested a place to look which was fortuitously just a few yards away and sure enough there were a pair of the ultra-rare Beesley's Lark! Once found the birds were easy to follow and everyone had great views of this endangered bird. Following this great success, we were free to look for a series of other larks the most common of which appeared to be the Red-capped Larks that seemed to be absolutely everywhere. Another group of Beesley's

Larks was spotted and eventually some Short-tailed Larks were also located and to complete this 'lark-fest' for the day we also scored with Fischer's Sparrow-Lark.



*The rarest bird of the trip was undoubtedly Beesley's Lark, with a total known population of perhaps no more than 63 birds! (Nik Borrow)*

During our meanderings across the plains there were also other things to see and our first displaying male Kori Bustard was much admired. Small numbers of Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse were seen flying over and perky Capped Wheatears were common. Some dapper Taita Fiscals were seen and a pair of Crimson-rumped Waxbills put in an appearance. We also found Montagu's Harrier, Lesser Kestrel, Lanner Falcon, White-necked Raven, Barn Swallow and African Pipit and some distant game dotted around proved to be Eastern White-bearded Wildebeest and Eastern Thomson's Gazelles.

The morning was advancing rapidly and we decided to spend some time birding the thorn scrub bordering the plains and this decision turned up a wealth of species. Typical acacia scrub species were seen such as White-bellied Go-away-bird, Blue-naped Mousebird, Buff-bellied Warbler, Grey Wren-Warbler, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Red-fronted Prinia, Brown-tailed Apalis, Banded Parisoma, Bare-eyed Thrush, White-browed Scrub Robin, African Grey Flycatcher, Beautiful (sometimes split as Gorgeous) Sunbird and Yellow-spotted Bush Sparrow and we were pleased to spot our first male Steel-blue Whydah in breeding plumage and an Upcher's Warbler was also a good find. Other more widespread species seen before it was time to move on included White-rumped Swift, Diederik Cuckoo, Mourning Collared Dove, Ring-necked Dove, Rüppell's Vulture, Brown Snake Eagle, Tawny Eagle, African Hoopoe, Little Bee-eater, Brubru, Red-tailed Shrike, Willow Warbler, Wattled Starling, White-headed Buffalo Weaver, Grey-capped Social Weaver, Speckle-fronted Weaver, Black-necked Weaver, Vitelline Masked Weaver, Chestnut Weaver, Cut-throat Finch and Blue-capped Cordon-bleu. It had been a highly successful morning but now we retraced our steps back towards Arusha noting Abdim's Storks and 'Schalow's' Abyssinian Wheatears along the way and then headed towards our next destination, Tarangire National Park.

At the Tarangire National Park entrance gate we easily found endemic Ashy Starlings and Yellow-collared Lovebirds but there was much disturbance at this normally birdy spot due to construction work so we didn't linger for long. The park is particularly well-known for its healthy population of African Elephants and we soon saw our first feeding amongst the enormous Baobabs that are also a feature of this beautiful park. Other mammals included tail-twitching Impala, shaggy-coated Ellipsen Waterbuck, towering stately 'Maasai' Giraffes and tiny little 'Thomas's' Kirk's Dik-diks.



*The gorgeous Yellow-collared Lovebird is endemic to Tanzania and fortunately common and easily seen in Tarangire National Park.  
(Nik Borrow)*

During the fairly short but action-packed drive to our lodge we also encountered a surprising number of new birds for the trip. A perched juvenile Martial Eagle that allowed close approach was definitely the star of the show and soon after we found an adult – perhaps one of the parents? Our first endemic Rufous-tailed Weavers were noted and other species included White-faced Whistling Duck, Crested Francolin, Yellow-necked and Red-necked Spurrows, Little Swift, African Cuckoo, Namaqua Dove, African Jacana, Common Sandpiper, Black-crowned Night Heron, White-backed Vulture, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Green Wood Hoopoe, Von der Decken's Hornbill, Lilac-breasted Roller, Striped, Woodland and Malachite Kingfishers, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Eastern Grey Woodpecker, Red-bellied Parrot, Magpie and Northern White-crowned Shrikes, Fork-tailed Drongo, Red-faced Crombec, Grey-backed Camaroptera, Arrow-marked Babbler, Yellow-billed Oxpecker, Silverbird, Spotted Flycatcher, White-browed Sparrow-Weaver and Lesser Masked Weaver.



*The 'awesome' view from Tarangire Safari Lodge (with endemic Ashy Starlings thrown in for good measure) is certainly worth a sundowner or two! (Nik Borrow)*

We were staying at the splendid Tarangire Safari Lodge for two nights and settled into our 'tents' which were more like huts made out of canvas. The lodge itself is set in an idyllic setting overlooking the Tarangire River and the 'awesome view' that is advertised on the approach road is certainly well worth having a sundowner for!



*A juvenile Martial Eagle stood and posed unperturbed as we entered Tarangire National Park (left) where endemic Ashy Starlings (right) were common. (Nik Borrow)*

The Tarangire ecosystem covers an area of approximately 20,000 square kilometres and comprises Baobab and Acacia woodland, *Commiphora* bushland and open grassland dotted with Real Fan Palms (*Hyphaene petersiana*) with swamps dominating the southern section. We opted for a full day drive that took us through open savanna and then followed the Tarangire River southwards to Silale Swamp where we enjoyed a pleasant picnic lunch overlooking the vast swamp.

The day started with a tiny African Scops Owl that had chosen a convenient tree by the rooms as its roost site then as we set out for the day our first Common Ostrich were seen letting us know that we were truly in 'Safari Land' Africa! Black-faced Sandgrouse and Double-banded Coursers were observed on the dirt tracks as was a Greater Painted-snipe that had claimed a puddle for its home and was seemingly determined not to leave it! The endemic form of D'Arnaud's Barbet which is sometimes considered a separate species 'Emin's or Black-capped Barbet' was seen well and a juvenile Verreaux's Eagle-Owl was found screaming for food. Spectacular Pin-tailed, Straw-tailed and Long-tailed Paradise Whydahs all in breeding dress were much admired as were some showy 'Black-faced' Bare-faced Go-away-birds.

The park is a wonderful place for observing African Savanna Elephants and we enjoyed a number of great encounters although after recent heavy rains the vegetation was high and the Tarangire River which runs through the park wasn't quite the magnetic draw that it often is. Of course, there were new mammals as well

such as Yellow-spotted Hyrax, Common Dwarf and Banded Mongooses, beautiful 'Maasai' Giraffes, Impala, Hartebeest and Grant's Gazelle.



*Tarangire is a great park for observing African Savannah Elephant. (Nik Borrow)*

The swamp itself was somewhat disappointing for waterbirds although some handsome Whiskered Terns in breeding plumage were seen quartering over the southern section which has now become an open water lake with rising water levels and here Little Egret, Great White Pelican and Pied Kingfisher were seen along with simply thousands of Red-billed Quelea along the waters edge. Other new species added to the list today included Knob-billed Duck, Horus Swift, Red-chested Cuckoo, Emerald-spotted Wood Dove, Black Crane, Three-banded Plover, White Stork, Secretarybird, Black-winged Kite, Lappet-faced Vulture, Bateleur, Gabar Goshawk, Eastern Chanting Goshawk, Northern Red-billed and African Grey Hornbills, Grey-headed Kingfisher, Red-and-yellow Barbet, Greater Honeyguide, Pygmy Falcon, Grey Kestrel, Slate-coloured Boubou, Zitting and Desert Cisticolas, Northern Pied Babbler and Marico Sunbird.



*This male Greater Painted-snipe would not move from his puddle in the middle of the track. (Nik Borrow)*

At night Tarangire Safari Lodge was offering game drives for the somewhat extortionate sum of about \$100 per person (most of which is park fee!) but all of the group opted to take part. Fortunately, it was unanimously deemed well worth it as we had excellent views of Bronze-winged Courser, Three-banded Courser and Slender-tailed Nightjar as well as Northern Lesser Galago, African Savanna Hare, East African Spring Hare and Common Genet.



'Black-faced' Bare-faced Go-away-bird (left) and Bronze-winged Courser (right) in Tarangire National Park. (Nik Borrow)

The following morning a noisy Hildebrandt's Francolin showed well by the lodge before it was time to continue our journey which took us out of Tarangire and towards Lake Manyara National Park. The road conditions were such that we were able to drive right through the park but we stopped first at some extensive rice fields where Golden-backed Weaver and Village Indigobird were prominent and fantastic breeding plumaged Fan-tailed Widowbirds and Southern Red and Yellow-crowned Bishops were busy in the rice fields all fluffed up and buzzing around in great excitement whilst angry rice growers yelled at them trying to keep the numerous birds out of the crops. Also, at the rice fields we were pleased to see two Rufous-bellied Heron and a selection of wetland birds such as Fulvous Whistling Duck, Long-toed Lapwing, Yellow-billed Stork, African Openbill, Glossy Ibis, Great Egret, Black Heron, Lesser Swamp Warbler and African Pied Wagtail whilst further on we found our first breeding plumaged Black Bishops of the colourful race *friederichseni*.

Entering by the south gate of Lake Manyara National Park, we birded the attractive acacia woodlands that cover the base of the cliffs of the wall of the Great Rift Valley and enjoyed great views of the intensely coloured Purple-crested Turaco. These forests are the haunt of 'tree-climbing' Lions although we did not manage to find them this time round. Instead, noisy Eastern Nicators sang from the thickets and although they also remained frustratingly invisible, we did see Black Cuckoo, Black-chested Snake Eagle, 'Steppe' Common Buzzard, Common Scimitarbill, Crowned Hornbill, African Pygmy Kingfisher, Red-fronted Tinkerbird, Lesser Honeyguide, White-crested Helmetshrike, White-bellied Tit, Yellow-bellied Greenbul,

White-browed Robin-Chat, Spotted Palm Thrush and Red-billed Firefinch. The D'Arnaud's Barbets types here show characters of Usambiro Barbet, which is often treated as a separate species and has somewhat different vocalisations. Although it seems that Manyara is perhaps in the intergrade zone between the two forms.

The park itself stretches for 50 kilometres along the edge of the imposing Rift Valley escarpment and the lake is usually the haunt of large numbers of flamingos and other waterbirds. However, for the past several years in common with other lakes in the East African Rift Valley water levels have been rising and this has now covered and killed much of the low-lying woodland that surrounded the lake. The famous 'hot springs' and 'hippo pools' were both underwater and it was also clear that the quality of the water wasn't favourable to birdlife for hardly any waterbirds except for a few Grey-headed Gulls and Gull-billed Terns were found along the shores. At the end of the day, we found a super perched African Goshawk and a pair of delightful Mountain Wagtails in the dark forests at the north end of the lake. We exited the park exactly at closing time and drove the short distance up the wall of the Great Rift Valley to our comfortable lodge perched on the edge of the escarpment itself which at night produced noisy Thick-tailed Greater Galagos in the garden.

