

Tanzania

Birding amidst the Serengeti Wildebeest Migration



Birding the Ngorongoro Crater and Golden-winged Sunbird © Callan Cohen www.birdingafrica.com

6 participants only

- ✓ best birding season
- ✓ Serengeti wildebeest migration
- ✓ Ngorongoro crater and Olduvai Gorge
- ✓ cheetah, lion, leopard
- ✓ amazing for photography
- ✓ window seats in open roof safari vehicle
- ✓ upmarket lodges



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Tour leader: Tertius Gous



Tertius leads birding tours in 9 African countries. After birds, he has a special interest in mammals and consults as a specialist wildlife vet. His exceptional knowledge ranges from the frontiers of bird identification to mammal ecology. His sharp eye and gentle nature are key in making our tours such a success.

Dates (12-day tour)

1 - 12 April 2027

1 - 12 April 2028 (provisional)

Price 2027

~~\$8450~~ **\$8250 early booking.**

Single supplement: \$750

Book online

Visit www.birdingafrica.com

Deposit (\$110) by [credit card](#)

Email info@birdingafrica.com



Birding Africa Itinerary

Day	Birding Africa Itinerary	Night
1	Transfer from Kilimanjaro airport to our lodge near Arusha .	Arusha
2	After breakfast we drive with picnic lunches for a full day in Arusha National Park .	Arusha
3	After breakfast we head out with picnic lunches to the lark plains . The afternoon we continue to our lodge situated in a conservation area that links Tarangire National Park with Lake Manyara NP	Lake Manyara
4	A full day in Tarangire National Park	Lake Manyara
5	After breakfast and birding for the Tarangire and Manyara specials we make our way up the crater rim and west through the scenic Ngorongoro Conservation Area to the Ndutu woodlands.	Ndutu
6	Today we have a full day in the woodlands, plains and lakes around Ndutu .	Ndutu
7	After breakfast, we drive north with picnic lunches through the Ngorongoro Conservation Area to Serengeti National Park . Dinner and overnight inside Serengeti National Park.	Serengeti National Park
8	We have a full day's game- and bird-watching inside Serengeti National Park .	Serengeti National Park
9	We have another full day game- and bird-watching inside Serengeti National Park .	Serengeti National Park
10	This morning we drive with a picnic to our lodge on the rim of the Ngorongoro crater .	Ngorongoro Crater
11	Early morning, we descend into the Ngorongoro crater for a tour of the crater, with picnic lunch on the crater floor. We dine again at our lodge on the crater rim.	Ngorongoro Crater
12	After breakfast, we drive east down the Lake Manyara escarpment for a relaxed lunch near Arusha. Kilimanjaro airport, where our tour ends upon arrival in the evening .	End

Flights

KLM and British Airways fly from London to **Kilimanjaro airport** (airport code JRO).

The **tour starts and ends in the evening at Kilimanjaro airport**. The tour cost includes the transfer from the airport to the lodge. If you wish to stay a few days extra before or after the tour, then we will gladly help arrange any transfers and accommodation for you.





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Day by day

Northern Tanzania in April: the last accessible great mammal migration, coinciding with the passage of migrant birds, in one of the most epic places on earth.

On this tour, birds and mammals abound in a timeless landscape. With so many herbivores on the move, we'll stand excellent chances of watching leopard, lion and cheetah while we bird one the of most striking landscapes of East Africa's Rift Valley. We'll bisect the plains afoot Mt Kilimanjaro, explore the lush and little known forests of Mount Meru, descend into the vast crater of the Ngorongoro, stay in the scenic palm savanna of Lake Manyara, bird the Baobab dotted woodlands of Tarangire, visit our ancestor's lands of Oldupai Gorge, drive through the endless plains of Serengeti, home to some of Tanzania's endemics, and be based in the woodlands of Ndutu, where predators lurk underneath flat-topped Acacias.

We travel by open-rooftop Landcruisers, each participant having his own window. We'll stay in safari-style upmarket lodges and tented camps while on tour and in a charity guest house while in Arusha.

Arusha National Park

We fly into Kilimanjaro International airport, near the town of Arusha. Our first two days are devoted to exploring *Arusha National Park* afoot two of East Africa's great peaks, *Mt Kilimanjaro* and *Mt Meru*. Here, dry acacia scrub gives way to luxuriant mistbelt forests as one drives further up the slopes. Small troops of **Colobus monkeys**, with their long, drooping black and white hair, forage in the branches draped in "Old Man's Beard" lichen. The birds are completely different to those we will see later in the trip. Here we'll hope to soak up the likes of **Narina Trogon** and **Hartlaub's Turaco**. The alarm calls of the monkeys betray hunting **African Crowned Eagle** flying overhead. We'll look out for

hulky **Silvery-cheeked Hornbills** flying above and delicate **Blue Monkeys** hiding in the dark foliage. We'll see our first game here, with **African Buffalo** and **Giraffe** in the more open areas, and if we're lucky, the dainty **Harvey's Red Duiker** in the forest understory.

