NORTHERN TANZANIA:
WILDLIFE SAFARI IN THE SERENGETI,
NGORONGORO CRATER & BEYOND

A Special Departure for the Cincinnati Zoo
with Thane Maynard, Michael O’Brien and Louise Zemaitis

FEBRUARY 20–MARCH 8, 2020

ONE-DAY NGARE SERO PRE-TRIP
FEBRUARY 19–21, 2020
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Of the world’s elite wildlife viewing destinations, perhaps no place captures the spirit of wild nature like East Africa. Replete with mammals large and small, remarkable birds, and evocative landscapes, this corner of the world captures the hearts of all who travel here.

On this special trip, arranged exclusively for supporters and members of the Cincinnati Zoo, we’ll experience the thrill of a classic African safari. Northern
Tanzania is the destination, and here we’ll spend over two weeks on a wildlife viewing odyssey, traveling among an array of superb national parks and other sites in search of big game, birds, reptiles, and more. Lake Victoria, the Serengeti, Ngorongoro Crater, and Tarangire are some of the places we’ll visit, places whose names are forever aligned with images of timeless Africa. Leading this safari will be Thane Maynard, Director of the Cincinnati Zoo, and expert naturalists Michael O’Brien and Louise Zemaitis from Texas-based Victor Emanuel Nature Tours. Also joining the trip will be Thane’s wife, Kathleen Maynard. No one is more excited about spotting new species than Kathleen; and while Thane will tell tales of the many mammals we see, Kathleen will make sure not a single raptor goes unnoticed or uncelebrated! The trip will be limited to only ten participants.

The Serengeti, meaning “extended place” in the Masai language, is a vast, unspoiled rolling savannah of grasslands and open acacia woodlands which hosts the most spectacular concentration of animals on the planet. This world-famous area offers a remarkable experience at any time of the year, but in February and March, it witnesses a phenomenal gathering of over one million Blue Wildebeest (along with a half-million Thomson’s Gazelle and a quarter million Common Zebra) in tight, nervous herds of tens of thousands, concentrated together to calve on the short-grass plains prior to the rains. To foil the numerous predators and to ensure the best survival of their young, all the wildebeests calve within a few short weeks, producing a glut of potential prey that overwhelms the dense gathering of predators. Lions are often in large prides—it is not unusual to see over 20 in a single day! Spotted Hyenas appear in marauding packs; Leopards, Cheetahs and smaller predators and scavengers such as jackals and vultures are also much more readily seen at this time of plenty. Although never precisely predictable, we should be in the best areas of the Serengeti at the best time to capture this world-class spectacle, with plenty of opportunity to savor the big game and find many classic East African birds.

Of equal renown is the Ngorongoro Crater and nearby Oldupai (“Olduvai”) Gorge—the “Cradle of Mankind,” where the Leakeys discovered remains of primitive hominids dating back over three million years. Mankind could not have chosen a more spectacular starting point. Ngorongoro is the largest unbroken volcanic caldera in the world—10 miles across and 2,000 feet deep. Lush forests clad the crater rim where our lodge is situated, overlooking the grasslands and lakes of the Crater below. This is “Africa in microcosm.” Apart from breathtaking scenery, great wildlife viewing, and superb birding, it is particularly good for excellent photographic opportunities and one of the few safe havens in Africa for the endangered Black Rhinoceros, which, although not guaranteed in a short visit, we do expect to see here.

To complement these superb sites, we visit two other national parks, both of which offer additional and subtly different birding and wildlife opportunities. Tarangire National Park is justly famed for its abundance of bizarre baobab trees—absurdly thick-trunked and ill-proportioned. Here too are the best elephant-watching opportunities of the tour, with large herds roaming the open woodland habitats and riverbeds. We should have exceptional opportunities to watch the matriarchal family lives of this unique creature. Tarangire also offers excellent birding, with several Tanzanian endemics likely. Lake Manyara National Park is a comparatively compact area nestled beneath the towering basalt cliffs of the Great Rift Valley. It encompasses spring-fed forests, thick acacia bush, and a soda lake, which at times holds a large variety of water birds from pelicans, cormorants, and flamingos to herons, ibis, storks, and ducks. Several “off the beaten track” stops give us a chance for more and different aspects of Tanzania, including a night at Speke Bay on the immense inland sea of Lake Victoria, and a special lunch and birding stop in the stunning gardens at Gibb’s Farm.
Apart from a carefully chosen itinerary, we have structured the time spent in each location to give adequate coverage to each area. In particular, by using a short flight to Mwanza, the western-most stop on our itinerary, we avoid a lot of unnecessary travel over unpaved roads. Tanzanian lodges and food are now of a very good standard. We use roomy, purpose-built 4x4 vehicles driven by experienced local driver/guides. There is plenty of space for passengers, with everyone having a window seat, and of course a “pop-top” roof, enabling you to stand up to view and photograph birds and game in the parks. By the end of our adventure, we expect a mammal list of 40-50 species including Lion, Leopard, Cheetah, African Elephant, Black Rhino and other classic African big game animals, and over 300 species of birds. We are pleased to announce that a portion of the proceeds go toward the support of the Cincinnati Zoo’s programs.

