



Kenya & Tanzania: Birds & Big Game

February 5-25, 2022



Otus asio Tours is pleased to offer our first tour to East Africa, one of the planet's most magnificent wildlife spectacles. Besides the astounding diversity and abundance of mammals large and small, the birding is some of the world's best. More than a thousand species of birds have been recorded in the geographic region covered by this tour that includes southern Kenya and northern Tanzania. The tour will be fast-paced and cover a lot of ground, but we will visit the best big game and birding sites the area has to offer and experience an amazing diversity of habitats while enjoying splendid scenery throughout. In Tanzania, we will cross the Great Rift Valley and climb to the rim of Ngorongoro Crater, the largest unbroken volcanic crater in the world and one of Africa's iconic big game destinations. From the crater we will move to the Serengeti and bird amidst its enormous herds of wildebeest, antelopes, zebras, and big cats. Retracing our steps, we will also visit Tarangire National Park, another of Tanzania's best birding and game watching venues. Moving north, we will cross the border into Kenya where our circuit includes Nairobi National Park, the alkaline shores of Lake Nakuru, the birding hotspot that is Kakamega Forest, Lake Baringo, and the slopes of Mount Kenya. The opportunity to visit all of these world renowned wildlife parks and reserves is one of life's most memorable and awe inspiring experiences. Being amidst the herds of large mammals and their accompanying predators is something that cannot be adequately described in words and those who have the chance to enter that world will never see or feel the world in the same way. Although the primary focus of the tour will be birds, the chance to see such a variety of large mammals at close range will enhance the tour, and we will devote ample time to see and photograph as many species as possible. East Africa is a delightful place to travel. The people are warm and welcoming, the climate in February is perfect and the tourism infrastructure is excellent. To enhance everyone's comfort, we will travel in a 4X4 Toyota Landcruiser with a pop-top roof and window seats for everyone. You can expect to see over 400 species of birds on this tour and 40 to 50 species of mammals, all amidst some of the most spectacular scenery anywhere in the world. We hope you will consider joining us for this once-in-a-lifetime East African birding safari.



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Physical Requirements and Pace of the Tour

This will not be a particularly demanding tour in terms of physical exertion. As is true with most birding tours, the days will long as we will seek to maximize our time in the field in order to see as much as possible. Obviously this means very early starts, but that should not come as a surprise to veterans of birding tours. We will try to balance the early starts by taking mid-day breaks when possible and practical, although there will be days spent entirely in the field. The long days over the course of a 19-day tour can be wearing and this may be the hardest part of the experience for some people. However nothing that we do will be especially strenuous. In many of the parks it is not allowable to leave the vehicles, so in those situations all of our birding and viewing will be quite easy. The pop-up roof in the safari vehicle will make this much more tolerable than normal birding from a van. However even with the spectacular big game viewing opportunities that will be available, it sometimes becomes difficult to be confined even to a plush safari vehicle. These frustrations will be offset by our periodic birding stops outside of the parks where we can leave the land cruisers and spend time birding on foot. However participants should be aware that habitats outside the parks tend to be much more degraded and the experience there is often much less pleasant and rewarding. That said, the our will not challenge people physically and anyone in reasonably good physical condition should be able to easily participate in all of the activities of the tour. As is always the case, an open mind, a willingness to get along with other tour members and a desire to see and experience a different part of the world will go a long way in ensuring that the tour is a positive experience for you.



Leopard



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DAILY ITINERARY

February 5-6, Days 1-2, Flights to Arusha from the U.S.

The tour will begin with departures from U.S. airports on February 5 in order to arrive in the city of Arusha, Tanzania's tourism capital, on February 6. Flights should be booked to Kilimanjaro International Airport (airport code JRO). Upon arrival you will be met by a driver who will transfer you to our hotel in Arusha. Because of the lengthy journey and significant time difference, participants are encouraged to consider arriving a day or two early to allow for some rest and recuperation before the tour begins. We can help with any pre-trip activities and additional hotel nights for early arrivals. Night in Arusha.

