

Kenya – Um Bongo

14th – 23rd February 2025





Somali Lesser Galago

Introduction

Mike Richardson organised a trip to Kenya with the hope of seeing the very rare Mountain Bongo. John Sadler and myself joined him in this quest.

We flew with British Airways from Heathrow to Nairobi.

Mike Richardson's report will have specific location details of some of the mammals we saw.



White Throated Bee-eater



Buffalo and Mount Kenya

Saturday 15th February



Nile Crocodile

We had arrived very late the previous night and stayed near the airport, we were picked up by our guide at 7am and headed off to Nairobi National Park a short distance away. We quickly found white rhino's, plains zebra and a few hartebeest. A cheetah sighting we followed up came to nothing, it had moved on, but we did catch up with two lionesses hunting. There was plenty of birds to get into African black crane, Malachite kingfisher and marabou storks and some flyover grey crowned cranes. One of the best birds was a scarlet breasted sunbird.



Common Fiscal



White Rhino



Common Hippopotamus

We caught up with some hippos and Nile crocodiles in a small lake and some Masai giraffe nearby. As we left the park we encountered a small troop of Blue monkeys.

We drove to Aberdare region, staying just outside the national park, the hotel staff were not too keen on us wandering around looking for nocturnal wildlife so we curtailed our walk and called it a night.

I ran the moth trap, I had a few moths but no hawkmoths.



Common Ostrich



Scarlet Chested Sunbird



Black Winged Kite

Sunday 16th February

An early start and we headed to the Aberdare National park a few miles away. We spent the morning driving round the national park, the vegetation was quite thick and spotting wildlife was quite difficult but we managed to find a few buffalo, olive baboons, a black fronted duiker and a few elephants. We drove to the high area of the park where the forest changes to moorland. Here we had our packed lunch, we shared it with several Mountain chats, Mesic Four-striped Grass Mouse and Zena Brush-furred Rats. The afternoon we searched the national park lower areas again, finally our major target Giant Forest Hog was spotted standing in the middle of the road, a very large boar. Along a small river were two Grey Crowned cranes showing very well, other birds encountered included Cinnamon breasted bee-eaters, Abyssinian thrush and Jackson's spurfowl.



Giant Forest Hog

We headed to our lodging for the night Rhino Retreat Cottage. The cottage overlooked a mineral lick where animals come to eat minerals and it was not long before 5 elephants arrived and we had amazingly close views of them while we enjoyed a drink on the veranda. A further 7 elephants arrived a short time after and we watched them until dark.



Aberdare National Park

I set up the moth trap and located three Giant forest hogs as I did so. We cooked our meal and settled down for the night to watch for the rare Mountain bongo that occasionally visit. The caretaker had seen one the night before and he would watch the mineral lick via CCTV all night and would wake us if a bongo turned up.

I could not sleep properly and kept waking up and looking out of my bedroom window, spotted hyenas, buffalo and elephants were present during my checks and a male bushbuck got me excited at one point. I got up just after 5am and there was a buck Mountain Bongo, I grabbed the phone for a couple of record photos and alerted Mike and John who both saw it, awesome. The moth traps held a nice selection of moths, including several nice hawkmoths, one was identified as a convolvulus hawkmoth.