February 20-21, Days 1-2: Travel to Kilimanjaro. All participants should arrange to arrive at Kilimanjaro International Airport (airport code JRO) no later than the evening of February 21, where they will be met by our local tour operator and transferred to Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge.

Participants can depart the USA on February 20 in order to arrive in Amsterdam on February 21, in time to connect with KLM Flight 569, which is scheduled to depart at 10:00 a.m. and arrive in Kilimanjaro at 8:40 p.m. (subject to change).

Those wishing to minimize the risk of misconnecting with the group, or to rest following the lengthy international flights, should consider either spending the night of February 20 in Amsterdam or joining our one-day pre-trip based at the Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge.

NOTE: On February 22 (Day 3), we will awaken very early in order take a domestic flight to Mwanza, on the shore of Lake Victoria. Participants who choose to arrive in Kilimanjaro on the night of February 21 will be faced with a short night before returning to the airport early the next morning. For this reason, we strongly recommend the one-day pre-trip to allow for a day of rest and casual birding before our activities commence. Information about the pre-trip appears at the end of this itinerary. Upon request, the VENT office will be happy to assist with any additional lodging arrangements.

NIGHT (February 21): Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge, Usa River

February 22, Day 3: Flight to Mwanza; Drive to Speke Bay. Today starts with an early transfer to Kilimanjaro airport to fly to Mwanza, the second-largest city in Tanzania, situated on the shores of Lake Victoria. Here we will be met by our safari drivers. The drive from Mwanza to Speke Bay over asphalt roads should take us slightly more than two hours. After arriving at the lovely Speke Bay Lodge, we should have time for a late afternoon bird
NIGHT: Speke Bay Lodge, Speke Bay

**February 23, Day 4: Speke Bay Lodge to the Central Serengeti.** This morning we'll have plenty of time to find birds along the nearby shores of the largest expanse of water in Africa—Lake Victoria. Everything we hope to find occurs within the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge, a wonderful location to opt out if you prefer to relax or indulge in fishing for tilapia or visiting a nearby village by traditional canoe or taking a cruise on the lake by motor boat. Over 200 species of birds have been recorded on the Lodge’s 250 acres of grounds. Birds of freshwater habitats—cormorants, Hamerkop, herons, egrets, ducks, and pelicans are sometimes prominent. The water margins and dense stands of papyrus, reed, and sedge will be of particular interest for the chance of finding birds less likely or impossible elsewhere, such as African Openbill; Three-banded (Heuglin’s) Courser; Water Thick-knee; Slender-tailed & Square-tailed nightjars; Pied, Malachite, and African Pygmy kingfishers; Black-billed Barbet; Swamp Flycatcher; reed-loving warblers; Angola Swallow; Red-chested Sunbird; Black-headed Gonolek; Black-winged Bishop; and Northern Brown-throated, Slender-billed, Golden-backed (Jackson’s), and Black-headed (Yellow-backed) weavers. Nearby acacia scrub holds still more possibilities.
Around mid-day, we’ll drive a short distance to the western gate of Serengeti National Park and head towards the central Serengeti. Traveling slowly, we’ll take advantage of any wildlife and birding opportunities as we go, before reaching our lodge by early evening. On this introductory game and birding drive through the western corridor of the Serengeti, we’ll keep an eye out for the highly localized Karamoja Apalis, as well as the bizarre Eastern Plantain-eater. A stop at the Grumeti River should produce Hippopotamus as well as huge Nile Crocodiles. There will no doubt be many game animals such as Topi, Blue Wildebeest (Brindled Gnu), Common Zebra and Impala on the tall grass plains. Savannah birds such as Common Ostrich, Secretarybird, storks, raptors, bustards and Southern Ground-Hornbill should be conspicuous throughout the drive.
We will arrive at Kubu Kubu Tented Camp, our luxurious home for the next three nights, before dusk. Situated on a hilltop overlooking the vast plains of the central Serengeti, this recently opened (summer 2016) luxury tented camp is a delightful base of operations for our time in the Serengeti. The tents are incredibly spacious and well appointed, and are placed on permanent platforms, each with its own private balcony. In suite, private bathrooms feature open-air showers with abundant hot water (dubbed “the world’s best shower” by more than one participant) and flush toilets, and the entire camp is solar-powered, with back-up generators providing 24-hour electricity. The camp is full board (including all drinks), and Wi-Fi is available in the central area.

