

KENYA

03 October – 15 October 2021

Introduction

At first my plan was not to do any trip report of this tour in Kenya. mostly because it felt like it would not add anything new as this was more a traditional safari trip rather than a specific mammalwatching tour.

I also did not visit any new areas directly and all the three places I visited are pretty well described here already.

But I changed my mind, and write something together. Maybe it makes someone happy, I do not know.

The three places I visited was:

Mara north in the mara ecosystem. I always go to the private concessions in Masai Mara and previously visited Olare Motorogi, Naboisho and Ol Kinyei. I had Mara North left and now was the time for a visit

I stayed at the lovely camp Offbeat Mara Camp: <https://www.offbeatsafaris.com/offbeatmara>

I did not expect any new lifers here but in the end I actually got some.

I stayed for 4 nights and got my own car all the time due to lack of people in the camp. One of the few benefits of a pandemic is that you can have the whole Masai Mara almost to yourself...

Tsavo east. Main target here was to see the worlds most endangered antelope – Hirola.

I stayed 3 nights in Ashnil Aruba Lodge, right in the middle of the park: <https://www.ashnilhotels.com/aruba/>

The lodge is quite big and it lacks a bit of “safari feeling” but it’s a nice place with very good food and has an excellent position in the middle of the park.

Arabuko-Sokoke forest. This was the place that hopefully would give me some lifers. And it did.

I stayed 6 nights in Ocean Sport Resort: <https://www.oceansports.net/>

Close to the ocean, well priced and the best food of the trip! They also arranged my stay in the forest and by chance they paired me with the same guide that Venkat Sankar got – David Ngala.

David in turn had arranged both a car and a driver for me for three days and I did 3 mornings and 3 nightdrives. The other three nights I just stayed at the lodge and did more or less nothing.

I booked the first two parts – Mara north and Tsavo east with Gamewatchers safaris: <https://www.porini.com/>

I have boked many times with them for traditional safari trips and find them excellent. Everything worked out perfectly as usual. We went by car between Nairobi – Tsavo east and then onto Watamu for my stay in Ocean Sport Resort which I had booked separate.

For Mara North I had a flight.



Arabuko-Sokoke forest

In the end I got **58 species** and **21 lifers**. Way more lifers than I expected as this was not a specific mammalwatching tour but more of a safari photograph tour.

My species list

1. **Cheetah** --- 7 of them seen in Mara North and 2 in Tsavo east



2. **Lion** --- Everywhere in Mara north and Tsavo east



3. **Leopard** --- Only one sighting. In Tsavo east. One of the worst sightings ever of a Leopard ever recorded 😊
Only the tail...



4. **Plains Zebra** --- Mara North and Tsavo east. Everywhere.



5. **Hirola --- (lifer)** After 4-5 hours of searching on the roads close to Satao camp – Tsavo east, we finally got a group of 7. The area around Satao Camp and Bachuma plain is the best place to see them as I understand it. This is where Jon Hall saw them and this is where we found them as well.



6. **Peter's gazelle --- (lifer)** Seen in Tsavo east. Subspecies of Grant's gazelle but now considered as its own species. Gigantic horns! The soil in Tsavo east must be something...