Mountain Bongo



African Elephant



Grey Crowned Crane



Jackson's Spurfowl



Zena Brush-furred Rat

Monday 17th February

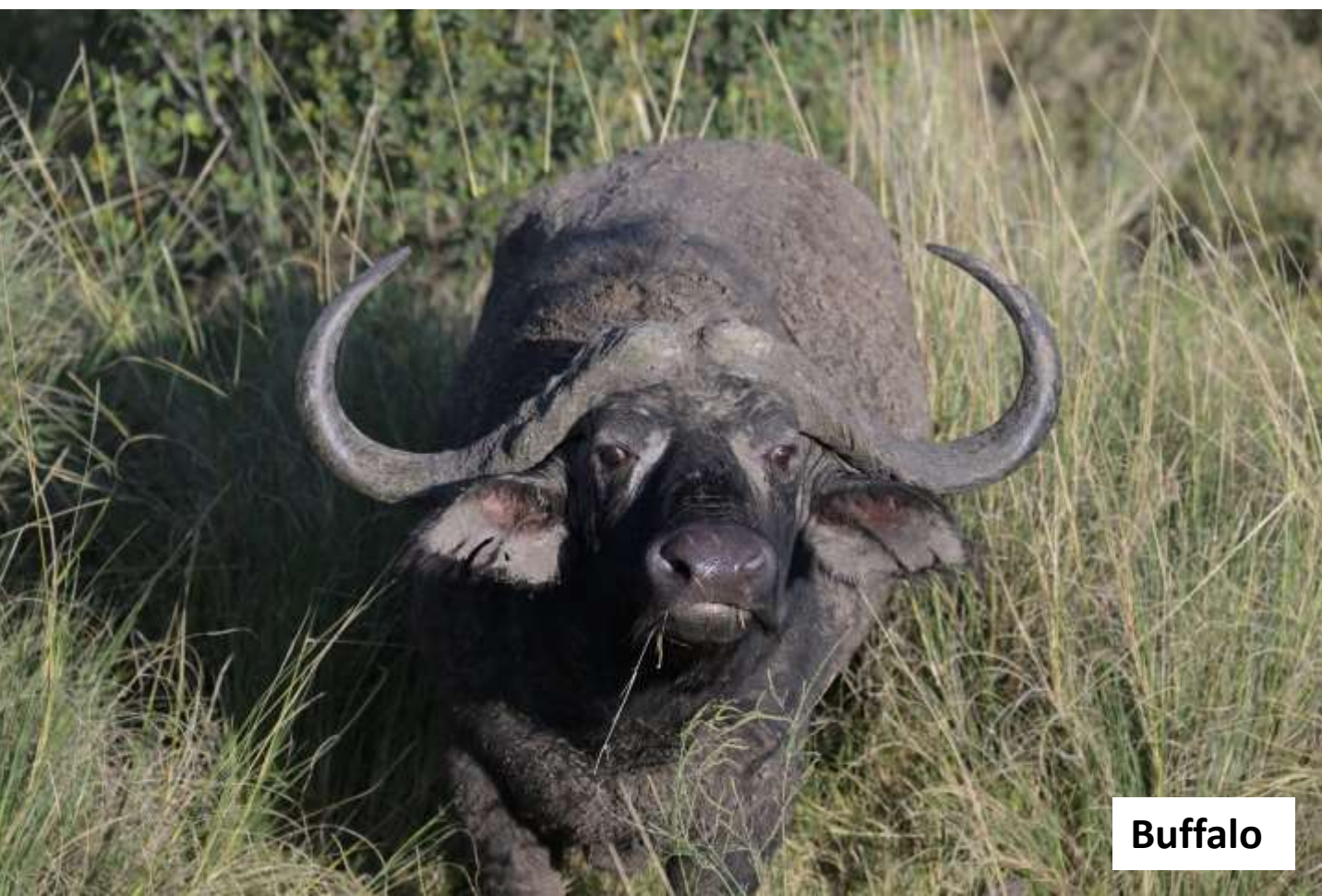
We drove to the Ol Pejeta Conservancy, making a touristy stop at the Equator on the way, and again in the reserve itself as we crossed the Equator again.

We settled into our accommodation and had some lunch. We took an afternoon drive in the reserve, our first stop was at the visitor centre where we visited a blind black rhino who lives there, it was nice to see one so close with its attendant yellow billed oxpecker.

On the drive we quickly caught up with Reticulated giraffes, common warthog and eventually a black rhino. We had plenty of Thompson's gazelles and found some Whites' gazelles. There were plenty of birds such as Superb starlings, White breasted bustard, Verreaux Eagle owl, Long tailed Widowbird, African hoopoe, saddle billed stork and Mariqua sunbird.

We had a night drive but we did not see very much, a couple of spotted hyenas and a white tailed mongoose but close views of three male lions did rescue the drive.

The moth trap was covered in moths but most were emeralds.



Buffalo



Impala



Superb Starling

Tuesday 18th February

We had a morning drive round the Ol Pejeta Conservancy where we caught up with both Kirk's dik-dik and Gunters dik-dik along with the commoner mammals.

Late morning we headed to Meru National park on what was another hot day, close to the park we stopped at a farm where a farmer showed us naked mole rat mounds and he even managed to catch one for us for photos before allowing it to go back to its underground burrow.

