

## AFRICA 1972

The following article was written by Celia White, past President of the KOS. The editorial comments are Max C. Thompson's.

The first KOS Africa Safari is now a wonderful memory. It was much better than we thought it could be and the small hassles we were involved in only make us more interested in the present political situations of the countries we visited. Max promised us 300 new species of birds for our life lists and we upped that by 76. But to the beginning.

Max Thompson said last winter he would like to lead a trip to Africa, [Celia actually put me up to it..Max] and eight KOS members took him up on it. Ed and Jo Dailey, Dr. Wm. Balfour, Wendy Balfour, David Holmes, and Ralph and I met Max at J. F. Kennedy Airport in New York on August 3. The night flight to Geneva proved a good start, a beautiful thunderstorm over Maine, and an outstanding northern light display over the ocean. Also the movie was Living Free, but by then I was asleep.

Geneva Airport stop was short. We were herded into a small building out from the terminal and searched. This was alright; we expected it each flight from then on and felt a bit more secure for it. KOS members had their first argument over a large black bird on the airfield. My notes say it was a Hooded Crow.

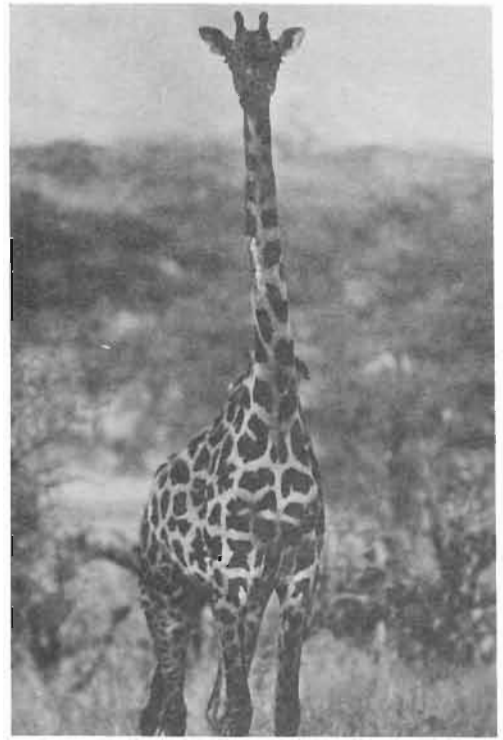
Bob Glazier was waiting to join us in Athens and complete our group. That afternoon was spent city sightseeing, most important, the Acropolis. Dinner that night was delicious and fun. Unknown foods in a small restaurant and the first problems with an unknown currency. Ed, the ex-math teacher, proved a whiz at converting, so I used his brain most of the trip.

On arrival in Nairobi next afternoon, Max went to find our Nairobi Tour agent. Several headed to the bank window to convert currency, and Jo found a bookstore in the airport that had copies of the out-of-print Field Guide to the Birds of East and Central Africa. The Nairobi Tour agent was looking for Max and seemed to just miss him, leaving us standing like sheep in the foyer. Then Issac, who was to be one of our drivers for the next two weeks, held up a sign saying "KOS Tour" and we were off on safari.

We travelled in two Volkswagen Minibuses with tops that raised for better viewing and photography. Wendy was too short to use the open top unless she stood on a seat, but the open top was a perfect height for Max and Bill and they stood for miles, heads in the wind and happy.

Ernest was the other driver; he and Issac proved not only excellent drivers but ingenious in taking care of problems such as both buses stuck in the mud on a lake shore or the battery splitting in one minibus, miles from the nearest town. They patched the battery and flat tires, exchanged money, found things we wanted to buy and with a bit of help turned out to be pretty good bird watchers.

Hotel and safari lodges were excellent. Food was generally delicious, some extraordinarily. Thomson Gazelle and Guinea Fowl were served at several places and one evening we enjoyed an outdoor barbecue with Eland steak. Uganda raises good coffee and most dining rooms served an excellent brew. Tea also had a nice bouquet and flavor. Three nights were spent in tents that were far from primitive. Ndutut did not have electricity at night but kept a huge fire burning in front of the lodge. We could hear animals just outside the firelight at the water hole and later lions coughed and roared nearby. This lodge is where they tell the story of a pride of lions walking through the bar and dining room one evening with guests hiding in closets and the cook having to be coaxed from a cupboard the next morning. Keekorok provided phones in the tent and armed guards at night, but seeing a bulge in the tent side, I felt of it and it snarled at me.



