

Kenya May 25-28 2023 Maasi Mara National Reserve

It was a long drive after leaving Kakamega Forest, with a stop at Kisumu on Lake Victoria for a boat ride to find more birds. We passed the equator going south, and night was falling as we entered the Mara. Our short drive to the night's lodge gave us some **Topi** and **Impala**,



with **Southern Bushbuck** on the lodge grounds.



Early the next morning outside the tent were a pair of **Cavendish's Dik-Diks**.



Once in our vehicle on our way to our next lodge we rapidly started getting sightings.

Topi



Thomson's Gazelle



We soon met a riveting sight: **Southern and Eastern African Cheetahs**, two male hunting partners.





Nearby some male **Southern Lions** snoozed flat on the ground behind bushes.



Cape Buffalo seen close have a no-nonsense Deniro “Are you lookin’ at me?” gaze.



Crossing the Mara River into the Mara Triangle we came upon



Thomson's Gazelles and **Banded Mongoose**.



As we drove along we saw a **Spotted Hyena** in the distance following a pair of **Southern and Eastern African Cheetahs**. Then near a wet depression lined with small trees our guide saw a few other vehicles jockeying around and took us down a very wet, exceptionally jouncing road to get a glimpse of an **African Leopard**.



We stopped for lunch at “the picnic tree” near the border of Kenya/Mara and Tanzania/Serengeti.



After dropping our bags off at our final lodge, some of us went out for a late afternoon drive.



Eastern Warthog



Savanna Elephant



Coke's Hartebeest



Spotted Hyena

A pair of **Eastern Black-Backed Jackals**.



Topi were often seen as lookouts on termite mounds.





Grant's Zebra



Thomson's Gazelles



Common Hippopotamus

That evening I walked down the path between the rooms and startled a family of **Bush Hyrax**.



Almost out the gate the next morning we had a mixed trio of **Topi**, **Coke's Harebeest**, and Maasai Ostrich. We also had **Unstriped Ground Squirrel** run off the road.





Maasai Giraffe



Common Hippopotamus



Common Impala



Eastern Black Rhinoceros



Topi



Common Impala



Spotted Hyena eying the antelopes.



Savannah Elephants



Olive Baboon



Defassa Waterbuck

Back at the lodge for lunch I wandered about and found some not-shy **Bush Hyrax** climbing around the trees.



Back out for an afternoon drive we came upon a solitary **Western White-bearded Wildebeest**. This was the best look we got at one, as this was not the time of the great migration.



We came upon our first carcass in the distance, with five **Spotted Hyenas**, three **Eastern Black-backed Jackals**, and various vultures in the area. Behind them on a rise were small herds of **East African Eland** and **Western White-bearded Wildebeest**.



Not long after we stopped as a magnificent pair of **Southern and Eastern African Cheetahs** paced up the road to and around us, probably the first ones we saw the day before.







Almost immediately after they paced off, a **Spotted Hyena** came following along.



We returned to the spot where the **African Leopard** had been the day before, and he was still there.





Though he appeared well-fed, he also looked to be blind in his left eye.



Common Impala



A worthwhile kind of traffic holdup.



On our last morning in Africa we had made most of our target species, and decided that we would only pause on the way out of the Mara for big cats.



Maasai Giraffes

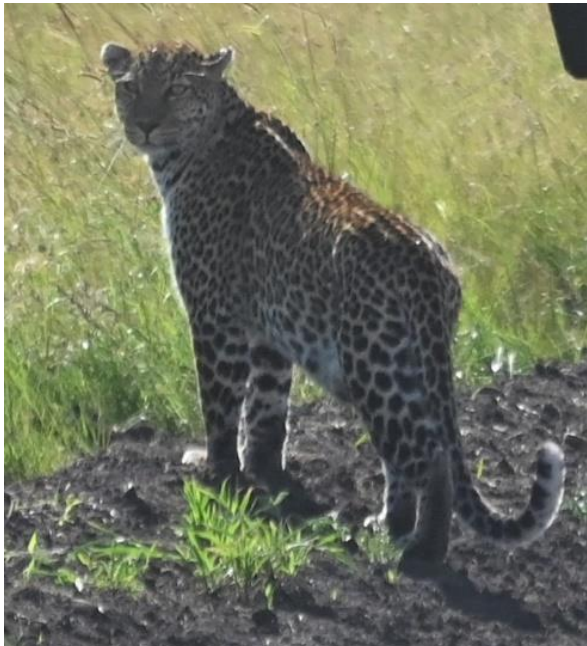


Common Hippopotamus



Coke's Hartebeest

We found our first big cat of the day, a female **African Leopard**, blithely strolling along the road with a half dozen vehicles nearby, almost seeming bored at their presence.



Then we came upon a small pride of **Southern Lions** napping.



And then Southern and Eastern African Cheetahs in the shade. Alex was amazed that we had found all three big cat species in less than an hour, he had never heard of that happening.



We weren't through yet, as we came upon the same group of male lions we had seen the other day resting in the same place.



And still within an hour of spotting the first big cat of the day, a lioness came up to the roadside.



Grant's Zebra

Just outside the park we drove up a road near a village to find a few more birds and also found



Olive Baboon and Common Dwarf Mongoose.





On our long drive back to the Nairobi Airport we had some brief stops for more birds, bringing the checklist just above 500. I thought we'd had our last mammal sighting, but on the steep, slow, winding road up to the higher elevations there were a troop of the first mammals we had seen on the trip, **Olive Baboons** looking for roadside pickings. They were the bookends.



Postscript: I would be remiss to not once again give the highest praise to **Cisticola Birding and Nature Tours** and our guide, Alex. This was an exceptionally productive and immersive tour by a company who knew where to find and accurately identify a cornucopia of species.

Mammal species for Maasi Mara National Reserve

Topi (*Damaliscus lunatus jimela*)

Southern Bushbuck (*Tragelaphus sylvaticus*)

Cavendish's Dick-Dik (*Madaqua cavendishi*)

Thomson's Gazelle (*Eudorcas thomsonii*)

Southern and Eastern African Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus jubatus*)

Southern Lion (*Panthera leo melanochaita*)

Cape Buffalo (*Syncerus caffer caffer*)

Banded Mongoose (*Mungos mungo*)

Spotted Hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*)

African Leopard (*Panthera pardus pardus*)

Eastern Warthog (*Phacochoerus africanus massaicus*)

Savanna Elephant (*Loxodonta Africana*)

Coke's Hartebeest (*Alcelaphus buselaphus cokii*)

Eastern Black-backed Jackal (*Lupulella mesomelas schmidtii*)

Maasai Giraffe (*Giraffa tippelskirchi tippelskirchi*)

Grant's Zebra (*Equus quagga boehmi*)

Common Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*)

Bush Hyrax (*Heterohyrax brucei*)

Unstriped Ground Squirrel (*Xerus rutilus*)

Common Impala (*Aepyceros melampus melampus*)

Eastern Black Rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*)

Olive Baboon (*Papio Anubis*)

Defassa Waterbuck (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus defassa*)

Western White-bearded Wildebeest (*Connochaetes taurinus mearnsi*)

East African Eland (*Tragelaphus oryx pattersonianus*)

Common Dwarf Mongoose (*Helogale parvula*)