We had some lunch at the lodge before heading for an afternoon drive into the National park. The park was full of birds every tree had a roller, mostly European but also some lilac breasted rollers as well. Plenty of other birds as well, Pygmy falcons, Bateleur and a very close Kori bustard were some of the highlights

Mammal wise we found Lesser Kudu and the strange looking Gerenuk our first Beisa oryx's of the trip.

Our post dinner night walk was very successful with a short eared galago, white bellied hedgehog, white tailed mongoose in the grounds of the camp but we could not find any lesser galagoes.

Moth trapping was successful with some beetles, three praying mantis species and a nice selection of small moths.



Naked Mole Rat



Blue Monkey



African Hoopoe



African Lion



Long Tailed Widowbird



African Lion

Wednesday 19th February

I found two lesser galagoes walking to the vehicle for our dawn drive and we spotted others as we entered Meru National Park. On our drive we had all the usual mammals including some sleeping lionesses, plenty of rollers, tawny eagles, some lovely white throated bee-eaters, long crested eagle, crested francolin.

We drove to Samburu spotting some Somali ostrich before reaching our lodge where we had some lunch. A greater kudu was walking round the perimeter of the camp fence from our room before we met up with one of the security guards who took us to an old building which had a heart nosed bat roost.

The afternoon drive produced good numbers of Beisa oryx and our first Grevy's zebra, Somali ostrich, grey headed kingfisher, dark chanting goshawk and an African orange bellied parrot.

We took a night walk round the grounds joined by the security guard who showed us the bat roost, we located some yellow winged bats, heart nosed bat, large spotted genet, Sundevall's Acacia Rat, African civet, nightjar sp and some lesser Kudu, an excellent haul.



Lesser Kudu



Kori Bustard

Thursday 20th February

We headed off for a very early morning drive to try to beat the heat, Martial eagle and black bellied bustard, a couple of marsh harriers were all showing well. We had a good selection of mammals including Kirks Dik-Dik but were still missing one target Somali dwarf mongoose but eventually we found a group inhabiting an old termite mound that showed very nicely. With the heat now oppressive we headed back to the lodge for lunch.

The afternoon drive proceeded without John who was not feeling well, we did not see much new but we did have nice views of a good-sized herd of Grevy's zebra and a single lioness. Bird wise we had little bee-eaters, yellow billed storks, African hawk eagle and white bellied bustard.

We headed to the gatehouse and as dusk fell little free tailed bats started to emerge, at least a hundred maybe more.

The night walk not a patch on the previous evenings with just nightjar, yellow winged bat and heart nosed bat all we find, what a difference a day makes!

The moth trap had been taken down or knocked down so only a couple of moths were present, and I packed the trap up and called it a night.



