



02-01-13 Naguru Safari Park & Drive back to Nairobi

We are now driving back to Nairobi after spending the night in the Naishi Guest House in the Naguru Safari Park. This guest house had originally been the Game Warden's home and it was really lovely. It had two large bedrooms, each with a king-size bed and a full size bed. The living room had a fireplace and lovely wooden furniture which was very heavy. The windows had metal guards on them to keep the animals out. Cathy was awakened around 5:00 am to Cape buffalo munching grass outside the bedroom window.

The vervet monkeys kept entertaining us by sitting on the window ledges watching us eat breakfast, grooming their little ones, and one actually got in the back of the van as we were putting our suitcases in.

We arrived at the park around 1:30 pm yesterday afternoon. As soon as we entered the park the road followed the lake and we saw flamingos, pelicans, heron, storks, cormorant, and many thousands of other birds.

Soon afterwards we were thrilled to see the herds of Cape buffalo, Impalas, zebras, and giraffes. Most of the animals were very close to the road and with the 'safari roof' we could look around 360 degrees.

As we explored further into the park we discovered two white rhinos, which were at one point only about 25-30 feet from us. We went to the Baboon Picnic Overlook area and we saw picnic tables. Someone mentioned it would be a good idea to have a snack so I got out a zip lock bag of granola bars from the van. It seemed like no sooner had I walked towards the overlook that a baboon came charging directly at me. I couldn't believe he could run so fast. I threw the bag away from me and the baboon grabbed it, as James tried to get to the bag first. The baboon quickly climbed over the fence. Later, Amy heard a noise, and sure enough, the baboon was sitting on a rock carefully unwrapping our bars and eating everything but the wrappers!

As we drove through the ever-changing park, from water and rich green grasses to arid plains and then high bluffs, we saw the following additional animals: Price of lions (10), 3 leopards, striped hyena, wart hogs, water bucks, bush bucks, dik-diks (very small deer), tortoise, rock hyrax, Thomson's Gazelle, and the very rare black rhinoceros. (In fact Andrew Nelson, Amy's husband, told us that while we were in the park, four black rhinoceros had been poached! The officials assume it was an inside job so we hope they find the poachers.)

Kenya is known for its 1400+ species of birds and we must have seen many of them. Ones we could identify include Egyptian Geese, Lilac Crested Lola, Marsh Eagle, Egrets, white heron, grey heron, Guinea Hens, and the Secretary Bird.

We went to one of the many waterfalls and it cascaded at least 100 feet. There were baboons playing in the cliffs and cape buffalo drinking in the pond at the bottom of the waterfall.

When we saw the lions, there were finally 10 safari vehicles crammed together on the narrow road with everyone zooming their cameras in to get photos of the lions rolling around. We wanted them all the wake up, but they just kept tossing, stretching paws, and stayed in the one area. It is rare to see the lions, so we were especially pleased that James had been able to find them for us.

We came back to the guest house to have our dinner. Denev fixed us gourmet ramen, white rice, beef jerky, almonds, and we all enjoyed a cup of tea in front of the fireplace. We had power from a generator from 7 – 10:00 pm.

People are not allowed in the park before 6:30 am so we were up bright and early to get out at exactly 6:30 am. James took us to a wetland area and soon we watched three leopards as they walked along the bank of a narrow stream. Soon there were about 5 other vans that also were there, and we all kept vying for the best spot to watch the leopards as they continued to move along the bank.

We all noticed that the woman who had literally been sitting outside the top of the vehicle yesterday was at least under the top today. (James had told her driver that he had at one time been a Park Officer and if she had been caught on top by an officer she would have been kicked out of the park.)

Leopards are very difficult to spot as they blend in so well. Andrew hasn't seen a leopard yet and he has been in many safari parks in his almost two years. So we were thrilled to see the leopards. They kept walking along the narrow stream and the foliage was quite thick. They stayed in the area for quite a while (good 20 minutes at least) so we all enjoyed watching them.

This park was especially nice I think because of the lake, the beautiful high cliffs surrounding the lake, and then the wide range of landscape from wetlands to quite arid areas. It was absolutely amazing to see zebra, cape buffalo, impalas, and giraffes just walking in the fields all together! What a journey we have had!