February 7, Day 3, Arusha National Park

We'll spend the entire day in Arusha National Park. We will split time between driving and also birding on foot in designated walking areas. This park is dominated by Mt. Meru (nearly 15,000 feet) and despite being small is home to a nice variety of birds and mammals including several we will not see elsewhere during the tour (Bushbuck and Harvey's Duiker). Some of the expected birds here will include Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, Scaly Francolin, African Black Duck, Striated Heron, Mountain Wagtail, Gray-olive Greenbul, Stripe-cheeked Greenbul, Crowned Eagle, Mountain Buzzard, African Wood-Owl, Black-throated Wattle-eye, Rameron Pigeon, Hamerkop, Bar-tailed Trogon, Giant Kingfisher, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Green-backed Twinspot, Retz's Helmetshrike, White-eared Barbet, Pallid Honeyguide, African Emerald Cuckoo, Taveta Weaver, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Ruppell's Robin-Chat, Pangani Longclaw, Kilimanjaro White-eye, Hartlaub's Turaco and a dizzying array of cisticolas.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L945607?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec> Arusha NP



Hartlaub's Turaco



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DAILY ITINERARY (cont)

February 8-9, Days 4-5, Tarangire National Park

Leaving Arusha, we will drive about 3 hours south to Tarangire NP where we will spend the next 2 nights. Tarangire is comprised mostly of dry savanna transected by the Tanganire River. It is famous for its large elephant herds and gigantic baobab trees which provide the elephants with a water source during the dry season. Though elephants will be the star attraction here, the park also has many other large mammals and the accompanying cast of predators, so outings here are always exciting. The park is also home to two Tanzanian endemic birds: Ashy Starling and Yellow-collared Lovebird. Other good birds here will include Woodland Kingfisher, Double-banded Courser, Black Cuckoo, White-headed Buffalo-Weaver, Coqui Francolin, Southern Ground-Hornbill, Meyer's Parrot, Brown Snake-Eagle, Mottled Spinetail, Bearded Woodpecker, Knob-billed Duck, Banded Parisoma, Miombo Wren-Warbler, Black-faced Sandgrouse, Red-bellied Parrot, Foxy Lark, Pearl-spotted Owlet and many more. Two days here will not seem like enough! Nights near Tarangire NP.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1044008?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec> Tarangire NP

February 10, Day 6, Lake Manyara

From Tarangire we will make a short drive to Lake Manyara, another of northern Tanzania's small reserves. The park's main geographical feature is a soda lake and its alkaline shores attract a plethora of waterbirds including large numbers of Greater and Lesser Flamingos. Other birds here might include Yellow-billed and Marabou storks, Pink-backed Pelican, Sacred Ibis and a some wintering shorebirds. In wooded areas away from the lake we can search for Gray-olive Bulbul, Northern Brownbul, Black-backed Puffback, Lilac-breasted and Rufous-crowned rollers, Red-fronted Tinkerbird, Slate-colored Boubou, Superb Starling and Fischer's Sparrow-Lark. Night at Karatu.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1033409?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec> Lake Manyara



Lilac-breasted Roller



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DAILY ITINERARY (cont)

February 11, Day 7, Ngorongoro Crater

From our lodge it is less than an hour's drive to the rim of Ngorongoro Crater, one of the most spectacular geological formations in the world and a place where one has one of the most amazing scenic vistas on the planet. In fact, the crater has been termed the "eighth wonder of the world by some travelers." We will drive down into the crater and spend the entire day there. The crater is over 2000 deep and its floor is comprised mainly of short grass savanna. On these grassy plains an astounding variety of large mammals are concentrated and in addition to being numerous, they are very close and easy to observe and photograph. Large herds of Common Zebra, Blue Wildebeest, and Grant's and Thomson's gazelles are regular along with prides of lions that seem unfazed by the bounty of prey before them. There is also an alkaline lake on the crater's floor, where thousands of Lesser and Greater flamingos and large flocks of Pied Avocets, Black-winged Stilts and Gray-hooded Gulls can be seen. Other expected species include Sacred Ibis, African Spoonbill, Red-billed Duck, Hottentot and Cape teals, Spur-winged Goose, Rosy-throated Longclaw and Kittlitz's and Chestnut-banded plovers.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L951508?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec> Ngorongoro Crater