7. Thomson gazelle --- Very common in Mara north



8. Topi --- Very common in Mara north



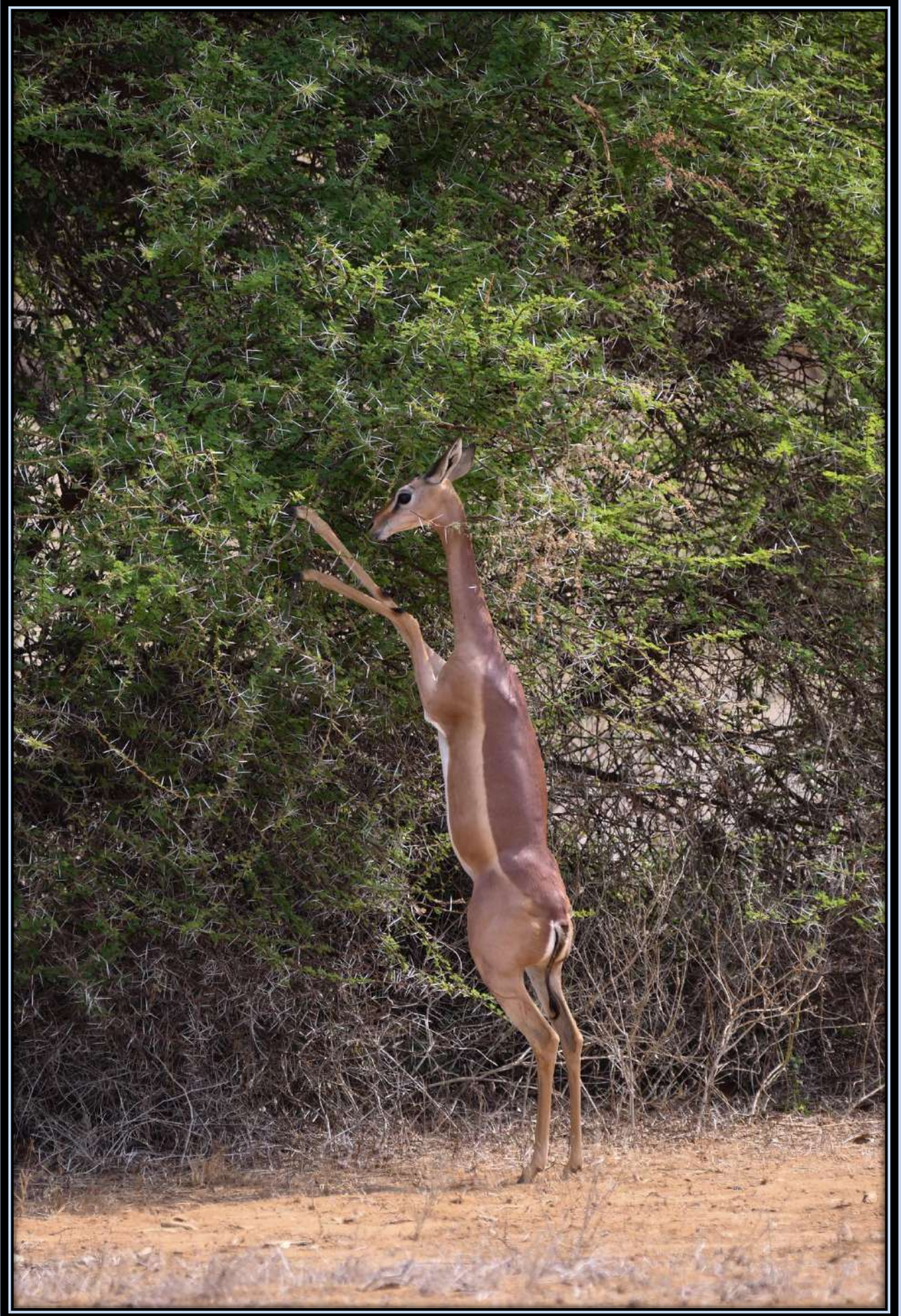
9. African buffalo --- Very common in Mara north



10. Eland --- Common in Both Mara north and Tsavo east.



11. Gerenuk --- Common and easily seen in the dry Tsavo east



12. Kirk's dik-dik --- Common in the lush areas of Mara north



13. Beisa oryx --- A few individuals seen in Tsavo east



14. Lesser kudu --- A few individuals seen in Tsavo east



15. Bushbuck --- Only one in Mara north and a couple in Arabuko-Sokoke



16. Waterbuck --- Common in Tsavo east



17. Impala --- Very common in Mara north and Tsavo east



18. Steenbok --- 3 individuals seen in Tsavo east



19. Coke's hartebeest --- Very common in Tsavo east and a few individuals in Mara north



20. Suni --- Common in Arabuko-sokoke. 6-7 individuals seen.



21. African elephant --- Plenty of them seen in all three places including Arabuko-Sokoke where they gathering together at the waterhole every evening.



22. Masai giraffe --- Very common in Mara north and Tsavo east



23. Desert warthog --- (lifer) Seen in Tsavo east and along with Hirola and Peter's gazelle, one of the three lifer targets for me here.



