Kenyan Birding & Animal Safari
Organized by Detroit Audubon and Silent Fliers of Kenya
July 8th to July 23rd, 2019

Kenya is a global biodiversity “hotspot”; however, it is not only famous for extraordinary viewing of charismatic megafauna (like elephants, lions, rhinos, hippos, cheetahs, leopards, giraffes, etc.), but it is also world-renowned as a bird watcher’s paradise. Located in the Rift Valley of East Africa, Kenya hosts 1054 species of birds--60% of the entire African birdlife--which are distributed in the most varied of habitats, ranging from tropical savannah and dry volcanic-shaped valleys to freshwater and brackish lakes to montane and rain forests.

When added to the amazing bird life, the beauty of the volcanic and lava-sculpted landscapes in combination with the incredible concentration of iconic megafauna, the experience is truly breathtaking--that the Africa of movies (“Out of Africa”), books (“Born Free”) and documentaries (“For the Love of Elephants”) is right here in East Africa’s Great Rift Valley with its unparalleled diversity of iconic wildlife and equatorially-located ecosystems. Kenya is truly the destination of choice for the birdwatcher and naturalist. Karibu (“Welcome to”) Kenya!
Itinerary:

Day 1: Arrival in Nairobi. Our guide will meet you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel. **Overnight stay in Nairobi.**

Day 2: After an early breakfast, we will embark on a full day exploration of Nairobi National Park—Kenya’s first National Park. This “urban park,” located adjacent to one of Africa’s most populous cities, allows for the possibility of seeing the following species of birds; Olivaceous and Willow Warbler, African Water Rail, Wood Sandpiper, Great Egret, Red-backed and Lesser Grey Shrike, Rosy-breasted and Pangani Longclaw, Yellow-crowned Bishop, Jackson’s Widowbird, Saddle-billed Stork, Cardinal Quelea, Black-crowned Night-heron, Martial Eagle and several species of Cisticolas, in addition to many other unique species. During your safari, keep an eye out for Hippos, Giraffes, Lions, Rhinos and other iconic animals of Africa. **Overnight stay in Nairobi.**

Day 3: Today we will drive south of Nairobi to Amboseli National Park which is a perfect place for watching ground-dwelling birds. Amboseli National Park is a flat, semi-arid basin lying below the most famous symbol of Africa – Mount Kilimanjaro.

Rising dramatically out of the savannah to 5,895m (19,340 ft), Kilimanjaro is the highest peak in Africa and the tallest free-standing mountain in the world.

The majestic giant with its snow-clad peak floating in the stark blue African sky forms a dramatic backdrop behind the abundant wildlife that live in Amboseli National Park.

A large part of the park consists of the alluvial dried-up bed of the seasonal Lake Amboseli, which in the rainy season can transform into a shallow floodplain, whilst the dry season brings strange mirages above the dry shimmering surface.
Towards the center of the park are a series of swamps, fed by the underground rivers running off the mountain. Here you will encounter ever-present herds of elephant, along with colorful birdlife. This includes a wide variety of water birds such as Grey Heron, Saddle-billed Stork, Egyptian Goose as well as Long-toed Lapwing, Yellow-throated Sand-grouse and up to 6 species of Vultures.

Other animals frequently seen include Cape Buffalo, Zebra, Wildebeest, Gazelle, Maasai Giraffe, Lion and Cheetah. *Overnight stay in Amboseli.*

**Day 4:** Today, we will spend the entire day in Amboseli National Park, and species of birds expected to be seen includes: Great White Pelican, Grey Heron, Goliath Heron, Squacco Heron, Cattle Egret, Great White Egret, Saddle-billed Stork, Marabou Stork, African Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis, Egyptian Goose, Secretary Bird, Tawny Eagle, Brown Snake-eagle, Montagu’s Harrier, African White-backed Vulture, African Fish-eagle, African Jacana, Spotted Thick-knee, Two-banded Courser, Painted Snipe, Kittlitz’s Plover, Three-banded Plover, and many other species of magnificent bird life. *Overnight stay in Amboseli.*