February 12-13, Days 8-9, Serengeti National Park

We will spend the next 2 days in the vast savannas of the Serengeti National Park. The entire park covers an area of nearly 6,000 square miles and is the size of Connecticut and Rhode Island combined. The Serengeti is home to some of the world's greatest concentrations of large mammals like Blue Wildebeest, Common Zebra, African Buffalo and an incredible assortment of gazelles and antelopes and their predators. The birds in the park are also abundant and spectacular and the area surrounding our lodge is home to 3 endemics: Fischer's Lovebird, Gray-breasted Francolin and Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbill. Obviously with only two days we can not possibly thoroughly cover the entire park. We will base in the Seronera region of the Serengeti which has ample year round water sources and thus is home to year round herds of wildlife and an abundance of birds. Large species like Common Ostrich and Kori Bustard are regular on the plains and flocks of Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse fill the skies. Other exciting possibilities will include Buff-bellied Warbler, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Northern Crombec, Kenya Violet-backed Sunbird, Brubru, Red-headed Weaver, Blue-capped Cordonbleu and Black-cheeked Waxbill to name a few. Best of all, our tented camp is situated in prime wildlife habitat with lovely vistas of the Serengeti Plains. Lying in bed in the evening and listening to the roar of lions always a great way to end a day in Africa. Nights in Serengeti National Park.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1327024?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec> Serengeti NP-Seronera



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DAILY ITINERARY (cont)

February 14, Day 10, Serengeti NP to Arusha

Today will be primarily a travel day as we will drive back to Arusha in preparation for the Kenyan portion of the tour. The trip is nearly 6 hours, but we will break it up as much as possible with some stops for birding. We will be crossing through the Ngorongoro Conservation Area on the way to Arusha and there will be many roadside birds available including Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, African Penduline-Tit, Taita Fiscal, Southern Grosbeak Canary, Red-throated Tit, Short-tailed Lark, Black Bishop, Two-banded Courser etc. In the higher region of Ngorongoro we'll have chances to see species such as Hunter's Cisticola, Golden-winged Sunbird, Eastern Double-collared Sunbird, Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike, Bar-throated Apalis, Cinnamon Bracken-Warbler, Brown Woodland-Warbler, Abyssinian Wheatear, Thick-billed Seed-eater, Banded Parusoma, Kenya Rufous Sparrow, Brown-backed Woodpecker, Waller's Starling, White-necked Raven, White-headed Barbet and Schalow's Turaco. We will plan to arrive at our lodge in Arusha by late afternoon so everyone has some time to relax a bit before we begin the Kenya portion of the trip.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L3752729?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec> Ngorongoro Conservation Area





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DAILY ITINERARY (cont)

February 15, Day 11, Engikaret Lark Plains and to Nairobi

After an early breakfast we will drive about an hour north of Arusha to the Engikaret Lark Plains where we will search for Beesley's Lark, one of Tanzania's rarest birds. Though our primary focus here will be Beesley's Lark, there will be many other interesting birds to attract our attention. Possibilities will include Kori Bustard, Banded Parisoma, Fischer's and Superb starlings, Amur Falcon, White-headed Mousebird, Von Der Decken's Hornbill, Beautiful Sunbird, Ashy Cisticola etc. Engikaret is a good place to work on your lark identification skills as there are many species here to sort out including Rufous-naped Lark, Somali Short-toed Lark, Fischer's Sparrow-Lark, Foxy Lark and Red-capped Lark. Wheatears are also well attended with Northern, Isabelline and Pied leading the parade. We will spend the entire morning birding the plains before heading north and crossing the border into Kenya. From there it will be about 2.5 hours to our hotel near the capital city of Nairobi where we will plan to arrive by late afternoon. Night near Nairobi.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1122427> Engikaret Lark Plains

