

## May 2013 Tanzania & Zanzibar

Mount Meru Game Lodge, Arusha National Park, Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Serengeti National Park, Lake Manyara National Park, Zanzibar Coastal Resorts & Jozani Forest & Dar es Salaam

In May 2013 I had the opportunity to lead a group of 13 participants from the Philadelphia Zoo on a 9 night/10 day Northern Tanzania safari. Afterwards I stayed on for an additional 4 nights / 5 days for work related reasons. For the past 10 years I have been working for a USA-based African travel company. My employer has been in business for 25 years and although we design and sell both Kilimanjaro treks and Zanzibar stays, no one in our company had ever been to Moshi, the normal start location for Kili treks, or Zanzibar. My colleagues and I all have a working knowledge of both destinations based on research and from post client/traveler feedback but there is nothing like seeing a destination for oneself. This was my fifth trip to Tanzania. My first was in early 1979 during the Tanzania/Uganda war (the 1<sup>st</sup> on my 28 trips to Africa), followed by 1992, 1997 & 2002. I was interested in seeing the changes since my last visit to the country as to the people, tourist infra-structure and of course, wildlife.

I departed New York's JFK the afternoon of May 17 on an afternoon flight on Turkish Airlines (TK) to Istanbul and arrived there late the next morning. TK has recently opened up numerous air routes into Africa including direct flights into Kilimanjaro Airport Tanzania (JRO). JRO has always been the closest international airport for the Northern Tanzania safari circuit and Kili treks. For years Royal Dutch Airlines KLM had a virtual monopoly for direct flights into JRO. Now with TK, Ethiopian Air & Qatar Air also flying directly into JRO, more flight options means potentially lower airfares for USA based travelers. My first impression of Turkish Airlines was not only being greeted by professional flight attendants but also by two chefs who are responsible for making sure the airline's food is prepared and served properly. I'm not sure if presenting the chefs was more show than substance; however food in Economy (where I sat on all of my flights) was quite good and was complemented by good Turkish wines and Raki. I had an extended layover in Istanbul and paid for a stay in what was called the Premier Lounge. Hot showers, clean toilets, resting areas, Wi-Fi service, an open bar and fresh snacks including sushi being served was worth the cost which was less than \$24.00 USD. Istanbul is a very vibrant active airport and the Lounge was a welcome oasis.

May 18 my direct flight to JRO departed midafternoon and I arrived there just after midnight. I planned to get my visa upon arrival and clearing Tanzanian immigration formalities was a bit of an adventure with conflicting information depending on what immigration person you talked with. In my case I had to fill out a blue entry card along with my printed visa application form and that with \$100.00 USD, new bills, issued after 2006. One of my \$20 had a slight tear and was rejected and fortunately I had a back-up undamaged bill. After that my photo was taken and printed on my visa and my thumb & finger prints were taken as well. I then collected my checked luggage and entered the Arrivals Hall. The lead driver/guide for my group met me and we drove through the Tanzania countryside to my room at the Mt. Meru Game Lodge. We saw no wildlife en-route except for some unidentified owls and a feral dog who was feeding on a road killed donkey.

I awoke at daybreak with loud crashing sounds on the roof of my cabin. While having breakfast I saw the noise makers, a troop of blue monkeys, breeding male, females with infants and young

active juveniles putting on a show worthy of a primate documentary. On the lodge grounds which is a combination, natural area and animal rescue center, one can find the aforementioned blue monkeys as well as, black faced vervets who kept their distance, black & white colobus (which I did not see here) and numerous birds including a pair of crowned cranes, fish eagle. One member of my group saw and photographed a palm nut vulture a species I had not seen previously outside of West Africa. Rescue animals include a small herd of zebra, a few eland, at least one common waterbuck, ostrich & 2 groups of sexually segregated South African porcupines (a photo op for a species that is normally only seen on night drives) and a good sized crocodile. The Mt. Meru is a good introduction for the first time visitor to Africa. The cabins are basic and clean. The food & service is good but it is the wildlife both wild & captive which make it a unique property. Of my group of 13, two arrived on Ethiopian Airlines from Addis and the others on KLM from Amsterdam. I was there for both pick-ups. The KLM flight arrives after dusk & I noticed at least two types of bats, based on size difference between them, hawking for insects over the JRO parking lot. If anyone who is familiar with the region has an educated guess on what species they might be I would greatly appreciate it.

