

2010 Gustafson Party Private Migration Safari

Guided by Jim Heck

PERSONAL ITINERARY for Gherry & Leland Gustafson

2010

8 Mar *Dep Atlanta at 5:26p*
9 Mar **The NETHERLANDS**

10-11 Mar **Mt. MERU, Tanzania**
Kigongoni Lodge

12-13 Mar **TARANGIRE**
Kikoti Camp

14 Mar **MANYARA**
Serena Lodge

15-16 Mar **KARATU**
Gibb's Farm

17-19 Mar **SERENGETI**
Ndutu Lodge

20-21 Mar **NGORONGORO**
Crater Lodge

22 Mar **KILIMANJARO Airport**
KIA Lodge

23 Mar **AMSTERDAM**
24 Mar *Return to Atlanta at 3 p.m.*



2009

DEPARTURE

Sunday, March 8, 2010

You have advised us that you are departing Atlanta aboard KLM 622 this evening at 9:35p.

Monday, March 9

The flight from Atlanta is scheduled to arrive at 11:45a. You have advised us that you are today in the Netherlands.

Wednesday, March 10

You have advised us that you are departing Amsterdam this morning at 11:05a aboard KLM 569, scheduled to arrive Kilimanjaro airport nonstop at 9:30p. You'll be personally met and privately transferred into the

**KILIMANJARO Airport
Mt. MERU**

*foothills of Mt. Meru, Africa's 5th highest mountain. Dinner and overnight at **Kigongoni Lodge**.*

[- -d]

Thursday, March 11

[Arusha National Park]

*After breakfast around 9:30a the group will depart for nearby Arusha National Park, the big game wilderness found on Mt. Meru. The day will be spent exploring all parts of this fascinating little park, with a picnic lunch on a hill overlooking the Momela Lakes. Return to the lodge in the afternoon. Meals and overnight at **Kigongoni Lodge**.*

[b-l-d]

ARUSHA NATIONAL PARK is a big game highland rain forest which surrounds Africa's 5th highest mountain, Mt. Meru. It is one of the most beautiful national parks in East Africa, including lush forests draping with moss and lianas, and is habitat for a remarkable amount of big game. Locally it is called "Giraffic Park" for its large numbers of giraffe. You can also expect to see waterbuck, zebra and a variety of gazelle and duikers, with good chances for buffalo as well. Of special importance is some very rare game you won't find on the big game parks that follow: the rare colobus monkey in particular. This is Africa's most elegant monkey. Large and shy, it is often seen leaping from the treetops, its gorgeous white tail trailing it like a jet stream. Its guttural hooping is the call of the forest. The forests have some of the most magnificent birds in Africa, ranging from the gargantuan hornbills to the spectacularly colored, luminescent sun birds. The Momela Crater Lakes area is famous for its brilliant displays of exotic birds, including from time to time thousands of flamingos.

Friday, March 12

ARUSHA

MESERANI

TARANGIRE

Today is mostly a travel day as we leave the Arusha area and drive onto the Maasai Plains. We pass through the attractive city of Arusha. There will be time to visit ATM machines and the post office as we travel through what is normally a busy Saturday morning. About a half hour later we leave the urban area and begin the drive over the Maasai Plains. Shortly we arrive at the Meserani area, a village complex which includes several attractions there will be time to visit. These include a large curio shop, a famous Tinga-Tinga art gallery, and the Meserani anti-venom snake museum. The drive from Meserani to the Tarangire northern gate takes about 90 minutes. This is a drive through rolling grassland plains settled by many villages, most of which are in transition to a much more modern life. In place of thatched huts are schools and small homes, stretched among wide expanses of range land with many cows and goats. A stop is made at the Tarangire gate to pay fees and register, and after which we enter this great park. Not long into the park is a beautiful lunch stop overlooking the Tarangire River where we'll enjoy our picnic. The afternoon will be spent game viewing through the park to the central east gate, which we'll arrive in the late afternoon. The drive from here to camp is about a half hour. Dinner and overnight at **Kikoti Camp**. [b-l-d]

