

Short stopover in Kenya



Vervet Monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*)



Olive Baboons (*Papio anubis*)

On our way to Madagascar, we had the chance to spend a day in **Nairobi**. We decided to rent a car and visit the nearby Nairobi National Park. It's a small park located close to the airport, but you can still see quite a good variety of species there.

We booked a 4x4 vehicle for a specific time at the Hertz branch right at the airport. The daily rental fee was 98 USD (deposit about 2000 USD), which wasn't exactly cheap – and to make things worse, no one was there at the scheduled time. We waited for almost an hour before anyone even answered the phone, and as it turned out later, the car itself wasn't great either. Another rather annoying issue – **tickets can only be purchased online**. That wouldn't be a problem in itself, but first you have to register on one website, then buy the entry on another one, and the system kept crashing and showing error messages. The next challenge was paying for the vehicle entry – it couldn't be paid by card, and cash wasn't accepted at the gate. So we had to walk around asking local visitors to pay with their card and take our cash in exchange. It was honestly one of the most chaotic experiences I've ever had. In the end, it would have been much more efficient to simply take a taxi and enter the park with a local driver. However, our original plan was to visit a chameleon locality just outside the city in the evening, so having our own car seemed like the better option at the time. However, by the time we finished at the park, we didn't have the energy or time left for the chameleon trip, so renting the car turned out to be pretty unnecessary after all.

Right at the park entrance, **Common Warthog** (*Phacochoerus africanus*) were running around. We didn't have much time, so we only drove through a small section of the park (see the blue points on the map). Additional, a major issue became apparent: our 4x4 wasn't really suitable for rough terrain, so it was difficult to reach some areas. For example, when another vehicle gave us a tip about a lion group, we weren't able to get there.

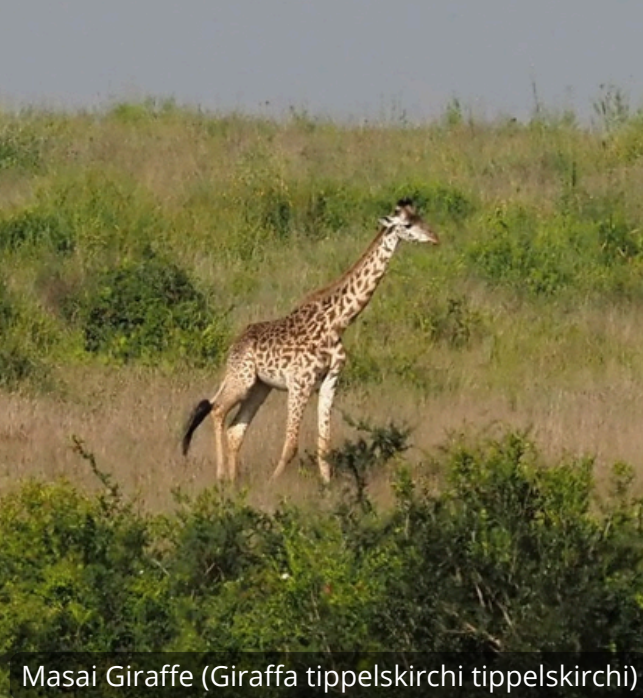


Map of Nairobi National Park

Slender Mongoose (*Herpestes sanguineus*)Suni (*Nesotragus moschatus*)Impala (*Aepyceros melampus melampus*)

Right on the approach road, a large group of **Olive Baboons** (*Papio anubis*) was sitting around, and a little further along, we spotted a group of **Vervet Monkeys** (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*). As we drove through the park, we gradually spotted a whole range of species: many **Impalas** (*Aepyceros melampus melampus*), a group of **Hippopotamuses** (*Hippopotamus amphibius*), **Suni** (*Nesotragus moschatus*), **African Buffalo** (*Syncerus*

Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*)Southern White Rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum simum*)Coke's Hartebeest (*Alcelaphus buselaphus cokii*)

Masai Giraffe (*Giraffa tippelskirchi tippelskirchi*)Suni (*Nesotragus moschatus*)Variable Sunbird (*Cinnyris venustus*)

caffer caffer), **Coke's Hartebeest** (*Alcelaphus buselaphus cokii*), **Slender Mongoose** (*Herpestes sanguineus*), **Masai giraffe** (*Giraffa tippelskirchi tippelskirchi*). My disappointment at not being able to reach the lions didn't fade until a gray shape appeared on the horizon – we debated for a long time whether it could be a rhinoceros. Part of the group clearly saw it, while others weren't even sure through their binoculars... But eventually, the creature moved, and we were able to spot several **Southern White Rhinoceroses** (*Ceratotherium simum simum*) in the distance. When we tried to get closer, a female with her calf appeared right on the road just a few meters from us!