May 20 we arrived at Arusha National Park (ANP) about 10 AM. After reading about the Park for years and reviewing reports on mammalwatching.com, this was my first visit and I was most interested in seeing it. We entered through the Ngurdoto Gate, which has a small museum that gives a good overview of the ANP, geology, flora, fauna and cultural history. The first mammal we saw was a large bull elephant with small tusks relative to its size. This was the first elephant ever seen by my lead driver/guide in this N.P. He did admit that he has not done many game drives within ANP however a comment like that shows how heavily elephants have been poached within the Park. For a detailed conservation history of Arusha N.P. refer to *Imposing Wilderness by Roderick P. Neumann 1998 University of California Press*. That this bull had small tusks could also explain why he was still alive, not worth a bullet for his meager amount of ivory. We then drove to the "Little Serengeti" grassland. It was here that we saw the most game in ANP, plains zebra, Maasai giraffe, warthog, common waterbuck & African buffalo. Although spectacular scenery is the main draw of the ANP (views of Mt. Meru, 9th highest peak in Africa and Kilimanjaro are stunning), for most of my group these were the first large wild African animals they had ever seen so their excitement was a pleasure to experience. Our next stop was Ngurdoto Crater, a sort of Ngorongoro Crater in miniature. Not much game there this time of year but a bush squirrel was a new mammal for this trip. En-route and afterwards we saw blue & vervet monkeys, black & white colobus, bush buck, Harvey's red duiker, dik dik, banded mongoose and several troops of baboons. There is some taxonomic controversy of what types of baboons these are, olive or a hybrid between olive & yellow. Whatever they were, one troop had two white youngsters, maybe not true albinos but grayish white in color with a pink tint on their faces. The Momella Lakes had some hippos and both greater & lesser flamingos. The latter gave my group photo ops for getting flamingos and clear views of Kilimanjaro in the same picture frame. Besides the flamingos the most interesting bird seen was a martial eagle seen eating a young flamingo in a tree. A total of 16 different mammals and a good diversity of birds make ANP a definite stop for a serious wildlife observer.

May 21 the plan was to slowly drive our way to our lodge in the Karatu area. Our first stop was a cultural tour of the Warusha village of Ng'iresi located on the south slope of Mt. Meru adjacent to the Meru Forest Reserve. Ng'iresi is the most organized collective settlement I have seen in

Africa. It is a model village of several thousand residents with agro forestry, livestock breeding, bio-gas production and soil conservation projects sharing space with coffee and tea plots, maize fields and small vegetable gardens. The bird species that have adapted to this area could be the subject of someone's doctoral dissertation but no wild mammals were in sight. Since Ng'iresi is close to the Forest Reserve I asked about agricultural pests expecting to hear about bush pigs and baboons and instead was told that most damage to local crops was caused by monkeys and porcupines.

Afterwards we traveled a short distance into a very different Tanzania, the city of Arusha. Now with a population of close to a million it is a bustling metropolis, not as hectic as Nairobi but it is getting there. Driving through stop and go city traffic tested our drivers but soon we were on the plains of the Maasai Steppe heading west. There you quickly see that you are now in Maasai country with colorful tribesmen in red & blue robes and herds of cattle, flocks of goats and sheep along with the first camels I have ever seen in Tanzania. In 1979 I remember looking for game on this road and seeing ostrich, impala, hartebeest and the occasional giraffe all of which are now unfortunately gone. The large Tanzanian Army base is still here. In 79 I rode past lines of small built young men running along the road kept at a quick pace by larger broad chested noncoms. The same area is now the training ground for Tanzania's Armored Corp. Don't try to take pictures here, at best you will pay a fine, at worst your camera is confiscated.

Past the military base we reached our next stop the Meserani Snake Park. This well maintained captive facility has a good collection of local reptiles including numerous species of poisonous snakes. The Snake Park milks the venomous snakes to help create antivenin to be used by a nearby clinic for snake bites. Our tour guide was very knowledgeable about the collection and told me that he had worked on a project to release captive born slender snouted crocodiles into Lake Tanganyika. The bird watchers in my group had a great time here identifying several species of weavers, and other smaller birds. For mammal watchers the Park has a colony of straw colored fruit bats. So for herp enthusiasts, bird watchers and someone looking to add another mammal Meserani is worth a stop.

We continued west towards Lake Manyara passing through part of the Manyara Ranch. This important African Wildlife Foundation project protects wildlife migration routes in this area of the Maasai Steppe. My drivers all mentioned the types of animals they have recently seen along this road including cheetah, lion and once African wild dog. So when driving through this area it is worth checking out both sides of the road. We then drove through Mto Wa Mbu Village, now more a town than village with lots of shops and several tourist accommodations. On the western boundary of the village is Manyara National Park (MNP) where we saw both vervet and baboons (olive or olive/yellow hybrids) along the road. We also saw the incredible destruction that was caused by a flash flood on the Simba River in March of this year. The damage to the road and the entrance of the N.P. was impressive enough but the large number of huge boulders moved by the flood within the Park was jaw dropping. The force of the water must have been Tsunami like. We continued up the Rift Valley wall and into Iragw/Mbulu highlands. No wildlife or much natural habitat remained here. We reached our overnight location, the Kitela Lodge, in time for dinner and overnight. Kitela is a relatively new lodge located on the edge of a coffee plantation and the grounds of the Lodge have extensive flower gardens that attract numerous species of birds.