February 16, Day 12, Lake Naivasha and Lake Nakuru

Today's focus will be on two large wetland areas. From Nairobi we will drive nearly 2 hours to Lake Naivasha where we will enjoy several hours birding the lake edges in a boat. Boat trips are always a highlight of any birding tour and this one will be no different. Some of the birds we will expect include Nyanza Swift, Mosque Swallow, Blacksmith, Spur-winged and Crowned lapwings, African Jacana, Gray-hooded Gull, Yellow-billed Stork, Great White and Pink-backed pelicans, Hamerkop, African Sacred Ibis, Hadada Ibis, Giant Kingfisher and a variety of wintering shorebirds. From Lake Naivasha we will drive another 2 hours to Lake Nakuru, one of the Rift Valley's best known birding destinations. This was the first national park established in Africa that was dedicated to the preservation of birds. Literally millions of flamingos are sometimes recorded at Lake Nakuru, although the number seen on any visit depends greatly upon current water levels. Most are Lesser Flamingos, but there are some Greaters included in the mix too. Lake Nakuru is a bird watcher's paradise and we are certain to rapidly increase our burgeoning Kenya bird list. We will spend the afternoon driving the edges of the lake and through the surrounding savannas where in addition to the birds, there will be a wealth of large grazing animals like Burchell's Zebra, African Buffalo and Thompson's and Grant's gazelles. The endangered White Rhinoceros has been introduced here as well, and since they tend to graze in open areas are generally fairly conspicuous.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1195069?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec> Lake Naivasha

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L920937?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec> Lake Nakuru



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DAILY ITINERARY (cont)

February 17-18, Days 13-14, Kakamega Forest

After breakfast at our lodge we will drive 4 hours to the northwest to for a two-night stay in Kakamega Forest, Kenya's only true rainforest. The birds here will be quite different than what we have experienced to this point. In fact, Kakamega Forest is home to 45 Kenyan species found only here. Unlike other venues on the tour, large animals will be absent here and mammal sightings will likely be confined to several species of monkeys, the commonest being Mantled Guerez. We will have a day and a half to explore this delightful area where the birding will be more reminiscent of South American rainforest than East African savanna. As you might expect, this means the birds are a bit harder to see as many inhabit the forest canopy or spend their days roaming about in mixed flocks in search of fruiting trees. Most of our time will be spent walking on forest trails listening for the chattering of mixed flocks or the raucous cacophony of birds attending an ant swarm. One of the specialties of Kakamega is the Great Blue Turaco and during our visit we will hope to encounter a group of these elegant birds. Other possibilities will include Black Goshawk, White-spotted Flufftail, Tambourine Dove, African Emerald and Cuckoo, Bar-tailed Trogon, Blue-headed Bee-eater, White-headed Woodhoopoe, Yellow-spotted, Gray-throated, Hairy-breasted, and Yellow-billed barbets, Least Honeyguide, Buff-spotted, Brown-eared, and Golden-crowned woodpeckers, African Broadbill, Petit's Cuckooshrike, Brown-chested Alethe, Dusky Tit, Equatorial Akalat, Blue-shouldered Robin-Chat, Green, Olive and Green-throated sunbirds, Pink-footed Puffback, Gray-green Bushshrike, Square-tailed Drongo, Vieillot's, Black-necked, Black-billed, Forest, and Brown-capped weavers, Red-headed Malimbe, Red-headed Bluebill and Oriole Finch. We will stay at a beautiful safari lodge situated inside the forest where we can enjoy civilized comfort amidst this incredible place. Nights in Kakamega Forest.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L920920?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec> Kakamega Forest



White Rhinoceros



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DAILY ITINERARY (cont)

