

The Best of Kenya and Tanzania - September 2006

By Garth Irvine, Zookeeper/Tour Leader



What a trip. One of my best ever! The wildlife God(s) were shining upon us for sure. We had so many truly wonderful and extremely lucky experiences. And on top of that, every second day or so it seems we had a birthday or an anniversary to celebrate and celebrate we did. We celebrated every meal, every zebra, and even every warthog. We had a truly motivated group who kept up a fast pace and were eager for more. Not even bumpy starts, evil hot water bottles nor soapy water could keep them down. Always ready for more.

We had many firsts, even those of us who have been several times. When Nancy asked if she was looking at a Wild Dog in Lake Nakuru we all thought she'd started happy hour early. Sure enough we saw a Wild Dog!!! We all knew what a big deal it was when our guide, Macharia was as excited as we were. Earlier we were treated to a magnificent duel between two massive reticulated giraffes—Lynn thought they might knock each others' heads off! What a spectacle. Later in the Maasai Mara not one, but two river crossings by the massive herd of wildebeest.



Interspersed with more laughter and good friendship. I thought it would be sad to see so many wildebeest carcasses rotting in the river, but it was just



mesmerizing and you could appreciate how fortunate the crocs and vultures were with this windfall. Still the park seems very healthy as this was the biggest migration in 40 years.

Our views of Mount Kilimanjaro and the Ngorongoro Crater were just as fruitful. Elephants, Lions and Jackals oh my!! Highlights or memorable experiences definitely were the Kajiado girls' school and the Maasai village. We will never forget the people we met.

Not all of us were able to visit to Rwanda, but what a jewel! We all made it to have spectacular gorilla viewings of the Sabinyo troop. What a treat to watch a mother very tenderly caring for her babe while we watched from a few meters away. All the while the largest silverback in the park stood guard with very little concern. The next day an even more spectacular trip to see the largest group Sussa with 36, yes 36 individuals. We were surrounded by gorillas just doing their gorilla stuff, feeding, grooming, playing or just snoozing. Even got a look at the set of twins. What a magical time it was. Rwanda did not disappoint and many in the group plan to make a return trip. I can't wait. Join me September 2007 for a repeat performance!

