

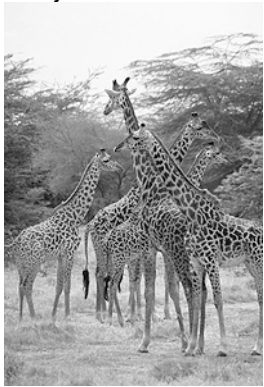
NATURE NOTES

Your up to date information from
Nature Encounters Tours & Travel,
Petersen Photography and Simply Safari

Issue # 9 Winter/Spring 2004

SAFARI REPORT-Tanzania by Garth Irvine, Zoo Keeper/ NETT Tour Leader – September 2003

You just never know what to expect. No matter how many times I travel to east Africa I am always surprised and awed by both the natural world and the friendly welcoming people I meet along the way. Highlights on this trip were as always our visit to the Maasai village. Spending time with these proud people and sitting fireside talking with a family in a dung hut is truly an experience none of us will ever forget. Then visiting the school with all the smiling happy children. Here you realize that several cultures are meshing while



the Maasai are fiercely guarding their own ways while allowing in only the best the rest of the world has to offer.

Imagine driving along the crater floor at Ngorongoro. The whole group is lost in time, a little overwhelmed by what the crater has to offer and then suddenly your driver stops. Not three meters away is a female hyena. She casually glances our way, closes her eyes and goes back to sleep. What a special moment. Wait! An eight week old pup crawls out of the den and crawls all over Mom. Times like this it is important to remember to breathe. It was amazing to spend this close quiet time with Mom and babe and then to drive away leaving them totally unaffected and us quite the opposite. The crater is one of the few places to see wild Black rhino in east Africa. Godson our driver refused to give up. It was already time to be back at the lodge and he made one more pass through the forest before we would have to give up for that day and head up out of the crater. Just then for a second or two we all caught a glimpse of a female rhino and calf just 30 meters away. It was very brief but we all saw them. We tried to judge where they had disappeared to and quietly wait for them to appear but it was not to be. Still and all the rhino gods were blessing us for we were the only ones to see rhino that day. I'm not sure Godson believes us yet as he was the only one who did not see them. Imagine driving across the golden tall grass open savannah of the Serengeti. As always all inhabitants are scanning, scanning because you just never know what you might find. Passing a small heard of zebra Chris catches sight of a pair of small ears just above the surface of the waving grass. STOP!!!! With several pairs of binocs we identify a lioness hiding in the grass—then another. Crouched with their ears flat we knew the chance of witnessing a hunt were good. We watched the pair transfixed as they slowly wiggled and crawled closer and closer. The zebra never had a clue and one came very close to our first hunter. Then the second gave chase in an attempt to send one or more running into our girl's jaws. The quarry caught on a little too soon and the girls were left empty mouthed, too bad for them but wonderful for the zebras and us. Another big cat moment - we arrived just as a female cheetah and her two grown children finished devouring a kill. What a privilege to watch from 5 meters away. Way off in the distance we could see something approaching. It was a jackal carrying half a gazelle. He was

heading right for our cheetah trio! He got to within 20 meters or so of the cheetahs before they saw him and he them. After a second, which seemed much longer the large cats took chase to claim the meal for themselves. Our jackal dropped the booty and ran. To our good fortune the small meal was brought back to the previous resting spot and we had wonderful views of the family sharing a meal. It just goes on and on. Every day better than the last! Leopard is plentiful in the Serengeti though difficult to spot. From quite a distance we can see a few vehicles near a large tree. Just as we are getting close enough to see that it is indeed a leopard in the tree, over to our left a pride of about 20 lion suddenly emerges out of the tall grass and brush. We are torn. Do we



continue on to the leopard or beg Godson to stop. We stopped and again with tremendous luck the pride flopped down in a heap just a few meters away from us including several adult females and cubs of varying ages. WOW! We had our fill of this wonderful domestic scene and moved on to our original intent. We had spectacular views of this leopard as she stretched and changed position on her upper limb. We watched for a while and eventually saw her descend from her perch and head off into the tall grass. We were afraid she might bump into the lion pride but she seemed to know they were there and didn't let herself be found. What an end to a perfect day, now off to the lodge for a nice cold drink and another of the chef's wonderful barbecued meals.

Our last camp was truly an experience; luxury-tented camp was a huge understatement! Four post mahogany beds and a full mahogany bath greeted us in the western Serengeti. Here we saw giant crocs, mating lions and the



highlight for all - a lone bull elephant approaching closer and closer. We moved off down the road—just far enough so he wasn't annoyed - then he began to follow us! We would move off and he would follow. . . we would move

further and he would follow. We left him to his "territory" and continued our game drive. On our return we found him not far from where we left him, in the middle of the road and were not about to challenge his authority so did a little off roading to safely pass him. He objected to our route, reeling with a trumpet and a mighty headshake. Such was our farewell to the Dark Continent. **Join Garth on safari in 2005!**

Details in next newsletter!!