February 19-20, Days 15-16, Lake Baringo

After breakfast we will drive all morning to Lake Baringo (4 hours) where we will spend the next two nights. En route we will do some birding in the riparian areas along the Kerio River with hopes of finding White-crested Tuaraco, one of the area's specialties. We will then cross the Tugen Hills and drop into the heart of the Rift Valley to our lodge near Lake Baringo. As was true of Kakamega, the area around Lake Baringo is home to many specialty species that don't occur anywhere else in Kenya, and we will spend our time trying to find as many of these as possible. Some of these will include Dark Chanting-Goshawk, Black-headed Lapwing, Three-banded Courser, Hemprich's and Jackson's hornbills, Brown-tailed Chat, Lesser Honeyguide, Three-streaked Tchagra, and Bristle-crowned Starling. We will also fit in a boat trip on Lake Baringo where the wetlands will provide a nice change from the forest based birding we have been doing for the past several days. Lake Baringo is unique in being one of only two freshwater lakes in the Rift Valley, where the geology has favored the development of alkaline surface water. The lake is a low lying area that receives runoff from the surrounding Tugen Hills to the west and Mau Hills to the east, and provides critical wildlife habitat for countless birds and mammals in this otherwise inhospitable part of the Rift Valley. We are very fortunate to be able to visit this area where fossils of some of the earliest hominoids have been found. Nights near Lake Baringo.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L920933?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec> Lake Baringo

February 21, Day 17, To Mount Kenya

Today will be a long travel day as it is nearly 6 hours from Lake Baringo to our lodge on Mount Kenya. Most of the route will take us through degraded habitat that has been converted to pastoral uses by local tribesmen, but we may make a few stops if time allows. One of these would be at a quarry where roosting Cape Eagle-Owls are sometimes found. However our focus will be on reaching our lodge on Mount Kenya by mid-afternoon to allow us several hours of birding time before darkness sets in. Our lodge is a beautiful place set amidst the Mount Kenya rainforest at an elevation of nearly 7,000 feet. From the restaurant and the rooftop viewing area we will be able to relax, sip hot tea and scan the canopy for many new species which are often at eye level! There is also a watering hole that attracts African Buffalo, African Elephant and Defassa Waterbuck and sometimes Delegorgue's Pigeon. At night some of the more retiscent mammals come to drink and we could see Bushpig and Large Spotted Genet. Night on Mount Kenya.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L2726319?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec> Mount Kenya



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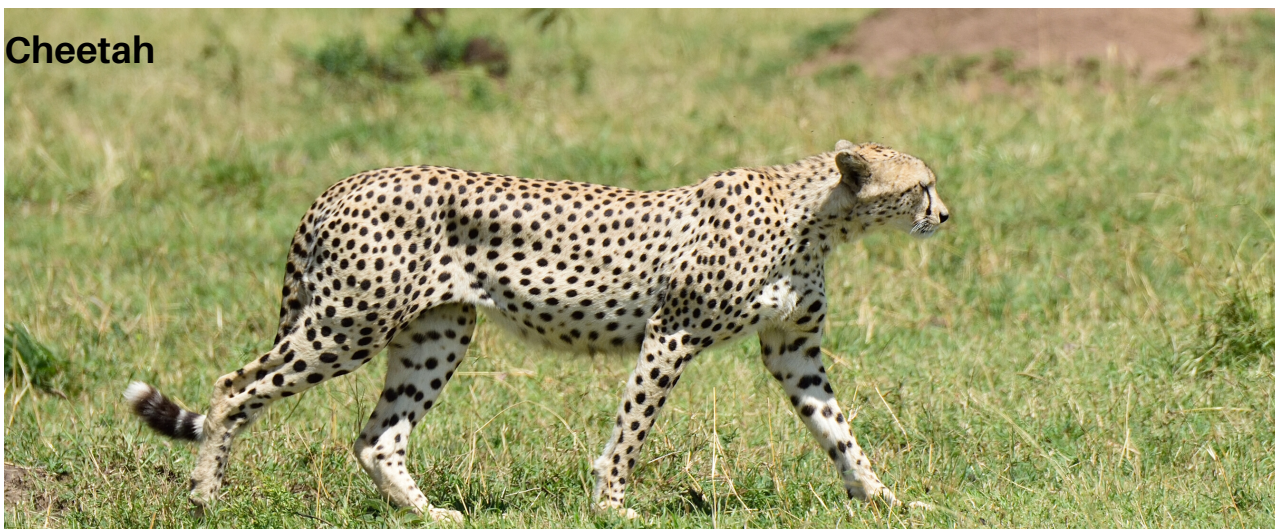
DAILY ITINERARY (cont)