24. Spotted hyena --- Very common in Mara north



25. Black-backed jackal --- Seen every now and then in both Mara north and Tsavo east



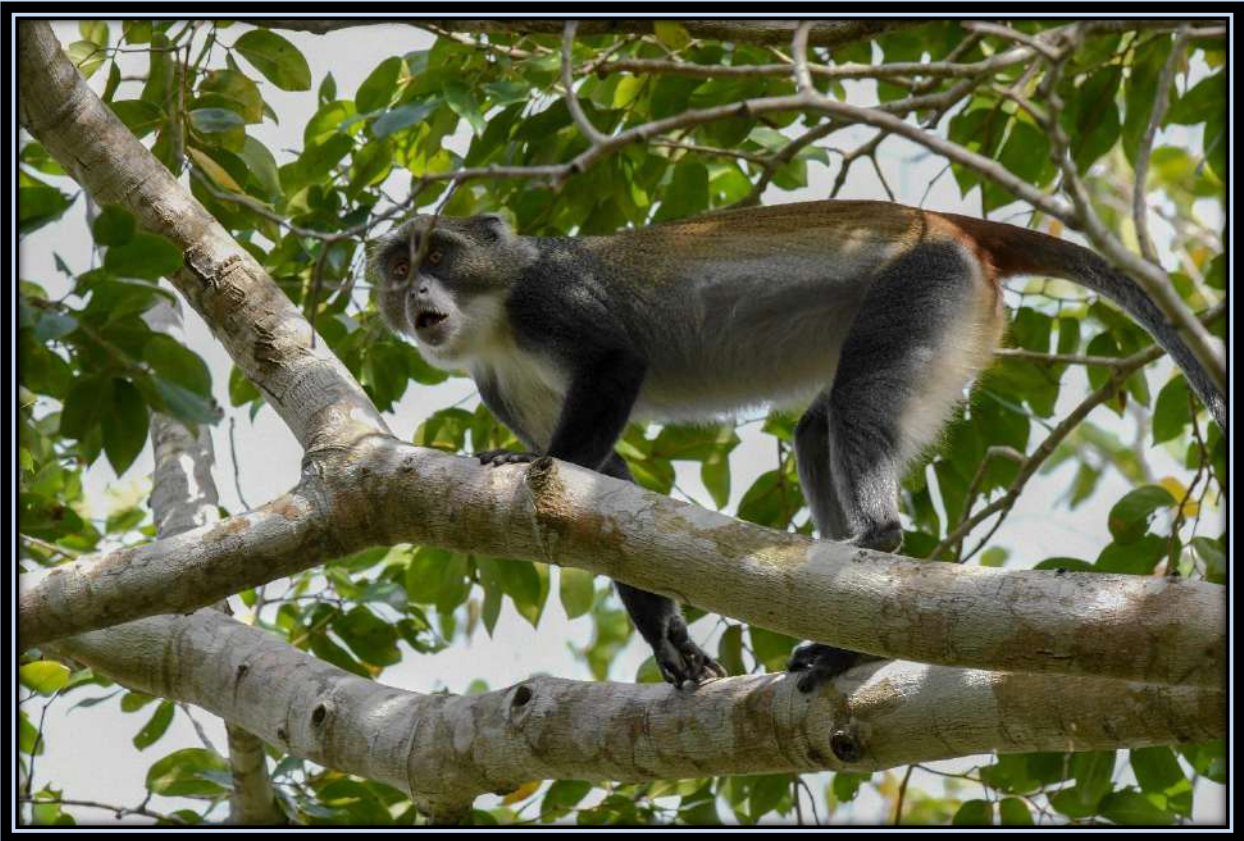
26. **African civet** --- One seen during a nightdrive in Arabuko-Sokoke. If you look close you see some eyeshine in the middle of the road. That's the civet 😊



27. **Yellow baboon** --- Troops seen in Arabuko-Sokoke



28. Syke's monkey --- (lifer) Common in Arabuko-Sokoke and a lifer for me



29. Northern greater galago --- (lifer) Fairly easy to find in Arabuko-Sokoke. Another lifer from this forest.



30. Vervet monkey --- Common in Mara north and Tsavo east



31. Kenya coast galago --- (lifer) Fairly easy to find in Arabuko-Sokoke. You just have to look at the right type of forest.