During our drive through the park, we spotted also a variety of birds. Highlights included Sacred Ibises (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*), Helmeted Guineafowls (*Numida meleagris*), White-headed Lapwings (*Vanellus armatus*), and African Vultures (*Gyps africanus*). We also saw Long-tailed Shrikes (*Lanius cabanisi*), Pin-tailed Whydahs (*Vidua macroura*), Ostriches (*Struthio camelus*), and Egyptian Geese (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*). Among the herons and cranes were Black-headed Herons (*Ardea ibis*), Grey Herons (*Ardea cinerea*), and the striking Grey Crowned Cranes (*Balearica regulorum*). Other sightings included Senegal Coucals (*Centropus superciliosus*), Little Bee-eaters (*Merops pusillus*), Emerald-spotted Doves (*Turtur chalcophilus*), Hadada Ibises (*Bostrychia hagedash*), Spotted Thick-knees (*Burhinus capensis*), African Darters (*Anhinga rufa*), and African Pied Wagtails (*Motacilla aguimp*). We also managed to spot colorful finches and sunbirds, such as Red-billed Firefinches (*Lagonosticta senegala*), Variable Sunbirds (*Cinnyris venustus*), and Violet-breasted Waxbills (*Granatina ianthinogaster*). Finally, majestic raptors like the African Fish Eagle (*Ichthyophaga vocifer*), as well as Sentinel lark (*Corypha athi*) and Three-banded Plovers (*Thinornis tricolor*).

Personally, I'm disappointed that we didn't manage to see any predators, but maybe we'll have a layover in Nairobi again someday and get another chance.

Common Warthog (*Phacochoerus africanus*)Pin-tailed Whydah (*Vidua macroura*)



Sacred Ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*)



Grey Crowned Crane (*Balearica regulorum*)



African Fish Eagle (*Ichthyophaga vocifer*)



Hadada Ibis (*Bostrychia hagedash*)



African Vulture (*Gyps africanus*)



Ostriches (*Struthio camelus*)



Red-billed Firefinch (*Lagonosticta senegala*)



Helmeted Guineafowl (*Numida meleagris*)



Nile Crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*)

List of Mammals:

1. Impala (*Aepyceros melampus*)
2. Common Warthog (*Phacochoerus africanus*)
3. Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*)
4. African Buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*)
5. Hartebeest (*Alcelaphus buselaphus*)
6. White Rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum simum*)
7. Vervet Monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*)
8. Slender Mongoose (*Herpestes sanguineus*)
9. Suni (*Nesotragus moschatus*)
10. Olive Baboon (*Papio anubis*)
11. Masai Giraffe (*Giraffa tippelskirchi tippelskirchi*)

List of Birds:

1. Sacred Ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*)
2. Helmeted Guineafowl (*Numida meleagris*)
3. White-headed Lapwing (*Vanellus armatus*)
4. African Vulture (*Gyps africanus*)
5. Long-tailed Shrike (*Lanius cabanisi*)
6. Pin-tailed Whydah (*Vidua macroura*)
7. Ostrich (*Struthio camelus*)
8. Egyptian Goose (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*)
9. Black-headed Heron (*Ardea ibis*)
10. Grey Crowned Crane (*Balearica regulorum*)
11. Senegal Coucal (*Centropus superciliosus*)
12. Little Bee-eater (*Merops pusillus*)
13. Emerald-spotted Dove (*Turtur chalcospilos*)
14. Hadada Ibis (*Bostrychia hagedash*)
15. Spotted Thick-knee (*Burhinus capensis*)
16. Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)
17. African Darter (*Anhinga rufa*)
18. African Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla aguimp*)
19. Red-billed Firefinch (*Lagonosticta senegala*)
20. Variable Sunbird (*Cinnyris venustus*)
21. Violet-breasted Waxbill (*Granatina ianthinogaster*)
22. Reichenow's Seedeater (*Crithagra reichenowi*)
23. African Fish Eagle (*Ichthyophaga vocifer*)
24. Sentinel Lark (*Corypha athi*)
25. Three-banded Plover (*Thinornis tricolor*)

List of Reptiles:

1. Nile Crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*)