February 22-23, Days 18-19, Buffalo Springs and Samburu

After some early morning roof top viewing, we'll have breakfast and then bird our way down the slopes of Mount Kenya. Driving north, we will cross the equator and enter an area of rolling wheat fields and pasture where we might see for Black-winged Lapwing, Dusky Turtle Dove, Northern Anteater-Chat, and Red-collared Widowbird. Continuing north the habitat quickly transitions to the arid vastness of the Northern Frontier Province. We will eventually reach the Buffalo Springs and Samburu Game Reserves, our destination for the next two nights. The combined reserves contain more than 100 square miles of dry, rugged terrain, dissected by the intermittent flows of the Uaso Nyiro River. Dense vegetation lines the river and provide shelter to large numbers of birds and mammals. Just add water as they say, and you will quickly discover that both of these reserves are full of birds. Along the river we can expect Northern Puffback, Northern Brownbul, African Bare-eyed Thrush, Black-bellied Sunbird, and Black-necked Weaver. In arid areas away from the river typical species include Somali Ostrich, Helmeted and Vulturine guineafowl, Crested Francolin, Somali Courser, Black-faced Sandgrouse, Mourning Collared-Dove, Ring-necked and Namaqua doves, White-bellied Go-away-bird, Blue-naped and White-headed mousebirds, Abyssinian Scimitarbill, Red-billed, Eastern Yellow-billed, and Von der Decken's hornbills, Somali Bee-eater, Pygmy Falcon, Nubian Woodpecker, Rosy-patched Bushshrike, White-rumped Shrike, Taita Fiscal, Pink-breasted Lark, Northern Crombec, Rufous Chatterer, Golden-breasted Starling, Hunter's and Kenya Violet-backed sunbirds and Black-capped Social-Weaver. Less common species include Lichtenstein's and Chestnut-bellied sandgrouse, Somali Tit, Yellow-vented Eremomela, Fischer's and Golden-breasted starlings, Shining Sunbird, and possibly Golden Pipit. Good numbers of raptors are also present with chances for Eastern Chanting-Goshawk, Bateleur, and Martial Eagle. Special mammals of Samburu are the endangered Grevy's Zebra, Reticulated Giraffe, Gerenuk, Cheetah, and Leopard. Nights at Samburu.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1233063?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec> Samburu NR

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1008193?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec> Buffalo Springs



Cheetah



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DAILY ITINERARY (cont)

February 24, Days 20, Return to Nairobi

We will spend a bit of time at Samburu this morning looking for any species we may be still missing and then begin the drive to Nairobi which will take much of the day. Along the way we will make stops for several range restricted species like Vanga Flycatcher, Waller's Starling and the endemic Hinde's Babbler. The latter is one of Kenya's most sought after endemics and can be tough to find, but we will make our best effort. Other roadside possibilities will include Meyer's Parrots, African Green Pigeon, Black-and-white Mannikin, Northern Pied Babbler, African Hill Babbler, Bearded Scrub-Robin, Red-capped Robin-Chat, Lead-colored Flycatcher, Hartlaub's Turaco, Purple-crested Turaco, Lemon Dove, Crimson-rumped Waxbill, Yellow-bellied Waxbill, Red-billed Firefinch, Gray-Olive Greenbul, and Spot-flanked Barbet. We hope to arrive at our lodge in Nairobi by late afternoon. Night in Nairobi.