SIMPLY SAFARI - SIMPLY A SHOPPING ADVENTURE!



Simply Safari has entered a new and exciting phase! We said goodbye to Colette Bennett who left the store and headed back to her U.S. roots in June. With that, Carol Petersen has taken on the exciting task of shopping in Africa for wonderful new art, craft and home décor items for you. Yes, Carol is now legitimately shopping (versus hiding her purchases in the basement telling her dear husband "oh we've had that for ages!") Carol travels to some pretty exotic locations and has not only developed

wonderful relationships with her African land operators but has made some great contacts with African artisans and craftspeople as well. You will now see items from Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, Namibia as well as South Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho, Mozambique and Madagascar. "Not only are we supporting wildlife and wild spaces by designing safaris in Africa and turning people on to the



many species that live there – by purchasing in *Simply Safari*, Canadians are able to directly support African families and that is what it is all about for me!" reports Carol. If you are in the area – come in for a visit – new items arrive regularly – many of which would be perfect for your home, office or as a unique and special gift! Check out our "Conservation Corner" with information on Nature Encounters Tours and craft that sponsors the Cheetah Conservation Fund, Daphne Sheldrick's Elephant Orphanage and the Mountain Gorillas in Rwanda – still walking the talk!



2004 ART SHOWS!

Come and visit *Simply Safari* to see the latest photographs or *Art Market - Calgary*

Nov. 18 - 21, 2004

Spruce Meadows - Calgary

Nov. 19 - 21, 2004

One of a Kind Show - Toronto

Nov. 25 - Dec. 5, 2004

Hope to see you there!

Contact Us

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****KUDU'S (to be confused with KUDO'S)****

To Garth Irvine for our *Safari Report* on page 1!
To the Nature Encounters Tours & Travel groups and private individuals for their donations to the Cheetah Conservation Fund, Arusha Orphanage and various schools!

To Jon and Karen for 12 boxes of books for the girl's school and **John T** for tons of toothbrushes!

To the gang for labeling, stuffing and sending again and again and yet again & again!

To Randy G, the greatest little support system ever!
How lucky I am to know you . . .



The Delta, The Zambezi and More!

Safari Reports from Carol Petersen

The Best of Botswana–Sept. 2003

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Botswana,
Where in
the world
can you, in
one day,

watch a dust devil (sand
tornado) engulf a
waterhole and then cruise
in your mokoro through winding waterways? Such
is Botswana! Our group spent 3 weeks in this
diversified land starting with Nxai Pan, giant
baobabs, Oryx, zebra, migrating wildebeest and
elephants pushing lions off their kill – exactly who
is the king of beasts?! Such a distraction as we
were then off to the extreme opposite – the
Okavango Delta – and all it has to offer. Walking
on tiny islands, mokoring through the reeds and
papyrus, visiting local villages and learning how to



dance Setswana style were
just some of our “wet
activities”. Off to some of the
grasslands and cats galore –
even some of the small cats
made themselves available
to us on night drives – Serval



and African Wild Cat. The only way to top this
diversity is to spend time on the Chobe River in
northeastern Botswana watching elephant cross
with only their trunks in view. Some carried on the
train through Zimbabwe to Joberg, some visited
the marvelous Garden Route in South Africa and
me I'm off to Zimbabwe

Endangered Species Trail - Sept. 2003

Zimbabwe . . . some
cringe at the thought of
traveling to this wonderful
land – of course hearing
the media reports doesn't
make it too enticing. So
let's ask our intrepid



group of 8 what they had to say. . Most described
their time on the Zambezi River in Mana Pools NP
as one of the highlights of their entire lives – which
speaks wonders, as one of our gang was a young
86 years of age! We were treated to an amazing
canoe trip – led by my pal and expert guide Garth
Thompson. Our safari included about a billion (ok
maybe not a billion) elephant – some big bulls
close enough to touch – those little point and
shoot's got “eyeball” images – WOW! “Chocolate
dipped” elephants crossing the river, elephants
reaching up on their back legs snacking on
scrumptious trees, young elephants testing their
trumpeting skills and the best – an elephant dung
birthday cake . . . when in Rome You name
it – we saw and heard it and all from the comfort of



our canoes and incredibly
outfitted campsites. From
Mana Pools we headed
on to Lake Kariba for
some rhino tracking, bird
watching, sunset viewing
and a just plain great time.
Next was mighty Victoria

Falls – the smoke that thunders complete with all
the shopping one could muster – exactly HOW
many necklaces can one buy CB? Off to
Botswana for amazing cats – cheetah, lion and
leopard – even a few
on kills!

What an adventure!

What a treat!

What an experience!