On May 22 we left after breakfast and drove to the entrance of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA). After clearing NCA formalities we drove through the highland forest passing a few troops of olive baboons who, compared to their Arusha & Manyara N.P. relatives, looked very much like pure bred anubis. Since we were to overnight at the Sopa Lodge we turned right at Crater View Point. This was a road I had not previously seen and my drivers pointed out areas along the route where elephants had dug out mineral rich clay to eat. They also told me that they frequently see leopards on this road. Those we did not see, but we did come across a bushbuck as well as a pair of Hartlaub's turacos. To allow more time in the Crater near we unloaded our luggage and checked into our rooms and started down the descent to the Crater floor. We quickly saw the largest herd of buffalo I have ever seen in Ngorongoro which numbered over three hundred. On my first trip to the Crater in '79 I saw only a few old male buffalo but on each of my subsequent visits the numbers of this species has greatly increased, perhaps due to the Maasai no longer being able to graze their cattle on the Crater floor. Our drivers told us that the Crater has 4 main wildlife attractions – large tusked male elephants, black maned male lions, black rhino and what may be the easiest photographed plains game anywhere in Africa. On this game drive we saw only one distant rhino, three lions (none of which were maned) who quickly disappeared in some high grass. Since “stay on the road policies” were implemented my post 1992 visits to the Crater have produced fewer lion and rhino sightings but that should be balanced with less harm to the Craters grasslands. We did see some large tuskers two of which did slow impressive walks just past our vehicles and we saw lots of easy photographed plains game – hartebeest, Thompson & Grant's gazelles, a few big male eland and hundreds & hundreds of zebra and wildebeest. We also saw hippos, wart hogs, vervet monkeys, black-backed jackal, spotted hyena and a hunting serval. The serval eventually caught a snake which I think was a Peter's thread snake. The thread snake must not have tasted very good because the serval released it and spent the next few minutes washing its face while still trying to hunt for something more palatable to eat. We also saw numerous species of birds in the Crater with the most interesting being a malachite sunbird and the first woodland kingfisher that I have seen outside of southern Africa. We made it to our Lodge just before 7 PM and were the last 3 vehicles to leave the Crater that day. The much needed repairs on the southern ascent route means that the only exit road from Ngorongoro is this north road that leads to the Ngorongoro Sopa. Vehicles with tourists staying on the south side lodges or accommodations outside the Conservation Area had left hours before. The total Crater mammal count was 17 species. Species I had seen here previously were golden jackal, Bohor's reedbuck (both within the Crater and on the rim), cheetah (one in 2002), slender mongoose and a black Egyptian mongoose.

May 23, we started driving south towards Crater View Point through a thick potentially dangerous fog. I have always mentioned to my tour groups that the most important skill an African driver/guide needs to have is to be an exceptional driver first- alert and thinking ahead. The tour guiding part can be added later. Our three drivers were up to the task swerving around oncoming trucks, a road construction crew, a troop of baboons and a very frightened scrub hare on the road. Headed west we drove by several Maasai villages until I asked to stop at Malanja Depression located just past the South Rim ascent road. On my other trips I have always tried to stop here to look over the amount of wildlife intermixed with herds of Maasai cattle. As with my previous stops I saw numerous small herds of zebra, wildebeest, hartebeest with a few Thompson & Grant's gazelle mixed between them totaling a few thousand head of game. The Malanja

Depression since my first visit here in 79 has had this concentration of wildlife each time I have driven past it. The more famous Sabi Sand Reserve in South Africa does not have this number of plains game within its boundaries. What that says about how plains game can coexist with Maasai livestock in a rich land I do not know, but I do think the Malanja needs some type of detailed ecological study. We then drove to the edge of the Highlands and looked at what has to be one of the most spectacular vistas on the planet. Ahead were the seemingly endless plains of the Serengeti and dark brown ribbon that is Oldupai Gorge.

