

A couple of trips to Africa (2022 – Tanzania, 2024 – Namibia)

I have been following this site and the adventures of Jon Hall since I first discovered it circa 2006/7. I feel a little guilty (well maybe a lot 😊) that I have used it extensively to plan holidays but never actually contributed.

Anyway I recently left a long term job, so my excuses of work are void.

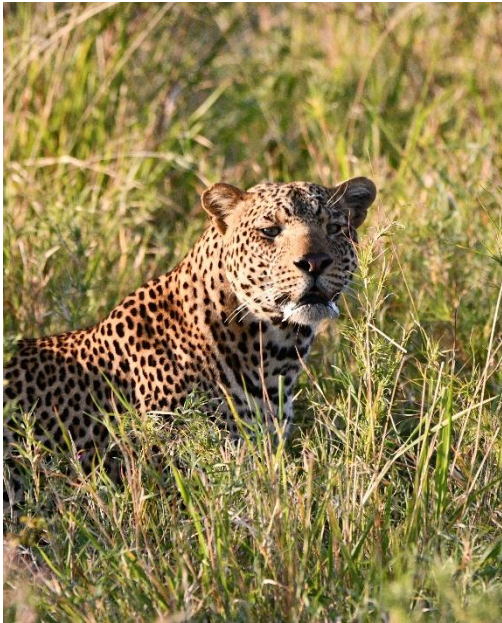
We have this scale in my family that my kids and I term the Andaman metric. We rate every place we stay at based on the accessibility of wildlife spotting. That is we want to be lying by the poolside or heading back from the bar to accommodation and see cool things. For reference the Andaman resort on Langkawi in Malaysia was a fantastic resort (sadly now burnt down) that had all number of animals living within the grounds. Colugo and Black Giant Squirrels could be found in broad daylight in the pool area and at night the Red Giant Flying Squirrels gliding between trees were a sight to behold. As a benchmark I know that many on this site rate Deramkot. I agree it is among the very best mammal spotting I have seen, however it is lower on the Andaman scale than you intuitively may think – as you need to hop in a vehicle and drive down the road, then have a family of Dusky Langurs or a Malayan civet on your balcony!

TANZANIA

In July 2022, with international borders relaxing, my family of five ventured to Tanzania. In summary we saw 50 species in two weeks. I found the Stuarts African Mammal App excellent for quickly identifying and tracking your mammal list. The list and location is included. We went with Big Cat Safaris. Fairly affordable and easily found on the Safari Bookings website to compare against other offerings. We were able to hire a Toyota Landcruiser that fitted just us and tailor the holiday to what we wanted to see. Hubbard was our guide – initially he was reserved and keen to find us the usual Big 5 offerings, but once he discovered we were into seeing as many and as obscure species as possible he quickly got into the game. His eyes for spotting wildlife are outstanding!

I won't get into a blow by blow of locations. These are better covered in multitude of other earlier Tanzanian reports. I would single out however a couple of highlights using the Andaman scale. Firstly a concession near Mt Kilimanjaro, Elerai Tented Camp rates very highly. Being a private concession it does not have the restriction of the national parks and will do night drives. We chose not to – and I very much regret! However, around the camp during daylight there were many of the usual suspects that could be seen without too much trouble, hyraxes, warthogs, giraffe, gerenuk, dik dik etc. Why I would rate this place up there with the Andaman was nighttime was fantastic. From the dining hut – one could view Northern lesser galago in the rafters and ratel and crested porcupine from 8pm looking for scraps from the kitchen.

After Tarangire, Serengeti and Ngorongoro we concluded the holiday with a few days on the beach at Zanzibar. I would call out also Unguja Lodge in the south of the island. It has Zanzibar Red Colobus, Suni and a lifer for me; the spectacular Black and Rufous Sengi. All easily seen within the grounds. The proprietor also told me that Tree Hyrax was present, but despite a lot of spot lighting and setting of the camera trap we failed to see it.



NAMIBIA

In January 2024 my wife and I headed to Namibia. We chose to go with Nature Travel who provided a guide and a car to ferry us between locations. To be honest if I had my time again, I probably would not have bothered with the guide. Unlike Tanzania, the roads, signposting and infrastructure are excellent and it would be easy to navigate yourself between locations without too much trouble. In addition our guide was not that knowledgeable on the animals and one could have just gone with game drives if necessary provided from the accommodation.

Going in January, the hottest and wettest time of the year, sighting animals is not as easy as during the dry when they are congregated around waterholes and the ground cover low. Though we still managed to see 42 mammal species across 2 weeks. List attached.