**NIGHT:** Kubu Kubu Tented Camp, Central Serengeti

**February 24-25, Days 5-6: The Central Serengeti.** At 5,675 square miles, the Serengeti is a vast preserve—larger than the entire state of Connecticut! With a further 3,200 square miles protected in the surrounding Ngorongoro Conservation Area, the total is as large as Vermont or New Hampshire. While the Ndutu area typically holds the bulk of the famous wildebeest herds at this time of year, there are many other important habitats with different and special birds and wildlife to be found elsewhere. Having already traveled through the “western corridor,” we’ll want to explore more of this vast national park and will concentrate for the next two days on areas in the center of the Serengeti. Here we can head off in any promising direction, depending on local conditions. The first differences we’ll notice in this area are the clusters of *kopjes* (pronounced “copies”—large isolated, weather-smoothed and rounded lumps of granite, some the size of large houses. These interrupt the vast flatness of the plains and provide shelter and shade for all sorts of wildlife, including idle Lions; Klipspringer; hyrax; nesting vultures and Greater Kestrels; and gaudy pink, purple and copper-blue agamid lizards. The Seronera River area with its braided small meandering streams has associated groves of yellow bark acacias (“fever” trees). Here again we’ll note obvious changes as we find wallowing Hippopotami, secretive Bohor Reedbuck, maybe a Nile Monitor and certainly many more bird species. It is also prime Leopard country and we’ll be doing all we can to ensure finding this mythical animal. Large herds of African Buffalo and smaller numbers of Topi and Kongoni (Red Hartebeest) are also found here, becoming scarce farther east.
Birds in this area and around our lodge should be plentiful. Bright little Purple Grenadiers, cordonbleus, and White-bellied Canaries peck seeds from the ground, while Golden-breasted and Cinnamon-breasted buntings sing their exuberant songs from the tops of stunted acacias along hillside slopes. Shrikes abound—Magpie Shrikes, various fiscals, Brown-crowned Tchagras, and migrant Red-backed and Isabelline shrikes. Brightly colored Superb and Hildebrandt’s starlings are commonplace, as are Wattled Starlings, Red-billed and Yellow-billed oxpeckers, Red-billed Buffalo-Weavers, dull little Swahili Sparrows, and Grayish Flycatcher. Raptors are a constant sight in the skies and this area is particularly fine for them. We have excellent chances of encountering anything from the huge Martial Eagle to the tiny Pygmy Falcon, including snake-eagles, the iconic and striking Bateleur, Long-crested Eagle, wintering groups of Montagu’s and Pallid harriers, and Lesser Kestrels.

NIGHTS: Kubu Kubu Tented Camp, Central Serengeti

February 26, Day 7: To the Eastern Serengeti. We’ll head eastward this morning, approximately 50 miles out across the Serengeti and Triangle Plains to the Nduvu region, which, biologically, is part of the eastern Serengeti wilderness, but which, for administrative purposes, falls within the Ngorongoro Conservation District. Taking most of the day for our journey will allow time to wander and visit any wildlife spectacles or concentrations on the way. You never know what surprises or excitement may dictate a temporary change of plan or route, so we’ll be as flexible as possible to cater to the unexpected. This is an excellent day for chances of finding Lions, Cheetahs and Leopard. We’ll be able to stretch our legs at a very good open-air visitor center (excellent for birds and hyraxes) and at Naabi Gate, one of the official entrances to the national park, where we will officially exit the Serengeti National Park. Nduvu Lodge is set in acacia woodland out on the edge of the short-grass plains, far from other lodges and tucked away as close to the main gatherings of plains game as we can get. We may well encounter our first huge gatherings of wildebeest today. There is a wonderful feeling of remoteness here and this region should be a true highlight.
February 27-28, Days 8-9: Ndutu Area. We’ll have two full days in potentially the prime area to watch one of the greatest wildlife spectacles on earth—the massed concentrations of calving Blue Wildebeest on the Serengeti. The wildebeest are at the end of their 500-mile circular migration here. Basically they follow the rains and the resultant regeneration of green grasses all the way north to the Mara area of Kenya. Then it’s back again to rest in the ensuing long rains on the short-grass plains to the southeast of Serengeti around Ndutu, where they calve and rear their young to a stage when they can again move west and north by May or June. Hopefully we will witness many aspects of this dynamic ecosystem—from calving, through the inevitable predation by the concentrations of Lions, Cheetahs, Leopards, jackals and hyenas, to the spectacle of five species of vultures scavenging and cleaning up the leftovers of the kill. The incredible abundance, variety, and action of the mammals alone will give us plenty to occupy our time here.

