

## HOWARD SAUNDERS

*Professional Guide*



Established 1946

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## NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2004

Here is all the latest from Africa after a very full, and action packed safari season. Kenya is enjoying a resurgence of visitors, and I for one have had some of my most exciting few months playing host and guide to an enthusiastic number of safari travellers.

Over the New Year, Sylvan Adams from Montreal re-created his childhood experience of Africa, by bringing his own family of six to Kenya. To his delight and some poignant déjà vu, his family were treated to as memorable a safari as Sylvan had experienced some thirty years before. Such experiences are not un-uncommon and highlight the dramatic and lasting impact this continent has on all who visit. Finishing the trip with an ascent of Mount Kenya's snow-capped peaks ensured this Christmas holiday was one that would be remembered for a very long time.

### The Samburu people

Sometimes overlooked when planning a safari, the Masai and Samburu people of Kenya have a lot to offer the visitor. I make a point on all my safaris to share some genuine experiences with these proud folk. Many of you have met my guides Solomon and ole Kamete, whose sharp eyes have spotted many a hidden lion or leopard; and have had the privilege of exchanging ideas, and appreciate the stark difference of their tribal lore. At times we recognise similarities, but more often than not we are moved by the contrast in their exotic life to ours.



Newlyweds Jeff & Alison Martin learn about Samburu culture.

Seeing one hundred painted and passionate warriors leap with unbridled excitement, while the glaciers of Kilimanjaro turn shades of pink with the setting sun's last rays, has to be one of the grandest sights on earth. For many of my guests, it is an evocative sight second to none. Such interest has prompted me to provide a more specific focus of my safaris on the cultural aspects of Africa, in addition to the wildlife wonders.

## Uganda - The Pearl of Africa

Yet more ventures into Uganda have continued to impress me. Most recently I was there on safari with Larry & Marilyn Shames from Ojai, California. We witnessed the superb recovery of wildlife, with lion numbers in particular noticeably higher. There was also a rather close encounter with a leopard - Howard must watch out when he goes to the little boy's room!

We visited the mountain gorillas and from just a few metres distant watched the '*almost human*' antics of a ten-day-old baby being nursed by its mother. Drifting down the Nile River we were reminded of such historic names as Stanley, Speke and Baker who first made their mark in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In the forest we nearly got caught up in the loud and feisty antics of a party of chimps feeding on fruits. These cherished experiences are merely some of the highlights of what Africa's '*Pearl*' has to offer.

The nature of Africa's wildlife necessitates exploring much of the continent by vehicle. One of the most pleasant and unique features of a trip to Uganda is the chance to leave the confines of our vehicle to walk amongst the primates and other flora and fauna of the forest. Out on foot amongst the forest's dazzling diversity, with a professional guide who can point out the many mysteries of bird calls and butterfly displays, is a fulfilling complement to the more traditional car-based game viewing.



Crossing the equator in Uganda.

## Tanzania Safari Update

Some of the highlights of my latest safaris have without a doubt, been in the unspoiled wilderness of Tanzania! Bob and Debra Watts from Pittsburgh came out in February, guided by my old safari mate Dave Simpson for a fascinating look at the wonders of Ngorongoro Crater and Lake Manyara. Bob and Debra also made sure to visit their daughter Heather's ongoing research on the carnivore life of Amboseli National Park.

My run of honeymoon safaris continued with the Martins from New York. Visits to Sarara Lodge, Lewa Downs, and a viewing of the great migration on the Serengeti plains all made for an unforgettable trip this January.



**Black rhino - Ngorongoro Crater**



**A very curious cheetah cub in the Masai Mara.**

## Ethiopian Adventure

After some extensive traveling through Kenya last year, Stephanie and I decided a visit to the highlands of Ethiopia was in order. While this is a safari for the seasoned African visitor, the rewards are certainly there for anyone who's game. The flowing, fur-caped gelada baboons are a delight to watch for anyone with an interest in animal behaviour. As with the baboon populations near our camp in Amboseli, the geladas are habituated allowing for close up viewing. This provides for some remarkable insights into the primate world.

Ethiopia also boasts some interesting historical destinations such as the ancient walled city of Gondar, once throne to the Abyssinia Kingdoms, and the ancient rock-hewn churches of Lalibela and Aksum, which date back to the 4<sup>th</sup> Century.



**Gelada baboon with grooming partner.**

Places for safaris in 2005 are becoming limited as I have already taken a number of confirmed bookings. So anyone who's interested in the trip of a lifetime, please drop me a line soon.

All the best,

**Howard**

**STOP PRESS !**

**A recent postponement of a safari for early July 2004 allows me to offer this spot at a substantially discounted rate for anyone who can fit it into their schedule this summer. Contact ASAP for this last minute safari opportunity!**