



## Trip report Tanzania with a focus on mammals and birds

I spend 7 weeks in Tanzania (24.06.-13.8.17). The first 4 weeks I did a Tropical Biology Association Biology Field Course in Amani Nature reserve in the East Usumbara Mountains. Then I went on Safari around Arusha, climbed Kilimanjaro and ended the trip on Zanzibar.

During the course we stayed in the **Amani Nature Reserve** office (-5.101132, 38.629488). Birding is best early mornings and can be tough, especially in the forest. Most mammals I only saw a few times and not regularly.

The special birds, such as the Tailorbird, are difficult without one of the local guides. I recommend Martin Joho (martinjoho2008@gmail.com). Zola is unreliable and did not show up one morning, besides some questionable identifications in the field. Sometimes the Usumbara Eagle Owl (which we saw around the camp thanks to Martin) calls in the night, for Amani Sunbird knowledge of the call is essential and Fisher's Turaco is seen around the football field with some patience. The rest of the endemics and usual targets are difficult without a guide. Other nice birds include Forest Batis, Crowned Hawk-Eagle, Southern Citril, Little Greenbul and Uluguru Violet-backed Sunbird.

I eventually saw most of the (bigger) mammals previously recorded in the area. Blue Monkey (*Cercopithecus stuhlmanni*) is omnipresent, Angola Colobus (*Colobus angolensis*) is shy and requires some luck. African Palm Civet (*Nandinia binotata*) was seen twice near the swamp. One of the traps there caught a probable Natal Multimammate Mouse (*Mastomys natalensis*).

Around the camp, I caught Soft-furred Rats (*Praomys delectorum*). A residential pair of Small-eared Galago (*Otolemur garnettii*) was seen or heard almost every evening. Starting at the camp is trail leading to Mbole Hill (-5.098531, 38.621794), which has especially in the first 100 metres many chameleons of up to 4 species. This trail is also good for mammals with the top being the best place and worth a longer stay: Besides the amazing star sky, the calls of Eastern Tree Hyrax (*Dendrohyrax validus*) and possibility of seeing Mountain Dwarf Galago (*Galagoides orinus*). Mountain Dwarf Galago was seen on most night walks, but sometimes just as jumping shadows in the canopy. The warning call is very distinctive and something like a "che che che che". Bushy-tailed Mongoose (*Bdeogale crassicauda*) and Servaline genet (*Genetta servalina*) were both regularly recorded with camera-traps and seen on the hill trail (Servaline genet once, Bushy-tailed Mongoose twice on top and once on the trail). Giant Pouched rat (*Cricetomys gambianus*) was only seen once. Rodents identified were Hinde's Pouched Rat (*Beamys hindei*).

This trail is also good for birding in the morning with many Silvery-cheeked Hornbills, Green-headed

Oriole, Fork-tailed Drongos and many other forest birds. Go to the top for an amazing view and chance to see Lanner falcon. In the evening, the hornbills fly in and sleep in the trees below.



Another good birding area is the football field (-5.090596, 38.637726): Fisher's Turaco is regularly seen and it's the best place for Trumpeter Hornbill. When walking down the main road from the office, check the spectacular tree at the big junction for sunbirds.

Squirrels can be everywhere, but a good strategy is to follow the river upstream from the swamp in the early morning. Species observed are Zanj Sun Squirrel (*Helioscurus undulates*) and a second species (picture below) that does not quite fit the descriptions, belonging to the Genus *Paraxerus* and most likely *Paraxerus vexillarius*. I am sure a study of the squirrels in the Eastern Arc Mountains would yield some interesting results!

There was a *Nycteris* bat snatching moths from our moth sheet, and once we were capturing bats down at the swamp, resulting in a few Egyptian Rousette (*Rousettus aegyptiacus*). In the forest, unidentified fruit bats were quite common.

Accommodation tip: We stayed at the headquarters. Emau Hill Campsite is much nicer to stay. Apparently, they have African Palm Civet regularly and Clawless Otter from time to time.