Of course, birding opportunities are legion. Very often while setting out to perhaps watch prides of Lions, Leopards with their prey cached in an acacia, or Spotted Hyenas mud-bathing in the heat of the day, new birds will appear and be pleasant distractions. The open grassland and scant acacia scrub hold many new species. Obvious are the Common Ostriches, Secretarybirds, noisy Crowned and Blacksmith lapwings, Lilac-breasted and European rollers, and Little Bee-eaters, along with raptors such as Long-crested Eagle and Dark and Eastern chanting-goshawks. Often, groups of Temminck’s and Double-banded coursers, Fischer’s Sparrow-Larks, Rufous-naped and Red-capped larks, Red-billed Queleas, Chestnut-bellied and Yellow-throated sandgrouse, and various cisticolas flush up from the grass as we move along. The endemic Gray-breasted Francolin (Spurfowl), Fischer’s Lovebird, and Rufous-tailed Weaver are common in the woodlands in this area, along with D’Arnaud’s Barbet, Green Woodhoopoe, Cardinal and Nubian woodpeckers, Black-lobed Babbler, Beautiful and Mariqua sunbirds, and Wire-tailed Swallow, to pick a few examples.
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February 29, Day 10: To the Ngorongoro Crater. We’ll leave the Ndutu area today, continuing on our eastern transect, and arrive at our spectacular lodge on the rim of famous Ngorongoro Crater by late afternoon. There is much to see and do on the way. We’ll be out of the national park, but still in the conservation area and driving for miles across open short-grass plains still potentially full of vast herds of Blue Wildebeest, Thomson’s and Grant’s gazelles, Common Zebra, and all of their attendant predators. As we drive, we will be able to appreciate the huge scale of this ecosystem that we’ve been traveling through west to east for several days by now—all the more remarkable for being preserved almost fully intact. We will arrive at the archaeological site of Olduvai (or Oldupai) Gorge by lunchtime. Often called “The Cradle of Mankind,” this is where Louis and Mary Leakey made their groundbreaking discoveries. Here we can pay homage to our ancestors, with a brief orientation talk and visit to the field museum overlooking the layered rocks of the gorge, where we can ponder the life and times of these early hominids. There is also an option of visiting a Masai village this morning, to learn first-hand something of their unchanged way of life as pastoralists on the open plains. Shortly after lunch we will climb up into the hills and suddenly top a rise to find the immense caldera of Ngorongoro Crater laid out before us. After descending to the crater floor, we will make our first game drive here as we cross the Crater to reach our lodge on the opposite rim, gaining our initial impressions of this remarkable place.

March 1, Day 11: The Ngorongoro Crater. We will spend most of the day down in the Crater, sometimes called “the eighth wonder of the world.” A mainly resident population of Blue Wildebeest, African Buffalo, Thomson’s and Grant’s gazelles, Common Zebra, and Eland are on the menu for a high concentration of predators—especially Lions and Spotted Hyenas. A major goal will be close views of some of the Black Rhinoceros that survive here. Much of the crater floor is open short-grass savannah, so they are often easy to spot. Birding in the crater is also diverse and rewarding, with fresh and soda lakes, swamp, and thick yellow-bark acacia forest. We may see African Fish-Eagle and Black Kites (helping themselves to our picnic if we’re not careful!), Kori Bustard, migrant White and Abdim’s storks, elegant Gray Crowned-Cranes, Black Crake, White-browed Coucal, Rosy-throated Longclaw, Plain-backed Pipit, Northern Anteater Chat, and Capped Wheatear, among others.
The grounds of the lodge are 2,000 feet above the crater floor, set amidst a very distinct moss-draped acacia forest. Here we’ll want to spend further time birding for specialties of the highlands. Brown-backed Woodpecker, Black-backed Puffback, White-necked Raven, Gray Cuckooshrike, White-eyed Slaty and Dusky-brown (African Dusky) flycatchers, Mountain Yellow Warbler, Cinnamon Bracken-Warbler, Hunter’s Cisticola, Brown-headed and Bar-throated apalis, African Hill Babbler, White-starred Robin, Streaky and Thick-billed seedeaters, Eastern Double-collared and flashy Golden-winged and Tacazze sunbirds are all possible. If the fig trees are fruiting, we may also find birds like Red-fronted Parrot, Rameron (African Olive) Pigeon, Schalow’s Turaco, Northern Olive Thrush, Eastern Mountain Greenbul, Broad-ringed (Montane) White-eye, and Kenrick’s and Waller’s starlings.

**March 2, Day 12: Ngorongoro Highlands.** After awakening at Sopa Lodge to the loud duetting of Tropical Boubous and the complex songs of Rueppell’s Robin-Chats, we will bird the edge of the tangled mountain forest before driving the Crater perimeter rim road to the park exit. Among the possibilities in this habitat are Crowned Hawk-Eagle, Mountain Buzzard, Schalow’s Turaco, Crowned Hornbill, Brown-backed Woodpecker, Cinnamon Bracken-Warbler, Brown Woodland-Warbler, Brown-headed and Bar-throated apalis, Red-collared Widowbird, Yellow-bellied Waxbill and commoner highland species.