We woke the following morning to fantastic views over the Rift Valley towards Lake Manyara but it was a slow birding start on a rather dull morning and only Flappet Lark, Pale White-eye, Amethyst Sunbird, Red-headed Weaver and Southern Citril were added to our lists.



*Grey-capped Warbler (left) and Brown-headed Apalis (right) were both seen as we entered Ngorongoro conservation Area. (Nik Borrow)*

After a hearty breakfast we continued onwards, ever onwards to the Ngorongoro Conservation Area entering by the Lodoare Gate. Here we enjoyed excellent views of the unusual Grey-capped Warbler and once inside the park we managed to lure a pair of excitable Brown-headed Apalis into view.

Continuing up along the winding road through montane forest we noted Long-crested Eagle and Mountain Buzzard and eventually reached a viewpoint on the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater. Here the first word on everyone's lips was a synchronised "WOW" because for all of the media familiarity that one might feel for the crater, actually seeing it for the first time is simply awe inspiring! Stretching out down below us was the vast caldera itself, over 16 kilometres across, and even at that great distance we could make out Black (or Browse) Rhinoceros, elephants, buffalos and numerous Serengeti White-bearded Wildebeest wandering across the grasslands! We were lucky that our stop coincided with visiting Mountain Greenbuls and a Grey-headed Nigrita.

We ate our picnic lunch in the company of some attentive Marabou Storks that were waiting for an opportune moment to grab an unguarded picnic and the site also gave us our first Hunter's Cisticolas. Afterwards we went on to explore the open grasslands that surround the crater and although they seemed to be a little overgrazed these days, we soon found striking Red-collared Widowbirds and the desirable Jackson's Widowbird in breeding plumage which we watched performing their bizarre bouncing display rituals. Driving further we were on the lookout for stands of flowering *Leonotis* (or 'Lion's Paw') normally favoured by

sunbirds however perhaps due to the lack of rain most of the clumps were not yet in flower but we did manage to find the lovely Malachite Sunbird holding territories and eventually one isolated stand of flowers that held the much-wanted Golden-winged Sunbird. We also hunted out a pair of Brown Parisoma in their favoured flat-top Acacia trees as well as African Stonechat, Anteater Chat and Western Yellow Wagtail.



*A male Jackson's Widowbird in full breeding regalia leaps out of the grasses in display. (Nik Borrow)*

Our two nights stay was at the Serena lodge perched upon the very rim of the crater with rooms that had a view to die for! With a little daylight left to our day a search in the garden produced colourful Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Bar-throated Apalis, Eastern Double-collared Sunbird, Yellow-bellied Waxbill, Thick-billed and Streaky Seedeaters and Yellow-crowned Canary whilst at dusk a Montane Nightjar put in an appearance.

The next morning, we were up early as the rising sun began to illuminate the expansive vista over the crater and wasting little time, we headed straight for the 'Descent Road' which was actually the 'Ascent Road' which was multi-tasking whilst repair works were being done.



*The Ngorongoro Crater is 'the' place to see the endangered 'Eastern' Black Rhinoceros. (Nik Borrow)*

Embarking on the steep and narrow road down into the crater was a breath-taking experience and having reached the wide expanse of flat open grassland that spread over the floor of the crater we were even more aware of the space involved, as recognisable animals gradually diminished in size to dots that were scattered as far as the eye could see. Hearing that some Black Rhinos were relatively close to one of the tracks that criss-cross the crater floor we decided to make a bee-line straight for them and we were fortunate to get there in time to watch three animals grazing at a time of day when heat haze was not a problem.

Big birds were a feature of the day with plenty of Common Ostrich and stately Kori Bustards all puffed up in display mode, striding across the plains and there was also the smaller Black-bellied Bustard, glorious Grey Crowned Cranes and bizarre Secretarybird. Driving over the expansive grasslands where good numbers of Pectoral-patch Cisticolas made their little buzzing calls in display flight we discovered some stunning Rosy-throated Longclaws and dowdy Anteater Chats.



*Beautiful Rosy-throated Longclaws were seen in the short grass plains of the crater floor. (Nik Borrow)*

The shallow lake in the crater is called Lake Magadi which held a lot of water this year and this large expanse of open water was sprinkled with numerous Lesser Flamingos, some Greater Flamingos and a small variety of waterfowl included Blue-billed Teal, the pretty pink-billed Cape Teal as well as Red-billed Teal and Red-knobbed Coot. Other waterbirds included Pied Avocet, Kittlitz's and Chestnut-banded Plovers, Marsh Sandpiper and African Spoonbill.

Of course, our day was also about the mammals and after our successful main quest to gain better views of the rhinos we turned our attentions elsewhere. Some very large bull African Elephants were feeding around the plains but mainly kept their distance and there were large numbers of game and in particular Serengeti White-bearded Wildebeest, Serengeti Thomson's Gazelles, smaller numbers of Grant's Gazelles and Common Eland. Somewhat dishevelled African (or Cape) Buffalos were common and often infested with Yellow-billed and Red-billed Oxpeckers. There were also somewhat menacing Spotted Hyaenas and finally we saw our first Lions with a very handsome trio of males as well as some sleepy females. What was once

the humble, common 'Golden Jackal' has now been elevated to wolf status and as a result renamed African Golden Wolf of which we saw several and also a few Black-backed Jackals for comparison.



*The near-endemic Rufous-tailed Weaver (left) and the colourful Speke's Weaver (right) are impossible to miss at the picnic sites. (Nik Borrow)*

At the main picnic site we were joined for afternoon tea by the usual marauding Yellow-billed Kites and Rufous-tailed and Speke's Weavers, sneaking in for accidentally dropped scraps or even grabbing food from the hands of unsuspecting tourists unaware that being fed is strictly against the park rules! The day had passed only too quickly and it was sad to have to leave this magical place.



*Kori Bustards were busy, proudly strutting their stuff across the crater floor. (Nik Borrow)*

The next morning, we woke to fine weather so we had another look at the lodge grounds before leaving and managed to see a splendid Schalow's Turaco that croaked at us repeatedly. Our first Hooded Vultures of the trip passed overhead and there were plenty of Dusky Turtle Doves, a glittering male Tacazze Sunbird and even a secretive pair of Abyssinian Crimsonwing. It was then time to set forth towards the Serengeti but we paused along the way to look for Lynes's Cisticola which fortunately showed well and is named after the respected Rear-Admiral Hubert Lynes who was responsible for sorting out the taxonomy of this confusing

group of warblers in a supplement to *The Ibis* way back in 1930. Also on view was a male Schalow's Wheatear but fearing bad roads we pushed onwards only to find that it had been recently graded and actually presented no problem at all!

Descending from the crater rim of Ngorongoro we watched the spectacular expanse of the plains unfolding before us until we reached the edge of the national park itself on a beautiful sunny day. The promise of big cats and the migration lay ahead of us and the next and final stages of our adventure beckoned. There are perhaps over 1.5 million wildebeest in the Serengeti and almost all of them flood into the southeast corner of the ecosystem between January and April when the heavy long rains arrive but we had heard that the wildebeest had already dropped their calves and the majority had already retreated northwards into the eastern sector of the park. The earlier rains meant that the drive towards the Serengeti was pretty dry and dusty and devoid of big game and we were beginning to wonder if the wildebeest would be present en masse.



*Road to somewhere – Gateway to the Serengeti! (Nik Borrow)*

Approaching the lonely entrance to the Serengeti we found our first Greater Kestrel and Black-winged Lapwings but the short grass plains beyond were mostly empty apart from Kori Bustards and small numbers of Serengeti Thomson's and Grant's Gazelles. The name is derived from the word "Serengit" in the Maa language, which means "Endless Plains" and we certainly experienced this incredible feeling of space as we journeyed on.

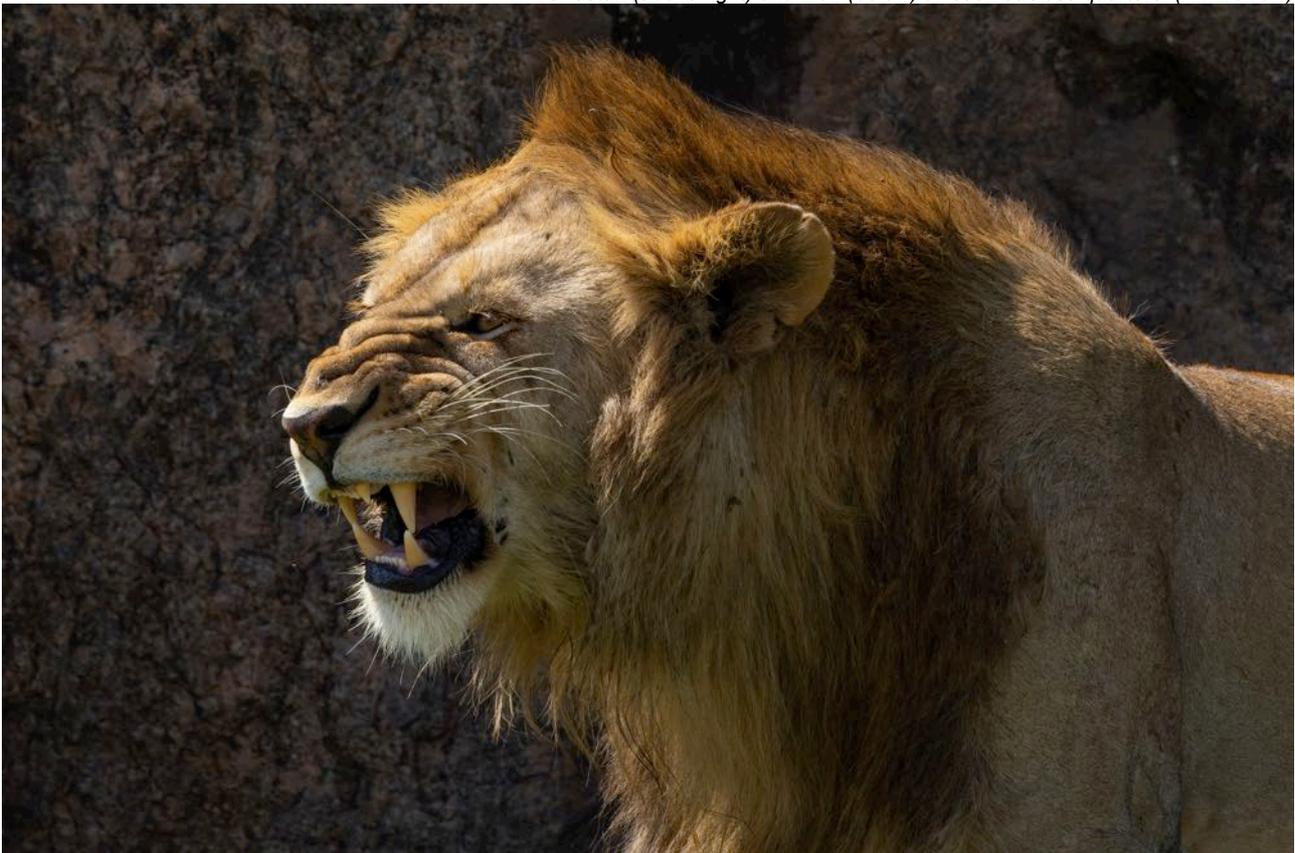
At Naabi Hills we gazed out over the plains shimmering in the haze and in the far distance a thin black line denoted the presence of faraway wildebeest. The rocks themselves were home to numerous pink-headed Mwanza Flat-headed Agamas and a few birds also sought the shelter of the rocky outcrop and we sought out Red-fronted Barbet, Red-throated Tit, Black-lored Babbler and Black-faced Waxbill.