Lark plains

In sharp contrast to these luxuriant forests, we'll also explore the arid plains in the rain shadow of *Mt Meru*, where we'll search for one of Africa's rarest birds, the **Beesley's Lark**. This comical and highly social lark is restricted to a tiny area highly susceptible to climate change. The area is also excellent for wheatears, harriers, sandgrouse – and if we're lucky – even a **White-headed Mousebird**. African plains game, such as **Thompson's Gazelle** and **Plains Zebra**, intermingle freely with the local Maasai herds of cattle and goats, in a seemingly harmonious tolerance. Definitely food for thought while watching this abundant wildlife with regal Maasai herdsman tending their flocks, their striking red shawls blowing in the breeze, and all presided over by the snow-capped Kilimanjaro overhead.

Tarangire and Manyara area

We'll base ourselves in a conservation area that links *Tarangire and Manyara National Parks*. The endemic striking **Yellow-collared Lovebirds** are common here, while **Ashy Starling** and **Rufous-tailed Weavers** abound too. The diversity of hornbills, woodpeckers, rollers and weavers is typical to African savannah birding. Nestled along the dramatic cliffs of the famous East African rift valley, *Lake Manyara* is perhaps most famous for its large concentrations of flamingos. Our lodge is set on the shoreline, in a sea of palm savanna where **Secretarybirds** and **Black-bellied Bustards** patrol the grasslands.

Ngorongoro-Serengeti ecosystem

We'll head to the vast Serengeti-Ngorongoro ecosystem, home to one of the greatest

amphitheatres on earth. It is hard to do justice to the feeling of awe and privilege in these vast, timeless landscapes so rich with wildlife.

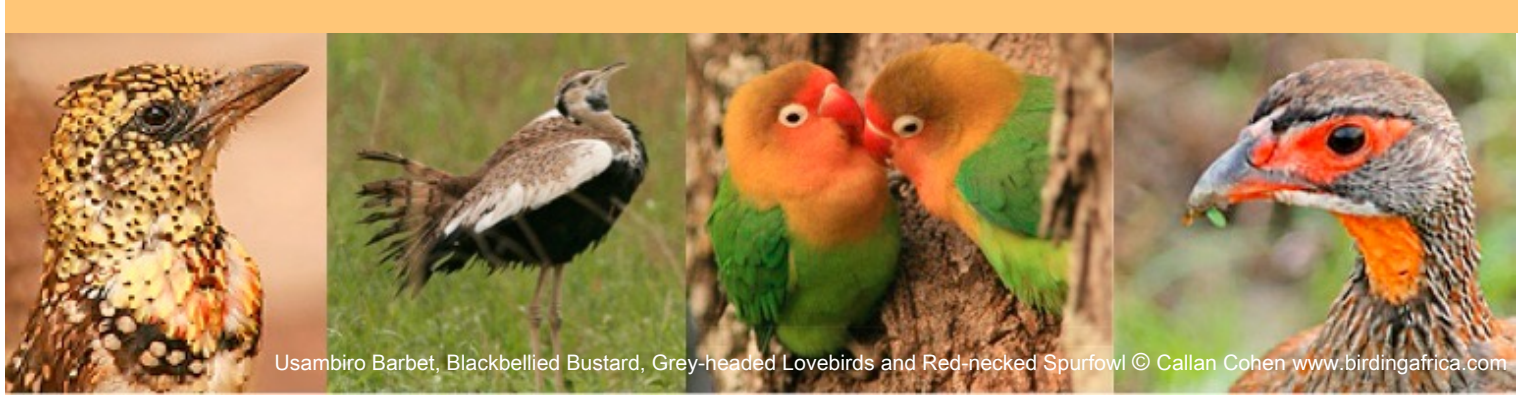
Here we will stay a full week. First, we'll drive up steep slopes of the *Ngorongoro caldera*, an ancient collapsed volcano, that looms above the plains. Looking westwards, the plains of the Serengeti stretch to the horizon and can literally teem with animals as far as the eye can see.

Oldupai Gorge

Some of our earliest ancestors have been unearthed by the Leakey family in the heart of the Ngorongoro Conservation area. Here lies the reconstructed footprint of our earliest ancestors and the world-famous archaeological site of Oldupai Gorge. It adds a sense of time and respect to think that the spectacle that stretches out in front of us has been going on for countless generations.



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Usambiro Barbet, Blackbellied Bustard, Grey-headed Lovebirds and Red-necked Spurfowl © Callan Cohen www.birdingafrica.com

Ndutu

As we drive into the open plains, we'll pass areas where wildebeest migrate through, stretching from horizon to horizon. It is almost impossible to describe the sense of energy that one gets surrounded by these hordes of grunting animals and the predators that follow. The herds are dominated by **Blue Wildebeest**, also known as Brindled Gnu, but also contain vast numbers of **Plains Zebra** and **Thompson's Gazelle**. The vulture watching is excellent here, with highlights being the huge **Lappet-faced Vulture**, and the scarcer **Rueppell's Griffon**.

We'll stay two nights in the area of Ndutu, known for its wildlife concentrations. Ndutu is an excellent base to explore the southern 'short-grass plains' and their associated herds of animals.