Our next stop is a very special one, at Gibb’s Farm, a coffee plantation on the lower flanks of the Crater highlands. Awaiting us is an incredible lunch using the wide variety of foods grown on the farm, plus great birding in a lovely setting with beautifully laid-out ornamental gardens. Here we should be able to observe birds at close range, perhaps including Tambourine Dove, Klaas’s Cuckoo, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Red-fronted Tinkerbird, African Paradise-Flycatcher, Arrow-marked Babbler, Gray-capped Warbler, many sunbirds, Grosbeak Weaver, and hopefully the beautiful and delicate White-tailed Blue-Flycatcher, a local specialty. The nearby forest edge offers still more possibilities. In the late afternoon we will travel the short distance to our lodging for the night.
March 3, Day 13: Lake Manyara National Park. This morning a short drive will take us to the steep escarpment of the Great Rift Valley, below which is nestled Lake Manyara National Park. Centered on a soda lake below the cliffs, Manyara is a small park with a wide variety of habitats and many possibilities for birds and mammals. Upon entering the park, we pass through a beautiful groundwater forest fed by streams rising from the base of the escarpment above. This cool and shady area offers possibilities for such localized species as Purple-crested Turaco, Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, Yellow-bellied Greenbul and more. Here too we’ll encounter large troops of Olive Baboons. In the more open acacia scrub fringing the lakebed are found most of the classic animals of East Africa, including African Elephant, comical Common Warthogs trotting through the bush with tails raised, and some very large Giraffes. Depending on water levels, we may find a nice variety of waterbirds, perhaps including Yellow-billed and Marabou storks, Pink-backed Pelican, Sacred Ibis, African Spoonbill, Black-headed Heron, Spur-winged Goose, Cape Teal, and a mix of resident and wintering shorebirds. In the afternoon we will return to our lodge on the rim of the Rift Valley in time for an optional walk around the grounds.

NIGHT: Tloma Lodge, Ngorongoro-Karatu

March 4-6, Days 14-16: Tarangire National Park. After breakfast on Day 14, we will head east along excellent paved roads to Tarangire National Park, arriving at the park gate well before lunch. Here we will likely encounter two Tanzanian endemics, the Yellow-collared Lovebird and Ashy Starling, as well as other new birds like Mottled Spinetail, Mosque Swallow, Northern Pied Babbler and Green-winged Pytilia. Tarangire is a dry region, subject to seasonal rains and drought, but it should be at its finest at this time of year, the grasslands lush and green and the trees and bushes leafed out. The entire area is studded with giant baobab trees. Useful stores of moisture for the elephants during drier seasons, their gargantuan trunks are scarred from generations of gouging by elephant tusks. Running through the center of the park is the Tarangire River, with wide grassy floodplains dotted with trees, but there are many other habitats too.

We will have two full days and an afternoon to explore the park. A main interest here will be the large African Elephant herds, but our game drives will take us past Impala, Giraffe, Defassa Waterbuck and other plains game. The area often produces sightings of predators, perhaps a Leopard resting in a tree during the heat of the day or
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Cheetahs hunting in the grasslands. Tarangire is also exciting birding territory, the possibilities ranging from Common Ostrich, Southern Ground-Hornbills and bustards to tiny cisticolas and bishops. Among the many birds typically present are Saddle-billed Stork, Hamerkop, several species of francolins, Double-banded Courser, lots of raptors from large to small, Black-faced Sandgrouse, cuckoos, Pearl-spotted Owlet, African Scops-Owl, Woodland Kingfisher, Red-and-yellow Barbet, White-rumped and Magpie shrikes, Slate-colored Boubou, Spotted Morning-Thrush, Red-headed Weaver, and many others. Our time here will undoubtedly pass all too quickly.

NIGHTS: Tarangire Sopa Lodge, Tarangire National Park
March 7-8, Days 17-18: Return to Arusha; Departure for Home. This morning, as we exit Tarangire, there is always a last minute chance for that final Leopard or new bird for our extensive list before making the short journey back to Arusha, arriving in time for lunch. There will be time for some optional last minute shopping before transferring to the Ngare Sero Lodge where private day rooms will be provided to wash, change, and pack prior to departure. A group transfer will be provided to Kilimanjaro International Airport in time for the 9:45 p.m. departure of KLM Flight 571 to Amsterdam, which is scheduled to arrive at 7:10 a.m. (subject to change) on March 8, enabling connections to the USA.

ONE-DAY NGARE SERO PRE-TRIP
FEBRUARY 19–21, 2020

Our first accommodation of the tour is the Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge, located near Kilimanjaro International Airport. The main tour program includes little time (one night) at this lovely lodge before we depart for points west. We strongly recommend that participants arrive in Tanzania a day early to get rested following the lengthy international flight and to avoid the risk of misconnecting with the group in the event of flight delays. This one-day pre-trip affords a casual and relaxing introduction to the birds of East Africa amid the beautiful and tranquil setting of the Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge.

February 19-20, Days 1-2: Travel to Kilimanjaro. All participants should arrange to arrive at Kilimanjaro International Airport (airport code JRO) on the evening of February 20, where they will be met by our local tour operator and transferred to Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge.

Participants can depart the USA on February 19 in order to arrive in Amsterdam on February 20, in time to connect with KLM Flight 569, which is scheduled to depart at 10:00 a.m. and arrive in Kilimanjaro at 8:40 p.m. (subject to change).

Upon request, the VENT office will be happy to assist with any additional travel arrangements.

