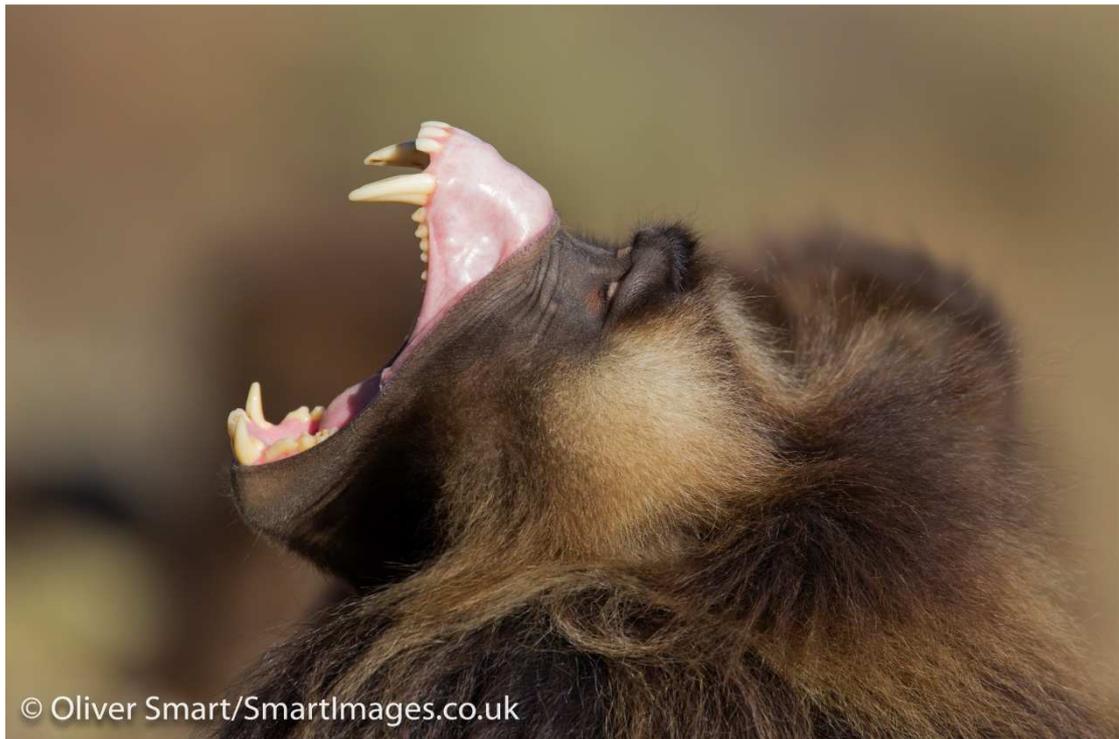


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Special Itinerary

The Photogenic Wildlife & Landscapes of Ethiopia – with Oliver Smart

17 - Day Escorted Group Tour - Led by Oliver Smart and
Daniel Million

01 – 17 April 2019



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A Brief Description of the Group Itinerary

This expert-led small group tour concentrates on the unusual and photogenic wildlife and landscapes that set Ethiopia apart from the rest of Africa. Ethiopia is truly a photographer's dream destination with wildlife, especially birdlife, surprisingly tolerant of people. There will be an emphasis in this group tour on photography and tuition in addition to observing Ethiopia's magnificent wildlife.



It will be jointly led by award-winning wildlife photographer, ornithologist and naturalist Oliver Smart and local wildlife expert Daniel Million who will help you make the most of the many photographic opportunities: most of the pictures in this itinerary were taken by Oliver, which will give you some idea of his abilities. His humour, knowledge and experience will help you gain maximum enjoyment and results from this exciting adventure.

Highlights on the trip will include sitting among gelada baboons (sometimes a few feet away) as they feed and chatter on the montane grasslands of the Simien Mountains. You should also see impressive walia ibex, soaring lammergeiers, agile klipspringers and the jaw-dropping scenery of the Simien Mountains. As we move into the Awash Valley there will be more typical East African savannah and wildlife such as Besia oryx, Grevy's zebra, Somali ostrich, bustards, various bee-eaters and raptors, crocodile, leopard tortoise and spotted hyena. The Bale Mountains come next, inhabited by the world's rarest canid and Africa's most endangered carnivore, the beautiful Ethiopian wolf. Seeing this elegant, rare predator hunting giant mole rats on the moonlike Sanetti Plateau is an experience to savour. The Afro-alpine moorlands and lush lichen-clad cloud forests of the Bale Mountains are home to many other endemic and unusual species including mountain nyala, Bale monkey, serval, crowned eagle, blue-winged goose and the Bale chameleon. There will also be hippos and vast flocks of flamingoes and other varied birdlife in the Great Rift Valley Lakes. Ethiopia's fascinating history and unique cultures combine with its wildlife to make for an unforgettable adventure in one of Africa's most diverse countries.