Worthy of mention on the Andaman scale was Okonjima Nature reserve; Bushveld Sengi, Common Duiker, Gemsbok, Greater Kudu, jackals, yellow mongooses etc etc all sighted from the comfort of the accommodation. The highlight was Temminck's Ground Pangolin at 1am in the morning after several hours searching with a guide provided from the Reserve. They apparently have Brown Hyena and we signed up for a guide to take us out to find one, "The endangered species tour". In my view the tour leaves too late to find one and just ventures to the White Rhinos (which are conveniently tracked).

Damaraland is also worth a visit and not just for the desert adapted elephants. Dassie rats and Western Rock sengi are all easily seen within the grounds of the Twfelfonten Country Lodge. Speaking to a guide at the Twfelfontein rock art site they occasionally saw Black Mongoose preying on Damara Ground Squirrels. We saw the squirrels but not the mongoose:(

Etosha was excellent as expected of Namibia's most famous national park, although as stated earlier at that time of year the waterholes are a little empty. I can also commend finishing the trip in Namibia with a journey along the Caprivi Strip to Chobe in Botswana, to capture species adapted to riverine environments such as Lechwe, Puku and Southern Reedbuck.

Namibia is a beautiful country and certainly one I would be keen to return to.



Tanzania		Namibia / Botswana	
Species	Location	Species	Location
Black and Rufous Sengi	Zanzibar	Bushveld Sengi	Okonjima
White-bellied Hedgehog	Arusha	Western Rock Sengi	Twyfelfontein
Yellow-winged Bat	Serengeti	Chacma Baboon	Etosha
Northern Lesser Galago	West Kilimanjaro	Malbrouck's Monkey	Caprivi
Yellow Baboon	West Kilimanjaro	Temminck's Ground Pangolin	Okonjima
Vervet Monkey	Tarangire	Cape Hare	Okonjima
Gentle Monkey / Blue Monkey	Cercopithecus mitis	Damara Ground Squirrel	Twyfelfontein
Guereza Colobus	Arusha	Southern African Ground Squirrel	Etosha
Zanzibar Red Colobus	Zanzibar	Noki / Dassie Rat	Twyfelfontein
Savanna Hare	Serengeti	Side-striped Jackal	Chobe
Sun Squirrels	Arusha	Black-backed Jackal	Etosha
Bush Squirrels	Zanzibar	Yellow Mongoose	Okonjima
Grass Rats	Serengeti	Spotted Hyaena	Etosha
Cape Crested Porcupine	West Kilimanjaro	Cheetah	Etosha
African Golden Wolf	Canis lupaster	Leopard	Etosha
Black-backed Jackal	Tarangire	Lion	Etosha
Side-striped Jackal	Ngorongoro	African Savanna Elephant	Etosha
Honey Badger / Ratel	West Kilimanjaro	Rock Hyrax	Etosha
White-tailed Mongoose	Ngorongoro	Rock Hyrax	Twyfelfontein
Banded Mongoose	Tarangire	Mountain Zebra	Okonjima
Slender Mongoose	Tarangire	Plains Zebra	Okonjima
Spotted Hyaena	Tarangire	White Rhinoceros	Okonjima
Cheetah	Serengeti	Black Rhinoceros	Etosha
Leopard	Serengeti	Common Hippopotamus	Caprivi
Lion	Serengeti	Common Warthog	Okonjima
Serval	Serengeti	Giraffe	Twyfelfontein
African Savanna Elephant	West Kilimanjaro	African Buffalo	Caprivi
Bush Hyrax	West Kilimanjaro	Greater Kudu	Okonjima
Rock Hyrax	Serengeti	Southern Bushbuck	Chobe
Plains Zebra	Tarangire	Gemsbok	Okonjima
Common Hippopotamus	Serengeti	Sable Antelope	Okonjima
Common Warthog	West Kilimanjaro	Waterbuck	Chobe
Giraffe	West Kilimanjaro	Puku	Chobe
Common Eland	Serengeti	Lechwe	Caprivi
Lesser Kudu	West Kilimanjaro	Common Reedbuck	Caprivi

Southern Bushbuck	Serengeti	Topi	Twyfelfontein
African Buffalo	Serengeti	Common Wildebeest	Etosha
Waterbuck (Common and Defassa)	Serengeti	Impala	Etosha
Bohor Reedbuck	Serengeti	Springbok	Etosha
Hartebeest	Serengeti	Steenbok	Etosha
Topi	Serengeti	Common Duiker	Okonjima
Common Wildebeest	Serengeti	Vervet Monkey	Chobe
Impala	Serengeti	Banded Mongoose	Etosha
Gerenuk	West Kilimanjaro	Rope Squirrels	Etosha
Grant's Gazelle	Serengeti	Bush Squirrels	Caprivi
Thomson's Gazelle	Serengeti	Western Rock Sengi	Twyfelfontein
Suni	Zanzibar	Chacma Baboon	Etosha
Kirk's Dik-dik	West Kilimanjaro		
Ugogo Dik-dik	West Kilimanjaro		
Black Rhinoceros	Ngorongoro		