NIGHT (February 20): Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge, Usa River

February 21, Day 3: A Day at Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge. This morning we will meet our group leaders and the other tour participants in advance of a day of birding and relaxation on the grounds of the Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge. Ngare Sero is a beautiful and peaceful place featuring a lodge with lots of amenities and verdant surroundings that offer excellent birding. On this introductory day we have a chance of encountering several species of mammals and a range of birds (many of which are unlikely to be found at other sites on the tour). Among the possibilities are troops of Guereza Colobus and Blue (Sykes’) Monkeys, African Black Duck, Giant Kingfisher, Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, White-eared and Brown-breasted barbets, Retz’s Helmetshrike, Mountain Wagtail, Kenrick’s Starling, Peter’s Twinspot and Taveta Golden-Weaver.

NIGHT: Ngare Sero Mountain Lodge, Usa River
TOUR SIZE: Each section will be limited to 10 participants.

TOUR LEADERS: Thane Maynard, Michael O’Brien and Louise Zemaitis

Cincinnati Zoo Director Thane Maynard is internationally known for his dedication to wildlife preservation, research, and education. He has authored more than a dozen books, the most recent, Hope For Animals & Their World, was co-authored with Jane Goodall. He has also shared science and environmental news via his nationally syndicated radio program, The 90-Second Naturalist, for thirty years. Maynard’s travels to promote biological diversity, natural history, and wildlife conservation have spanned five continents and earned him a membership in the Explorers Club. He is an active member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), and a member of the Board of Trustees for the Margo Marsh Biodiversity Foundation, a primate conservation fund headquartered in Washington, D.C. Born and raised in central Florida, Thane earned his bachelor’s degree in environmental studies from Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, and his master’s degree in wildlife ecology from the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources. He is also a graduate of the Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management program at the Harvard Business School, as well as the first National Education Leadership Institute sponsored by WWF and Disney.

Michael O’Brien is a freelance artist, author, and environmental consultant living in Cape May, New Jersey. He has a passionate interest in bird vocalizations and field identification, and a serious addiction to migration and nocturnal birding. His travels have taken him throughout North and Central America and beyond. At home in Cape May, Michael serves as an Associate Naturalist with Cape May Bird Observatory for whom he conducts numerous workshops, and, for many years, conducted a fall songbird migration count. He is co-author of The Shorebird Guide, Flight Calls of Migratory Birds, and America’s 100 Most Wanted Birds, and is primary author of Larkwire, an online and handheld application for learning bird sounds. His illustrations have been widely published in books and field guides, including the National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America and the latest Peterson field guides. Michael also has an intense interest in butterflies, leads several “Birds & Butterflies” tours with his wife, Louise Zemaitis, and is coordinator of the Cape May Butterfly Count.

Louise Zemaitis is an artist and naturalist living in Cape May, New Jersey where she is a popular field trip leader teaching birding workshops as an Associate Naturalist with New Jersey Audubon’s Cape May Bird Observatory. She also enjoys leading birding groups and lecturing at birding festivals and is known for her enthusiasm for all natural history subjects. Louise and her husband, Michael O’Brien, have been guiding young birders at birding events and conferences for many years. In addition to leading, Louise is coordinator of the Monarch Monitoring Project in Cape May, compiler of the Cape May Christmas Bird Count, and owner of Swallowtail Studio at West End Garage in Cape May. An honors graduate of Temple University’s Tyler School of Art, she enjoys working as a freelance artist and her illustrations have been widely published. Her proudest accomplishment has been the raising of her two sons, Bradley, a biologist and artist, and Alec, a philosopher and musician.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for Northern Tanzania (main tour) is $15,795 per person in double occupancy from Arusha. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 3 to lunch on Day 17, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, the flight between Arusha and Mwanza, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Arusha and return.
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airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for Northern Tanzania (main tour) is **$835**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you. Please note that single accommodations are limited and you may be asked to share at some of the lodges. If so, you’ll be credited accordingly.

The fee for Northern Tanzania: One-Day Ngare Sero Pre-Trip is **$500** per person in double occupancy from Arusha. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 3 to dinner on Day 3, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Arusha and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for Northern Tanzania: One-Day Ngare Sero Pre-Trip is **$105**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The initial deposit for this tour is **$500** per person per section. If you would like to pay your initial deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay the initial deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with American Express, MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at [www.ventbird.com](http://www.ventbird.com)) should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

**PAYMENTS:** Initial tour deposits may be made by American Express, MasterCard, Visa, check, money order, or bank transfer. All other tour payments, including second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc., must be made by check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Cancellation penalties and refunds are based on the following schedule: if cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **$250** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be **$100** per person. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions. *We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.*

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<th>If you cancel:</th>
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<td>120 days or more before departure date</td>
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<td>Fewer than 120 days before departure date</td>
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*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be $100 per person.

Upon cancellation of the transportation or travel services, where you, the customer, are not at fault and have not cancelled in violation of the terms and conditions of any of the contract for transportation or travel services, all sums paid to VENT for services not received by you will be promptly refunded by VENT to you unless you otherwise advise VENT in writing.
Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of $50,000. CST #2014998-50.

**EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES:** In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

**FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES:** In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge. Also, please be aware that many African countries often impose fuel surcharges upon checking in for the flight and do not give any advanced warning. Previously, these surcharges have been nominal ($5-$15 per flight) and it is the responsibility of each passenger to pay these costs.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE:** To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Resolutions as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™. Designed for all types of travelers, Ripcord is among the most highly regarded travel insurance programs available.

Critical benefits of Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance include a completely integrated program with a single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims; medical evacuation and rescue services from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice; comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, primary medical expense coverage, and much more. Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available but must be purchased within 14 days of tour deposit. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as security evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or other security events, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” clause (must be purchased within 14 days of tour deposit). Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.

For a price quote, or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: ripcordrescuetravelinsurance.com/ventbird; or click the Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™ logo on our website (click Help and Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

**ACCOMMODATIONS AND INTERNET ACCESS:** Accommodations throughout are very good: clean, comfortable rooms with private bathrooms, and all in lovely locations. There are swimming pools at several lodges; laundry service; good shops offering gifts, clothing and practical items; well-stocked bars; and excellent service. Internet is available at most lodges, but is not always reliable or functioning, particularly away from the central reception & dining areas.

**AIR INFORMATION:** Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be responsible for any air ticket penalties.

**TRANSPORTATION:** The group will be traveling in specially built four-wheel drive Landrovers or Landcruisers (six window seats in each) with a driver/guide in each vehicle.
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**BAGGAGE**: We request that participants limit their luggage to one medium, soft-sided roller bag or duffel bag and one carry-on, as storage space in the vehicles is very limited, and the aircraft for the flight from Arusha to Mwanza can accommodate 50 pounds of checked luggage per person. When packing, keep in mind that good laundry service is available at all of the lodges you will be visiting, meaning that laundry can be done at any location where we spend two or more nights. Any luggage or clothing not needed while on safari may be left in Arusha (at Ngare Sero), where it will be safely stored.

**CLIMATE**: The rainy and dry seasons have become less well-defined and predictable in recent years. However, we are expecting mainly dry, warm to hot weather with daytime temperatures ranging from 77˚ to 88˚F. In the crater highlands evenings can be chilly, with cool, misty mornings when temperatures may be down to the mid-50s. Generally, the temperatures and climate are considered pleasant and comfortable—sometimes hot, but not humid. The only exception is at Speke Bay, which is typically hotter and more humid, but we are there for only one night. We could experience some rainstorms with the onset of the rainy season, but this rarely affects our program and activities.

**CLOTHING**: Depending on weather, heat, and your susceptibility to the sun, you could bring a mix of T-shirts and long-sleeved and lightweight blouses or shirts. Similarly, it is OK to wear shorts in most situations, but light weight, washable pants (especially those that convert into shorts by unzipping legs) are preferable, because they offer additional protection from sun, thorny plants, and biting insects. A light sweater/sweatshirt for cooler evenings and a light, easily packable rain shell are advised. Neutral colors (grays, tans, and khakis) are most appropriate. Easily washable, quick-drying clothes are useful. And remember, all lodges have reasonable laundry services so you can pack lightly! Alternatively, to lighten your load, you may consider bringing some clothes you plan to discard. These can be worn on the tour and left behind—and are very well received by local staff that we meet. Some lodges have swimming pools, so bring swimwear if you wish. There are few opportunities for any serious hiking, so lighter walking shoes should be adequate. A sunhat and sunglasses are advised. Casual clothes are adequate throughout and leave the fancy jewelry at home!

**CURRENCY**: There are opportunities to exchange small amounts of U.S. dollars for Tanzanian shillings at some of the lodges, but you will not need large amounts. Almost all places (including souvenir and gift shops) will accept U.S. dollars and major credit cards. There are ATM machines in Arusha—bring your PIN number! Please note that it is nearly impossible to exchange (or use as payment) U.S. paper currency of any denomination that was printed prior to 2006 – neither banks nor merchants will accept these older style bills that lack the most recent anti-counterfeiting designs.

**DOCUMENTS**: In order to enter Tanzania, a passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned stay and VISA are required for United States and Canadian citizens. Citizens of other countries should check with their local consulate/embassy on visa requirements and any required vaccinations. Please refer to the HEALTH section of this itinerary for more information on vaccinations. For further information, you may contact the Tanzanian consulate nearest you or Travel Document Systems, Inc. (www.traveldocs.com or 888-838-4867), a company which handles visa procurement.

**EQUIPMENT**: Your leader will carry a spotting scope for all to use. Since much watching will be done from vehicles, there is limited use for such scopes, so you should strongly consider leaving this bulky and heavy piece of equipment at home. A small daypack for carrying your essentials in the vehicles on game drives is useful. You should bring all the camera equipment and spare batteries and digital storage media that you need as these items may not be available in Tanzania. There are abundant excellent photographic opportunities of mammals and birds, so be sure to bring plenty of digital storage media. Also bring a small flashlight or headlamp as some lodges run on generators that are switched off in the middle of the night. Please bring an alarm clock for early-morning wakeups. A few dust masks are advised in case we encounter dry and dusty roads.