Entering into the Serengeti we drove for a short distance along the main road before heading out towards Gol Kopjes. Some Yellow-throated Sandgrouse flushed up along the way and as we reached the first rocky outcrops a super Caracal was sighted but sadly disappeared in between the rocks and did not re-emerge. An enormous Verreaux's Eagle-Owl was above our heads at close quarters and a bit further on there was a pair of Spotted Eagle-Owl but then our attention was taken by a slinky Serval stalking past and so we manoeuvred round to spend some time watching this marvellous creature before returning to the owls and

also some Spotted Thick-knees. We continued to add to our Lion experience and also found four Cheetahs during the course of the afternoon. It was really a superb day for cats!



*Our first day in the Serengeti turned out to be a bumper afternoon for big cats with Caracal (sadly no photo!), Serval (above left), Cheetah (above right) and Lion (below) all seen at close quarters. (Nik Borrow)*



Heading across the grasslands on the black cotton soil, we were paying special attention to larks because in the past few years it had been discovered and now finally proven that not all of the White-tailed Larks are indeed that species and indeed most appear to be Melodious Lark, a species previously only known from central Zimbabwe and South Africa! There were other species along the way to distract us that included a male Hartlaub's Bustard as well as Temminck's Courser, Steppe Eagle, Dark Chanting Goshawk, Western Marsh Harrier, Lesser Grey Shrike, Grey-backed Fiscal, Cape Crow, Croaking Cisticola and Plain-backed

Pipit here of the interesting *goodsoni* race. Eventually at an apparently suitable area of habitat we heard some larks singing which sounded clearly like Melodious and we managed to see several birds, song flying above us. Sadly, time was pressing and we were still far from the lodge so we had to move more directly flushing a Common Buttonquail along the way and driving past our first endemic Grey-breasted Spurfowl but we were to see more of those later. We arrived exactly on closing time at seven o'clock at our lovely accommodation for the start of a three nights stay in the heart of the Serengeti.

The next day we headed straight out in the fresh morning air and found a large group of Lesser Kestrels still roosting in some acacia along with a pair of Amur Falcon. We continued to an area of Whistling Thorn where we soon found numbers of Kenya Sparrow and more importantly, the highly localised Karamoja Apalis. This species is strictly linked with stands of this particular thorn tree and fortunately it did not take too long to track this scarce bird down. We then paid a visit to the Hippo pools noting numbers of near-endemic Fischer's Lovebirds, Rüppell's Starlings and Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu en route. At the pools there were plenty of Hippopotamuses wallowing in the waters but due to the receding water levels it was a somewhat fetid experience so we resumed the game drive.



*Karamoja Apalis is a highly localised East African endemic restricted to Whistling Thorn (left). Hippo watching can sometimes be a rather smelly experience! (right). (Nik Borrow)*

It had now become a quest to find one of the very special birds of the Serengeti, the localised Grey-crested Helmetshrike and the drive took us through some grasslands where we flushed Harlequin Quail, saw Yellow-throated Longclaw and also a number of *Mirafra* larks that included more Melodious Larks (including a perched bird) and from which we also managed to sort out several White-tailed Larks both by sight and sound. An added bonus was spotting a sleepy Leopard in a tree, its tail and legs dangling down in classic pose and best of all was that we had it all to ourselves!

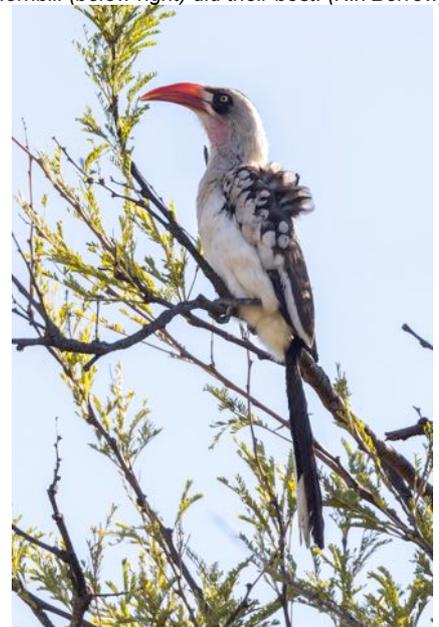
As we neared the helmetshrike area we came across an amazing sight as we became aware of a mighty movement of zebra and wildebeest that was winding out of the valley ahead and gradually moving all around us. Jaws dropped at the sight and sound of thirsty animals coming down to drink as they moved on their migration and spent some time watching and listening to the excited hee-hawings of the zebras and the "me-you" grunts of the wildebeest.

Eventually, after this most worthwhile delay to our quest we reached the location where we hoped to find the helmetshrike and sure enough, after a short search there they were; a large family party of these striking birds firstly at some distance away but then sat on the trees all around us. This scarce species is restricted to a small area stretching from northern Tanzania up into southern Kenya where it is particularly localised and

also appears to hybridise there with White Helmetshrike thus perhaps making the future of this characterful bird doubtful. Also, in this area Meyer's Parrot was seen and we finally tracked down some endemic Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbills.



*It was a hard act to follow after the exciting sight of the migration in full swing (above) but the rare Grey-crested Helmetshrike (below left) and the endemic Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbill (below right) did their best. (Nik Borrow)*



There had been much to delay us with some incredible sightings and it was a long drive back to our lodge with little of note seen on the return except some Black Coucals in breeding plumage.

A new day and we'd heard that there was a significant movement of wildebeest and zebra out to the east and so with all of the main targets 'in the bag' we headed out to see what we could find. Initially we spent some time with a fascinating group of elephants that were munching their way through some acacia trunks and then decided to head out via the Maasai Kopjes to see if we could find any migration activity. Occasional long lines of wildebeest were encountered and these would either turn to eye us quizzically or else suddenly break into a run for no apparent reason. The small number of Lions that we saw today were obviously well fed and predictably sleepy having no need to try hard at hunting when the food supply was so numerous. Star of the day had to be our second Leopard which had chosen to haul a young wildebeest carcass up into the canopy of an acacia and was at one point just above our heads for the track ran under the tree it was lounging in. This lovely cat paid us little heed even when we realised that blood from the kill was dripping down on us! Terry was attempting to wipe a spot of blood from his hat when the wind caught it and snatched it from his hand so that it had to be rescued by a neighbouring vehicle! We then watched with bated breath as we saw a lost wildebeest calf crying for its mother and making a bee-line for our vehicles and therefore right below the Leopard which until this moment had been in blissful ignorance of all the kerfuffle below it. The lost youngster though was much more interesting than tourists and lost hats and in tense anticipation the cat rose quietly but swiftly to its feet and stood as if poised for the kill as the wildebeest ran right beneath it. Presumably the stash of food it already had was enough to save the life of the calf for the leopard merely watched the youngster run by, blissfully ignorant of the impending doom above it and once it had passed the Leopard once again settled down to drape itself over the bough and return to its slumbers.



*Leopard number two was so close that the stashed wildebeest corpse dripped blood onto our car! (Nik Borrow)*

Trying to find new birds for the tour today wasn't easy but we did add Great Spotted Cuckoo, Klaas's Cuckoo, Common Moorhen, White-headed Barbet, Common Kestrel, Mosque Swallow, Tree Pipit and a breeding plumaged male Black-winged Red Bishop before the day was out.

The journey from the Serengeti to Ndutu where we were to spend our remaining three nights took us back across the Serengeti spotting African Green Pigeon and Red-breasted Swallow along the way. We passed

numbers of wildebeest and zebra seemingly at rest amongst a bushier area and later we stopped to climb one of the Moru Kopjes and 'play' the bizarre 'Gong Rock' before reaching Naabi Hills where we left the Serengeti and re-entered the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Here we found an African Hawk Eagle before arriving at the lovely Ndutu Lodge in good time to settle in, explore the grounds and enjoy a sundowner. Ndutu itself is a delightful spot and we all came to love this simple lodge in the middle of nowhere, complete with its lithe and beautiful Common Genet that arrived silently along the roof beams of the lodge each evening to rendezvous with their nightly snacks!



*The Common Genets at Ndutu Safari Lodge are their signature trademark and a nocturnal visitation is to be expected! (Nik Borrow)*

As in the Serengeti, we had two full days to explore the Ndutu area and here we could partake in some exciting off-road driving excursions during our stay in search of cats and more for here one isn't limited to simply driving along the tracks but can also take off into the wide blue yonder creating a great sense of adventure. Our explorations took us out over the endless plains, through acacia woodlands and around the two lakes Ndutu and Masek that lie on the border of the Serengeti and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.

There were plenty of Lions in the Ndutu area and sightings of the testosterone fuelled males were noteworthy as we not only saw a mating pair but also one casualty of a fight that had suffered a bad head wound that had to be stitched up by the local animal doctor. We also found our third Leopard of the trip which was a very nervous animal that ran to hide in the thorny canopy of an acacia.

Grey-breasted Spurfowl were much more common here than in the Serengeti and there were huge flocks of Wattled Starlings with many males in their bizarre breeding plumage. It was also a great spot to compare Chestnut-bellied and Yellow-throated Sandgrouse and we became reacquainted with Lesser and Greater Flamingos on the lakes. The lodge itself provided great photographic opportunities in the middle of the day and we watched pretty Blue-capped Cordon-bleus and Fischer's Lovebirds coming down to drink by the restaurant at lunchtime and enjoyed some great looks at the attractive Grey-headed Silverbill. At the picturesque Eden Valley we watched slovenly Spotted Hyaenas, migrating wildebeest as well as Curlew Sandpiper, Collared Pratincole and many Abdim's Storks loafing by the water's edge. Palearctic migrant

Lesser Grey Shrike and Eurasian Golden Oriole were noted and out on the plains we finally caught up with Athi Short-toed Lark and had a very close encounter with a Honey Badger (or Ratel).