After the camp, a small group travelled via Bus to **Arusha** to book Safari. The first three days were spent in Serengeti, followed by a day in the Ngorongoro crater, followed by visits of Tarangire and Arusha National park.

We used a middleman to organize the Safari, we were very happy with his efforts: Ngowo, +255 786 290 448. The first stretch we did with Eastern Sun Tours and driverguide Fred. Fred was not a good spotter, but kept going from six to six without complaining and stopped whenever we asked for that. The following days we choose to go really on budget (still over 100 Dollars per day with park fees) and had another driverguide, which was not as motivated.

The masses of wildlife in **Serengeti**, even if we missed the big migration, is at times overwhelming. Also the ignorance of the people: In the public campsite in the evening some groups played loud music, others watched the newest "Game of Thrones series". Most are only interested in the big five and there are sometimes countless vehicles around a single lion. We still saw some good wildlife for such a short time: Almost 90 cats of 5 Species, 3 species of jackal and many birds (over 200 species in this part of the trip),

Both the Naabi Hill Gate and Serengeti Visitor's Centre are good places to spend some time. At the gate there are Unstriped Grass Rats (*Arvicanthis niloticus*) running around and many birds could be observed, for example Martial Eagle and Tacazze Sunbird.

At the visitor centre are some tame Rock Hyrax (*Procavia capensis*) and Bush Hyrax (*Heterohyrax brucei*), as well I saw Dwarf Mongoose (*Helogale parvula*). Birds include flocks of Sparrows and weavers.



Always a good site are the campsites: We stayed in the public one. Some Dikdik (*Madoqua kirkii*) were stalked by a Spotted Hyaena (*Crocuta crocuta*) that was coming for scraps from the kitchen. There were some *Nycteris*-bats day roosting in an old toilet and in the night a galago jumped around, unfortunately too far for a safe identification and I never heard it call. Birds in this campsite include Pearl-spotted Owlet, Red-throated Tit and many Hornbills.



As in all the parks I visited, night drives are not allowed. However, you are allowed to leave at 6am, giving you about 20min of night driving: We saw some Hares and Serval in the Serengeti, as well early mornings gives you the chance to see hippos (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) out of the water, Side-striped Jackal (*Canis mesomelas*), as well find some things for yourself. We observed some territorial action between two different male groups of Lions, very interesting behaviour!

In the area around the Kopjes, we observed beside Rock Hyrax (*Procavia capensis*) and Klippspringer (*Oreotragus oreotragus*) on the Kopjes itself and a Steenbok (*Raphicerus campestris*) close by. Besides that, this area is also good for Cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*).

Most Servals (*Leptailurus serval*) we saw from the long road going to the Serengeti gate in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.



After the Serengeti, we visited **Ngorongoro crater**: We slept in the public Simba Campsite A to be in the crater early morning. There was a Chestnut Climbing Mouse (*Dendromus mystacalis*) running along one of the bathrooms, as well I saw a Bushpig (*Potamochoerus larvatus*) at the rubbish dump behind the kitchen building. In the night, the camp is visited by Zebra (*Equus quagga*) and Defessa waterbuck (*Kobus ellipsiprymnus ssp. defassa*).

The descend into the crater is spectacular. Even more so if you are greeted by Lion pups playing with their mom. We did a lot of driving in search of the Rhino on this day, with no luck. From all the people I ask if they have seen Rhinos, only someone did. There were some rumours of poaching, as well it is difficult this time of the year, as it is getting hot very quickly, the Rhinos lay down and are almost invisible. We also saw a melanistic Egyptian mongoose (*Herpestes ichneumon*), but species of the day was a Caracal (*Caracal caracal*), about in the middle of the crater.





Next up was **Tarangire**: New landscape, new animals, a lot of Tsetse flies, but most important: Almost no people. We saw mammals such as Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) and many birds, including Ashy Starling.