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

- 01 Apr Depart **LONDON HEATHROW** on overnight flight to **ADDIS ABABA**.
- 02 Apr Morning arrival and transfer to hotel for breakfast. Later in the day enjoy visiting the **ADDIS ABABA MUSUEUM** and some birdwatching around the city. O/n GETFAM HOTEL, FB.
- 03 Apr Transfer to the airport and take flight to **GONDAR**. Met on arrival and transfer to the **SIMIEN MOUNTAINS**. O/n LIMALIMO LODGE, FB.
- 04 Apr Enjoy a full day exploring the **SIMIEN MOUNTAINS** including the Chennek Valley in search of its special wildlife. O/n LIMALIMO LODGE, FB.
- 05 Apr After some last wildlife watching, we return to GONDAR for lunch. In the afternoon we will visit **GONDAR CASTLE** and the **DEBRE BIRHAN SELASSIE CHURCH**. O/n GOHA HOTEL, FB.
- 06 Apr Transfer to the airport. Take flight back to ADDIS ABABA. On arrival transfer to **AWASH NATIONAL PARK** for an evening safari. O/n AWASH FALLS LODGE, FB.
- 07 Apr Morning and afternoon wildlife viewing in **AWASH NATIONAL PARK**. Evening visit to Hyena den at Mount Fentale. O/n AWASH FALLS LODGE, FB.
- 08 Apr Early transfer to **ALI-DEGHI WILDLIFE RESERVE** for a morning game drive. Lunch at Doho Lodge and some time at leisure and for the hot springs. Afternoon game drive. O/n DOHO LODGE, FB.
- 09 Apr Morning safari on the **ALI-DEGHI WILDLIFE RESERVE**. In the afternoon transfer to ADAMA (Nazret) for the evening. O/n LA RESIDENCE HOTEL AND SPA, FB.
- 10 Apr Day to drive to the **BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK** stopping at points of interest along the way such as the **GAYSAY GRASSLANDS**. O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, FB.
- 11 Apr Excursion to the **SANETTI PLATEAU** to see its special wildlife. Afternoon to explore the **HARENNA FOREST**. O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, FB.
- 12 Apr A full day to explore the **HARENNA FOREST** or more of the SANETTI PLATEAU. O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, FB.
- 13 Apr Last morning to explore the Bale Mountains including the **GAYSAY GRASSLANDS**. Transfer to **LAKE AWASSA**. O/n HAILE RESORT, FB.
- 14 Apr Morning to explore **LAKE AWASSA** by boat and on foot. Later transfer to LAKE LANGANO. Afternoon birdwatching. O/n HARA LANGANO, FB.
- 15 Apr Morning birdwatching and hippo watching at **LAKE LANGANO**. Later visit **ABIJATTA-SHALLA NATIONAL PARK** to see its hot springs and wildlife. Night walk for nocturnal wildlife in the evening. O/n HARA LANGANO, FB.
- 16 Apr Morning birdwatching again at **LAKE LANGANO**. After lunch drive back to **ADDIS ABABA** for a farewell dinner at a special restaurant. O/n GETFAM HOTEL, FB.
- 17 Apr Morning transfer to the airport for check in. Take flight 0150 back to LONDON. Arrive LONDON HEATHROW at 1500 pm.



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Joint Leader: Oliver Smart

An alumnus of the University of Birmingham, Oliver is an acclaimed wildlife photographer and ornithologist. His clear passion for the natural world and significant experience of wildlife photography will be a valuable asset to the group members. Oliver has won awards from the Zoological Society of London and The Bird Photographer of the Year and has been published and highly commended in numerous magazines, national newspapers,



nature books and wildlife guides. Oliver's deep understanding of wildlife behaviour and experience photographing a range of habitats throughout Ethiopia will help you to capture some fantastic images of that country's extra-special wildlife, landscapes and culture. His friendly and outgoing personality, sense of humour and immense knowledge of wildlife and photography will ensure you gain the very best possible enjoyment and photographic results from this exceptional tour. Oliver will also offer Lightroom tuition during downtime to encourage you to achieve the best results from your images. He'll also stay up late in the evening to assist you in photographing the bright stars and Milky Way visible in the dark, unpolluted skies of Ethiopia.