**Day 5:** Today, we will drive north toward Mt. Kenya, stopping en route at Mwea rice plantation area where we expect to record species like Yellow-crowned Bishop, Yellow-mantled Widowbird, Oriole Finch, Winding Cisticola and various species of aquatic birds. We will continue to Castle Forest Lodge. After some relaxing, we will start our afternoon birding on the main forest road, which is an excellent trail.
**Day 5 cont’:** We’ll see many species, with a chance of spotting the Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, Olive and Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeons, Hartlaub’s Turaco, Rüppell’s Robin-Chat, Mountain Yellow Warbler, Abbot and Sharp’s Starling, Doherty’s and Black-fronted Bush-shrike, Cinnamon Bracken and Evergreen Forest Warblers and Yellow-crowned Canary, White-starred Robin, Abyssinian Crimson-wing, African Crowned Eagle, African Emerald Cuckoo, and Moustached Green Tinkerbird. *Overnight stay at Castle Forest Lodge.*

**Day 6:** Full day of birding at Mt. Kenya forest reserve. Also, during your stay, be on the lookout for Jackson’s Chameleon. *Overnight stay at Castle Forest Lodge.*

**Day 7:** Today, we start with an early breakfast and after checking out of Castle Forest Lodge, we leave for Samburu National Reserve which is further north. Beyond Isiolo the habitat becomes very dry and the signature tree becomes apparent along the waterways, the Doum Palm. Once inside Samburu you will see why this is one of the most exciting reserves in East Africa.

An afternoon game drive will produce many of the specialty birds of the area like Somali Ostrich, Palm-nut Vulture, the tiny African Pygmy Falcon, Vulturine Guineafowl, Lichtenstein’s Sandgrouse, African Orange-bellied Parrot, Violet Wood-Hoopoe, White-headed Mousebird, Somali Bee-eater, Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill, the glorious Golden breasted Starling, and many other unique avian species. *Overnight stay at Samburu Game Lodge.*

**Day 8:** Full day birdwatching in Samburu National Reserve, which is great for big game with Lion, Cheetah, the attractive Reticulated Giraffe, Cape Buffalo, Beisa Oryx, Gerenuk, and the endangered Grevy’s Zebra all present. The biggest of big game is the iconic African Elephant.
Day 8 con’t: Exploration of the reserve will produce an almost overwhelming array of bird species: Buff-crested and White-bellied Bustards, Black-faced and Lichtenstein’s Sandgrouse, Rufous-crowned Roller, Von der Decken’s Hornbill, Red-and-yellow Barbet, Bearded Woodpecker, Pink-breasted Lark, Rosy-patched Bushshrike, Hunter’s and Black-bellied Sunbirds. Overnight stay at Samburu Game Lodge.

Day 9: Following breakfast we will do a game drive on our way out of the park. After we exit the park we will drive to Nanyuki, a town where we will stop for lunch. After lunch we head to the base of Aberdare National Park. En route we will bird Solio Plains, stopping as we go to study an array of small passerines perched on the roadside wires, where we hope to find Temminck’s Courser, Jackson’s Widowbird, Black-bellied Bustard, and various other grassland species. You will also expect to see White Rhinos on this drive. Before the day ends, you will drive to an old quarry where you meet Eunice, a local guide who has been tracking Cape Eagle Owl (sub-species Mackinderi) for some time now. Overnight stay on the lower slopes of Aberdare Range.

Day 10: After an early breakfast we will be off to Aberdare National Park. We’ll head into the Aberdare Mountains, where a good road will take us above treeline into moorland habitat. As we ascend through mixed woodland, we’ll see Jackson’s Francolins along the road, and the songs of Brown Woodland Warbler and African Emerald Cuckoo should give away their presence.
Day 10 con’t: We’ll stop at the end of the road in moorland habitat above 10,000 feet. Alpine Chats will be common here and easily seen, and we’ll search patches of giant lobelias for the main specialty, Scarlet-tufted Malachite Sunbird. In the late afternoon we exit Aberdare national park using Mutubio Gate and drive down to Lake Nakuru National Park. We expect to be inside Lake Nakuru National Park at around 6:00 p.m. Overnight stay at Lake Nakuru Lodge.