Entering TARANGIRE is impossible for anyone who has read the "Little Prince" without immediately thinking of it. There are more grand baobab trees here than anywhere in Africa. The Maasai legend which claims a baobab is an upside down tree provides you with enough information to become completely disoriented, as you seem to be moving upside down just under the top of the earth. Tarangire is a huge wilderness. Only the Serengeti is larger. It is a long rectangular park whose eastern side is a series of intriguing and beautiful swamps. The interior is composed of very dense woodlands cut by sand rivers. This is big game country of the best kind. Everywhere elephant dominate the game viewing, but it's also our best chance for seeing the magnificent kudu, and the park has one of the densest leopard populations left in East Africa. The park gets its name from the great sand river that winds through it. Sand rivers only infrequently have visible water flowing but always underneath the sand, drawing the game to the water holes that are dug along its meandering route. Tall palms rise from its banks and thick palmetto forests spread into the more distant woodlands. Sand river parks like Tarangire are more a feature of southern than East African wildernesses, and so is some of Tarangire's unique game like kudu, roan and sable antelope. Although rare to find this far north, their populations in this well protected park are growing rapidly. Twenty years ago these great wildernesses, which more or less are found down the entire spine of the Great Rift Valley, were the purvey of hunters rather than tourists. And for the century before that they were the greatest single impediment to the early explorers and trade caravans seeking Africa's interior from the Zanzibar coast.

Saturday, March 13

The day is available for game viewing in and around Tarangire National Park. Shorter game drives are available returning to camp for meals, or a packed meal can be taken for longer drives. The camp also operates guided safari walks with trained naturalist guides. Meals and overnight at **Kikoti Camp**. [b-l-d]

Sunday, March 14

After a leisurely breakfast, we drive out of Tarangire to Manyara. The morning's drive from Kikoti Camp into the Great Rift Valley is a bumpy a long one. But it is one of the most dramatic and beautiful drives in Africa. The Great Rift Valley began forming about 25 million years ago: the right half of the continent is moving north and the left half is moving south. The fissure that has formed is one of the few features that can easily recognized from outer space. The rift is widely seen as one of the engines for human evolution. In its seam are many beautiful African lakes, and this morning we drive by the lake up the spectacular escarpment to **Lake Manyara Serena Lodge** for a late lunch. The remainder of the afternoon is free, and there are several local options offered by the hotel. [b-l-d]

LAKE MANYARA

Monday, March 15

Dawn game drive in Lake Manyara National Park with a picnic breakfast. Enjoy the park at the best time of the day and the picnic breakfast site overlooks the lake often filled with flamingoes. At the end of the morning we leave the park and return to Serena Lodge for a late lunch. In the afternoon it's a short drive through rural Tanzanian farming country to the town of Karatu. We'll spend two nights at **Gibb's Farm**. This working farm is located in the beautiful, lush forests of the rim of Ngorongoro Crater. [b-l-d]

KARATU

LAKE MANYARA is a fabulous but little big-game park with many thick woodlands, amazing stands of baobab tree and great sand rivers. It's famous for its lions-in-tree. Lions love to climb trees wherever they can, and that's exactly the point. Manyara has so many different kinds of trees, more are suitable to lion climbing than most places. The park is an UNESCO biosphere, a reflection of its enormous biodiversity. There are over 100 species of trees, for example. The park is composed of the high plateau of the rift escarpment, the cliffs that fall downwards towards the lake, the thick forests of the bottom of the cliffs, then the grassland savanna that rolls out to the lakeshore, the lakeshore itself and the massive salt lake. The lake was where the opening scene from *Out of Africa* was filmed, and there are usually more than a million flamingoes

here although they tend to remain in the middle and are therefore hard to see. Manyara was where some of the first and most important elephant research was completed by such early, famous researchers such as Ian Douglas Hamilton. Expect also to see many giraffe, zebra, impala and baboon as well.