Joint Leader: Daniel Million

After completing studies in tourism, wildlife and history, Daniel began leading tours all over Ethiopia for a number of special interest clients. He now has well over a decade's worth of experience in tour leading in Ethiopia and is one of the country's eminent experts in wildlife and birding, having extensively studied ornithology and natural history. He has travelled to all corners of his country, assisting National Geographic photographers and film crews and leading hundreds of wildlife and cultural tours. He has an outstanding knowledge of wildlife behavior and has observed an exceptional range of Ethiopia's wildlife: he knows where to find even the most elusive species. Daniel's studies and interest in history and culture are also very evident and his fluency in English, French, Amharic and Oromiffa combined with his great sense of humor and warm personality make him a perfect joint leader for this group.





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THE PHOTOGENIC WILDLIFE & LANDSCAPES OF ETHIOPIA

Mon 01 Apr Depart LONDON HEATHROW on ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES flight ET 701 at 2015 to ADDIS ABABA (Flight duration: 7 hours 35 minutes).

Tue 02 Apr Arrive ADDIS ABABA at 0550. Met on arrival and transfer to the hotel for breakfast and some time to freshen up and rest after your flight. Later in the morning we will visit the grounds of the Ghion Hotel for some urban birdwatching. Here a surprising variety of Ethiopian highland and endemic bird species can be found in the forested grounds of this government-owned hotel. Birdwatching here gives a good introduction to the avian families found across Ethiopia and sightings may include the endemic wattled ibis, Abyssinian white-eye, Abyssinian slaty flycatcher, tacazze sunbird, Rüppell's robin-chat and hooded vulture. In the afternoon we will take a city tour of Addis Ababa and visit the National Museum which houses the famous Lucy exhibit and some of the earliest hominid remains ever discovered. We will also visit the Holy Trinity Cathedral where Emperor Haile Selassie and his wife are buried. Return to our hotel in the evening for dinner. (All meals are included today)



O/n GETFAM HOTEL, FB. One of the most comfortable in Addis and only a 15-minute drive from the airport, the hotel is located on a busy road with good views towards the mountains from the higher floors. Each of the 115 rooms features comfortable beds with modern amenities including flat screen cable TV, direct dial telephone, minibar and tea and coffee facilities. There is a restaurant serving international cuisine, and 24-hour room service is also available. Other facilities include an indoor swimming pool, gym and free Wi-Fi.

Wed 03 Apr Pick up for an early transfer to the airport to check in for the ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES flight ET 122 at 0810 to GONDAR arriving 0920. On arrival we will transfer north to Debarq, the gateway to the stunning Simien Mountains National Park. The journey takes around 3-4 hours and passes interesting upland landscapes including the mountains of Kosoye where Queen Elizabeth camped in 1965 on her journey to Axum. After lunch we will begin exploring the magnificent SIMIEN MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK.

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Established in 1969, The National Park was subsequently designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978 for its remarkable mountain landscapes and importance as a refuge for a unique range of species. Millions of years of erosion on the volcanic Ethiopian Plateau have resulted in the dramatic highland landscapes that can be seen today. These jagged mountains with their craggy peaks and pinnacles, deep valleys and sheer cliff faces make for some superb landscape photography, especially early and late in the day when rays of sunshine illuminate the valleys.



The park is also of great importance for its populations of endangered and endemic wildlife. Many of the animal and plant species here are dependent on the rare Afro-alpine moorland habitat found here and in the Bale Mountains. One of the most iconic species to thrive here is the magnificent gelada (or bleeding heart) baboon. These impressive primates are the only living species of an ancient family of primates that almost exclusively feed on grass.



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The geladas graze the high altitude grasslands on the mountain tops in huge groups, known as herds sometimes numbering 200 or 300 individuals. These herds are actually made up of numerous smaller family units controlled by the matriarchs, rather than the powerful looking males. Due to there being no persecution within the National Park itself, the geladas here have become habituated to people and will allow you to sit with them as they graze, groom and chatter amongst themselves. The large males are particularly photogenic with their fluffy manes, long expressive faces and bright red chests.



Sitting amongst these surprisingly gentle animals while they go about their daily business is one of the most intimate and memorable wildlife experiences to be had anywhere. By spending time with and photographing a herd we hope to observe interesting behaviour such as the expressive lip and eyelid flashes of the males.