*Mating Lions on the Ndotu plains. (Nik Borrow)*

By our second day in the Ndotu area new birds were exceedingly difficult to find but we did add Rufous Chatterer to the list. The wildebeest that had been present had disappeared to the north drawn by the smell of rain and the plains were quite empty. In the late afternoon we finally caught up with a little family of delightful Bat-eared Foxes but the encounter was sharply curtailed by a sudden rainstorm and we felt that surely the game would be back the following day and with the promise of more rain to come sure enough the lines of game could be seen weaving their way across the plains as we drove out the following morning.



*Both Grey-headed Silverbill (left) and the near-endemic Fischer's Lovebird (right) could both be seen coming down to drink at Ndotu. (Nik Borrow)*

It was time to begin the long journey home and as we left Ndutu many of the animals that had become familiar to us were by the roadside to bid us farewell along with a nice little group of Amur Falcons. However, we had one more stop to squeeze in and that was the famous Oldupai Gorge (named after the wild sisal that grows there), site of many important hominid discoveries by the Leakey family. At this historic place most of the group explored the interesting little museum now in a grand new building while birders were satisfied with views of the hulking Southern Grosbeak Canary as well as Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird and Purple Roller, and Bearded Woodpecker both nearby.

On the return journey we also decided to call in at our lodge on the crater rim to try to find the near-endemic Mbulu White-eye which we had previously missed. Fortunately, we were successful and we also saw a displaying Crowned Eagle and a Brown-backed Woodpecker as bonuses!



*Southern Grosbeak-Canary (left) was seen at Oldupai Gorge and Cinnamon-chested Bee-eaters (right) posed for us during a short stop on the Ngorongoro crater rim. (Nik Borrow)*

The journey back to Arusha now began and there was nothing else to do but baton down the hatches and head back carrying home with us a myriad of marvellous experiences both on numerous memory cards but better still in our own internal memories!

We overnighted back at Lake Duluti and in the morning had time to visit the crater lake there. It had rained heavily overnight and generally everywhere was wet and subdued. Nonetheless we gave it our best shot and found Striated Heron, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Giant Kingfisher, Little Greenbul, Grey-olive Greenbul, Southern Black Flycatcher, Thick-billed Weaver, Village Weaver, Red-throated Twinspot and a surprise Green-backed Honeybird in the hotel garden before we had to return to the airport.

There are over 1.5 million wildebeest and 200,000 zebras in the Serengeti and almost all of them flood into the southeast corner of the ecosystem between January and April when the heavy long rains arrive and their calves and foals are born and numbers swell considerably and it felt that we must have seen a fair number of them! It had been a stunning fortnight packed full of amazing wildlife encounters and the amount of time spent at each location had actually helped us feel a part of the Ngorongoro and Serengeti rather than just visitors. Our talented driver/guide had manoeuvred the car over all manner of difficult terrain and without his driving skills we might never have had the marvellous views of the wildlife that we had enjoyed on this tour. The Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater is home to one of the greatest wildlife scenarios on this planet and we were privileged to have witnessed it for ourselves.



*Grey-breasted Spurfowl is endemic to Tanzania and easily seen on the Serengeti and particularly at Ndutu. (Nik Borrow)*

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). IOC World Bird Names. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

### BIRDS

**Total of bird species recorded: 427**

**Common Ostrich** *Struthio camelus* Still common and easy to see in the parks.

**White-faced Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna viduata* c. 20 in Tarangire NP.

**Fulvous Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna bicolor* c. 8 at Manyara rice fields.

**Spur-winged Goose** *Plectropterus gambensis* Small numbers in Arusha, Tarangire and Ngorongoro.

**Knob-billed Duck** *Sarkidiornis melanotos* Just 2 in Tarangire NP.

**Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiaca* Commonly encountered.

**Blue-billed Teal** *Anas hottentota* 5+ in the crater.

**Cape Teal (C Wigeon)** *Anas capensis* Most numerous in the crater.

**Red-billed Teal (R-b Duck)** *Anas erythrorhyncha* Most numerous in the crater.

**Southern Pochard** *Netta erythrophthalma* 20+ in Arusha NP.

**Helmeted Guineafowl** *Numida meleagris* Widespread and commonly encountered in the parks.

**Crested Francolin** *Dendroperdix sephaena* Most numerous in Tarangire NP.

**Coqui Francolin** *Peliperdix coqui* Seen well Tarangire, in the Serengeti and around Ndutu.

**Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix* (H) Heard on the crater rim in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.

**Harlequin Quail** *Coturnix delegorguei* Small numbers flushed in the Serengeti and Ndutu area.



*A pair of Hildebrandt's Spurfowl in the Ngorongoro Crater. (Nik Borrow)*

- Hildebrandt's Spurfowl** *Pternistis hildebrandti* Seen well in Tarangire NP and Ngorongoro.
- Scaly Spurfowl** *Pternistis squamatus* 2 seen well in Arusha NP.
- Yellow-necked Spurfowl** *Pternistis leucoscepus* Easily seen in Tarangire NP
- Grey-breasted Spurfowl** *Pternistis rufopictus* A Tanzanian endemic easily seen in the Serengeti and around Ndutu.
- Red-necked Spurfowl** *Pternistis afer* Easily seen in Tarangire NP.
- Montane Nightjar** *Caprimulgus poliocephalus* 1 seen at dusk on the crater rim.
- Slender-tailed Nightjar** *Caprimulgus clarus* Great views in Tarangire and another at Ndutu.
- African Palm Swift** *Cypsiurus parvus* Commonly encountered in areas with palms.
- Nyanza Swift** *Apus niansae* Small numbers in Arusha NP and Ngorongoro.
- Little Swift** *Apus affinis* Commonly seen throughout the tour.
- Horus Swift** *Apus horus* A pair was seen in Tarangire NP.
- White-rumped Swift** *Apus caffer* Widespread sightings in small numbers throughout the tour.
- Bare-faced Go-away-bird (Black-f G-a-b)** *Corythaixoides [personatus] leopoldi* Seen in Tarangire and Serengeti.
- White-bellied Go-away-bird** *Corythaixoides leucogaster* Small numbers from Engikaret to Tarangire NP.
- Purple-crested Turaco (Violet-crested T)** *Tauraco porphyreolophus* Wonderful looks in Lake Manyara NP.
- Schalow's Turaco** *Tauraco schalowi* Excellent, prolonged views at the crater rim.
- Hartlaub's Turaco** *Tauraco hartlaubii* Easily seen in Arusha NP.
- Kori Bustard** *Ardeotis kori* The widespread sightings were often close up and personal!
- White-bellied Bustard** *Eupodotis senegalensis* Regularly encountered in Tarangire NP and the Serengeti.
- Black-bellied Bustard** *Lissotis melanogaster* Sightings of small numbers in the crater and the Serengeti.
- Hartlaub's Bustard** *Lissotis hartlaubii* A male was seen well in the Serengeti.
- White-browed Coucal** *Centropus superciliosus* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.
- Black Coucal** *Centropus grillii* At least 6 in the Serengeti.
- Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius* 3 sightings in the Serengeti.
- Jacobin Cuckoo (Black-and-white C)** *Clamator jacobinus* Singletons in Arusha, Ngorongoro and the Serengeti.
- Diederik Cuckoo (Didric C)** *Chrysococcyx caprius* Widespread sightings.
- Klaas's Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx klaas* 1 male seen in the Serengeti.
- African Emerald Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx cupreus* (H) Heard in Arusha NP.
- Black Cuckoo** *Cuculus clamosus* 1 in Manyara NP.
- Red-chested Cuckoo** *Cuculus solitarius* Seen well in Tarangire NP but more often heard only.

**African Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis*** At least 1 in Tarangire NP and Ndutu.

**Common Cuckoo (Eurasian C) *Cuculus canorus*** This Palearctic migrant was apparently on migration.



A pair of Yellow-throated Sandgrouse pose in the Serengeti (above), male Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse at Ndutu (below left) and male Black-faced Sandgrouse in Tarangire NP (below right) (Nik Borrow)



**Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus*** Seen on the plains at Engikaret and again in the Serengeti.

**Yellow-throated Sandgrouse *Pterocles gutturalis*** Seen well in the Serengeti and around Ndutu.

**Black-faced Sandgrouse *Pterocles decorates*** Best views were in Tarangire NP.

**Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia*** Domestic birds only.

**Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea*** Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

**African Olive Pigeon (Rameron P) *Columba arquatrix* (H)** Heard only in Arusha NP.

**Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon *Columba delegorguei* (H)** Heard only in Arusha NP.

**Dusky Turtle Dove *Streptopelia lugens*** Easily seen in the crater area.

**Mourning Collared Dove (African M D) *Streptopelia decipiens*** Seen at Engikaret, Tarangire and the Serengeti.

**Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*** Arusha and Ngorongoro areas only.

**Ring-necked Dove *Streptopelia capicola*** An abundant dove throughout the lower country.

**Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis*** Most numerous in the Serengeti.

**Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos*** Small numbers in lower country.

**Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistria*** Small numbers seen in Arusha NP and heard at Duluti.

**Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*** Scattered sightings of this pretty dove in small numbers.

**African Green Pigeon *Treron calvus*** Singletons in the Serengeti and at Duluti.

**African Rail (A Water R) *Rallus caerulescens* (H)** Heard calling at Manyara rice fields.

**Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*** 1 in the Serengeti.

**Red-knobbed Coot (Crested C) *Fulica cristata*** At least 100 in the crater.

**Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostra*** Just 3 sightings.

**Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum*** Small numbers from Arusha NP to the crater.

**Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*** Most numerous in Arusha NP.



We had a number of wonderful encounters with Greater Flamingo (left) and Lesser Flamingo (right) (Nik Borrow)

**Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*** Seen well in Arusha NP, the crater and Nduu.

**Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor*** Flocks in Arusha NP, the crater and Nduu.

**Common Buttonquail *Turnix sylvaticus*** 1 seen by some as it flushed from the vehicle in the Serengeti.

**Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis*** Small numbers seen well in the Serengeti and Nduu.

**Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*** Commonly seen in suitable habitat.

**Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*** 20+ in the crater and a couple in the Serengeti.

**Long-toed Lapwing (L-t Plover) *Vanellus crassirostris*** 4 seen at the Manyara rice fields.  
**Blacksmith Lapwing (B Plover) *Vanellus armatus*** A common and most striking lapwing throughout the tour.  
**Black-winged Lapwing *Vanellus melanopterus*** Good numbers in the Serengeti.  
**Crowned Lapwing (C Plover) *Vanellus coronatus*** A common lapwing in the parks.  
**Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*** Palearctic migrants seen in Arusha NP, the crater and Nduu.  
**Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius*** Seen well in the crater, Serengeti and Nduu.  
**Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris*** Seen well in Tarangire NP, Serengeti and Nduu.  
**Chestnut-banded Plover *Charadrius pallidus*** 3 in the crater and a pair at Nduu.