Tuesday, March 16

The day is free at the farm for a number of optional activities: These include a guided walk into the forests of Ngorongoro Crater to bird watch and see elephant caves; a tour of this organic farm; a visit to a nearby village and school; and an interesting visit with a Maasai medicine man. The farm runs a Maasai health spa that portends to cure chronic western ailments like migraines and psoriasis (appointments required). Activities, meals and overnight at **Gibb's Farm**. [b-l-d]

Wednesday, March 17

Today is a long and exciting one, and an early departure from Gibb's is essential. From the farm to the Ngorongoro gate is only about a half hour. The drive through the magical 7 km rim forest is one of the great memories on safari. This unique highland rain forest includes birds, animals and plants found nowhere else on earth. At the end of this short drive is the first overlook viewpoint above the crater. The rim road continues around the rim for about 45 minutes before veering over the crater rim onto the Serengeti. At this stop an enormous expanse of Africa comes into view. We proceed another half hour to Olduvai Gorge, for a special visit to this world-famous early man site. After short lectures and a time to explore the small museum, the safari leaves the roads all together and heads onto the Serengeti plains. Game viewing begins immediately for these vast plains are normally where millions of animals have congregated since the rains began around the end of the year. In this remote and little visited part of the Serengeti there are opportunities to encounter traditional Maasai villages, nomadic lions as well as the vast herds. We'll picnic on one of the great kopjes found on the plains. In the afternoon we head west towards the lakes region of the Serengeti, game viewing as we go, arriving the only modest lodge found in this game rich area in the late afternoon. Dinner and overnight at **Ndutu Lodge**. [b-l-d]

The SERENGETI was the first protected wilderness in East Africa, gazetted to forbid hunting by the British overlords in 1921. There is some speculation today that this was less an environmental gesture than one to punish the defeated Germans who were notorious hunters and ivory collectors. Britain assumed governance of the former German colony

reluctantly following WWI, and policy was focused principally on what to do with the Germans, not the animals. Nevertheless, the first registered tourist was T.J. Simpson of Trenton, New Jersey, who in June, 1921, drove his Model T-Ford across the Serengeti Plains.

The Serengeti is just under 5,000 sq. miles but is contiguous with the Ngorongoro Conservation Authority and Kenya's Maasai Mara, which effectively increases the area to nearly 7,000 sq. miles of a uniform ecosystem. And unlike so much of East African wilderness, much of this terrain could provide a range of good farming opportunities, so it is tourism alone that so far has saved the wilderness. The southern plains that begin immediately north of Ngorongoro Crater extend approximately 60 miles north and is what we generally think of when we mention the Serengeti. The grass grows on top of sediment formed from the ancient lake and provides the nutrition for the largest collection of big mammals found on earth. Further north into Kenya the land rises and becomes woodlands with important river systems. To the west are the strikingly beautiful Moru Kopjes. Kopjes are rocky outcrops or isotherms some dated to almost 4 billion years old. And to the east are the nearly impenetrable Loliondo mountain badlands. Together the Serengeti is composed of a diverse and extensive biosystem that is among the most studied, most revered and most visited on earth.

Our focus on the great wildebeest migration reflects the Serengeti's single greatest attraction. Great animal migrations are disappearing, and in Africa the great veterinary fences continuing to be constructed in Botswana have disrupted the last great such migration in the south. Oil drilling in the arctic likely will obstruct the Porcupine caribou herd and all that remains of our own Great Plains bison are great movies. But the Serengeti's wildebeest migration has actually improved during our life time. There are three times as many animals involved in the migration, today, as when Peter Beard wrote his book, *The End of the Game*, in 1979. The reason for this is tourism, and it has resulted in new problems not least of which is the growing conflict with peripheral human settlements and the probable loss of less robust species.

The annual migration is truly fascinating and remarkably exciting. We generally think of it as beginning at the end of the year, just as the rains in northern Tanzania's single long rainy season begin. The rains bring the nutrient grasses and the pregnant wildebeest recongregate to feast. Rains continue with only a minor let up in February right through May. Calves are dropped in February with the ensuing three months a food fest as they develop the strength for the coming migration. When the rains stop in June and the veld dries up, the herds panic. They form tight files that run north in the direction the rain is receding.

In the far north of the ecosystem, in Kenya's Mara, it rains almost every day of the year except in October. These higher grounds are heavily wooded so the grass is not as nutritious. So whenever an anomalous

period of weather develops and rains fall again on the plains, the herds actually turn back. This to-and-fro causes some confusion from year to year, but the pattern over the aeons is quite clear.