We drove down past Mt. Lemagut. In years past I have seen numerous giraffe here, not so on this trip. There were a few but not the numbers I had seen previously. Was this a seasonal change in giraffe movements or the sign of Maasai sheep & goat overgrazing of whistling thorn acacia? We passed a few territorial Thompson gazelle males but no other wildlife. We reached Oldupai Gorge and had a short lecture of the significance of the site and I encourage any serious mammalogists to visit the small museum here. Oldupai Gorge is equally as important a site for mammalian evolution as it is for humans. Before entering Serengeti National Park (SNP) we had the obligatory Maasai village visit. As with my Warusha village visit I asked about wildlife problems. This village which, is very close to the SNP boundary, has no problem with lions, cheetah or spotted hyena until the wildebeest herds arrive in December. My village guide also told me of the great expense they incur to have water trucked in and the village men told my drivers that there is some talk about blocking the road between the NCA & SNP to get the conservation payments the Tanzanian Government has promised the Maasai in this region. Afterwards we entered SNP and started seeing more Thompson & Grant's gazelles and small family groups of zebra. We checked in at Naabi Hill where a climb to the scenic overlook showed a few un-striped grass rats. While on the top just to the southwest I saw herds of wildebeest & zebra ready to start their trek north & west. Driving north we passed from the short grass to the long grass plains where we started seeing small groups of hartebeest & topi. Just before our turn off to our lodge, the Serengeti Sopa, we saw an African wild cat (the first I had seen in East Africa) hunting along the road. On the road to the Sopa we entered a woodland habitat and saw impala, Defassa waterbuck, vervet, giraffe, black-backed jackal and the second Egyptian mongoose I had ever seen. On this safari we were seeing some interesting smaller carnivores but getting good looks at the larger ones which had so far eluded us.

May 24, there are several advantages to using the Serengeti Sopa - great staff, meals - the lodge has the normal East African buffet breakfast but for lunch & dinner there were two choices for starters, appetizers, entrees and dessert. I have not seen this type of meal choice outside of more exclusive lodges/camps in East Africa, and the location of the Lodge. The Seronera area of SNP, centrally located, has more lodges and camps compared to Serengeti Sopa. The Sopa is located just off the main Naabi Hill to Seronera Road & just north of the Moru Kopjes which is also good for black rhino & leopard sightings. This is a less visited area but there are two sides to this location, one positive and one negative. Being that you are away from the main game viewing area you may miss the eyes of numerous other drivers looking for game. However in this section of the SNP when you find something it will take some time before the "bush telegraphic" brings a herd of other drivers to your location. This morning we set out just after breakfast to give my drivers a more leisurely start after a long previous day. We quickly spotted a couple of hippos & medium sized crocodile on a small stream, followed by woodland animals like vervets, baboons, giraffe, impala and the largest herd of buffalo that I had seen in the Serengeti – several hundred

in number. We then got our first close looks at large cats, 10 lions, 9 of which were in trees. As a wildlife biologist first and a tour consultant second, I am always amused by the typical East African travel brochure claiming that Manyara is the only place to see tree climbing lions. Tree climbing lions can turn up anywhere there are lions and trees. The first lions I ever saw were 3 young males in a tree in MNP in 1979 and in 2002 I saw a lioness in a tree in Kenya's Nakuru N.P. Seeing lions in trees was a treat but the most unexpected was yet to come.

When I planned this itinerary I thought the bulk of the Serengeti migration would be due to reach this region of SNP when we planned to be there. I was a bit off with most of the herds being found further north in the Seronera area. However, this morning I saw the first large river crossing I had ever seen. This was just north of Lake Magadi on the seasonal Loiyangalani River. No crocodiles here but there were a few flamingos, some ornery male buffalo as well as several thousand wildebeest and several hundred zebras. What I can now say about a river crossing is that no matter what wildlife documentary you have watched it does not give this natural phenomenon the impact of what it is like seeing it in person. The noise, confusion and the individual actions of the participants is mesmerizing. The zebra for the most part crossed in an organized manner, although we saw what was most likely a bachelor male heavily courting a young filly and observed him fighting fiercely for her with what I think was a harem stallion. During this altercation the young mare ignored several of what she must have considered inferior males and waited for her chosen stallion to rejoin her which he eventually did. The wildebeest in comparison crossed in what appeared to be in absolute chaos. The males in spite of being initially hesitant did so without incident. Females crossing with calves were another matter. Some had brown colored very young calves that had obviously been born after the main calving season. Our drivers speculated that these calves would not survive this migration since they would tire more quickly and not be able to keep up with the herd. These females and those with older calves tried to cross cautiously, keeping their young nearby but often had great difficulty doing so. Between determined zebras, indifferent male wildebeest and tour drivers maneuvering through the herd looking for the best camera angles for their clients, several wildebeest calves got separated from their mothers. I counted 3 lost calves before we drove away, two of which I later saw collected by what I assume were their mothers. The next morning we drove past the crossing and there was one lone wildebeest calf in a reclined position obviously lost and waiting for its mother to return which did not seem likely. During the crossing I was most taken by one female wildebeest who decided to cross the river away from the main crossing with her calf. Whether that strategy would work further north where a predator could lock on a single female and calf I do not know. We tried for leopard that day without any luck but saw small groups of topi, hartebeest & warthogs and a few distant bull elephants. While returning to our Lodge we passed a breeding herd of elephants, cows & calves. In 3 of my 4 previous trips to SNP I did not see elephants. In 97 I saw some males and a few distant female/calf groups. Today it was a close encounter with indifferent young bulls and very alert females who watched us closely before moving away from us. From the reactions of these elephants, the SNP, in my opinion, has now become a sanctuary where elephants can now feel secure and breed.