*Kittlitz's Plover (left) and the lovely Chestnut-banded Plover (right) (Nik Borrow)*

**Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*** A male in Tarangire NP.  
**African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*** Small numbers in Tarangire NP.  
**Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*** Good numbers of Palearctic migrants in suitable habitat throughout the tour.  
**Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*** 2 of these Palearctic migrants at Nduu.  
**Little Stint *Calidris minuta*** A common Palearctic migrant in suitable habitat throughout the tour.  
**Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*** Widespread sightings of these Palearctic migrants.  
**Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*** Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants in the crater, Serengeti and Nduu.  
**Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*** Widespread sightings of Palearctic migrants in suitable habitat throughout the tour.  
**Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*** Small numbers of Palearctic migrants throughout the tour.  
**Temminck's Courser *Cursorius temminckii*** Just 1 in the Serengeti.  
**Double-banded Courser *Rhinoptilus africanus*** Wonderful views of this delicate courser in Tarangire and Serengeti.  
**Three-banded Courser *Rhinoptilus cinctus*** A pair seen well during the Tarangire night drive.  
**Bronze-winged Courser (Violet-tipped C) *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus*** A pair during the night drive in Tarangire NP.  
**Collared Pratincole *Glaresola pratincola*** 40+ in Eden Valley.  
**Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus*** A few on Lake Manyara and in the crater.  
**Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*** Seen on Lake Manyara, the crater, Serengeti and Nduu.  
**Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*** Some in breeding plumage at Silale Swamp and 1 in the crater.  
**Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*** 1 at Manyara rice fields and small numbers in the crater.  
**African Openbill (O-billed Stork) *Anastomus lamelligerus*** About 6 at Manyara rice fields.  
**Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii*** This intra-African migrant was seen near Arusha and in Eden Valley.  
**White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*** 5 of these Palearctic migrants were noted in Tarangire NP.  
**Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*** Pairs seen in Arusha and Tarangire NPs.  
**Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumenifer*** Small numbers from Arusha NP to the Serengeti.  
**African Darter *Anhinga rufa* (NL)** Terry saw 1 briefly in Arusha NP.  
**Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C) *Microcarbo africanus*** Scattered sightings in suitable habitat.

**White-breasted Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax lucidus* Small numbers at Duluti.  
**African Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus* Most common in the crater.  
**Hadada Ibis** *Bostrychia hagedash* Noisy birds at Lake Duluti.  
**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* Many at Manyara rice fields and also seen in the crater.  
**African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba* 4 seen in the crater.  
**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* Seen in Tarangire NP, Nduu and Lake Duluti.  
**Striated Heron (Green-backed H)** *Butorides striata* 3 seen at Lake Duluti.  
**Rufous-bellied Heron** *Ardeola rufiventris* 2 seen at Manyara rice fields.  
**Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.  
**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* Widespread sightings but only small numbers.  
**Black-headed Heron** *Ardea melanocephala* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.  
**Great Egret** *Ardea alba* Seen on Manyara rice fields, the crater and Lake Duluti.  
**Intermediate Egret (Yellow-billed E)** *Ardea [intermedia] brachyrhyncha* 1 in Arusha NP.  
**Black Heron (Black E)** *Egretta ardesiaca* 2 on Manyara rice fields.  
**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* Scattered sightings from Tarangire, Manyara rice fields, the crater and Lake Duluti.  
**Hamerkop** *Scopus umbretta* Scattered sightings throughout the tour.  
**Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* Small numbers at Silale Swamp and in the crater.  
**Secretarybird** *Sagittarius serpentarius* A pair in Tarangire with more in the Serengeti and at Nduu.



We watched a pair of Secretarybirds bonding and nest building at Nduu. (Nik Borrow)

**Black-winged Kite (B-shouldered K)** *Elanus caeruleus* Scattered sightings from Tarangire to the Serengeti.  
**African Harrier-Hawk (Gymnogene)** *Polyboroides typus* Singletons in Arusha and Tarangire NPs.  
**Palm-nut Vulture (Vulturine Fish Eagle)** *Gypohierax angolensis* 1 in Arusha NP.  
**Hooded Vulture** *Necrosyrtes monachus* 2 over Ngorongoro and 8 in the Serengeti.  
**White-backed Vulture** *Gyps africanus* The most numerous of the vultures from Tarangire to Nduu.  
**Rüppell's Vulture (R's Griffon V)** *Gyps rueppelli* The most widespread of the vultures encountered.  
**White-headed Vulture** *Trigonoceps occipitalis* Singletons in the Serengeti and Nduu.  
**Lappet-faced Vulture** *Torgos tracheliotos* Seen well from Tarangire to Nduu  
**Black-chested Snake Eagle** *Circaetus pectoralis* Small numbers from Manyara NP to Nduu.  
**Brown Snake Eagle** *Circaetus cinereus* 1 at Engikaret and 4 in the Serengeti/Nduu.  
**Bateleur** *Terathopius ecaudatus* Regularly encountered in the parks.  
**Crowned Eagle (African C E)** *Stephanoaetus coronatus* Excellent views of a displaying male from the crater rim.

**Martial Eagle** *Polemaetus bellicosus* An adult and juvenile in Tarangire NP and 3 in the Serengeti/Ndutu.  
**Long-crested Eagle** *Lophaetus occipitalis* 4 sightings from Ngorongoro to Ndutu.  
**Tawny Eagle** *Aquila rapax* The most commonly encountered eagle.  
**Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis* 2 sightings of this Palearctic migrant in the Serengeti.  
**African Hawk-Eagle** *Aquila spilogaster* 1 sighting at Ndutu.  
**Gabar Goshawk** *Micronisus gabar* Just 1 sighting in Tarangire NP.  
**Dark Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax metabates* Small numbers seen regularly in the Serengeti and at Ndutu.  
**Eastern Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax poliopterus* 2 sightings in Tarangire NP.  
**African Goshawk** *Accipiter tachiro* 1 seen well in Manyara NP.  
**Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* 1 of these Palearctic migrants was seen in the Serengeti.  
**Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus* Palearctic migrants; 2 at Engikaret and 1 in the Serengeti.  
**Yellow-billed Kite** *Milvus aegyptius* Small numbers encountered but a species to be wary of in Ngorongoro!  
**African Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus vocifer* Small numbers noted from Arusha NP to the crater.  
**Common Buzzard (Steppe Buzzard)** *Buteo [buteo] vulpinus* A pair of these Palearctic migrants over Manyara NP.  
**Mountain Buzzard** *Buteo oreophilus* A pair seen over the crater rim.  
**Augur Buzzard** *Buteo augur* Commonly seen throughout the tour.  
**Pearl-spotted Owlet** *Glaucidium perlatum* 4 of these diurnal owls seen and more heard.  
**African Scops Owl** *Otus senegalensis* 2 at a daytime roost at Tarangire.



Spotted Eagle-Owl (left) and Verreaux's Eagle-Owl (right) were both seen well at daytime roosts. (Nik Borrow)

**Spotted Eagle-Owl** *Bubo africanus* A pair at a daytime roost in the Serengeti.  
**Verreaux's Eagle-Owl** *Bubo lacteus* 5 excellent sightings in Tarangire NP and the Serengeti.  
**Speckled Mousebird** *Colius striatus* This characterful bird was commonly seen throughout the tour.  
**Blue-naped Mousebird** *Urocolius macrourus* Small numbers seen at Engikaret and in the Serengeti.  
**Narina Trogon** *Apaloderma narina* (H) Heard only in Arusha NP.

**African Hoopoe** *Upupa africana* Small numbers seen at scattered locations throughout the tour.  
**Green Wood Hoopoe** *Phoeniculus purpureus* Groups seen in Tarangire NP and in the Serengeti.  
**Common Scimitarbill** *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas* 2 seen in Manyara NP.  
**Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbill (Ruaha R-b H)** *Tockus ruahae* Just 1 pair seen in the Serengeti.  
**Northern Red-billed Hornbill** *Tockus erythrorhynchus* Common in Tarangire NP.  
**Von der Decken's Hornbill** *Tockus deckeni* Easily seen in savannah throughout the tour.  
**Crowned Hornbill** *Lophoceros alboterminatus* Seen in Manyara NP and at Lake Duluti.  
**African Grey Hornbill** *Lophoceros nasutus* Widespread sightings in small numbers mostly in the Serengeti/Ndutu.  
**Silvery-cheeked Hornbill** *Bycanistes brevis* This impressive hornbill was seen well in Arusha NP.  
**Purple Roller (Rufous-crowned R)** *Coracias naevius* Just 1 seen near Oldupai Gorge.  
**Lilac-breasted Roller** *Coracias caudatus* This gorgeous bird was commonly seen throughout the tour.



The gorgeous Lilac-breasted Roller (left) and the unassuming Striped Kingfisher (right). (Nik Borrow)

**European Roller (Eurasian R)** *Coracias garrulus* Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants were on the move.  
**Grey-headed Kingfisher** *Halcyon leucocephala* Small numbers seen in Tarangire and Manyara NPs.  
**Brown-hooded Kingfisher** *Halcyon albiventris* A pair seen at Lake Duluti.  
**Striped Kingfisher** *Halcyon chelicuti* Several sightings from Tarangire to the Serengeti.  
**Woodland Kingfisher** *Halcyon senegalensis* Small numbers in Tarangire and the Ndutu area.  
**African Pygmy Kingfisher** *Ispidina picta* 2 seen in Manyara NP.  
**Malachite Kingfisher** *Corythornis cristatus* Small numbers in Tarangire and Manyara NPs and Lake Duluti.  
**Giant Kingfisher** *Megaceryle maxima* Excellent views of a pair at Lake Duluti.  
**Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* A few at Tarangire and Manyara NPs and Lake Duluti.  
**Little Bee-eater** *Merops pusillus* Widespread sightings.  
**Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater** *Merops oreobates* A few were seen in the Ngorongoro forests.  
**White-fronted Bee-eater** *Merops bullockoides* Good numbers seen in and around Arusha NP.  
**Blue-cheeked Bee-eater** *Merops persicus* Good numbers seen in Tarangire NP.  
**European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster* Palearctic migrants at Arusha and Tarangire NPs.  
**White-eared Barbet** *Stactolaema leucotis* Small numbers seen in Arusha NP and at Lake Duluti.  
**Moustached Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus leucomystax* (H) Heard in Arusha NP and the Ngorongoro forests.  
**Red-fronted Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus pusillus* Seen at Manyara.  
**Red-fronted Barbet** *Tricholaema diademata* 2 seen at Naabi Hills.  
**Spot-flanked Barbet (Spotted-flanked B)** *Tricholaema lacrymosa* Small numbers in Arusha and Manyara NPs.  
**White-headed Barbet** *Lybius leucocephalus* 1 of the race *albicauda* seen in the Serengeti.  
**Red-and-yellow Barbet** *Trachyphonus erythrocephalus* Seen well in Tarangire NP.  
**D'Arnaud's Barbet** *Trachyphonus [darnaudii] emini* (Emin's/Black-capped B) 3 seen in Tarangire NP.