32. Rock hyrax --- Seen both day and night in Mara north.



33. Crested porcupine --- (lifer) 1 seen during a nightdrive in Mara north. A nice lifer for me as I have only seen Cape porcupine before, the ones further south. The highlight of my only nightdrive in Mara north.



34. White-tailed mongoose --- Very common in early morning and on nightdrive in Mara north



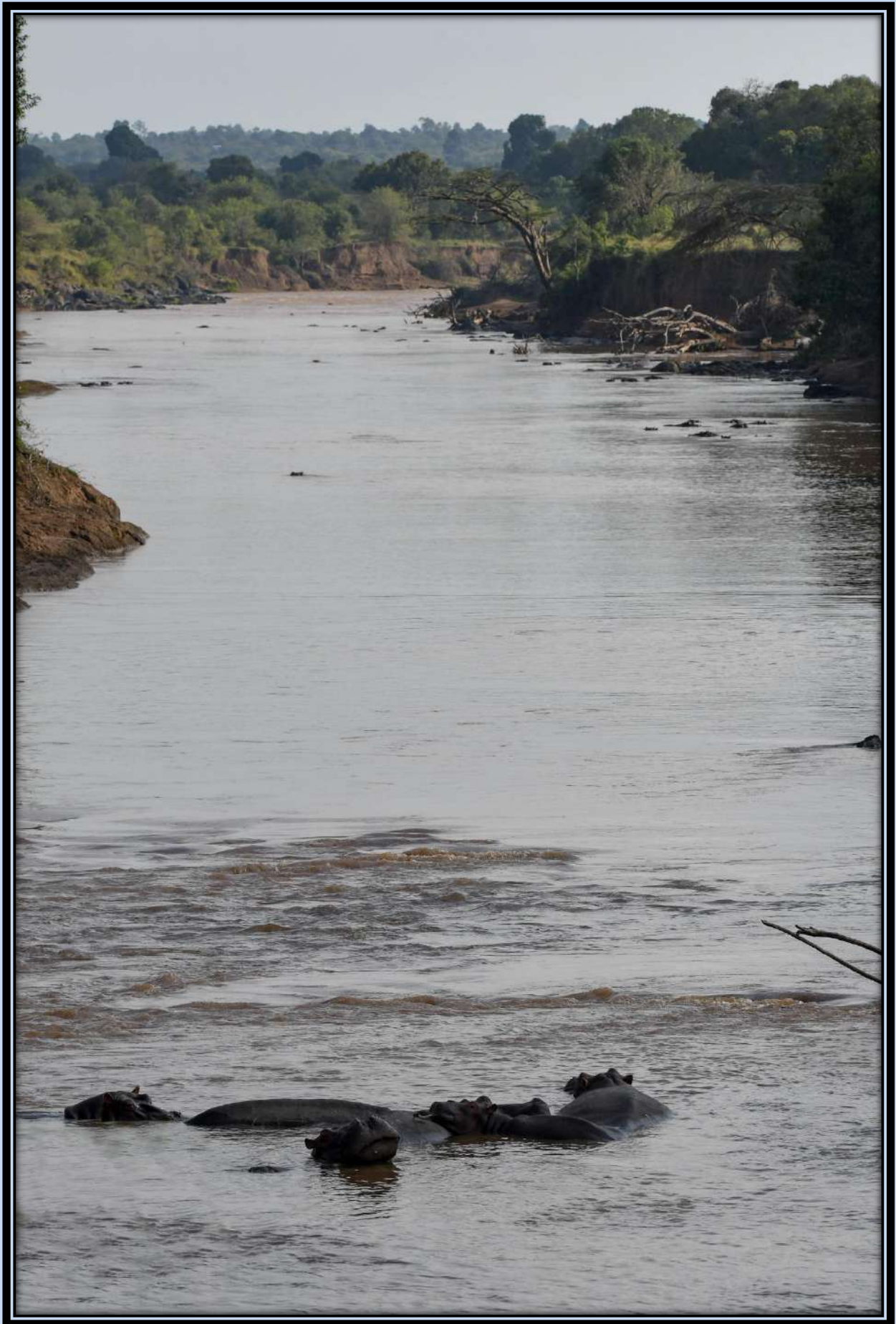
35. Dwarf mongoose --- Common in Tsavo east. First mammal I saw in Tsavo east. Already at the VOI gate.