Day 11: We’ll spend the morning at Lake Nakuru National Park, world famous for its vast flock of Pelicans, Flamingo and a wealth of other waterbirds. In the acacia woodland around the lake, we’ll look for such species as Narina Trogon, Red-throated Wryneck, Greater and Scaly-throated Honeyguides, Arrow-marked Babbler, and African Firefinch. We will then return to the lodge for lunch and check-out as we bird our way to the exit gate. While exploring the Acacia woodland and the lakeside marshes we will no doubt encounter many wonderful avian delights: Great White Pelican, Great Cormorant, African Spoonbill, African Fish-eagle, African Harrier-hawk, Hildebrandt's Francolin, Grey-headed Gull, Broad-billed Roller, Levaillant's Cuckoo, White-browed Coucal, Green Wood-hoopoe, Grey Woodpecker, Black Cuckoo-shrike, Northern Anteater-chat, Grey-backed Fiscal, Brown-crowned Tchagra and African Firefinch. Mammals are also quite common in the park and it is one of the few places in East Africa where the endangered Black Rhino can be found. Some of the other mammals we hope to find include Rothschild's Giraffe, leopard, Buffalos and Deffasa waterbuck. This is also a good area for Leopards; they often spend the day asleep in the yellow-barked acacia trees.
**Day 11 con’t:** After lunch we’ll drive west to the only remnant of East African tropical rainforest at Kakamega and our wonderful accommodation within the forest where Great Blue Turacos are frequent visitors and White-spotted Flufftails live by the fish ponds. *Overnight stay in Kakamega Forest.*

**Day 12:** We have our breakfast at 6:00am and start birding the forest. We expect to see species like Uganda Woodland Warbler, Black-collared Apalis, Black-faced Rufous Warbler, Red-headed Bluebill, Red-headed Malimbe, Pink-footed Puffbacks, Olive-green Camaroptera, Equatorial Akalat, Yellow-billed Barbet, Purple-throated Cuckooshrike, Lührder´s Bush-Shrike, Grey-throated Barbet, Great Blue Turaco, Joyful Greenbul, Kakamega Greenbul, Green-headed Sunbird, Brown-eared Woodpecker, Yellow-spotted Barbet, Brown-chested Alethe, Jameson´s Wattle-eye and Dusky Tit. Others include; White-headed Wood-Hoopoe, Dark-backed and Black-billed Weavers and Green, Green-throated and Green Sunbirds, along with a number of more somberly colored but no less-interesting species. We will return to the lodge for lunch and afterward bird the compound of the lodge where we expect to net Northern Double-collared Sunbird, Vieillot´s Black Weaver, Mackinnon´s Fiscal, Stuhlmann´s Starling, African Blue Flycatcher, White-spotted Flufftail and Chubb´s Cisticola. *Overnight stay at Rondo Retreat.*

**Day 13:** Today we have breakfast early and bird our way out of the forest. We will be stopping at Kerio View Lodge for lunch at the western edge of Kerio Valley. After lunch we will descend the valley stopping at one location to look for Boran Cisticola, Gambaga Flycatcher, Red-headed Weaver, Little Rock Thrush, Lesser Honeyguide, White-crested Turaco, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-weaver and Black-headed Gonolek. We ascend the majestic Tugen Hills on the eastern side of the valley and down to Lake Baringo, a freshwater lake which is a birding paradise. *Overnight stay at Tumbili Cliff Lodge.*
Day 14: After breakfast we will drive to the volcanic escarpment located on the western side of the lake. Here we expect to pocket the following species of birds: Bristle-crowned, Greater blue-eared, and Magpie Starlings, Little Weaver, Three-streaked Tchagra, Pale Prinia, Mouse-coloured penduline-tit, Eastern violet-backed, Hunter’s and Beautiful Sunbird, Jackson’s, African Grey and Hemprich’s Hornbill, Green-winged Pytilia, Purple Grenadier and Red-fronted Warbler. We will return back to the lodge for some rest and to hide ourselves from the scorching heat that lake Baringo is known for. The lodge compound is a good place to watch birds in the comfort of the swimming pool. In the afternoon we’ll venture out into the nearby scrub, where our sharp-eyed local guides will help us find Spotted Thick-knee, Heuglin’s Courser, Lichtenstein’s Sandgrouse, Grayish Eagle-owl and Northern White-faced Scops-owl, Verreaux’s Eagle-owl, and Slender-tailed Nightjar, among others.