**Usambiro Barbet** *Trachyphonus usambiro* Easily seen from Manyara to the Serengeti.

**Green-backed Honeybird** *Prodotiscus zambesiae* 1 seen well at Lake Duluti.

**Lesser Honeyguide** *Indicator minor* 1 seen well in Lake Manyara NP.

**Greater Honeyguide (Black-throated H)** *Indicator indicator* A juvenile seen in Manyara NP and heard elsewhere.



Nubian Woodpecker (left) and Eastern Grey Woodpecker (right) are both usually easily seen on this tour. (Nik Borrow)

**Nubian Woodpecker** *Campethera nubica* Widespread sightings from Arusha NP to the Serengeti.

**Bearded Woodpecker** *Chloropicus namaquus* 1 sighting near Oldupai Gorge.

**Cardinal Woodpecker** *Dendropicos fuscescens* Small numbers at Arusha and Tarangire NPs.

**Eastern Grey Woodpecker** *Dendropicos spodocephalus* Good looks in Tarangire and the Serengeti.

**Brown-backed Woodpecker** *Dendropicos obsoleteus* 1 seen well on the crater rim.

**Pygmy Falcon** *Polihierax semitorquatus* Small numbers from Tarangire to Ndutu.

**Lesser Kestrel** *Falco neumannii* Flocks of this Palearctic migrant at Engikaret and in the Serengeti.

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* A few Palearctic migrants in the Serengeti and 1 *rufescens* at Oldupai Gorge.

**Greater Kestrel (White-eyed K)** *Falco rupicoloides* A number of sightings in the Serengeti and Ndutu.

**Grey Kestrel** *Falco ardosiaceus* 2 in Tarangire NP and 3 in the Serengeti.

**Amur Falcon (Eastern Red-footed F)** *Falco amurensis* Small numbers in the Serengeti and on the Ndutu plains.

**Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* A Palearctic migrant seen at Lake Duluti and in Ngorongoro.

**Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus* Singletons at Engikaret and in the Serengeti.

**Meyer's Parrot (Brown P)** *Poicephalus meyeri* Small numbers in the Serengeti.

**Red-bellied Parrot (African Orange-b P)** *Poicephalus rufiventris* Seen well in Tarangire NP.

**Fischer's Lovebird** *Agapornis fischeri* No problems seeing this near-endemic in the Serengeti and at Ndutu.

**Yellow-collared Lovebird** *Agapornis personatus* No problems seeing this endemic in Tarangire NP.

**Chinspot Batis** *Batis molitor* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

**Black-throated Wattle-eye** *Platysteira peltata* (H) Heard only at Lake Duluti.

**Grey-headed Bushshrike** *Malaconotus blanchoti* (H) Heard only in Manyara NP.

**Black-fronted Bushshrike** *Chlorophoneus nigrifrons* 2 seen in Arusha NP.

**Orange-breasted Bushshrike (Sulphur-b B)** *Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus* Seen in Arusha and Manyara NPs.

**Rosy-patched Bushshrike** *Telophorus cruentus* (H, LO) Nik heard 1 at Engikaret.

**Brown-crowned Tchagra** *Tchagra australis* Common but heard more often than seen throughout the tour.

**Black-backed Puffback** *Dryoscopus cubla* Seen in Arusha and Manyara NPs the crater and Lake Duluti.

**Slate-coloured Boubou** *Laniarius funebris* Easy to see throughout the tour.

**Tropical Boubou** *Laniarius major* Seen well at Duluti, Arusha NP and in the Ngorongoro area.

**Brubru** *Nilaus afer* Seen well at Engikaret and often heard during the tour.

**White-crested Helmetshrike** *Prionops plumatus* A flock seen in Manyara NP.

**Grey-crested Helmetshrike** *Prionops polioloophus* A flock was found in the Serengeti, one of the avian highlights!

**Black Cuckooshrike** *Campephaga flava* A pair seen in Arusha NP.

**Magpie Shrike** *Urolestes melanoleucus* Common and easily seen in Tarangire and the Serengeti.

**Northern White-crowned Shrike** *Eurocephalus rueppelli* Common and easily seen throughout the tour.

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio* Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants scattered throughout the tour.

**Red-tailed Shrike** *Lanius phoenicuroides* Singletons of these Palearctic migrants at Engikaret and in the Serengeti.

**Lesser Grey Shrike** *Lanius minor* Palearctic migrants seen in the Serengeti passing up from the south.



*Resident Magpie Shrike (left) and Palearctic migrant Lesser Grey Shrike (right). (Nik Borrow)*

**Grey-backed Fiscal** *Lanius excubitoroides* Commonly encountered in the Serengeti.

**Long-tailed Fiscal** *Lanius cabanisi* Small numbers seen from Arusha to Tarangire NP.

**Taita Fiscal** *Lanius dorsalis* Easily seen at Engikaret and in the Serengeti.

**Northern Fiscal** *Lanius humeralis* Widespread and often seen on journeys from Arusha to Ngorongoro.

**Black-headed Oriole (Eastern B-h O)** *Oriolus larvatus* (H) Heard from Arusha to Tarangire NPs.

**Eurasian Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus* 1 of these Palearctic migrants at Eden Valley.

**Fork-tailed Drongo (Common D)** *Dicrurus adsimilis* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

**African Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone viridis* Seen well in Arusha NP and at Lake Duluti.

**Cape Crow (C Rook, Black C)** *Corvus capensis* Small numbers in the Serengeti.

**Pied Crow** *Corvus albus* Common but absent from Ngorongoro and the Serengeti.

**White-necked Raven (W-naped R)** *Corvus albicollis* Just 2 seen at Engikaret.

**White-bellied Tit** *Melaniparus albiventris* 4 seen in Manyara NP.

**Red-throated Tit** *Melaniparus fringillinus* These localised birds were seen well at Naabi Hills and in the Serengeti.

**Eastern Nicator** *Nicator gularis* (H) Heard only at Manyara.

**Beesley's Lark** *Chersomanes beesleyi* A minimum of 5 birds at Engikaret. BirdLife does not yet recognise the split.

**Fischer's Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix leucopareia* One of the most abundant birds seen during the tour.



The Red-throated Tit (left) is endemic to acacia woodland in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania. It has only recently been ascertained that Melodious Lark (right) exists in the Serengeti. (Nik Borrow)

**Foxy Lark *Calendulauda alopex*** Small numbers seen at Engikaret, Tarangire NP and in the Serengeti.

**Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafra africana*** Commonly seen and always heard on the various plains.

**Flappet Lark *Mirafra rufocinnamomea*** Displaying birds at Manyara and in the Serengeti.

**Melodious Lark *Mirafra cheniana*** Seemingly more common in the Serengeti than the following species.

**White-tailed Lark *Mirafra albicauda*** At least 2 birds identified singing and displaying in the Serengeti.

**Short-tailed Lark *Spizocorys fremantlii*** At least 6 were seen on the plains at Engikaret and 2 in the Serengeti.

**Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea*** A common lark and particularly abundant in the Serengeti.

**Athi Short-toed Lark *Alaudala athensis*** Small numbers on the plains at Ndotu.

**Yellow-bellied Greenbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris*** Not uncommon at Manyara.



Fischer's Sparrow-Lark (left) was one of the most abundant birds seen during the tour. We had to work a little harder to find the Short-tailed Lark (right) on the plains at Engikaret. (Nik Borrow)

**Mountain Greenbul (Black-headed M G) *Arizelocichla nigriceps*** A pair seen well on the crater rim.  
**Stripe-faced Greenbul *Arizelocichla striifacies*** Small numbers seen well in Arusha NP.  
**Little Greenbul *Eurillas virens*** 2 seen at Lake Duluti.  
**Grey-olive Greenbul *Phyllastrephus cerviniventris*** Good views of this localised greenbul at Duluti.  
**Cabanis's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus [cabanisi] cabanisi* (H, LO)** Heard by Nik as we descended into the crater.  
**Dark-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus tricolor*** Widespread throughout the tour.



*Mountain Greenbul (left) was seen well on the crater rim. Lesser Striped Swallows (right) were commonly encountered. (Nik Borrow)*

**Black Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne [pristoptera] holomelas*** Small numbers in Arusha NP and Ngorongoro.  
**Banded Martin *Riparia cincta*** Small numbers from Tarangire to the Serengeti.  
**Brown-throated Martin (Plain M) *Riparia paludicola*** Large numbers in Arusha NP and a few in the Serengeti.  
**Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula*** Small numbers at widespread localities.  
**Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*** Small numbers at widespread localities.  
**Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*** Large numbers of this Palearctic migrant on the move.  
**Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum*** Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants seen in Tarangire NP.  
**Red-breasted Swallow *Cecropis semirufa*** 1 seen by some in the Serengeti.  
**Mosque Swallow *Cecropis senegalensis*** 1 seen in the Serengeti.  
**Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica*** Commonly encountered during the tour.  
**Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*** Seen from Tarangire NP to Ndutu.  
**Moustached Grass Warbler *Melocichla mentalis*** 2 seen in Arusha NP.  
**Red-faced Crombec *Sylvietta whytii*** Sightings in Tarangire NP and at Naabi Hills.  
**Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*** Widespread sightings of these Palearctic migrants in small numbers.  
**Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris*** 2 seen well at Manyara rice fields.  
**Mountain Yellow Warbler *Iduna similis* (H)** Heard only on the crater rim.  
**Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida*** 1 of these Palearctic migrants was seen at Engikaret.  
**Highland Rush Warbler *Bradypterus centralis* (H)** Heard only at Manyara rice fields.  
**Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops* (H)** Heard only at Ngorongoro.  
**Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans*** Seen in Arusha NP and heard elsewhere.  
**Trilling Cisticola *Cisticola woosnami*** Seen in Arusha NP and heard elsewhere.  
**Hunter's Cisticola *Cisticola hunter*** Seen well on the crater rim.  
**Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana*** Widespread and abundant.  
**Lynes's Cisticola *Cisticola distinctus*** Good looks in the crater.  
**Winding Cisticola *Cisticola marginatus*** Widespread sightings and common in wet grassland in the Serengeti.  
**Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis*** Small numbers seen in the Serengeti.  
**Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*** Commonly encountered throughout the tour.  
**Short-winged Cisticola *Cisticola brachypterus*** Seen in Arusha NP and on the crater rim.  
**Desert Cisticola *Cisticola aridulus*** Seen in Tarangire NP and common in the Serengeti.  
**Pectoral-patch Cisticola *Cisticola brunnescens*** Common in the Ngorongoro Crater and Serengeti.  
**Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava*** Small numbers seen from Arusha to the Serengeti.  
**Red-fronted Prinia *Prinia rufifrons*** Easily seen at Engikaret.