On safari someone is doing a wash every night so when we had balconies it was so much better for drying clothes than over the bathtub. One unfortunate lady had monkeys steal most of her intimate apparel from her balcony. Laundry was never again left out overnight. Safari lodges offered excellent birdwatching, so some of us were up at daylight. We were not allowed to leave the grounds as in the parks we were not allowed out of our cars. Ngulia had a sign telling us not to use the swimming pool after seven o'clock in the evening as the leopards often came to drink.

The lodges with undeveloped grounds were of course the most interesting, but the garden flowers and tree planting other places were beautiful and attracted sunbirds. Namanga had a lovely garden full of blooms and a huge flowering tree complete with equally lovely birds. KOS members birded on game drives, between every animal photograph, at rest stops, and before dinner in the evenings. After doing the wash we birded on our afternoons the tour had left for leisure. Each night a conference was held and we argued, dug into reference books and when agreeing put into our record all bird species seen that day. This daily list was made in luxurious hotel rooms, by gasoline light in a tent at Ndutu, by candlelight during a terrific lightning storm at Mweya Lodge, and in the Nairobi Airport while waiting for a flight after our earlier one had been cancelled [we were to depart at 11 a.m. and finally left at 10 p.m.]. Therefore all 376 species recorded we are sure of and we have a page full of question marks left over. Few species were seen only once or only by one person. Max tried hard to be sure all of us had a good look at every new bird. David and Max have the longest lists as they worked harder. My list is well over 300 and each species I listed I really saw and could at the time identify. These thrilling birds of vivid color, jewel tone and iridescence leave me without adjectives. Some species of Starling and weaver birds were common many places. African Pied Wagtail, Augur Buzzard, Marabou Stork and Blacksmith Plover were seen often. Seventeen species of sunbirds were identified and an outstanding experience was watching two Verreaux's Eagle Owls "talking" to each other. This was at Lake Naivasha. One-hundred-eleven species were the largest number recorded in one day, and 63 our poorest day. On five different days we recorded over 100 species. Of course with all these birds we recorded 46 species of animals, several lizards, crocodiles and a snake.

We all felt one 12 foot adder was enough snake so did not regret not seeing others. Three lizards were outstanding as one was pink and purple, one gold and blue and one a five foot monitor from Kazinga Channel.

Seeing so much new required a good deal of time in the reference books. Even when Max knew a species he encouraged us to look it up and my two books have a well-worn look. Almost constantly someone was reading descriptions--many of the parks had study skins or mounted birds for our use. The museum in Nairobi has an excellent bird section. It was a busy three weeks. We were surprised at the good weather and coolness of the night. I had forgotten my geography and did not realize we would be at higher altitudes most of the trip. Ngorongoro Lodge was over 7800 feet and the floor of its crater 2000 feet below, but still really high. The slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro are lush and green as are the Mountains of the Moon area with clouds of vapor coming down from the mountains in the Congo. At lower altitude, Tsavo, Tarangire, Serengeti and Amboseli and other short grass ranges were dry and brown, but the cured grass was supporting thousands of head of animals. Where prairie fires had burnt even larger herds were concentrated on the new green sprouts.

We were charged by rhino and threatened by elephant, but were never in any real danger. As David said, we travelled "in little glass cases" and we often had a powerful urge to get out and walk to get closer to all these new things we were seeing. The photographs I took are great but they do not capture the tense moment of watching a jackal sneak up on a flock of flamingoes. The riotous fun of Zebra playing in a water pool. The wonder of running gnu and Zebra before a thunderstorm, a line of animals from far hill to farther valley.

I had thought, way back in June, on reading the itinerary, that a boat trip on the Nile River and perhaps Murchinson Falls were to be the best of the trip. These were a wonderful part of the Africa we saw. A five day-old Hippo with Mama. The fantastic power of water falling 400 feet through a 20 foot rock cleft. The peaceful beauty of the historic Nile at sunset from Paraa Lodge. But Africa to me will always be a giraffe under an acacia tree.

The air flight into Uganda had problems but getting out was only through the heroic effort of Max. David left to visit his sister in West Africa (Zaire), and the same evening Bob and Bill left for Kansas City. Max, Wendy, Ed, Jo, Ralph and I had two more days in Entebbe before flying to Cairo. This time in Entebbe had been looked forward to for birding but because of airline ticket problems, Max finally found only a part of one afternoon to visit the Botanical Gardens. Egypt proved hot, dirty, and full of lies, but worth it. We all looked ridiculous riding camels from the pyramids to the Sphinx but we were tourists, weren't we?