*Overnight stay at Tumbili Cliff Lodge.*

Day 15: Today you have an option of hiring a boat to explore the Lake. A 3-hour boat trip is always recommended. This will enable you to potentially spot species like Goliath, Green-backed, Squacco and Black-crowned Night-heron, Senegal Thick-knee, Carmine Bee-eater, Crimson-rumped Waxbill, Malachite, Woodland and Giant Kingfishers and many more.
Day 15 con’t: We will return to the lodge for some more compound birding and bird feeder photography. After lunch, we drive to Lake Bogoria National Reserve, this is the lake where over a million lesser flamingos have been recorded. The lake provides a feeding ground for the flamingos due to its richness in *Spirolina* algae. **Overnight stay at Tumbili Cliff Lodge.**

Day 16: Today is our last day birding day in Kenya, depending on what time your flight is due. We will transfer you to the airport for your flight back home, stopping for lunch along the way in Lake Naivasha area. **Departure from Nairobi’s Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.**

Tour Leader Bio: 
Bruce Szczechowski is thrilled to be leading this trip to one of his favorite places in the world. Bruce has been a professional educator for over twenty years and holds a Bachelor’s of Science from Wayne State University, a Teaching Certificate from Eastern Michigan University, and a Master’s in Applied Ecology from Michigan Technological University, as well as having extensive ornithological expertise garnered from a decade of collaborative work with the Canadian Wildlife Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In 2011 he, alongside his friend and Kenyan business partner Alex Kotut, co-founded Tembokanga Tours and Education Ventures, a safari company that focused on their shared expertise in the East African national park system. He currently teaches Environmental Science at Anderson High School in Southgate, Michigan, and continues to organize tours to, and guide safaris in, Kenya every year. He is now in the process of creating a new tour company with Kenyan friends, Joseph Aengwo and Wilson Tiren, expert wildlife guides and founders of *Silent Fliers of Kenya* safari company in order to provide unparalleled wildlife guiding and birding services to all future clients.

Testimonial: “I have known Bruce for over 10 years as an effective researcher, outstanding teacher, and passionate naturalist. He has a strong sense of wonder for the natural world, a keen interest in sharing his knowledge, and an ability to inspire others to care for the Earth. Bruce’s unique gifts and talents make him an ideal person to lead and guide tours in Kenya.”  
Accommodations:
- **Nights 1 & 2**: Nairobi, Kenya
- **Nights 3 & 4**: Amboseli National Park
- **Nights 5 & 6**: Castle Forest Lodge
- **Nights 7 & 8**: Samburu Game Lodge
- **Night 9**: Aberdare National Park
- **Night 10**: Lake Nakuru Lodge
- **Night 11**: Kakamega Forest
- **Night 12**: Rondo Retreat
- **Nights 13 – 15**: Tumbili Cliff Lodge

Fees and Registration Information:

**How much will this trip cost?**
Per person, double occupancy: $5,750  
Per person, single occupancy: $6,500

**What is included in the trip fee?**
- All overland travel
- All meals & bottled water
- Park fees
- Lodging

**What is not included in the trip fee?**
- Airfare to and from Nairobi
- Meal beverages (alcoholic or non-alcoholic)
- Extra boat tours/nature walks/village tours
- Special lodge services (laundry, spa services, etc)
- Kenyan entrance visa ($51, can be obtained before traveling to Kenya or upon arrival)
- Tipping of safari guides (recommended but not required)

**How do I sign up?**
- If you are interested in joining us on this Kenyan adventure, email Bailey Lininger, Detroit Audubon Program Coordinator, at blininger@detroitaudubon.org to put yourself on the list. We will have an informational session for interested participants to learn more—time, date, location for meeting TBD.
- A 50% deposit will be due by April 30th. Deposit information to interested parties will be sent once we have confirmation that our minimum trip number (6) has been reached. Payment in full will be due on June 15th.