Bright's Gazelle



Heart Nosed Bat



Beisa oryx



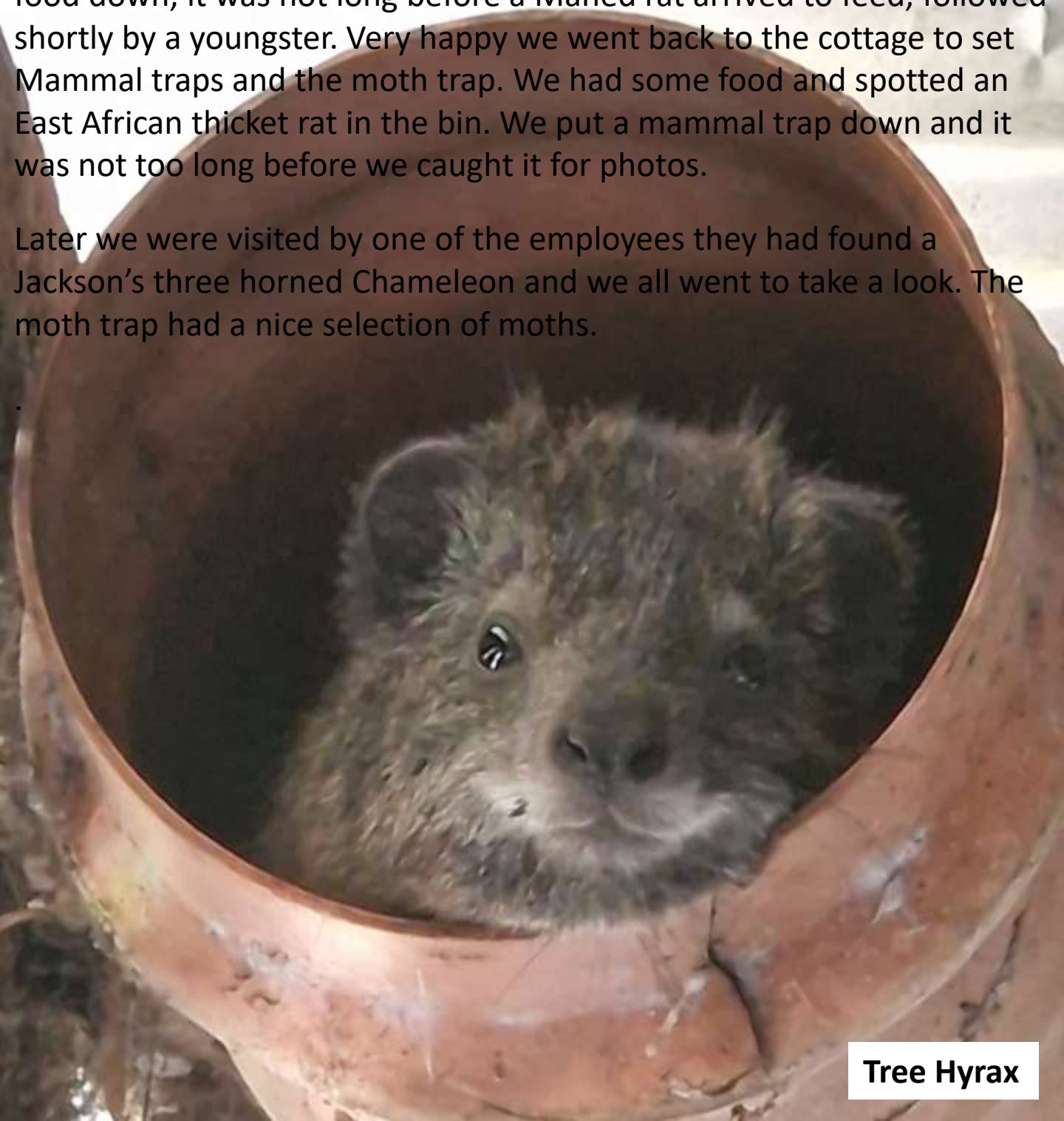
Secretarybird

Friday 21st February

We headed off for an early drive to beat the heat again, we came across 4 jackal pups who were quite interested in us and came close to investigate, we searched for Desert warthogs but could not find any (although review of photos later we did in fact see some), we still found a nice selection of mammals including some nice waterbucks and a few elephants.

We had some lunch in town before heading off, our destination was Trout tree farm. They have a small rustic cottage you can stay in which we had booked for the night. We settled in and then had a guided tour by one of the employees. He showed us tree hyraxes resting in a shed, a troop of Guereza colobus monkeys and a couple of Blue monkeys. We had a break before taking a walk round to see some other mammals and birds we could not find any mice or rats but we did find an Ochre tree squirrel. The main event was to visit a drain where we put some food down, it was not long before a Maned rat arrived to feed, followed shortly by a youngster. Very happy we went back to the cottage to set Mammal traps and the moth trap. We had some food and spotted an East African thicket rat in the bin. We put a mammal trap down and it was not too long before we caught it for photos.

Later we were visited by one of the employees they had found a Jackson's three horned Chameleon and we all went to take a look. The moth trap had a nice selection of moths.



Tree Hyrax



Maned Rat



Jackson's three horned Chameleon



Guereza colobus



Common Warthog

Saturday 22nd February

We checked the mammal traps first thing, only one was tripped which contained a black rat. We headed off did some shopping and had lunch before arriving at the Soysambu Conservancy. We met one of the conservancy guides and headed to a cave to see bats. The chalk caves are actually old mines used by hyenas as a den and was full of bones. The cave held 4 species of bats, all easy to see on the low ceilings.

We went to our camp to settle in, it was very hot so we opted for a late game drive. Our first stop was by the lake where lesser flamingos and great white pelicans and lots of waders were present. But we were after mammals and quickly found Nubian (Rothschild's) Giraffes, spotted hyenas, Grants gazelle and eventually Cavendish's dik-dik.

