

Tanzania Wildlife & Birding Safari Species List | 24 February – 9 March, 2026 With Naturalist Journeys



Guide Washington Wachira & Greg Smith of Naturalist Journeys plus eight participants: Kate & Fiona, Karen, Gina, Wendi, Rami, Donna and Terri



Africa, a place all of us dreamed of as children. Images of striped horses, animals with necks so long that they stoop two stories high and big, flightless birds that could outrun us on our bicycles. And here were in person visiting the fabled Serengeti Plains. It was even better than our story books made out! We had the Big Five many times over, with multiple white rhinoceros and multiple black rhinos, herds and herds of African buffalo, eleven different prides of lions, a few hundred elephants (both red and gray), and four leopards! We also had cheetah, caracal and a melanistic serval.

Tanzania, a country in Eastern Africa filled with the wildest diversity of mammals, some of the darkest night skies and abundant bird species. Our tour was planned for late summer, a time when birds were moving into post-breeding dispersal.

While we had unseasonably early rains, we were still able to get through to all our planned locations. Maybe a day later than expected, but we enjoyed each of our scheduled lodges.

With eight clients, two exceptional driver naturalists and one Tanzania-seasoned guide, we did our best to find as many resident and migrant species at the end of the Austral summer. We found 53 different mammal species and were fortunate to get close to 390 different bird species as the summer nesting season was drawing to a close.

We visited the world-famous Serengeti Plains and Ngorongoro Crater, experiencing iconic scenery and wildlife. We had thirteen rhinoceros of both the African species in the crater, an exceptional day for these declining species. Giraffes and impalas have never made it down into the crater, but the Serengeti and all the other national parks we visited had loads of these two species.

Tanzania has over 1100 species of birds and we had a respectable 390 plus of those species. We had seven species of cuckoos, sorted through the thirteen species of plovers and came away with seeing ten of them, 25 species of diurnal raptors, eight of the nine shrike species, ten different Cisticolas and nine of the ten swallow species. An exceptional number of species!

Link to the eBird Trip Report where all of our checklists can be found here:

[Tanzania Wildlife & Birding Safari | Feb. 24 – Mar. 9, 2026 | eBird Trip Report](#)

MAMMALS – (53)

HYRAXES: Hyracoidea (3)

Southern Tree Hyrax *Dendrohyrax arboreus* – We found a few of this species in the trees along Ngorongoro Crater

Rock Hyrax *Procavia capensis*—Very in rocky locations (of course...), with loads of them from both the balloon ride and in Tangarire NP.

Bush Hyrax *Heterohyrax brucei* – These white-bellied hyrax were spotted in Arusha National Park.

ELEPHANTS: Proboscidea (1)

African Bush Elephant *Loxodonta Africana*—Common, more so in Botswana than Namibia

CERCOPITHECIDAE: Old World Monkeys (5)

Mount Kilimanjaro Guereza *Colobus guereza caudata*– The black & white colobus were quite common around our lodging at Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge.

Olive Baboon *Papio anubis*– Most entrance gates to the parks had a squadron of these baboons looking for a handout.

Hilgert's Vervet Monkey *Chlorocebus pygerythrus hlgerti*– Not uncommon, but our sightings were always in forested habitat.

Zanzibar Sykes Monkey *Cercopithecus mitis albogularis*– (3) Ngare Sero and Aruha NP.

Manyara Monkey *Cercopithecus mitis manyaraensis*– (1) Big groups at Lake Manyara NP.

GALAGIDAE: Galagos or Bush Babies(1)

Senegal Lesser Galago *Euoticus s. senegalensis* – Tarangire night drive and in the rafters of some of our rooms.

SCIURIDAE: Squirrels (2)

Ochre Bush Squirrel *Paraxerus ochraceous*– Seen in forested areas, at Ngare Sero Lodge in Arusha, and then Tarangire NP.

Unstriped Ground Squirrel *Xerus rutilus*– Seen on both days in Tarangire NP, especially around our lodge.

MURIDAE: Rats (1)

Nairobi Grass Rat– We saw them on drives in the Lake Nduvu area.