May 25, early this morning and five of my group left for a balloon ride. The plan was for one of our drivers to travel north to meet them after landing. The rest of us would have a bush breakfast and look for wildlife while driving to meet the others. We saw the usual woodland species – impala, giraffe, buffalo, baboon, vervet and saw a pair of Kirk's dik dik along with a few hippos

in the nearby Mbalageti River. Entering the grasslands we started encountering topi, hartebeest and warthogs. As we drove north towards the Seronera we saw numerous other mixed zebra / wildebeest herds that had moved up overnight from the south. We had a bush breakfast and watched one of these large herds while swatting the occasional tsetse fly. My drivers told me that the flies come out in force in the woodlands when the migratory herd arrives. They are of the opinion that the tsetse are the main reason that the migrants move so fast through the woodlands. We saw a few lions and this time they were on the ground hunting, not in trees. We then got word of a mating pair which we detoured to see, the male of which had a nice full mane. We stopped at a museum which was part of the Serengeti Research Institute for a break and spotting some rock hyrax and it was here that the ballooning folks rejoined us. They had spectacular views and photos of the migratory herds as well as seeing a large group of giraffes and another pair of mating lion while aloft. We had lunch at a nearby secure picnic site with another group of un-striped grass rats waiting to collect our crumbs from lunch. As we worked our way south we passed several of the mixed migratory herds and throughout the day must have seen tens of thousands of wildebeest along with a few thousand zebras. While looking for leopards in the trees along the Seronera River we came across yet another tree climbing lioness. We got back to the Sopa by late afternoon and had one quick game drive before dusk. We saw the pride of tree climbing lions from the day before now looking well fed and resting in the bed of the Loiyangalani River. The highlight, however, was a 5 meter rock python stretched across the road back to the Sopa. It was the largest python I had ever seen. Our drivers thought that the python was moving into a stream bed to get away from the migratory herds now moving into the woodlands adjacent to the Sopa.

May 26 was our last full day in the Serengeti the plan was to look for cheetah and leopard. After breakfast while heading back to my room I saw a small bat land in a tree. I tried to get my binoculars on it with no luck. I asked one of the Lodge porters if he could find the bat for me. He led me to a different tree and pointed out a group of roasting dwarf epauletted fruit bats. That was a good start to the morning. Again on the way to the grasslands we saw the woodland species impala, giraffe, baboons, vervets and the same large herd of buffalo. Joining them in the woodlands was a large mixed herd of wildebeest & zebra that wandered in overnight from the south. We headed east and did a circuit around the Gol & Barafu Kopies. We did not see much game at first until the lead vehicle that I was in spooked an aardwolf (only the 3<sup>rd</sup> I had ever seen) who gave us a good look as it ran across the road and disappeared into its den. Nearby our rear vehicle saw a golden jackal. While making some tight turns on the road several times we flushed some Bohor's reedbucks. Game out on the plains was sparse; a few Grant & Thompson's, warthogs and a few lone bull elephants. In the distance I was surprised to see small family groups of elephants ranging far into the grasslands. My drivers told me that mother elephants travel out there to show their families where to find specific plants to eat. We then started seeing predators, first spotted hyena, then numerous lions including a male with a full mane. It was here we decided to have lunch while watching a pride of lions lounging on a nearby kopie. We then continued north and entered the woodlands and drove along the Ngare Nanyuki River looking for leopards. We did not find any but saw a leopard kill hanging in a tree. It was definitely a carnivore and after ruling out it being a spotted hyena cub, the drivers and I confirmed that it was an aardwolf. We started back to the Sopa and after only seeing a few other vehicles all morning ran into a lion viewing traffic jam in the Seronera area. After maneuvering around 20 + vehicles we headed south. We got a report of a leopard in a tree near the Moru

Kopies and headed that way until a passing driver told us that a National Parks vehicle had passed underneath the tree and caused the leopard to jump down into some high grass. After a long day we returned to our Lodge. At dinner that night my group said how pleased they were with what they had already seen even though cheetah and leopard had so far eluded them. I told them that tomorrow there was at least the chance to see cheetah and on my previous four trips to Tanzania I have always seen at least one.