We shopped in the Bazaar, visited mosques, found a little more room in suitcases for one more thing we couldn't at the moment do without, and lived at the Nile Hilton. Shopkeepers plied us with Turkish coffee, spiced tea, and lemonade, all delicious if you did not look at the cup or glass or think about intestinal parasites. We had a miserable flight to Luxor and an equally bad one back to Cairo. The temples of Karnak and Luxor have to be seen to be appreciated. The Valley of the Kings and interiors of the tombs of the Pharaohs can only be described as fantastic. What a great civilization existed to produce these.

We saw few birds in Egypt and did not bother to keep a list. Jo had wanted to see a Cobra and got her wish. A small boy tried to sell her a dead one when we were photographing the Colossi of Memnon.

We rode in old horse-drawn carriages, endured peddlers and dust; the elevator in the hotel broke and all our rooms were on the fifth floor. We sailed the Nile one evening at sunset in an ancient felucca.

I wish I could do it all over again. Celia White

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2nd AFRICAN SAFARI AUGUST 1-22, 1973

Another African safari for KOS members and their friends (or enemies) is being planned for August. We will depart New York on approximately August 1 and return to the US on August 22. The tour will cover essentially the same area as the 1972 tour, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda (the political situation in Uganda at the time will determine whether we go to that country). Smyer Travel Service will again operate the tour. If enough people sign up, we might have two parties and possibly two departure dates. The price will be held as close as possible to the 1972 tour price. If you are interested, please write Max Thompson, Southwestern College, Winfield, Ks. 67156. People do not have to be members of KOS to go. Our group saw more birds than two nationally known bird touring groups did in August 1972 and they couldn't had any more fun with the congenial group we had. Tour information will be sent out as soon as it is available to those interested. The birding list is also available if you want a copy. Max C. Thompson

DON'T FORGET TO PAY YOUR 1973 DUES

Earth News Service--The next time you or a lady friend wears that fetching Chanel No. 5 perfume, try to cool your passion long enough to consider the source of that delicate fragrance.

At least one of the ingredients of Chanel No. 5 is extracted from a glandular secretion of the Abyssinian Civet. In order to get the cats to secrete that delicacy, the manufacturers have to do some persuading. The process was explained to a reporter for an Australian newspaper by Jacques Leal, Chairman of the Board for Chanel Ltd. Said Leal: "They put the cat's head into a sort of torture chamber, whip it, the cat gets mad, and it gives off a glandular secretion." A nice business, the perfume business.

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High-level government corruption and unscrupulous business practices in Kenya have sparked wholesale slaughter of the East African Leopard in the last 6 months.

Even though Africa's spotted cats--Cheetahs and Leopards--are headed for extinction the price of their skins is so high that "the pelts will always get to the markets through official collusion," says a representative of one of Kenya's several wildlife protection leagues.

Since March 1st the sale of Leopard coats in Kenya has been against the law, but the ban has been lifted for 3 months--September through December--Solely to allow merchants to clear their stock of the forbidden goods.

In practice, however, the shops are not just selling off their old stock; they are replenishing their piles of skins as fast as possible with illegally shot leopards. For example, a delivery of illegal Leopard skins was made to a large store called Kenya Crafts on November 5th.

A Kenya wildlife society member who conducted a two-year study of poaching and smuggling in East Africa claims a powerful, Mafia-like international organization is directing the illegal traffic in spotted cat skins.

One wildlife protection league officer warns that the ban may actually increase the killing of leopards because it will drive the black-market price of the skins even higher. Oldtimers in Nairobi recall days when a top quality Leopard skin could be bought for \$3. Today it will cost over \$1,000, and as the animals become more scarce, the price will soar even higher.

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Fall notes from Towanyak--With resident camp ending August 6, we settled down for a few weeks of R. & R until the group camping began in mid-September. On August 15, the folks across the road reported an Osprey perched on a fencepost in their backyard, which adjoined a large open meadow area. Later that day Jim saw it in the same vicinity. We spotted another on September 10. On August 31, we discovered that the hummingbirds were feeding on jewelweed at the edge of the back meadow. We counted ten of these diminutive birds, most of which remained for a week or more. On this same date we had one unidentified Empidonax flycatcher. A little wave of warblers, on September 2 caught us unaware and without binoculars. They moved quickly on through the trees before identification could be made. This was the same day Esther O'Connor and Rilla Nammatt reported 2 Swainson's Thrushes feeding on pokeberries in their backyard. On September 15, a Parula Warbler was singing along the creek. Unseasonably warm temperatures in the nineties inspired a Whippoorwill to sing one final farewell song early the evening of September 16. We also had Cedar Waxwings, another Empidonax and an unidentified thrush on that day. On the 17th September there were flocks of flickers and Robins. Jim found a titmouse hopelessly entangled in Virginia Stickseed (Lappula virginia) which was growing in among the jewelweed. The poor bird's wings were caught and so enmeshed with the pesky little burs that it hung there helpless, about two feet off the ground, and would surely have perished had he not freed it. On