We got back to the camp to pick up a local guide for our night drive and set up the moth trap and mammal traps. The rather windy night drive produced over 20 spotted hyenas, several African savannah hares, white tailed mongoose. Jackal, Cavendish's dik-dik and eventually East African spring hares. Back at the camp I reset the moth trap which had blown over but it had plenty of moths in already. We had something to eat and got some sleep.



Agur Buzzard



Spotted Hyena



Lesser Flamingos



Landers Horseshoe Bat



Gerenuk

Sunday 23rd February

We checked the mammal traps first thing we had 3 striated grass mice, which were quite tricky to handle, a Neumann's Grass Rat and a mouse that looked like a wood mouse or Apodemus sp of some kind, we did not have an ID so took some measurements and subsequently got the ID as Hinde's Veld Rat.

After our breakfast we headed out of Soysambu Conservancy passing the common grazing animals along the way, our destination was Mount Suswa. We encountered some troops of Baboons along the way and a few plains zebra and gazelles in conservancies along the way. We met our local Masai guide and headed into Mount Suswa conservancy.

Here we visited a couple of caves in search of bats and in 2 of the 3 caves there were massive colonies of Harrison's Large eared Giant Mastiff bats, thousands and thousands of them. The roosts were amazing the sound and smell quite impressive.

We looked for Rock Hyrax near the caves but only found Tree squirrels and Kenyan rock agama.

We thanked our bat guide and headed back to Nairobi, bid our main guide farewell then had a shower and something to eat before the overnight flight home.



Harrison's Large eared Giant Mastiff bats



Gunther's Dik-Dik



Nubian Giraffe

Lists



Grevy's Zebra

Birds - 160



Avocet	Greater Blue eared Starling	Red fronted Parrot
Abyssinian Thrush	Green Wood Hoopoe	Red Fronted Tinkerbird
African black crake	Green-backed camaroptera	Red Headed Weaver
African Dusky Flycatcher	Grey Apalis	Red Rumped Swallow
African Fish Eagle	Grey Crowned Crane	Ring Necked Dove
African Hawk Eagle	Grey Headed Gull	Ringed Plover
African Hoopoe	Grey Headed Kingfisher	Rosy Patched Bushshrike
African Jacana	Grey Heron	Ruff
African Marsh Harrier	Grey Wren Warbler	Rufous Chatterer
African Paradise Flycatcher	Gull Billed Tern	Saddle Billed Stork
African Pied Wagtail	Hadada ibis	Scarlet Chested Sunbird
African Pygmy Falcon	Hammerkop	Secretary Bird
African Sacred Ibis	Helmeted Guineafowl	Sentinel Lark
African Spoonbill	Hilderbrand’s Starling	Shelly’s Francolin
Augur Buzzard	Jackson’s Spurfowl	Slate Coloured Boubou
Bagafecht weaver	Kenya Rufous Sparroe	Somali Ostrich
Barn Swallow	Kenya White eye	Speckled Mousebird
Bateleur	Kenyan Rufous Sparrow	Speckled Pigeon
Black Headed Heron	Kori Bustard	Speke’s Weaver
Black Kite	Lesser Flamingo	Spotted Eagle Owl
Black Saw Wing	Lesser Whitethroat	Spotted Palm Thrush
Black Winged Kite	Lilac Breasted Roller	Spur winged lapwing
Black Winged Stilt	Little Bee-eater	Streaky Seedeater
Blacksmith Plover	Little Stint	Striated Heron

Blue Naped Mousebird	Little Swift	Superb Starling
Brimstone Canary	Long Crested Eagle	Tawny Eagle
Bronze Sunbird	Long Tailed Cormorant	Tawny Flanked prinia
Buff Crested Bustard	Long Tailed Fiscal	Thick Billed Seed eater
Cape Rook	Long Tailed Sunbird	Three Banded plover
Cattle Egret	Long Tailed Widowbird	Tropical Boubou
Chestnut Bellied Sandgrouse	Malachite Kingfisher	Variable Sunbird
Chinspot Batis	Marabou Stork	Verreaux's Eagle Owl
Cinnamon Chested Bee-eater	Mariqua Sunbird	Violet Backed Starling
Common bulbul	Marsh Sandpiper	Vulturine Guineafowl
Common Fiscal	Martial Eagle	Wahlberg's Eagle
Common Greenshank	Meyer's Parrot	Western reef Egret
Common Moorhen	Mocking Cliff Chat	White Bellied Bustard
Common Ostrich	Mountain Buzzard	White Bellied Go-away bird
Common Sandpiper	Mountain Chat	White Browed Coucal
Crested Francolin	Namaqua Dove	White Browed Robin Chat
Crowned Lapwing	Northern Pied babbler	White Browed Sparrow Weaver