May 27 we had a long day ahead of us so we left shortly after breakfast and drove east. Along the way we saw some of the woodland game we saw the previous three mornings – buffalo, giraffe, black-backed jackal and several mixed migrant herds of zebra & wildebeest numbering several thousand animals. We also drove by a dead zebra that may have been a road kill (lodge & tented camp vehicles have a bad habit of driving too fast in wildlife areas) that yesterday was untouched. This morning it was now just bones having been picked clean by numerous well feed vultures. Heading south we entered the grasslands and our sharp-eyed driver drove to the left and found our first cheetah on a small rock outcropping. This very nervous cat moved away quickly, not from us, but from a lion we saw 60 meters away. While this was going on two of our vehicles saw a group of banded mongoose. We continued south and then with a quick radio report of something moving to the right we found a female cheetah with 2 cubs, about a year old adjacent to one of the largest of the Simba Kopies. The mother was stalking a herd of hartebeest. As she slipped past her cubs they started chirping a common cheetah contact call. Our drivers, who had seen this behavior before, thought that the cubs assist their mothers hunt by focusing the attention of the potential prey towards them and away from the real threat. This could be an accurate observation but I can only relay what happened next. The cubs continued their cheetah contact calls while mom started rushing towards the hartebeest. The hartebeest ran as fast as any animal I have ever seen and as my driver pointed out they ran in a zigzag pattern around the youngest member of their group, a small calf not more than a few weeks old. The hartebeests escaped, the cheetah family reunited and drank from a small puddle of water while a troop of baboons on top of the Kopie seemed indifferent to the whole episode. We continued south towards Naabi Hill where we needed to check out of SNP. We passed more hartebeest, some topi and a few warthogs. The further south we went we saw more Grant & Thompson gazelles. The Thomies were just starting to move north following the wildebeest/zebras that had already cropped the grasses to a stubble that the gazelles prefer. The Serengeti cheetahs would soon be eating well. Clearing Naabi Hill formalities cost us a half hour in time. This gave my birders the opportunity to selectively bird and I saw more un-striped grass rats.

Our final SNP mammal total was 21 different species of mammals. Based on my previous Serengeti trips, on this safari we missed bat-eared fox, leopard (single individuals 92 & 97), bush hyrax, common genet & dwarf mongoose (all three easily seen the Seronera Wildlife Lodge), klipspringer & eland (easily seen at Lobo Wildlife Lodge), tree hyrax (seen once in gallery forest in the north), Cape hare (seen on the short grass plains) and bush squirrel. As for African wild dog (Awd), there was the possibility that I saw one on my 79 safari. Others in the group I was traveling with on that trip saw and photographed an Awd very close to where I had my possible sighting. My drivers told me that they see this species most frequently in Tarangire National Park but they also mentioned a pack that had tried to den in the Ndotu area of NCA the previous year. Last year SNP introduced a pack in the western corridor. These Awd were most recently seen in

the Loliondo area earlier this year far to the east and it appears that the SNP is still not a location in which you can easily see the species.

We continued east crossing into NCA, seeing one spotted hyena. Except for an occasional lone male Grants or Thompson gazelles, we saw no game until the aforementioned Malanja Depression. A required stop at the exit gate for the NCA had some well habituated baboons who stole a container of yogurt from one of our vehicles. We re-crossed the Iragw/Mbulu highlands with an obligatory souvenir stop where I purchased a small Tanzanite stone for my wife. The shop was guarded by a check point with two guards armed with automatic rifles. I then got my group settled in with lunch at the Kirurumu Tented Camp. Due to availability I needed to spend this evening at the Escarpment Lodge, a very high end property which I did not have the time to properly appreciate. My group did a late afternoon game drive within MNP. We saw baboons, blue & vervet monkeys, giraffe, impala, buffalo, a few territorial wildebeest and some hippo. Since the road down to the hippo pool had been heavily damaged in the flood that I mentioned previously, the hippo and aquatic bird sightings that MNP was famous for are now no longer possible. The only carnivore we saw was a black-backed jackal and the only elephants we saw were a small family group of which the females had either very small tusks or none at all. The elephants I saw in my 79, 92 & 97 visits here that had large tusked females. The thought that comes to mind is that the elephant poaching of the past 30 years is producing elephants with smaller sets of ivory or none at all. If so, good for them since this may lead to less elephant poaching. Three of my group did a night drive into MNP. They saw another serval, spotted hyena, greater bush baby and some South African porcupines. Species I had seen previously in Manyara were lions (79 & 97), dwarf mongoose, common waterbuck, warthog, Thompson gazelle, dik dik, zebra and the first black rhino I ever saw (79). At that time MNP had close to forty. They are now gone from both Manyara and nearby Tarangire N.P. I stayed for dinner at the tented Camp and saw a very small all black bat hawking insects in the Camp dining area. Based on my African mammal reference sources I think this was a banana bat.