September 6, we drove to the Agricultural Hall of Fame to view the "white hawk" (an albinistic redtail) reported by Bob Lee and Bob Means of Bonnar Springs. We got our first (and only) Yellow-bellied Sapsucker of this fall season on October 2, while a Summer Tanager sang nearby. Heavy rains on the 28th, followed by a very early frost and light freeze on September 30, with cool cloudy weather remaining in the area, brought a wave of migrants on October 3. At least 3 Golden-crowned Kinglets, 2 Brown Creepers, several White-throated Sparrows, and many Robins were seen. A flock of 20 or more Barn Swallows, flying directly south, was observed. They were not wheeling or circling as usual, but seemed intent on going in the direction of warmer climes. Another flock of small birds, fairly high, were unidentified. Many swifts were in the air, a Green Heron squawked along the creek, and a lingering Wood Pewee sounded his plaintive call. One hundred Blue and Snow Geese were observed around noon on October 6, with another smaller flock on the 8th. Also saw 13 Bluebirds flying over. At that time they had not yet returned to our feeders, so this may have been a migrating flock. Our Bluebirds returned on November 28. We saw our first Slate-colored Junco on October 11. Rain and cooler weather moving in brought a wave of Golden-crowned Kinglets the next day. A Rufous-sided Towhee fed in the yard on October 14 and 22. Another little wave on October 15 brought lots of Golden-crowned Kinglets and half a dozen Ruby-crowned Kinglets, plus 25 or more White-throated Sparrows, many Robins and grackles, one Winter Wren, one House Wren and one eacy Black-throated Green, Chestnut-sided and Orange-crowned Warbler. On October 17, there was a large flock, 50 or more Pine Siskins at the top of our hill. Mrs. Joanne Azernoff, on this same date, reported a Philadelphia Vireo and a Goshawk on the grounds of the K. C. Museum. On November 9, Jim found a dead adult Goshawk in our woods. It was a beautiful speci man with a wingspan of 42 inches and measured 24 inches from end of beak to tip of tail. Although it appeared to be somewhat emaciated, the cause of death was undetermined. On October 18, we had the siskins again, a Myrtle Warbler, Cedar Waxwings, and several Buteo hawks in the air. We got our first and only White-crowned Sparrow on October 20. an immature who now wears our band #105-145283. We saw a Golden-winged Warbler on October 23, plus another flock of siskins. Our first Purple Finch appeared on October 30. They definitely aren't in in numbers (December 4). On November 9 and 11 the trees from the house all the way up to the road sounded full of Red Crossbills. They did not tarry long, flyi ng in the direction of Lake Quivira. Later on the date of November 11, a Bay-breasted Warbler was foraging among the brown leaves, a very late date. All indications point to an unusual winter season, with opportunities for many norther goodies. All experts say this is an invasion year. Mary Louise and Jim Meyers.

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NORTHERN INVASION YEAR-----Red Crossbills, Bohemian Waxwings, Evening Grosbeaks, Clark's Nutcrackers, Pinon Jay have all been seen in the State this fall. Also Goshawks have been reported from several stations.

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Membership Secretary Notes--Only 35 members, including eight "lifers" had paid their 1973 dues by December 4. Dues envelopes were enclosed in the last Newsletter. It is hoped that they will be returned to the treasurer soon. Again we stress the importance of having about a hundred sustaining members to offset the student members who pay only \$1.00 per year. Last year we had 88 sustainers, plus eight life members and three paying toward life membership. Please pay as soon as possible. Amelia J. Betts.

XMAS COUNT DATES--December 16: Wichita, Newton, Manhattan, Kansas City; December 17: Emporia, North Kansas City; December 23: Lawrence, Winfield; December 30: Baldwin; December 31: Junction City. No other dates were available at press time.

MERRY XMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE EDITORS

P.S. If you didn't get a June Bulletin, write Ruth Fauhl, Museum of Natural Hist. at KU. An old mailing list was used and you may have been missed.