**Buff-bellied Warbler** *Phyllolais pulchella* Small numbers seen at suitable widespread localities.

**Bar-throated Apalis** *Apalis thoracica* Seen well on the crater rim.

**Brown-tailed Apalis** *Apalis flavocincta* Seen at Engikaret.

**Yellow-breasted Apalis (Black-breasted A)** *Apalis flavida* Encountered throughout the tour.

**Black-headed Apalis** *Apalis melanocephala* (H) Heard in Arusha NP.

**Karamoja Apalis** *Apalis karamojae* 1 allowed excellent views in the Serengeti.

**Brown-headed Apalis** *Apalis alticola* 3 showed well in the Ngorongoro forests.

**Grey-capped Warbler** *Eminia lepida* Sightings of this interesting warbler at Ngorongoro.

**Grey-backed Camaroptera** *Camaroptera brevicaudata* Encountered throughout the tour.

**Grey Wren-Warbler** *Calamonastes simplex* Easy to see at Engikaret.

**Yellow-bellied Eremomela** *Eremomela icteropygialis* 2 seen at Engikaret.

**Banded Parisoma** *Curruca boehmi* Seen well at Engikaret and Ndotu and heard in the Serengeti.

**Brown Parisoma** *Sylvia lugens* A pair seen in the Ngorongoro area.

**Pale White-eye (P Scrub W-e)** *Zosterops flavilateralis* Seen well at Manyara and Oldupai.

**Mbulu White-eye** *Zosterops mbuluensis* Seen on the crater rim.

**Broad-ringed White-eye** *Zosterops eurycricotus* Seen well in Arusha NP.



The 'montane' white-eye in the crater highlands has recently been split as Mbulu White-eye (left) whilst the yellow-bellied forms of Abyssinian White-eye (right) are also deemed worthy of specific status and named Pale White-eye. (Nik Borrow)

**Rufous Chatterer** *Turdoides rubiginosa* 2 at Ndotu.

**Arrow-marked Babbler** *Turdoides jardineii* Only seen in Tarangire NP.

**Black-lored Babbler (Sharpe's Pied B)** *Turdoides sharpei* Easy to see in the Serengeti and Ndotu.

**Northern Pied Babbler** *Turdoides hypoleuca* Small numbers in Tarangire NP.

**Wattled Starling** *Creatophora cinerea* Extremely common to abundant from Engikaret to Ndotu.

**Rüppell's Starling (R's Long-tailed S)** *Lamprotornis purpuroptera* Easy to see in the Serengeti.

**Superb Starling** *Lamprotornis superbus* An abundant and colourful addition to the avifauna and seen throughout.

**Hildebrandt's Starling** *Lamprotornis hildebrandti* Most numerous in the Serengeti.

**Ashy Starling** *Lamprotornis unicolor* This endemic was very common in Tarangire NP.

**Red-winged Starling** *Onychognathus morio* Most common around Arusha but also seen in the Serengeti.

**Kenrick's Starling** *Poeoptera kenricki* 1 seen in Arusha NP.

**Yellow-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus africanus* Seen in Tarangire and the Serengeti.

**Red-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus erythrorhynchus* The more common oxpecker noted throughout the tour.

**Bare-eyed Thrush (African B-e T)** *Turdus tephronotus* 2 seen well at Engikaret.

**White-browed Scrub Robin** *Cercotrichas leucophrys* Widespread sightings in suitable habitat throughout.

**White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher** *Melaenornis fischeri* Seen in Arusha NP and more on the crater rim.



*Hildebrandt's Starling (left) and the lovely Silverbird (right). (Nik Borrow)*

- Southern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis pammelaina*** A pair at Duluti.
- African Grey Flycatcher *Melaenornis microrhynchus*** Seen at Engikaret, Tarangire and in the Serengeti.
- Silverbird *Empidonax semipartitus*** This beautiful flycatcher was seen in Tarangire, the Serengeti and Nduu.
- Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*** 3 sightings of these Palearctic migrants in Tarangire and Manyara NPs.
- African Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta*** Seen in Arusha NP and on the crater rim.
- Cape Robin-Chat *Cossypha caffra*** Seen in Arusha NP and on the crater rim.
- Rüppell's Robin-Chat *Cossypha semirufa*** Seen in Arusha NP and at Duluti.
- White-browed Robin-Chat *Cossypha heuglini*** Common at Manyara and Ngorongoro.
- Red-capped Robin-Chat *Cossypha semirufa* (H)** Heard in Manyara NP.
- White-starred Robin *Pogonochila stellata*** 3 seen well in Arusha NP.
- Spotted Palm Thrush (S Morning T) *Cichladusa guttata*** Widespread sightings in suitable habitat.
- African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*** Seen in Arusha NP and the Ngorongoro uplands.
- Anteater Chat (Northern A C) *Myrmecocichla aethiops*** Seen well in the crater.
- Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata*** Common on the Engikaret Plains, Ngorongoro and the Serengeti.
- Abyssinian (Schalow's) Wheatear *Oenanthe [lugubris] schalowi*** Seen near Arusha and in the crater.
- Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird (Kenya V-b S) *Anthreptes orientalis*** 1 female seen at Oldupai Gorge.
- Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris*** Small numbers in Arusha NP and at Duluti.
- Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra olivacea*** Common in Arusha NP and heard at Duluti.
- Amethyst Sunbird *Chalcomitra amethystina*** Seen at Manyara and Duluti.
- Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis*** Small numbers in Arusha NP, the Serengeti and Nduu.
- Tacazze Sunbird *Nectarinia tacazze*** 4 seen on the crater rim.
- Bronzy Sunbird *Nectarinia kilimensis*** Small numbers seen in Arusha NP and the Ngorongoro forests.
- Malachite Sunbird *Nectarinia famosa*** 3 seen along the Misigiyo road.
- Golden-winged Sunbird *Drepanorhynchus reichenowi*** A poor showing with just 3 seen along the Misigiyo road.
- Eastern Double-collared Sunbird *Cinnyris mediocris*** Seen well on the crater rim.
- Beautiful Sunbird (Gorgeous S) *Cinnyris [pulchellus] melanogastrus*** Small numbers from Tarangire to Oldupai.
- Marico Sunbird (Mariqua S) *Cinnyris mariquensis*** Seen in Tarangire NP and the central Serengeti.
- Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus*** Widespread sightings throughout the tour.
- Yellow-spotted Petronia *Gymnoris pyrgita*** Just 1 at Engikaret.
- Chestnut Sparrow *Passer eminibey*** A roadside breeding colony en route to Tarangire.
- Kenya Sparrow (Rufous S) *Passer rufocinctus*** Seen well in the Serengeti.
- Northern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus*** At the Arusha NP entrance.
- Swahili Sparrow *Passer suahelicus*** Common and widespread.
- House Sparrow (Introduced) *Passer domesticus*** Noted on journeys in urban areas.

**Red-billed Buffalo Weaver** *Bubalornis niger* Commonly seen in Tarangire and the Serengeti.  
**White-headed Buffalo Weaver** *Dinemellia dinemelli* Very common in Tarangire and again in the Serengeti.  
**White-browed Sparrow-Weaver** At the entrance to Tarangire NP.  
**Rufous-tailed Weaver** *Histurgops ruficauda* This near endemic was easy to see from Tarangire to the Serengeti.  
**Grey-capped Social Weaver** *Pseudonigrita arnaudi* Seen at Engikaret and in the central Serengeti.  
**Speckle-fronted Weaver** *Sporopipes frontalis* Common at Engikaret and in the central Serengeti and Ndutu.  
**Thick-billed Weaver (Grosbeak-W)** *Amblyospiza albifrons* Nest-building at Duluti.  
**Baglafaecht Weaver** *Ploceus baglafaecht* The form concerned *reichenowi* was once treated as a separate species.  
**Spectacled Weaver** *Ploceus ocularis* Seen in Arusha NP, Ngorongoro and at Duluti.  
**Black-necked Weaver** *Ploceus nigricollis* Singletons at Engikaret and Manyara NP.  
**Taveta Weaver** *Ploceus castaneiceps* Colonies of this near endemic at Arusha NP and Duluti.  
**Lesser Masked Weaver** *Ploceus intermedius* Widespread sightings throughout except the crater.  
**Vitelline Masked Weaver** *Ploceus vitellinus* Widespread sightings throughout except the crater.  
**Speke's Weaver** *Ploceus spekei* Easily seen at the picnic site in the crater and elsewhere.  
**Village Weaver (Layard's W)** *Ploceus cucullatus* Seen at Duluti.  
**Golden-backed Weaver (Jackson's G-b W)** *Ploceus jacksoni* Seen well in the Tarangire/ Lake Manyara areas.  
**Chestnut Weaver** *Ploceus rubiginosus* Breeding plumaged birds from Engikaret to the Manyara area.  
**Red-headed Weaver** *Anaplectes rubriceps* Males seen well at Manyara and Naabi Hills.  
**Cardinal Quelea** *Quelea cardinalis* Breeding plumaged birds in and around Tarangire NP.  
**Red-billed Quelea** *Quelea quelea* Thousands around Silale Swamp.