By October it rains nowhere, not even in the Mara, and the entire system is a dustbowl. Grass is hard to find anywhere, and unlike the frantic northern migration, the wildebeest now amble slowly south through a parched landscape for seemingly no good reason. But inevitably they reach the southern plains just as the new rains begin.

Thursday & Friday, March 18 & 19

Two more days to explore Africa's Grande Dame wilderness at exactly the right time. We expect to intersect the great wildebeest migration, currently more than 2 million white-bearded gnu and month-old calves feasting on the nutrient grasses of the Serengeti plains in preparation for the great trek north. Our routine depends upon the animal whereabouts, and we expect great drama throughout our time here. In addition to extraordinary game viewing we may have time to explore several sacred Maasai sites and visit some very different terrains of this immense wilderness. Meals and overnights at **Ndutu Lodge**. [b-l-d] daily

Saturday, March 20

After breakfast we take our final game drive in the Serengeti as we retrace our route from Ngorongoro. We'll arrive **Crater Lodge** for lunch. Crater Lodge is one of the most famous lodges in East Africa, a super luxurious and somewhat iconoclastic property built right on the crater rim with stupendous views. Many veteran safari travelers refer to it as "Maasai Versailles". Individual stylistic duplexes modeled after mythical Maasai chiefs' bomas include a private fireplace, floor to ceiling vaulted windows overlooking the crater, and a Victoria bath under a crystal chandelier. The afternoon is free to enjoy your sumptuous surroundings, although an afternoon hike in the Endulen Hill to see Maasai villages is easily arranged. Dinner and overnight at the lodge. [b-l-d]

Sunday, March 21

Leave the lodge before dawn for an early morning descent into the crater national park, one of the most famous game sanctuaries on earth. The 100 sq. mile floor of the crater is a wildlife paradise, including the highest density of lion found in the world. An early morning descent gives us the best chance to find rhino. A picnic lunch will be enjoyed beside a lake usually filled with hippo, and the exciting ascent to the rim occurs in the early afternoon. We'll have a later lunch at the lodge before some free time this afternoon. Dinner and overnight at **Crater Lodge**. [b-l-d]

NGORONGORO

Once the world's highest structure, **NGORONGORO** volcano blew its stack nearly three million years ago during a period of turbulence that would be hard to imagine, today. The dinosaur volcano contracted into seven smaller volcanoes, the furthest east one which remains active although very small, today. The other six are now dormant, and the caldera of the largest is the national park so famous as a big game sanctuary.

The 100 sq. mile crater with its 1800' high rim has a resident big game population of around 20,000 and includes the last free-ranging black rhino easily seen in East Africa. Few animals remain all their lives in the crater and contrary to popular belief, it's very easy for them to go in and out. But several dozen male elephant which took sanctuary in the crater during the years of terrible poaching have remained and seem to have no intention of leaving. And so the crater now includes the distinction of protecting some of the largest tusked elephant left on earth, even though the habitat on the crater floor is not the best for elephant. The lack of trees is the reason there are no giraffe in the crater, for example.

Few geographic formations on earth could create such a beautiful scene, and animated with Africa's big game, the crater is truly one of the most special places on the continent.

ARUSHA
KILIMANJARO
Depart

Monday, March 22

After breakfast we begin the journey back to Arusha, through the crater forest, past Manyara and into Arusha town around noon. There will be time for shopping before lunch at a popular local restaurant. Afterwards, we continue to Kilimanjaro Airport, where everyone has a private room at the hotel adjacent the airport, **KIA Lodge**. The lodge shuttles guests to the terminals for the departures home. *You have advised us that you are departing Kilimanjaro Airport this evening at 10:35p aboard KLM 569. [b-l-]*

Tuesday, March 23

The KLM flight is scheduled to arrive Amsterdam at 8:10a, and you have advised us that you are spending today in Amsterdam.

Wednesday, March 24

You have advised us that you are returning to Atlanta, today, on KLM 621 scheduled to depart Amsterdam at 2:35p and arrive Atlanta at 7:20p.