Kenya - January 2013
By Tim Roberts

This safari was not primarily intended as a birdwatching trip; viewing mammals was the aim of my companions although they, and our guide, were happy to indulge me once they’d seen the key species. We spent three days in the Masai Mara and another day at Lake Nakuru National Park. The safari was organised through Mara Gates Safaris in Nairobi. No hesitation in recommending this small company. From our first contact they responded by return of email and were only too happy to change one of their standard itineraries to suit us.

We stayed at Ol Moran (Masai for ‘The Warrior’) a tented camp; basic but adequate accommodation with the friendliest of staff and located within a mile of the Oloolaimutia entrance to the reserve. It was also conveniently adjacent to a working (as opposed to tourist) Masai village complete with a colourful market drawing in Masai people from miles around and a number of entertaining pubs. At Nakuru we stayed at Flamingo Hills Camp – a bit swankier.

Given that there are limited opportunities to get out of your safari vehicle – it’s not encouraged when carnivores can appear at any moment - most of what I saw and managed to photograph was the big, obvious stuff. The camera I used was a Panasonic Lumix TZ30 which has a wonderful Leica lens with a 20x optical zoom. It is a compact model with many features but works really well as a point & shoot – which is pretty well my level these days as you’ll see from the pictures. (Additional photos by Constance Wolstenholme and June Thomas also with Lumix TZ30.)

After our safari we returned to Nairobi to visit the David Elphick Elephant Orphanage before flying on to Zanzibar for a beach week. There was limited birdlife at our resort, so just a couple of photos from there. In Zanzibar we stayed at Pongwe Beach Hotel – aka paradise!

We saw many and varied creatures including, within the first half-hour of entering the Mara, three species of big cat.

Reference books used were:

Birds of the Masai Mara – Adam Scott Kennedy (a beautiful new photographic guide)
The Hamlyn Guide to Birds of Britain and Europe – Bruun & Singer - old faithful from 1974 useful for migrants

In addition to the birds captured on camera I listed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White Stork</th>
<th>Black Kite</th>
<th>Sooty Chat</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marabou Stork</td>
<td>African Black-shouledered Kite</td>
<td>Yellow Bishop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lappet-faced Vulture</td>
<td>Common Kestrel</td>
<td>Jackson’s Widowbird</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martial Eagle</td>
<td>Wattled Starling</td>
<td>Saddle-billed Stork</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bataleur</td>
<td>Rufous-naped Lark</td>
<td>Sacred Ibis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hadada Ibis</td>
<td>Brown Snake Eagle</td>
<td>Grey-backed Fiscal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black-headed Heron</td>
<td>Crested Francolin</td>
<td>Common Fiscal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grey Heron</td>
<td>Ring-necked Dove</td>
<td>Common Drongo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black-capped Avocet</td>
<td>African Mourning Dove</td>
<td>Common Bulbul</td>
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<tr>
<td>African Fish Eagle</td>
<td>Emerald-spotted Wood Dove</td>
<td>Rattling Cisticola</td>
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<tr>
<td>African Jacana</td>
<td>Speckled Mousebird</td>
<td>Variable Sunbird</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spur-winged Plover</td>
<td>African Grey Hornbill</td>
<td>Ruppell’s Starling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blacksmith Plover</td>
<td>White-browed Coucal</td>
<td>Village Weaver</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pied Kingfisher</td>
<td>Common Scimitarbill</td>
<td>Von der Decken’s Hornbill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Pied Wagtail</td>
<td>Hoopoe</td>
<td>African Grey Flycatcher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grey-headed Sparrow          White-headed Saw-wing          Little Swift
Kenya Rufous Sparrow         Eurasian Bee-eater               White-rumped Swift
House Sparrow                Barn Swallow                    Common Swift
Brown-necked Raven           Plain Martin                     Wire-tailed Swallow
Pied Crow                    Little Swift

**Masai Mara National Reserve**

Grey-capped Social Weaver

Yellow-billed Oxpecker (and Cape Buffalo!)
Bare-faced Go-away Bird

White-headed Vulture

Ostrich (ssp Masai)

Abdim’s Stork

White-browed Robin Chat

Superb Starling
Grey Crowned Crane

Helmeted Guineafowl

Lilac-breasted Roller

Tawny Eagle

Red-necked Spurfowl

Long-crested Eagle
African Wattled Plover

Lesser-striped Swallow

Sooty Chat

Red-billed Oxpecker (and Impala)

Yellow-fronted Canary

Secretary Bird
Lake Nakuru National Park

Cattle Egrets (and Cape Buffalo!)

Great White Egret

Grey-headed Gull

Red-knobbed Coot
Yellow-billed Stork

African Spoonbill

Greater Flamingo and Lesser Flamingo (only a couple of thousand present as opposed to four million plus on my previous visit)

Little Egret

Hammerkop

Black-winged Stilt, Ruff, Wood Sandpiper
Zanzibar – Pongwe Beach

Whimbrel

Western Reef Heron

Tim Roberts, April 2013
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