The Magic of Zambia

Jan 2004

Off to a land filled with



safari history . . . the place where
walking amongst the great game of
Africa was pioneered! The South
Luangwa Valley was the area to
see at this time of the year. Even
though it was considered the rainy
season, the game was incredible!
We were treated to the brightest
zebra I have ever seen – they
looked like they had just been



Painted! Elephant populations had been
decimated years ago but with the help of
conservationists like Mark and Delia Owens, these
giants are plentiful and complete with many
young. Cats came in many varieties of spots and
solids . . . even very very young lion cubs
(approximately 8 weeks old) were seen at close
proximity. We watched for a while then witnessed
mom swim across a small channel of water to join
the rest of the pride and a bit of hunting. Her
nose wrinkled and she sneered as she entered
the water – hating every moment of getting wet!
Of course all was well again when she joined her
relatives and proceeded with classic cat greeting –
all this before breakfast! We stayed in some lovely
lodges, set in beautiful locations next to oxbow
lagoons, the mighty Luangwa River and the
amazing scenery of the
south end of the park. Not
having a group to take
care of – I even indulged
one day with a glass of
wine, a hot bubble bath in
a sunken tub in my very
private luxury tent



overlooking the wildlife filled plains – oh man it
doesn't get much better than this! Zambia –
magical and marvelous! **Join Carol and her expert
tour leaders as they visit Mana Pools, the Luangwa
Valley, East Africa, Gorillas and much more in 2005!**
Details coming in the next newsletter . . .

MAKE TRACKS

2004 Departures

Call us or look at our updated web site for detailed itineraries. Prices quoted in Canadian dollars, ALL-INCLUSIVE of air, accommodation, meals (exceptions noted on the detailed itineraries), gratuities & priced per person sharing! *Just show up and enjoy!* Groups are 6 to 18 travelers so book early to ensure your safari seat!

HAVE YOUR OWN GROUP (FAMILIES COUNT)?
Let NETT design your very own safari!

Group Departures . . .

Pricing is per person based on double occupancy.
If paying by credit card please add 4% to tour cost

**October 6-10 Polar Bears Abound! \$2995CDN
Churchill, Manitoba Led by Carol Petersen**
A tundra experience – see the great white bears up close and personal from your specially designed tundra vehicle.

Polar Bear Space Limited!

Book Before the Rush!

**November 5 – 19 South African Safari! \$6995
Kruger to Capetown! Led by Randy Gregson**
Enjoy the beauty and diversity of South Africa. Visit Cape Peninsula and Table Mountain. Enjoy wine tasting in Stellenbosch. Marvel at the wildlife in Kruger National Park. Maybe try a little golf?
All of this and more!

Independent Itineraries . . .

Would you like to go on safari but not fit into, or want to travel in a group? Check out our Independent Itineraries! Want something a bit more customized – drop us an email and we will design your dream safari!

Pricing is land only per person based on double occupancy Single supplement available!
If paying by credit card, please add 4% to tour cost.

Kenya!

The Best of Kenya 10 Nights/11 Days
Land Only From \$3370 Includes: Amboseli, Aberdares, Samburu, Lake Nakuru and Maasai Mara. Luxury Lodges

Kenya Fly In Safaris 2 – 6 Nights
Land Only From \$940 Includes: Amboseli, Maasai Mara and Samburu. Luxury Lodges

Northern Kenya Safari 4 Nights/5 Days
Land Only From \$1395 Includes: Aberdares, Mt. Kenya & Samburu. Luxury Lodges/Tented Camp

The Kenya Connoisseur's Safari 10 Nights/11 Days
Land Only From \$9795 Includes: Lewa Downs Conservancy, Maasai Mara and Tsavo. Luxurious Private Bush Homes/Lodges

Ngorongoro Crater & Lake Manyara 3 Nts/4 Dys
Land Only From \$710 Includes: Ngorongoro Crater and Lake Manyara. Luxury Lodges

Northern Circuit Safari 7 Nights/8 Days
Land Only From \$2095 Includes: Tarangire, Ngorongoro, Serengeti, Manyara. Luxury Lodges

The Serengeti Safari 5 Nights/6 Days
Land Only From \$1355 Includes: Ngorongoro Crater, Serengeti, Lake Manyara. Luxury Lodges

The Best of Zambia 9 nights/10 days
Land Only From \$5195 Includes: Victoria Falls, Lower Zambezi and South Luangwa. Luxury Lodges/Tented Camps

The Best of South Africa 7 nights/8 days
Land Only From \$2395 Includes: Kruger, Addo Elephant Park and The Garden Route.
Hotels/Rest Camps

2005 Departures Coming in Next Newsletter September 2004!

Watch for South Africa in Feb/March; Kenya/Tanzania in May/June; A Kenya Family Safari July/August; The Great Migration and Gorillas in September; and top it all of with Mana Pools Canoe Trip and Zambia in September.

Wheew . . . are WE going to have fun!

Join us for the vacation of a lifetime!

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