As it was the rainy season, bishops and weavers were all in plumage. Black Bishop of the race *frederichseni* (left) and Southern Red Bishop (right). (Nik Borrow)

**Yellow-crowned Bishop** *Euplectes afer* Breeding plumaged males at the Manyara rice fields.  
**Black Bishop** *Euplectes gierowii* Breeding plumaged birds seen well in in the Manyara area and at Oldupai Gorge.  
**Black-winged Red Bishop** *Euplectes hordeaceus* A breeding plumaged male in the central Serengeti.  
**Southern Red Bishop** *Euplectes orix* Widespread sightings of breeding plumaged birds.  
**Yellow Bishop** *Euplectes capensis* Breeding plumaged males in the Arusha area.  
**Fan-tailed Widowbird** *Euplectes axillaris* Breeding plumaged birds at the Manyara rice fields and the crater.  
**White-winged Widowbird** *Euplectes albonotatus* Breeding plumaged birds in and around Tarangire NP.  
**Red-collared Widowbird (R-naped W)** *Euplectes ardens* Breeding plumaged birds on the crater rim.  
**Jackson's Widowbird** *Euplectes jacksoni* Breeding plumaged birds displaying on and in the crater.  
**Grey-headed Silverbill** *Odontospiza caniceps* A pair at Ndutu.  
**Bronze Mannikin** *Lonchura cucullata* (NL) Seen by Sue in the central Serengeti.  
**Red-backed Mannikin (Rufous-backed M)** *Lonchura nigriceps* At Arusha NP and in the garden at Duluti.

**Yellow-bellied Waxbill** *Coccothraupis quartinia* 1 seen on the crater rim.  
**Abyssinian Crimsonwing** *Cryptospiza salvadorii* A pair on the crater rim.  
**Grey-headed Nigrita** *Nigrita canicapillus* 1 seen on the crater rim.  
**Black-faced Waxbill** *Estrilda erythronotos* Seen at Naabi Hills and Oldupai Gorge.  
**Crimson-rumped Waxbill** *Estrilda rhodopyga* Seen at Engikaret, Tarangire NP and Ndutu.  
**Quailfinch** *Ortygospiza atricollis* We were lucky to see birds on the ground in the Serengeti.  
**Cut-throat Finch** *Amadina fasciata* Seen at Engikaret and in the Serengeti.  
**Purple Grenadier** *Uraeginthus ianthinogaster* Small numbers from Ngorongoro through the Serengeti to Oldupai.  
**Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu** *Uraeginthus bengalus* Small numbers in the Serengeti.  
**Blue-capped Cordon-bleu** *Uraeginthus cyanocephalus* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.



*Crimson-rumped Waxbill (left) and Blue-capped Cordon-bleu (right) were visitors to the Ndutu drinking pool. (Nik Borrow)*

**Red-throated Twinspot** *Hypargos niveoguttatus* 1 was seen by some at Lake Duluti.  
**Red-billed Firefinch** *Lagonosticta senegala* Seen from Manyara to the Serengeti.  
**Village Indigobird** *Vidua chalybeata* Sightings in the Arusha and Manyara areas included birds in breeding plumage.  
**Pin-tailed Whydah** *Vidua macroura* Breeding plumaged birds throughout the tour.  
**Steel-blue Whydah** *Vidua hypocherina* Breeding plumaged males at Engikaret and in the Serengeti.  
**Straw-tailed Whydah** *Vidua fischeri* Breeding plumaged males in Tarangire and Manyara NPs.  
**Long-tailed Paradise Whydah** *Vidua paradisaea* 2 males in breeding plumage in Tarangire NP.  
**Yellow-headed Wagtail** *Motacilla [flava] lutea* A Palearctic migrant and the most numerous *flava* type identified.  
**Mountain Wagtail** *Motacilla clara* A pair in Manyara NP.  
**African Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla aguimp* Widespread sightings from Manyara to the end of the tour.  
**Yellow-throated Longclaw** *Macronyx croceus* 4 sightings in the central Serengeti.  
**Rosy-throated Longclaw (R-breasted L)** *Macronyx ameliae* Small numbers seen well in the crater.  
**African Pipit (Grassland P)** *Anthus cinnamomeus* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.  
**Plain-backed Pipit** *Anthus leucophrys* The race *goodsoni* seen in the crater and Serengeti.  
**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis* A Palearctic migrant seen in the Serengeti.  
**Southern Citril (East African C)** *Crithagra hyposticta* Seen in the garden at Manyara and Duluti.  
**White-bellied Canary** *Crithagra dorsostratus* Common in the Serengeti.  
**Southern Grosbeak-Canary** *Crithagra buehleri* A pair seen well at Oldupai Gorge.  
**Thick-billed Seedeater** *Crithagra burtoni* Small numbers seen on the crater rim.  
**Streaky Seedeater** *Crithagra striolata* Easily seen in the Ngorongoro area.  
**Yellow-crowned Canary** *Serinus flavivertex* Seen in the Ngorongoro area.



This Honey Badger (or Ratel) put on an amazing show at Ndutu. (Nik Borrow)

## MAMMALS

Total of mammal species recorded: 57

- Yellow-spotted Hyrax (Bush H) *Heterohyrax brucei*** Easy to see in Tarangire and the Serengeti.
- Common Rock Hyrax (Black-necked R H) *Procavia [capensis] johnstoni*** Seen in the central Serengeti.
- African Elephant *Loxodonta africana*** Wonderful encounters in Tarangire, the crater and the Serengeti.
- Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus*** 6 different individuals seen in the Serengeti.
- Caracal *Caracal caracal*** 1 seen well in the Serengeti but snuck away before we could photograph it.
- Serval *Leptailurus serval*** 1 marvellous encounter in the Serengeti.
- Lion *Panthera leo*** Plenty of Lions (about 48) of all sizes and ages!
- Leopard *Panthera pardus*** 3 individuals and seen exceptionally well during this tour.
- Common Genet (Small-spotted G) *Genetta genetta*** Seen on the Tarangire night drive and at Ndutu.
- Spotted Hyaena *Crocuta crocuta*** Some close encounters with these fascinating animals.
- Common Dwarf Mongoose *Helogale parvula*** Seen well in Tarangire and the Serengeti.
- Slender Mongoose *Herpestes sanguineus*** Singletons briefly in the Serengeti.
- Banded Mongoose *Mungos mungo*** Seen well in Tarangire, Manyara and the Serengeti.
- African Golden Wolf *Canis anthus*** Seen well in the crater and the Serengeti.
- Black-backed Jackal *Canis mesomelas*** Seen well in the crater and the Serengeti.
- Bat-eared Fox *Otocyon megalotis*** Great looks at these enchanting creatures at Ndutu.
- Honey Badger (Ratel) *Mellivora capensis*** A very close encounter at Ndutu.
- Plains Zebra (Common Z) *Equus quagga*** The race *boehmi* was seen throughout the tour.
- Black Rhinoceros (Browse R) *Diceros bicornis*** We were privileged to see 5 in the crater.
- Common Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus*** Seen throughout the tour.
- Masai Giraffe *Giraffa tippelskirchi*** Seen from Arusha and Tarangire NPs to the Serengeti and Ndutu.
- Impala (Common I) *Aepyceros melampus*** Common in Tarangire, the Serengeti and Ndutu.
- Hartebeest (Kongoni/Coke's Hartebeest) *Alcelaphus cokii*** A few in Tarangire but more in the Serengeti.
- Harvey's Duiker *Cephalophus harveyi*** 1 was seen in Manyara NP.
- Eastern White-bearded Wildebeest *Connochaetes [taurinus] albojubatus*** Small numbers at Engikaret.
- Serengeti White-bearded Wildebeest *Connochaetes [taurinus] mearnsi*** Many in the crater and Serengeti.
- Serengeti Topi *Damaliscus [lunatus] jimela*** Relatively small numbers in the Serengeti.
- Eastern Thomson's Gazelle *Eudorcas [t.] thomsonii*** Seen on the plains at Engikaret.

**Serengeti Thomson's Gazelle** *Eudorcas [thomsonii] nasalis* Easily seen in the crater and Serengeti.  
**Ellipsen Waterbuck** *Kobus [ellipsiprymnus] ellipsiprymnus* Easy to see in Arusha and Tarangire NPs.  
**Defassa Waterbuck** *Kobus [ellipsiprymnus] defassa* Small numbers in the Serengeti.  
**Thomas's Dik-dik** *Madoqua [kirkii] thomasi* Seen well in Arusha and Tarangire NPs.  
**Cavendish's Dik-dik** *Madoqua [kirkii] cavendishi* Easily seen in the Serengeti.  
**Grant's Gazelle** *Nanger granti* Common and seen in Tarangire, the crater, Serengeti and Ndutu.  
**Steenbok (Steinbuck)** *Raphicerus campestris* Just 1 in the Serengeti.  
**Bohor Reedbuck** *Redunca bohor* Just a few in Tarangire NP and the Serengeti.  
**African Buffalo (Cape B)** *Syncerus caffer* Seen from Arusha NP to the Serengeti.  
**Common Eland** *Taurotragus oryx* Good numbers seen from the crater to Ndutu.  
**Bushbuck** *Tragelaphus scriptus* Most common in Arusha NP but also in Manyara NP and the Serengeti.  
**Hippopotamus** *Hippopotamus amphibius* Fascinating creatures seen in many a wallow!  
**Yellow-winged Bat** *Lavia frons* Seen in the Serengeti.  
**Wahlberg's Epauletted Fruit Bat** *Epomophorus wahlbergi* Seen at Duluti.  
**Minor Epauletted Fruit Bat** *Epomophorus minor* Probably this species seen by some at Tarangire.  
**Mauritian Tomb Bat** *Taphozous mauritanus* Presumably these were the small bats leaving roost at Tarangire.  
**Northern Lesser Galago (Senegal G)** *Galago senegalensis* 1 seen on the night drive in Tarangire.  
**Thick-tailed Greater Galago (G G)** *Otolemur crassicaudatus* 2 seen at night at Manyara.  
**Small-eared Greater Galago (Garnett's G G)** *Otolemur garnettii* 3 seen at night at Duluti.  
**Blue Monkey (Sykes's M)** *Cercopithecus [mitis] albogularis* Seen in Arusha and Manyara NPs.  
**Vervet (Savanna Monkey)** *Chlorocebus pygerythrus* Commonly seen throughout.  
**Guereza (Eastern Black-and-white Colobus)** *Colobus guereza* Small numbers seen in Arusha NP.  
**Olive Baboon** *Papio anubis* Commonly seen from Arusha NP (where there was a leucistic individual) to the Serengeti.  
**Cape Hare** *Lepus capensis* 2 seen on the Engikaret Plains.  
**African Savanna Hare** *Lepus microtis* Seen in Tarangire NP.  
**Huet's Bush Squirrel (Ochre B S)** *Paraxerus ochraceus* Seen in Tarangire and Manyara NPs and Duluti.  
**Unstriped Ground Squirrel** *Xerus rutilus* Seen in Tarangire NP and in the Serengeti.  
**East African Spring-hare** *Pedetes surdaster* Great views during the Tarangire night drive.  
**African Grass Rat** *Arvicanthis niloticus* Seen in the Serengeti and at Ndutu.



The cute Bat-eared Fox was the last mammalian addition to our lists during this tour (Nik Borrow)