February 25, Day 21, Nairobi National Park and Evening Flights Home

We will spend the entire day in Kenya NP, Kenya's oldest National Park, located just a few miles from the edge of the city. This is an amazing venue where over 500 species of birds have been recorded, an incredible number given its proximity to a large urban area. Some species to expect will include Secretarybird, African Water Rail, Spotted Thick-knee, Black-winged Plover, African Finfoot, Pangani Longclaw, Jackson's Widowbird, Kori Bustard, Hartlaub's Bustard, Saddle-billed Stork, Ruppell's Robin-Chat, Northern Pied-Babbler, White-tailed Lark, Rufous-naped Lark, Somali Short-toed Lark, Red-throated Tit, Speke's Weaver, Yellow-throated Sandgrouse, Martial Eagle, African Crowned Eagle, Wahlberg's Eagle, African Quail-finch, Zebra Waxbill, Harlequin Quail, Lappet-faced Vulture, Violet Wood-hoopoe, Nairobi Pipit, Grassland Pipit, Siffling Cisticola, Croaking Cisticola and Desert Cisticola. The park also hosts four of the African Big Five (Black Rhinoceros, African Lion, African Buffalo and Leopard) and many other interesting animals that you'll enjoy during the visit. We will return to our hotel for lunch and to pack and prepare our luggage for the flights home. In the later afternoon we will be transferred to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport for flights home. For your convenience we will have day rooms available at the hotel for you to shower and rest a bit before being transferred to the airport. Flight schedules change, but international flights usually depart fairly late in the evening.

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L915651?yr=all&m=&rank=mrec> Nairobi NP



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Tour information

Cost

The price for this tour is \$9,800 from Arusha and includes 19 nights lodging (Day 2 through Day 20, all ground transportation throughout in 4x4 Land Cruisers, guide service throughout the tour, all park entrance fees, boat trips as mentioned in the itinerary, airport transfers in Arusha and Nairobi and all meals beginning with breakfast on Day 3 through lunch on Day 21. The price does not include round trip airfare between Arusha and your originating city, alcoholic beverages, phone calls, laundry, gratuities or items of a personal nature. A single supplement of \$1300 will be charged if you choose to room alone or if you do not have a roommate and we cannot provide one for you. Note that single rooms may not be available at some smaller camps.

Tour Registration

A deposit of \$1500 and a completed registration form will be required to secure a place on this tour. Checks should be made payable to Otus asio Tours and mailed to Jan Hansen at 900 Hillsborough Road in Chapel Hill NC 27516

Tour Size

The maximum number of participants on this tour will be 10 in order to guarantee that everyone in the group will have a window seat at all times. Depending upon the final group size we will use one or two Land Cruisers.

Cancellation Policy

Cancellation penalties and refunds are based on the following schedule: if cancellation is made 90 days or more before the tour departure date, the deposit less \$500 per person is refundable. If cancellation is made fewer than 90 days before departure date and after final payment is received the refunded amount will be limited to the amount that can be recouped from merchants and booking agents. This could be as little as 25% of the tour price. **Trip insurance is strongly recommended to protect you in the event that you have to cancel.**

Travel Insurance

To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. We recommend Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance which is designed for all types of travelers. Ripcord is among the most highly regarded travel insurance programs available. They offer medical evacuation, trip cancellation and various other coverage options. Visit their website at ripcordrescuetravelinsurance.com or call 1-415-481-0600.

Documents

To enter both Tanzania and Kenya you will need a passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure date and a visa. For a Tanzanian visa you may contact the Tanzanian consulate nearest you or Travel Document Systems, Inc. (www.traveldocs.com or 888-838-4867), a company which handles visa procurement. Kenya has an online eVisa application process. Details and the application are available at www.kenyaevisa.org.



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Tour information (cont)

Trip Difficulty

This tour will not be especially physically demanding, but people should be in reasonably good physical health to participate. In many of the parks we will not be allowed to leave our vehicles, so there will be no walking in these situations. The fact that everyone will have a window seat and there will be a pop-up roof will make long periods in the vehicles tolerable. At some venues we will do some hiking, but nothing we do will be overly strenuous or physically taxing. If you are uncertain as to whether this tour is a good fit your physical condition please feel free to contact us for more information.