May 28 we left Kirurumu Tented Camp early and continued east and after dodging road construction and Arusha traffic and arrived at the Mt. Meru Game Lodge in time for lunch and pre flight wash-up and repacking. Here again we saw a few blue monkeys while eating lunch. Afterwards I left with two of my group who were flying out of JRO to Addis Ababa and waited at JRO until the last eleven of my group arrived for their KLM flight to Amsterdam. I then was driven an hour north to the town of Moshi by one of our drivers for whom Moshi was his home town. I did not see any wildlife but hearing about the history of every town we passed was of interest and having him point out each potential accident he maneuvered around made it an attention grabbing ride. Moshi is a small quiet town and my night at the Key's Hotel was made more interesting by sharing drinks with a Swiss couple who had driven there from Morocco and two Irish lads who had driven here from Cape Town.

May 29 I was met and transferred to JRO for a Precession Air flight. Precession Air is a partner of Kenya Airways, an ECC accredited airline. The flight was comfortable and uneventful. What I found out this day is that when you land in Zanzibar (ZNZ) you need to know that you have landed on an island that still considers itself a different political entity from mainland Tanzania. Zanzibar includes the Islands of Ujunja, Pemba and nearby smaller islands and you need to clear a separate immigration procedure to see if your pre-issued Tanzania entry visa and passport are

still valid. After clearing Zanzibar formalities and collecting my luggage I entered the Arrivals Hall and was met by my driver & guide for the day. I checked into the Serena Stone Town Inn and started a full afternoon of hotel site inspections. Along with seeing four different hotels & inns I had a quick tour of Stone Town. For the best description of Stone Town I will quote my guide for this day, “Stone Town is not Africa it is Arabia!” The most common bird seen in Stone Town is the introduced Indian house crow which many ornithologists think is responsible for the low diversity of birds found in settled areas of Ujunja. I had a pleasant night here listening to a local Swahili/Arabic group while drinking a decent South African white and eating some good local sea food.

May 30, I was up early, and after breakfast and check-out I was met by my guide & driver for the next three days – Machumo & Mussa. We made a good team. Until my transfer to the ZNZ on June 01 we visited close to twenty hotels and lodges from one end of Ujunja to the other. I had little time for wildlife viewing. On this day my first stop was at the Maruhubi Palace Ruins, an archeological site that had some interesting birds and some large black centipedes. I also saw three roasting bats on the upper domes of the ruins which I could not get a clear look at with my binoculars. If anyone who is familiar with the region has an educated guess on what species they might be I would greatly appreciate it. Afterwards I had a “Spice Tour” to a local cooperative shamba (small farm). The tour was worthwhile and I saw and sampled local spices and fruits. I asked about local wildlife that can be seen here. The local guide told me both species of squirrel, which they call the red (red – bellied coast squirrel, *Paraxerus palliatus*) & gray (Zanji sun-squirrel, *Heliosciurus undulatus*), Zanji elephant shrew and Fisher’s turaco are sometimes seen. I then started a site inspection of ½ dozen resorts on the Ras Nungwi area on the north east tip of the Island. I did not see any mammals until I got to the Kilindi Resort. There I saw two Zanzibar Sykes/blue moneys and a new life mammal a red – bellied coast squirrel which turned up in the resort’s dining area. Kilindi is surrounded by natural vegetation and from what I saw would be a good place to stay for wildlife viewing if the cost could work within your travel budget.

It was then on to Mnemba Island. Operated by “& Beyond Mnemba” is reached by a small boat transfer. Just off shore were numerous sooty gulls and Caspian terns roosting on fishing boats. Upon arrival on the Island I had my choice of getting settled in my room or seeing some newly hatching green sea turtles and of course chose the latter option. Mnemba Island is a very high end accommodation. The best description I can give of my stay there is that it is like being on a desert island while enjoying comfortable accommodations, good food, ample wine and exceptional service. Mnemba is also a desert island that also has a strong conservation mission. That mission includes protection of green sea turtle nesting sites and working with local communities to protect the marine life around the Island which has been gazetted as a marine National Park. Diving and snorkeling opportunities on Mnemba are exceptional and the Island at its surrounding coral reefs are considered the best diving site on Ujunja. Most diving & snorkeling operators in this part of the Ujanga take their clients here.

At dinner I got a quick review of the status of antelopes on the Island. There are about 40 to 50 Zanzibar sunis and 15 to 16 Ader’s duikers. Both species have been introduced to provide a breeding source to repopulate areas on the main Island. It took several years to get the Ader’s population reproducing. According to the Island managers the sunis are dominant over the Ader’s which means that their numbers need to be culled by live trapping and release in conservation

areas on Ujunja. On May 30 while at breakfast I saw my first suni. Not shy at all, this male rose up on its hind legs, gerenuk-like, to browse on some low shrubs. To find the Aders I needed to be shown one. The duikers & suni are almost the same size. The best way to tell the species apart is that the Aders have a white stripe on the lower part of their body from their front leg to the rear leg. Once the Camp manager showed me a young Ader's (new life mammal) I was then able to find its mother and I later saw a male duiker. The male rose up on its hind legs to browse just like the suni that I saw earlier. As the Island manger pointed out the suni are not shy at all and boldly walk right by you. The Ader's in comparison are shy and easily spooked. Bird watching here can be interesting with a large colony of red eyed doves and the more intriguing bird that I saw here, the black morph of the intermediate egret.