PEDETIIDAE: (1)

Eastern African Springhare *Pedetes surdaster* – Our vehicles on the night drive at Tarangire NP saw this species.

LEPORIDAE: True Hares (1)

African Savanna Hare *Lepus microtis* – First seen in Ngorongoro Crater then in the Lake Nduvu area and finally on our night drive in Tarangire NP.

MEGADERMATIDAE: Bats (1)

Yellow-winged Bat *Lavia frons* - Day roost in the amphitheater at Oldupai Gorge.

CANIDAE: Canids (3)

African Wolf (Golden Jackal) *Canis lupaster* – Seen quite well, on our drive from Ngorongoro to Lake Nduvu..

Black-backed Jackal *Lupulella mesomelas* – Seen on a number of days and usually in pairs.

Bat-eared Fox *Otocyon megalotis* – Only seen on our night drive at Tarangire NP.

FELIDAE: Cats (5)

Lion *Panthera leo* – This iconic mammal of Africa did not disappoint us, as we had sightings on several days. We saw a variety of ages and groupings of females, males and both sexes together. Several times they were sleeping shade, but often trading places, greeting each other, grooming. One young male stretched, groomed, and got up to scratch on a tree and pull down fibers it ran through its teeth like a toothbrush. For all our sightings, it is probably the grunts and roars in the night that were most memorable, we heard them close at several of our tented camps – unforgettable!

Leopard *Panthera pardus* – We had a very memorable afternoon sighting, finding one that we knew was active in the area up a tree. We stayed parked as other vehicles gathered, and watched it settle in to nap, occasionally opening an eye or moving a bit. It then got up and did a great cat stretch, yawned, and walked down the massive tree limb to descend the tree – wow!

Caracal *Caracal caracal* -

Serval *Leptailurus serval* – We watched one individual hunting and moving through the grass at the edge of the forest on a loop drive through Ngorongoro Crater.

Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* – Seen in Ndotu, on an amazing 3 cat day, Cheetah, Lion and Leopard. Our first sighting was a group of three, a mother with two almost grown youngsters, resting in the shade. They moved around a bit but were done for the morning, settling in to sleep as only cats can do. We had quite a bit of company there for our cat sightings in Ndotu, so finding two brothers with just a few of us to watch them driving back from our afternoon drive in Tarangire was most memorable. They were on the move and going to cross the road, so we had them coming right for us, one crossing ahead of the other. We watched one scent mark a small bush then roll, and marveled as the other jumped right up in a tree, proceeding to scent mark there and then poop on a prominent limb, quite a ways up the tree! The second in time found the same tree and repeated this same behavior, so unusual to see this cat make arboreal markings, even our guides had not seen that before.

VIVERIDAE: Genets & Civets (2)

African Civet *Civetticlis civetta* – Seen well by the group on the night drive Tarangire NP.

Large-spotted Genet *Genetta maculata* – Also seen well by the group on the night drive in Tarangire NP.

HYAENIDAE: Hyenas (1)

Spotted Hyena *Crocuta crocuta* –

HERPESTIDAE: Mongooses (3)

Slender Mongoose *Herpestes sanguineus* – Seen on our full day in Ngorongoro Crater.

Banded Mongoose *Mungos mungo* – Seen a few times and always 10+ individuals to a group.

Common Dwarf Mongoose *Helogale parvula* – This was our most frequently encountered mongoose and always close to or in a termite mound.

EQUIDAE: Horses & Zebras (1)

Plains (Common) Zebra *Equus burchelli* – Common is the name and it fit quite well. There was only two days we never saw a zebra.

RHINOCEROTIDAE: Rhinos (2)

White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* – The white is being released in the crater in hopes of helping their numbers rebound. We got to see three.

Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* – We saw a few from the first overlook at Ngorongoro Crater and then the next say we saw eight down in the crater.

SUIDAE: Hogs (1)

Warthog *Phacochoerus aethiopicus* – Common and widespread, and usually in family groups. Very seldom did we see solo individuals.

HIPPOPOTAMIDAE: Hippos (1)

Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* – Only seen a few times, and always in pools of water.