36. Banded mongoose --- Common in Mara north



37. Hippo --- Seen in Mara river where they are everywhere



38. Golden-rumped elephant shrew --- (lifer) The star of Arabuko-Sokoke. Easy to find around the entrance office when walking around. Also a few along the road. Around 10 individuals seen.



39. Four-toed elephant shrew --- (lifer) Very common in parts of Arabuko-Sokoke. They are everywhere if you are in the right habitat. Must av seen around 30 individuals.



40. Red bush squirrel --- (lifer) The easier one of the two species of squirrel to find in Arabuko-Sokoke. 6-7 individuals seen.



41. Zanj sun squirrel --- (lifer) We struggled a bit with this one but got a good look the last morning close to the entrance office in Arabuko-Sokoke.



42. Hairy slit-faced bat --- (lifer) Day roosting at the camp in Mara north. I got two at my tent.



43. Wahlberg's epauletted fruit bat --- (lifer) Common in the fruit trees close to entrance office in Arabuko-Sokoke.



44. Egyptian fruit bat --- (lifer) I took a tuk-tuk to the man-made cave close to the police station in Watamu to see this bat on one of my last days. It's thousands of them inside. I wasn't allowed to get inside but could see them from a ledge



45. Common genet --- One seen during nightdrive in Mara North and one visited our dinner...

46. East african springhare --- (lifer) Seen during nightdrive in Mara north. Lifer for me as I have only seen the cape springhare before.

47. Savanna hare --- Seen during nightdrive in Mara north.

48. Grant's gazelle --- common in Mara north.

49. Blue wildebeest --- As the migration didn't reached Mara north this year due to the rains there were only few residents left of them.

50. Olive baboon --- Troops in lush areas close to water in Mara north.

51. Common warthog --- Common in Mara north.

52. Slender mongoose --- One seen crossing the road early morning in Tsavo east. Distinct black tip of the tail.

53. Harvey's duiker --- (lifer) One seen crossing the road in Arabuko-Sokoke. Brief sighting. Not many left in this forest due to heavy poaching.

54. Ochre bush squirrel --- (lifer) One seen in Tsavo east early morning crossing the road.

55. Southern giant pouched rat --- (lifer) A real beast crossing the road in Arabuko-Sokoke during a nightdrive.

56. African frass rat --- (lifer) One seen in camp in Mara north.

57. Yellow-winged bat --- (lifer) Common in campsite in Mara north during night when they flying around searching for food.

58. Northern silver galago (otolemur monteiri) --- (lifer) One visit our dinner at campsite in Mara north. Split from the Brown greater galago.

Some other cool creatures



Sokoke scops owl (red morph)

Endemic to this patch of forest and one place in Tanzania.



Nile monitor lizard in Mara north

Stuff I missed

No **Soko** **dog** **mongoose** in Arabuko-sokoke for me despite passing the area several times where Venkat Sankar saw this species.

I also had hoped for **Zorilla** during night drives in Mara north but no one showed up. My guide told me that he sees them every now and then when there has been some rain. Which in fact was the case during my stay and therefore we could only do one night drive out of three.

Serval still eludes me big time. I have seen one before in Amboseli but long time ago and I had hoped for some better photos of this feline.

Also the **Leopard** was a noticeable miss. Not just that it only was a tail hanging down from a tree. There was also bad light ... on the tail 😊

Four-toed hedgehog didn't showed up in the garden of my stay at Ocean Sport resort. They are fairly common here.



Mara north



My veranda at Ocean sport resort - Watamu

Thanx alot to my guide David Ngala in Arabuko-Sokoke for a fantastic 3 days visit and also to Offbeat Mara Camp for a fantastic stay and guiding.

Last but not least thanx to another great tour organized by Gamewatchers safari and my guide in Tsavo east – Allan who was dedicated in finding me the Hirola 😊

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