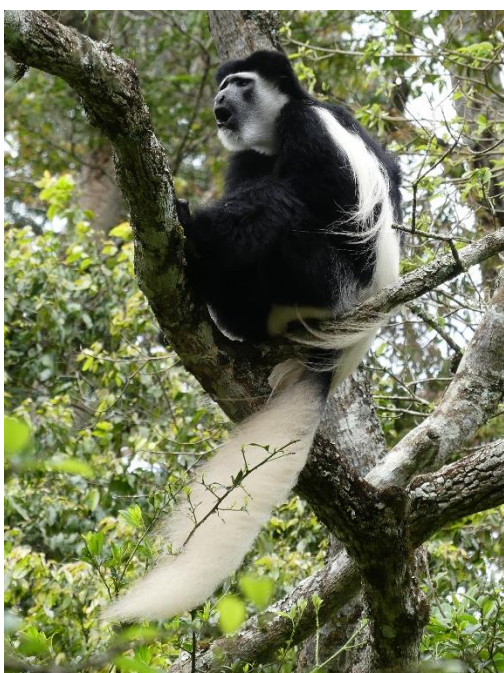
The public campsite was good with a colony of Free-tailed Bats (if anyone knows/finds out the species, I would be happy for an e-Mail!) in the kitchen building, as well it is worth to check the toilets. There was a beautiful Yellow-winged Bat (*Labia frons*) and Common Genet (*Genetta genetta*) in the night. While spotlighting I also found another Pearl-spotted Owlet.

Check the rocks for Hyrax and in the picnic/lookout area there was an Ochre Bush Squirrel (*Paraxerus orchracerus*)



The day we visited **Arusha national park**, the weather was wet. The first time we did the Crater road in the early morning, there were no Quercus Colobus (*Colobus guereza*), however a few Harvey's Duiker (*Cephalophus harveyi*). In the afternoon we found the Quercus colobus (*Colobus guereza*), as well as a mixed bird flock around the museum (where you can get out of the vehicle) with Violet-backed Starling, African Golden Oriole, African Paradise Flycatcher and more.

Probably just pure luck was a sighting of another Serval (*Leptailurus serval*) disappearing into the grass at one of the lookouts over the lake.





I fulfilled myself a childhood dream with climbing **Kilimandjaro**, as well as see the transition from Savannah to forest to moorland to alpine desert.

A few general notes: I took the most popular route, Machame route. On the particular day I was starting, there were another 100 clients starting – together with 600 porters, guides etc. If you have ever been mountain trekking before, I recommend another route, on this one you are never alone. To get to the top is easy, if you don't get hit with mountain sickness (take an extra day like me to make it less likely). The last day is tough though and your body is fighting for oxygen. If you want to see 200 people walking like a penguin – this is the place to go!

Whereas it is much cheaper to book a tour in Arusha, they don't tell you that you basically pay all the salaries in the end (same in some cheap safaris, they call it tipping...).

As this is neither on the usual mammal-nor birdwatchers route, in this part you find all species I observed. Unfortunately, in the montane forest I was only in the afternoon, so for sure, much more can be found there.

While waiting for the permissions at the Machame guide, I was having a look around. I ran in to a mixed flock with Pale Flycatcher, Abyssinian Crimson-wing, the first Eastern Double-collared Sunbird and first Brown Woodland-Warbler among some more common forest birds.

The trek starts in a stunning mountain forest. Here I saw Hartlaub's Turaco, Cinnamon Bracken-Warbler (also common in the transition zone between forest and moorland of camp 1), Eastern Mountain-Greenbul, White-starred Robin, Abyssinian Thrush, Bar-throated Apalis and Oriole Finch. Most common bird in the forest are Montane White-eye.

The first camp is already in the transition to moorland. As in every camp, birds seem to concentrate here, and the mornings are incredibly birdy, in contrary to the path, where sometimes it takes a long time to find any life besides sweaty Homo sapiens. From here on I saw Moorland chat, Hunter's Cisticola, Dusky Turtle-Dove and Streaky Seed-Eater. Also a francolin got away and I found a pair of Tacazze Sunbird.