GIRAFFIDAE: Giraffes (1)

Maasai Giraffe *Giraffa camelopardalis tipperriskirchi* – We would see group of females with young, groups of teenagers and groups of bulls. And then once in a while, a solo individual.

BOVIDAE: Bovids (18)

African (Cape) Buffalo *Syncerus caffer*– Common, seen in large herds iCrater.n lush, greener areas.

Bushbuck *Tragelaphus scriptus*– Seen in Arusha NP and in Ngorongoro

Common Eland *Taurotragus oryx*– An enormous animal, mostly seen solo or in very small herds.

Suni *Nesotragus moschatus* – Seen only once in Arusha NP.

Kirk's Dik-dik *Madoqua kirki* – Seen in Arusha NP.

Thomas's Ugogo Dik-dik *Madoqua kirki thomasi*– Seen every day in Tarangire NP.

Naivasha Dik-dik *Madoqua kirki caendishi* – Not uncommon in Ndotu and Serengeti.

Thomson's Gazelle *Gazella thomsoni*– One of the most common of the small grazing mammals of Serengeti. First seen in Ngorongoro Crater.

Grant's Gazelle *Gazella granti* – The species seen in Ngorongoro, Ndotu and Serengeti.

Grant's Gazelle *Gazella granti granti* – A subspecies seen two of our days in Tarangire.

Bohor Reedbuck *Redunca redunca* – First seen in Ngorongoro Crater.

Common Waterbuck *Kobus ellipsiprymnus ellipsiprymnus* – Seen in Arusha NP and Lake Mayanara NP

Defassa Waterbuck *Kobus defassa* – The waterbuck of the Serengeti

Impala *Aepyceros malampus* – Abundant and widespread with lots of females attended to by the dominant buck.

Topi *Damaliscus lunatus* – This polished antelope is just a stunning color, like burnished copper. Seen only in Serengeti.

Coke's Hartebeest (Kongoni) *Acelaphus buselaphus cokii* – Serengeti, with the highlight for those that went ballooning being a young one learning to nurse that was at most 2-3 hours new.

Eastern White-bearded Wildebeest *Connochaetes taurinus albojubatus* – Seen from the highway going to Arusha NP.

Western White-bearded Wildebeest *Connochaetes taurinus mearnsi* – Abundant and very memorable with huge adult herds with young.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS (14)

Leopard Tortoise *Stigmochelys pardalis* – We had two different ones, and adult and a half grown individual. Both were spotted alongside the road as we drove along.

African Helmeted (Marsh) Terrapin *Pelomedusa subrufa* – Sunning at a big pool along the main road into Serengeti.

Nile Crocodile *Crocodylus niloticus* – A juvenile was seen in big Hippo pools.

Tropical House Gecko *Hemidactylus mabouia* – Found in our camps, lodgings.

Nile Monitor Lizard *Varanus niloticus* – Seen at a river crossing with two Water Thick-knees doing their best distraction display.

African Striped Skink *Trachylepis striata* – Seen on our drive from Arusha to Ngorongoro Crater.

Mwanza Flat-headed Rock Agama *Agama mwanzae* – A couple were seen jousting on some rocks near Kubu Kubu.

Blue-headed Tree Agama *Acanthocercus ugandaensis* – Seen in passing as we drove thru lightly forested areas.

Flap-necked Chameleon *Chamaeleo dilepis* – Seen twice, once crossing the road and a second that Washington spotted in a tree and was able to share with us.

Guttural Toad *Sclerophrys gutturalis* – Fairly common at night at Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge.

Common Reed Frog *Hyperolius viridiflavus* – Seen and heard during our two days at Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge.

Northern Clawed Frog *Xenopus borealis* – Seen just as it was captured by a Black-headed Heron.

Olive Grass Snake *Natriciteres sp.* – Seen at Manyara NP just as it was captured and then eaten by a Common Buzzard.

Kenyan Striped SkaapSteker – Probably the find of the trip. This snake had been hunted by a White Stork and then the snake took it upon itself to constrict around the stork's neck.