Clothing

As is the case with all warm weather tours, lightweight field clothing is recommended. Quick dry, lightweight field pants and long-sleeved shirts are best. Clothing that can be rinsed out and hung to dry in your rooms is helpful in limiting the size of your luggage. A hat and sunscreen are recommended for protection from the sun. **DARK-COLORED OR EARTH TONE CLOTHING IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED, AS WHITE AND OTHER BRIGHT COLORS FRIGHTEN THE BIRDS.** You will need a lightweight and comfortable pair of hiking shoes since we will some time hiking. Waterproof boots will not be necessary as we will be visiting during the dry season. Rain is not likely at this season, but a rain jacket or a poncho are always a good idea just in case. Most of the hotels we will use are not heated. Though it will be warm in most places the evening temperatures can sometimes be chilly, especially on Mount Kenya which is at an elevation of about 7,000 feet, so bring something warm to sleep in. Shorts will be appropriate on some days, but for some of the hikes you will need long pants. Remember that space in our vehicle will be limited so trying to minimize the size of your luggage as much as possible is important.

Climate

The temperatures will be warm to hot (80-90 F) during the day and pleasantly warm to cool (60-65F) at night. At a few places (especially Mount Kenya and at Ngorongoro Crater) it may be even cooler in the evening with temperatures possibly falling to the low 50's. Misty and foggy weather is possible at some of the higher elevations, again particularly on Mount Kenya and that can make it feel much cooler, so be prepared for that possibility.

Currency

You can exchange small amounts of U.S. dollars for Tanzanian shillings at some of the lodges, but you will not need much because most places will accept U.S. dollars and major credit cards. There will be ATM machines in Arusha. Please note that U.S. dollars of any denomination that were printed prior to 2006 will not accepted, so be sure and bring new bills! Neither banks nor merchants will accept these older style bills because they lack the most recent anti-counterfeiting designs. In Kenya the same will be true. U.S. dollars and credit cards are widely accepted, but you should plan to exchange dollars for some Kenyan shillings for small purchases like bar bills etc.



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Tour information (cont)

Health

A yellow fever vaccination certificate is no longer required for entry into Tanzania unless you are traveling from a yellow fever infected country. The current requirements for entry into Kenya from Tanzania regarding yellow fever are a bit nebulous and have been changing, but it may be necessary to have proof of vaccination to enter. You should check the Kenyan embassy website and the CDC website for the most current information regarding yellow fever requirements. Although mosquitoes are scarce, there is a general recommendation to take malaria prophylaxis. Either Mefloquine (Larium) or Malarone is suggested for this region, as malaria here is chloroquine resistant. Mefloquine is available by prescription only, and may not be suitable for those using cardio-vascular medication; Malarone is also available only by prescription. You should consult with your personal physician before using either drug. As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against hepatitis types A and B. Water is non-potable in either country, but there will be plenty of bottled water available throughout the tour. We will carry an adequate water supply in the vehicles at all times.

Field Guides

Recommended field guides for the tour are:

Field Guide to the Birds of East Africa by Stevenson and Fanshawe published in 2002 and
The Kingdon Field Guide to African Mammals by Jonathon Kingdon published in 1999

Other Trip Essentials

Other important items will be sunglasses, sunscreen, lip balm, toilet paper and an alarm clock. A day pack in which to carry things you will need during our birding excursions is always a good idea.

Miscellaneous

There is no departure tax due at the airport. This fee is included in the cost of your air ticket.

Electricity: 240 volts with British square or round 3-pin plug sockets

Language: English is the official language of Kenya and Tanzania. Kiswahili is also spoken.

Time: 9 hours ahead of EST.

Information

For further information please contact Jan Hansen at otusasiotours@gmail.com or at 919-259-9423.