Pygmy Falcon



Somali Ostrich

Eastern Chanting Goshawk	Northern White Crowned Shrike	White Faced Whistling Duck
Egyptian Goose	Nubian Woodpecker	White Headed Buffalo Weaver
Emerald Spotted Wood dove	Pied Crow	White Stork
European Roller	Pied Kingfisher	White Throated Bee-eater
Fisher’s Sparrow Lark	Pin Tailed Whydah	Wood Sandpiper
Fork tailed Drongo	Purple Grenadier	Yellow Billed Duck
Golden Winged Sunbird	Red Billed Oxpecker	Yellow Billed Egret
Grasshopper Buzard	Red Cheeked Cordon Bleu	Yellow Billed Oxpecker
Great Cormorant	Red Eyed Dove	Yellow Billed Stork
Great White Egret	Red faced Crombec	Yellow Necked Spurfowl
Great White Pelican	Red Fronted Barbet	Donaldson Smith's Sparrow-Weaver
Golden Pipit	Red-fronted Prinia	Parrot-billed Sparrow
Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird		

Mammals - 70

Masai Giraffe	Reticulated Giraffe	Nubian Giraffe
Beisa Oryx	Hartebeest	Impala
Waterbuck	Gerenuk	Bright’s Gazelle
Grant’s Gazelle	Thomson’s Gazelle	Gunther’s Dik-dik
Kirk’s Dik-dik	Cavendish’s Dik-dik	Black-fronted Duiker
Common Eland	Mountain Bongo	Cape Bushbuck
Greater Kudu	Lesser Kudu	African Buffalo
Common Hippopotamus	Common Warthog	Giant Forest Hog
Black Rhinoceros	White Rhinoceros	Plains Zebra
Grevy’s Zebra	White-tailed Mongoose	Spotted Hyena
Somali Dwarf Mongoose	African Civet	Large-spotted Genet
Lion	Black-backed Jackal	‘African’ Bent-winged Bat
Yellow-winged Bat	Harrison’s Giant Mastiff Bat	Heart-nosed Bat
‘Natal’ Bent-winged Bat	Eloquent Horseshoe Bat	Little Free-tailed Bat
Lander’s Horseshoe Bat	Neumann’s Grass Rat	Epauletted Fruit Bat
White-bellied Hedgehog	Savanna Hare	Cape Hare
Naked Mole-rat	East African Springhare	Hinde’s Veld Rat
Sundevall’s Acacia Rat	Mesic Four-striped Grass Mouse	Black Rat
Striated Grass Mouse	East African Thicket Rat	Nile Grass Rat
Zena’s Brush-furred Rat	Maned Rat	Unstriped Ground Squirrel
Ochre Bush Squirrel	Somali Lesser Galago	Small-eared Greater Galago
Blue Monkey	Vervet Monkey	Olive Baboon
Guereza Colobus	African Bush Elephant	Southern Tree Hyrax
Desert Warthog		



Somali Slender Mongoose

Herps - 15

Kenyan Rock Agama	Nile Crocodile	Western Plated lizard
Red Lipped Snake	Jackson's three Horned Chameleon	Ground Agama
Nile Monitor	African Five Lined Skink	Tropical House gecko
Guttural Toad	Rough Scaled Plated Lizard	Terrapin sp



Kenyan Rock Agama

Selected Others



White Ribbon Flower
Mother of Thousands
Jasminum grandiflorum
Lions ear

Lions ear

Selected Insects

African Golden Arab	Convolvulus Hawkmoth	Euproctis lucifuga
Fall Armyworm Moth	Pyrausta gemmiferalis	Mung Bean Moth
Hawaiian Beet Webworm Moth	Mediterranean Brocade	Slender Burnished Brass
Sorghum Stem Borer	Cataloipus oberthuri	African Clouded Yellow
Slender Burnished Brass	Euproctis lucifuga	Pioneer White
Scarlet tip	Wandering Glider	Yellow Banded Pansy



flickr