**HEALTH**: If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember
to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

Bottled and purified water is supplied during the game drives and at meals, so you shouldn’t need a water bottle or purification tablets. You will need sunscreen and a small amount of insect repellent (though mosquitoes are scarce and not a problem). A few dust masks are a good item to bring, in case we encounter dry and dusty roads. Though food hygiene and quality is typically very good throughout, and we rarely experience any serious stomach problems, you may want to bring whatever remedy you prefer or are prescribed for upset stomach. Moist towelettes can be a pleasant way of keeping refreshed and clean en route. Lodges do have emergency medical kits and some lodge shops stock basic, well-known drugstore remedies for headaches, painkillers, etc. However, participants should bring their own supply of any medical/pharmaceutical items they need or have prescribed, as these will not be available. Our highest elevation will be at Ngorongoro, where the lodge is at about 7,500 feet above sea level.

A yellow fever vaccination certificate is no longer required for entry into Tanzania unless you are traveling from a yellow fever infected country, but it is handy to have the certificate with you. Although mosquitoes are scarce, there is a general recommendation to take malaria prophylaxis. Either Mefloquine (Larium) or Malarone is suggested for this region, as malaria here is chloroquine resistant. Mefloquine is available by prescription only, and may not be suitable for those using cardio-vascular medication; Malarone is also available only by prescription. You should consult with your personal physician before starting a prophylactic regimen using either drug.

As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against hepatitis types A and B.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour, recorded Travelers’ Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (232-4636). You can check the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

MISC: Departure Tax - None
    Electricity - 220/240 volts; plugs may be round or square 3-pin, fused or unfused
    Language - Kiswahili and English are the official languages
    Time - 9 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time

SUGGESTED READING: A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend www.amazon.com which has a wide selection; www.buteobooks.com and www.nhbs.com which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and www.abebooks.com for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

Birds:

Fanshawe, J. and T. Stevenson. A Field Guide to the Birds of East Africa: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. 2001. This book is the one to buy if you do not already have the Zimmerman field guide. Well illustrated, up to date, and recommended.

Van Perlo, Ber. Collins Illustrated Checklist: Birds of East Africa. Collins, 1995. This is a much more compact, yet complete coverage of East African birds. Illustrations are small, but generally good, though there is little back-up text. An excellent compromise for light and easy field use.

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**Mammals:**


Stuart, Chris, and Tilde. *Southern, Central and East African Mammals: A Photographic Guide*. Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 1998. For those wanting a much lighter reference, this is your book! Excellent photos and good brief text to most of the mammals we are likely to see in a very compact pocket-sized format.


**Reptiles:**


S. Spawls, K. Howells, & R. Drewes. *Pocket Guide to the Reptiles and Amphibians of East Africa*. Christopher Helm Publications (in UK), 2006. 144 pages, 230 color plates. This is a lightweight and portable guide, partly adapted from the popular and highly acclaimed field guide reviewed above. Covering the most prominent 150 reptiles and 80 amphibians found in the region (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi), with concise text, photographs and a map for each, this is a convenient and attractive pocket guide for a diverse and often conspicuous group of animals.


**Plants:**


**General:**

There is a wealth of material available for this region. Suggested good “general” reading about Africa, the wildlife, history and former lifestyles include:


Zimmerman, Dale A. *Turaco Country*. Portal, Arizona: Sky Island Press, 2015. This recently published book is a masterfully written memoir of the author’s 30 years of fieldwork in east Africa (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda). Zimmerman writes extensively of birds, mammals, butterflies and plants, from both the perspective of a professional biologist and an accomplished birder and natural historian, and includes detailed accounts of several of the stops on our tour (Ngorongoro Crater, the Serengeti, Lake Manyara, Arusha National Park, etc.). Much attention is given to the author’s early visits to the region in the early 1960s, and, as such, provides an evocative account of a time when visitors on safari could tent camp virtually anywhere. This book makes excellent pre-and-post-tour reading (and the photographic selection is remarkable), but it is too big and heavy to carry with you on tour.

Available in Tanzania are small booklets for each of the national parks. Produced by the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania and African Wildlife Foundation, they are highly informative, very well-illustrated and extremely readable accounts giving interesting details of all wildlife, plant life, ecological relationships and conservation aspects. Recommended!

**TIPPING:** Tipping (restaurant staff, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that tips are not expected and are entirely optional. Tips should be given directly to your tour leader; they should not be sent to the VENT office.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. (VENT) and/or its Agents act only as agents for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT and its agents can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute leaders on any tour. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on January 25, 2019 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein. The right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner’s risk entirely. The airlines concerned and their agents and affiliates are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their aircraft. The passenger ticket in use by said airlines, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchaser of these tickets and/or passenger. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for these tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airline Reporting Corporation.

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