Kori and **Hartlaub's Bustards**, **Pallid Harrier** and **Caspian Plover**, are just some of the birds we'll encounter on the plains. Endemic Serengeti birds are common all around our accommodation, with **Fischer's Lovebird** breeding in tree-cavities along the walkways, and **Grey-breasted Spurfowl** displaying early mornings in front of our rooms. The nearby Lake Masek is excellent for

waterbirds. If we're lucky, we might even see cheetah chasing **Thompson's** and **Grant's Gazelles** across the open plains. We're certainly likely to see a pride of engorged lion, lazily scattered around the previous night's killings, while vultures, hyaenas and jackals all wait for their opportunity to get some scraps.

Serengeti

We'll head northwards to Seronera in the central *Serengeti*. There are more trees here, offering a larger diversity of birds and our best chance of spotting a Leopard. **Usambiro Barbet**, **Superb** and **Hildebrandt's Starlings**, **Silverbird**, **Ruaha Red-billed Hornbill** and **Grey-headed Silverbill** are just some of the birds that we'll encounter here. We'll explore the area's riverine loops, game drives and rocky kopjes. If we're lucky we'll even encounter the little-known **Karamoja Apalis**, and possibly the family groups of the **Grey-crested Helmetshrike**. Their floppy crests are definitely outdone by **Longcrested Eagle**, just one of the eagles we hope to encounter.

Ngorongoro Crater

The rim of the crater is a completely different habitat to the grasslands below and is

cloaked in forest and heathlands where we'll search for **Schalow's Turaco** and **Golden-winged Sunbird**. However, it is the crater floor that provides a natural sanctuary for the wildlife within and has become so famous. It is also the only reliable place in East Africa to see **Black Rhinoceros**, but the whole place is like a microcosm of Africa, with a good population of game animals – and lion and cheetah. The small lakes inside the crater hold a selection of **Greater and Lesser Flamingos**, storks and plovers. An excellent selection of raptors, such as **Augur Buzzard**, may be seen. We'll stay a night on the crater rim, before descending the next morning to explore.

Return to Arusha

Finally, when our time has come to retrace our steps, our journey will conclude eastwards to descend the Ngorongoro Crater rim through the lush forests, looking for our last views of turacos and Blue Monkeys in the tall canopies overhead. We'll zigzag down to the Lake Manyara escarpment and back at Arusha, we'll enjoy a relaxed lunch before we check in for our flight past Mount Kilimanjaro and back home.



Kori Bustard at Ndutu and White-bellied Go-away Bird in Tarangire © Callan Cohen www.birdingafrica.com



Leopard and Scarlet-chested Sunbird in Serengeti © Callan Cohen www.birdingafrica.com

Practical details

Group size

Maximum 6 participants.

Fitness & Health

This tour includes short strolls around the lodge grounds on relatively flat terrain. Elsewhere, the presence of wild animals may preclude excursions on foot so we travel by safari vehicles. We travel to a maximum altitude of 2400m.

Vehicles

We travel in open roof safari vehicles. Each participant has a window-seat.

Accommodation

We'll stay in hand-picked comfortable to excellent safari lodges, hotels and permanent tented camps as possible to the

best birding areas. Rooms have private facilities with hot showers.

Meals and drinks

Meals are Western-style, with a hint of French and African influence. Please advise if you are vegetarian and what foods you enjoy, so that we can cater for you. Water is not safe to drink so we supply free bottled water in the vehicle which you can take to your rooms in the evening for drinking.

Tour focus

Our Northern Tanzania migration safari blends the very best that is East Africa.

The forests, lakes and savannas of East Africa teem with birds, including a suite of Serengeti endemics. We'll also focus on mammals as our tour is planned to coincide with the great Wildebeest migration through

the central Serengeti, we'll stand a good chance of finding many of the region's predators such as lion, leopard, cheetah, hyaena and perhaps even Serval.

The Serengeti is a timeless landscape, where millions of animals have migrated to green pastures under the watchful eye of tribesmen and the looming mountain Kilimanjaro. Here too lies Oldupai Gorge, where evidence of humankind's most ancient ancestors have been found. The Ngorongoro crater captures a microcosm among its high walls, it's home to a high amount of predators, old resident male elephants and a unique sanctuary for the scarce Black Rhino.

We will spend a full week in the Serengeti-Ngorongoro ecosystem, one afternoon and morning in the Lake Manyara and Tarangire area and two days in the verdant Arusha National park.



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Booklet and checklist

Birding Africa provides:

1. **this tour leaflet** with detailed itinerary
2. **the tour information pack**, emailed to you.
3. **the tour booklet with checklists**, on the tour.

Included

- ✓ Birding Africa tour leaders and local guides
- ✓ entry fees and activities as per itinerary
- ✓ accommodation and all meals
- ✓ airport transfers
- ✓ bottled water in the vehicle
- ✓ soft drinks
- ✓ tips



How to book

1. Complete our [online form](#).
2. Secure your [booking deposit](#) by credit card on our 3D-secure site (ZAR2000 or about \$110.)
3. Settle the balance by bank transfer 150 days before the tour. We will email you a reminder and the bank details.