My visit here was all too quick and I was transferred back to the main Island. Today was to consist of site inspections of resorts in the Matemwe area located just south of Mnemba Island. The east side of Ujunja has the most extreme tides on the Island which one needs to take into account when selecting resorts for honeymooners or beach lovers. It was on this area of Ujunja I started seeing similarities between the Island and the Atlantic coastal areas that I saw on my trip to Ghana in 99, that being a natural environment heavily influenced by humans with small patches of nature. This is no pristine natural habitat, but Ujunga does have areas that have interesting wildlife, many of which have important conservation value. Today I was to have my only free afternoon which was to be spent at Matemwe Lodge & Bungalows. The resort has a reef a mile off shore which at low tides gives locals the opportunity to collect marine life and I saw some men spear fishing octopus. Matemwe Lodge has conservation projects similar to Mnemba, including green sea turtle nesting protection and tries to work with local communities for marine life conservation. The Bungalows are clean, comfortable and each have spectacular views of the ocean. The lunch and dinner I had here were two of the best meals I have had (outside of the West Cape in South Africa) on the Continent. I asked the Lodge manager who showed me around the property what animals they see – elephant shrew, variable skink and rough-scaled plate lizard and the small-eared galago (bush babies). While here I saw the skink, heard rustling and saw movement that was most likely the plate lizard and a special treat was seeing the galago. Matemwe Lodge, like many resorts on the Island had been closed the months of April & May to make repairs after the East Africa Long Rains. When the Lodge is open, food is put out during dinner so that the bush babies come nearly every night. The Lodge manager introduced me to a female member of the wait staff who told me that she loves the bush babies and would do her best to call them in for me. Dinner was after dusk and she showed me the sweet cake that she makes especially for the galagos. While waiting dinner tables she would stop on occasion and make snacking, trilling calls and waited for a response. For a ½ hour she heard nothing until all of us could hear some soft clicking sounds and then the bush babies appeared. Not only did the regular nearby resident pair show, but also their babies who were born during the rains. I proclaimed her “queen of the bush babies” and made sure that she got a nice tip before I left the resort the next morning.

This was my last day on Ujunga. Mussa suggested a change in schedule that would allow me to see the last southern Island resorts as well as a visit to the Jozani Forest. This area of the Island had the most wildlife. Mussa, who knew my interest in animals, spotted a Zanj elephant shrew (new life mammal) running across the road and also pointed out a crowned hornbill and black sparrow hawk for me. The last resort I was to see was The Residence, a high end property that

had the best wildlife viewing of the resorts I had seen. Here I saw Sykes monkey including a very handsome male, the skink and a good look at a plated lizard. I was told that also seen on the large well landscaped property was a type of small antelope (suni or blue duiker) and one lone old male Zanzibar red colobus. It was then off to the Jozani Forest, now a Zanzibar National Park. Finding the Islands red colobus is incredibly easy: just park at the Jozani HQ lot, cross the road and you will see quickly see dozens. Probably one of the easiest life mammal sightings I have ever had. With limited time I did a quick walkthrough on a boardwalk into the mangrove area and a longer walk into the more mature forest behind the reserve HQ. With more time this area would be worth a slower more careful walk which could turn up some interesting birds. My young guide who was quite good told me that earlier that day he saw the gray Zanzi squirrel. This life mammal will have to wait for my next visit to Ujanga.

Events moved rapidly after Jozani. We drove towards the airport and I was offered the opportunity to get cleaned up and reorganized at the depot of Island Express, my host for my Zanzibar site inspection. I got to the airport and after clearing Zanzibar formalities boarded a small aircraft Coastal Aviation flight to Dar es Salaam. Small aircraft give one the opportunity for a slow, low elevation flight. It seemed like we were floating across the Zanzibar Channel and then over the Tanzanian mainland to land at the Dar Domestic Terminal. My only previous visit to Dar was in 1979 and I was curious to see how it had changed. I had arranged a day room at the Protea Courtyard Hotel before connecting with my early morning TK flight to Istanbul. The city seemed alive & vibrant with lots of new high rise construction going on. As dusk fell over the city I started noticing what I thought at first were hadada ibis heading towards their night roost. It took a while but I then realized I was seeing hundreds and hundreds of straw colored fruit bats just starting their night rounds. An unexpected place I thought for a mammal watcher observation.