From this time on, one is mostly (4 of 6 nights) in the alpine desert or the edge of it. Unfortunately, there is almost no life there and it turned out to be less interesting than I hoped. Mesic Four-striped Grass Mouse (*Rhabdomys dilectus*) is common in every camp. Tropical Vrei Rat (*Otomys tropicalis*) are also possible to find. Check for their running tracks and then wait. If you find the right area, they are very common. There was also some duiker dung around one of the camps. High above the base camp at almost 5000 metres were some Alpine Swifts hunting, incredible! The base camp is also the area where they see Bearded vulture. At the camp Barafu Huts at 4680m I also saw Dusky Turtle Dove, which is probably a height record for this species. The White-necked Ravens are also still around at this height.

On the way down, take your time and look for Tree Hyrax in the forest. You can smell their latrines and then check low horizontal branches. Also finally here, I found Red-tufted Sunbird.





Next up was **Zanzibar**, where I visited Jozani forest. Unfortunately, it was raining the whole morning, sometimes pouring down. I arrived at first thing in the morning to not find any ranger that would be willing to guide me before 8. I explored the trails near the parking and found a Red-bellied Bush Squirrel (*Paraxerus palliatus*). Eventually, with a guide, I started looking for Black and Rufous Elephant Shrew (*Rhynchocyon petersi*). My guide was Idi: He tried to overcharge me first and then didn't know the birds, but he was very dedicated to find me the Elephant Shrew. Due to the weather, it was very difficult, as you could not hear any movements. Even Zanzibar Red Colobus (*Procolobus kirkii*) was difficult on this day, until we finally saw one at the ranger station. Finally we took the car to the village football field, there we quickly located a shy pair of Elephant Shrew. At the same time, in the butterfly garden, they had heard about the search, and located one as well, this one much tamer. Birding was difficult the whole morning, highlights include Madagascar Bee-eater, African Crested-Flycatcher, Sombre Greenbul and Mouse-coloured Sunbird.



From the ferry back to Dar es Salam, I saw some nice sea birds such as Sooty Gull and Brown Noddy, as well as Sperm Whale (*Physeter microcephalus*).



Species lists for **Amani**:

*Mammals*

<b>Species name English</b>	<b>Species name Latin</b>
Eastern Tree Hyrax	<i>Dendrohyrax validus</i>
Blue Monkey	<i>Cercopithecus stuhlmanni</i>
Angola Colobus	<i>Colobus angolensis</i>
Small-eared Galago	<i>Otolemur garnettii</i>
Usumbara Galago	<i>Galagoides orinus</i>
Zanj Sun Squirrel	<i>Helioscurus undulatus</i>
Swynnerton's bush squirrel	<i>Paraxerus vexillarius</i>
Giant Pouched Rat	<i>Cricetomys gambianus</i>
Hinde's Pouched Rat	<i>Beamys hindei</i>
Natal multimammate mouse	<i>Mastomys natalensis</i>
Soft-furred Rats	<i>Praomys delectorum</i>
Egyptian Rousette	<i>Rousettus aegyptiacus</i>
Slit-faced Bat	<i>Nycteri sp</i>
Fruit bat sp	
Servaline Genet	<i>Genetta servalina</i>
Bushy-tailed mongoose	<i>Bdeogale crassicauda</i>
Banded Mongoose	<i>Mungos mungo</i>
African Palm Civet	<i>Nandinia binotata</i>

Birds:

<b>Species Name English</b>	<b>Species name Latin</b>
African Harrier-Hawk	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>
Banded Snake-Eagle	<i>Circaetus cinerascens</i>
Crowned Hawk-Eagle	<i>Stephanoaetus coronatus</i>
Long-crested Eagle	<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>
Tawny Eagle	<i>Aquila rapax</i>
African Fish-Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>
Gray Crowned-Crane	<i>Balearica regulorum</i>
Lemon Dove	<i>Columba larvata</i>
Blue-spotted Wood-Dove	<i>Turtur afer</i>
Tambourine Dove	<i>Turtur tympanistria</i>
African Green-Pigeon	<i>Treron calvus</i>
Fischer's Turaco	<i>Tauraco fischeri</i>
African Emerald Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx cupreus</i>
White-browed Coucal	<i>Centropus superciliosus</i>
Usambara Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo vosseleri</i>
African Wood-Owl	<i>Strix woodfordii</i>
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
African Palm-Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>
Speckled Mousebird	<i>Colius striatus</i>
Silvery-cheeked Hornbill	<i>Bycanistes brevis</i>
Trumpeter Hornbill	<i>Bycanistes bucinator</i>



Gray-headed Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>
Green Barbet	<i>Stactolaema olivacea</i>
Green Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus simplex</i>
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus bilineatus</i>
Green-backed Honeyguide	<i>Prodotiscus zambesiae</i>
Scaly-throated Honeyguide	<i>Indicator variegatus</i>
Greater Honeyguide	<i>Indicator indicator</i>
Mombasa Woodpecker	<i>Campethera mombassica</i>
Green-backed Woodpecker	<i>Campethera cailliautii</i>
Cardinal Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>
Lanner Falcon	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>
Short-tailed Batis	<i>Batis mixta</i>
Pale Batis	<i>Batis soror</i>
Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher	<i>Bias musicus</i>
Black-backed Puffback	<i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>
Brown-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra australis</i>
Black Cuckooshrike	<i>Campephaga flava</i>
African Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus auratus</i>
Square-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus ludwigii</i>
Fork-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>
Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>
White-necked Raven	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>
Rock Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne fuligula</i>
Lesser Striped-Swallow	<i>Cecropis abyssinica</i>
Mosque Swallow	<i>Cecropis senegalensis</i>
Black Sawwing	<i>Psalidoprocne pristoptera</i>
Shelley's Greenbul	<i>Arizelocichla masukuensis</i>
Stripe-cheeked Greenbul	<i>Arizelocichla milanjensis</i>
Little Greenbul	<i>Eurillas virens</i>
Northern Brownbul	<i>Phyllastrephus strepitans</i>
Cabanis's Greenbul	<i>Phyllastrephus cabanisi</i>
Yellow-streaked Greenbul	<i>Phyllastrephus flavostriatus</i>
Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>
Evergreen-forest Warbler	<i>Bradypterus lopezi</i>
Black-headed Apalis	<i>Apalis melanocephala</i>
Green-backed Camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>
Long-billed Tailorbird	<i>Artisornis moreaui</i>
Red-faced Cisticola	<i>Cisticola erythrops</i>
Tawny-flanked Prinia	<i>Prinia subflava</i>
Green-headed Oriole	<i>Oriolus chlorocephalus</i>
Dusky-brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>
White-browed Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha heuglini</i>
Brown-chested Alethe	<i>Pseudaethe poliocephala</i>
African Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>
Red-tailed Ant-Thrush	<i>Neocossyphus rufus</i>



Kurrichane Thrush	<i>Turdus libonyana</i>
Red-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>
Waller's Starling	<i>Onychognathus walleri</i>
Kenrick's Starling	<i>Poeyoptera kenricki</i>
Black-bellied Starling	<i>Notopholia corrusca</i>
Uluguru Violet-backed Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes neglectus</i>
Banded Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes rubritorques</i>
Collared Sunbird	<i>Hedydipna collaris</i>
Eastern Olive Sunbird	<i>Cyanomitra olivacea</i>
Amethyst Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra amethystina</i>
African Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>
Cabanis's Bunting	<i>Emberiza cabanisi</i>
Southern Citril	<i>Serinus hypostictus</i>
Baglafaecht Weaver	<i>Ploceus baglafaecht</i>
Spectacled Weaver	<i>Ploceus ocularis</i>
Forest Weaver	<i>Ploceus bicolor</i>
Grosbeak Weaver	<i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>
Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>
Red-headed Bluebill	<i>Spermophaga ruficapilla</i>
Black-and-white Mannikin	<i>Spermestes bicolor</i>

Species lists for the mammals in **Serengeti, Ngorogoro Conservation Area, Tarangire National Park, Arusha National Park and Zanzibar**. If no place is given, the species was seen in most National Parks.

Sperm whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>	between Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam
Rock Hyrax	<i>Procavia capensis</i>	Serengeti, Tarangire
Bush Hyrax	<i>Heterohyrax brucei</i>	Serengeti, Tarangire
Bush Elephant	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>	
Querza Colobus	<i>Colobus guereza caudatus</i>	Arusha National Park
Olive Baboon	<i>Papio anubis</i>	
Vervet Monkey	<i>Chlorocebus pygerythrus</i>	
Blue Monkey	<i>Cercopithecus mitis</i>	Arusha National Park
Unstriped Grass Rat	<i>Arvicanthis niloticus</i>	Serengeti
Chestnut Climbing Mouse	<i>Dendromus mystacalis</i>	Ngorongoro
Mesic Four-striped Gras Mouse	<i>Rhabdomys dilectus</i>	Kilimanjaro
Tropical Vrei Rat	<i>Otomys tropicalis</i>	Kilimanjaro
Ochre Bush Squirrel	<i>Paraxerus orchracerus</i>	Tarangire
Hare	<i>Lepus</i> sp	Serengeti
East African Springhare	<i>Pedetes surdaster</i>	Tarangire
Yellow-winged Bat	<i>Labia frons</i>	Tarangire
Slit-faced Bat	<i>Nycteris</i> sp	Serengeti
Free-tailed Bat sp		Tarangire
Side-striped Jackal	<i>Canis mesomelas</i>	Serengeti
Black-throated Jackal	<i>Canis adustus</i>	Serengeti
Common Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>	



Lion	<i>Panthera leo</i>	
Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	Serengeti
Serval	<i>Leptailurus serval</i>	Serengeti, Arusha National Park
Caracal	<i>Caracal caracal</i>	Ngorongoro
Cheetah	<i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>	Serengeti, Tarangire
Common Genet	<i>Genetta genetta</i>	Tarangire
Spotted Hyena	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>	
Ichneumon Mongoose	<i>Herpestes ichneumon</i>	Ngorongoro
Dwarf Mongoose	<i>Helogale parvula</i>	Serengeti
Banded Mongoose	<i>Mungos mungo</i>	
Common Zebra	<i>Equus quagga</i>	
Bushpig	<i>Potamochoerus larvatus</i>	Ngorongoro
Common Warthog	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>	
Common Hippopotamus	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>	
Masai Giraffe	<i>Giraffa tippelskirchi</i>	
African Buffalo	<i>Syncerus caffer</i>	
Bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus scripts</i>	Ngorongoro
Common Eland	<i>Taurotragus oryx</i>	Serengeti
Harvey's Duiker	<i>Cephalophus harveyi</i>	Arusha National Park
Steenbok	<i>Raphicerus campestris</i>	Serengeti
Kirk's Dikdik	<i>Madoqua kirkii</i>	
Thomson's Gazelle	<i>Eudorcas thomsonii</i>	
Grant's Gazelle	<i>Nanger granti</i>	
Bohor Reedbuck	<i>Redunca redunca</i>	
Waterbuck	<i>Kobus ellipsiprymnus ellipsiprymnus</i>	Arusha National Park
Defessa waterbuck	<i>Kobus ellipsiprymnus defassa</i>	
Klippspringer	<i>Oreotragus oreotragus</i>	Serengeti
Impala	<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>	
Topi	<i>Damaliscus lunatus jimela</i>	Serengeti
Hartbeest	<i>Alcelaphus buselaphus cokii</i>	Serengeti
Brindled Gnu	<i>Connochaetes taurinus albojubatus</i>	Tarangire
Brindled Gnu	<i>Connochaetes taurinus mearnsi</i>	Ngorongoro