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Noisy clashes between the males and curious youngsters investigating us are likely highlights of our time spent with these fascinating primates. We will return to our lodge for dinner and drinks around the fire under the stars. (All meals and selected alcoholic and soft drinks are included today)

O/n LIMALIMO LODGE, FB. This lodge is located in an area of recently replanted native forest within the newly extended National Park boundary and overlooks a beautiful escarpment. Named after the local village in which it is heavily involved, Limalimo Lodge offers



exceptional views, a friendly service and excellent environmental and social credentials. The Lodge was opened in 2016 and offers accommodation in 12 secluded bungalows superbly constructed using the local traditional rammed earth and wood method. The rooms feature huge panoramic windows allowing in lots of light and views of the natural habitat. The king-size beds are comfortable and the attached bathroom is spacious and well designed. The lodge has been built to blend into its natural surroundings and has a strong environmental policy. The main building offers a cosy living area with coffee tables, sofas, a small library and bar and the restaurant features a roaring fireplace. Meals are beautifully presented and cooked using local produce. There is an outside deck with fire pit overlooking the magnificent escarpment, perfect for enjoying the views, watching the birdlife and star gazing. The lodge is located at a more comfortable altitude than most of the park, at just under 3,000 meters above sea level.

Thu 04 Apr

Today we can enjoy a full day exploring the Simien Mountains National Park with a packed lunch. During the day we will see various habitats and spend time with large herds of geladas, taking some fantastic photographs. We will also visit the



beautiful Chennek Valley where the locally endemic Walia ibex can usually be found grazing on the high grasslands and cliff faces. These sure-footed members of the goat family were once hunted to near extinction but thanks to increased protection and education their numbers are now slowly recovering.

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This is also an excellent area of the park to see and photograph the majestic lammergeier, also known as the bearded vulture or bone breaker for its habit of smashing open bones to feed



on the marrow inside. With some patience and luck these magnificent vultures with their awesome 2.5 metre wingspans can be seen gliding by at eye level at certain locations.

Other wildlife to look for during the day includes the agile Ethiopian klipspringer and a wide range of other birds including the aptly named thick-billed raven, tawny and steppe eagles,



Ruppell's, white-backed and Egyptian vultures, Erckel's francolin, greater blue-eared starling, Blandford's lark, moorland chat and the endemic Abyssinian wheatear. Throughout the day we will also experience the three vegetation zones of the park; the afro-montane forests, higher elevation Ericaceous bush, and afro-alpine moorlands found at the highest altitudes of around 3,700 meters above sea level. (All meals are included today) O/n LIMALIMO LODGE, FB.



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Fri 05 Apr

For those interested, this morning we can enjoy some pre-breakfast birdwatching around the lodge grounds where many exciting avian species such as Abyssinian catbird and a range of warblers, sunbirds and flycatchers can be found. We will then head back Gondar for a tasty lunch at a traditional restaurant where white-cheeked turacos often visit the gardens. In the late afternoon we will visit the historic Fasil Ghebbi royal enclosure and its castles, dating back to the 17th Century.



The original castle was built by Emperor Fasilides as his home after he founded Gondar as the capital city of then Empire of Abyssinia. Various members of his family then went on to build their own impressive castles within the enclosure. A short drive from the castles is the Debre Birhan Selassie Church. Also built in the 17th Century by King Iyasu, this famous church offers some of the best examples of Ethiopian Orthodox artwork with almost every inch of the interior walls and ceiling being intricately painted with religious events. The Church was one of the few spared during the Mahdist War of the 1880s, apparently due to a swarm of bees chasing off the soldiers who were just about to raze it to the ground. In the evening we will transfer to the Goha Hotel for dinner and views of the sunset over Gondar while fan-tailed and thick-billed ravens soar past. (All meals are included today)



O/n GOHA HOTEL, FB. Located atop a hill overlooking the city of Gondar and mountains in the distance, the Goha Hotel is one of the best and oldest in town. All 82 rooms feature traditional colours and artworks and offer comfortable beds, cable TVs and private bathrooms. There is a large restaurant on the ground floor with an outside dining area and there is often live music on weekend evenings. There is a good range of international and local cuisine as well as Rift Valley wines available in the restaurant plus free Wi-Fi. There is also a small outdoor swimming pool and sunset deck.



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Sat 06 Apr

After an early breakfast we transfer to the airport to check in for the flight back to Addis Ababa. Take ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES flight ET125 at 0850 to ADDIS ABABA arriving 1000. On arrival we transfer approximately 4 hours east into the Great Rift Valley and to the AWASH NATIONAL PARK. This region is much more arid and characterised by acacia woodland, grasslands and impressive volcanic features with the mighty Awash River cutting its way through the landscape. In the late afternoon we can explore the scrub and grasslands of the Illala Sala Plains in the south of the National Park on a safari drive.



The area is home to a population of the elegant Besia (East African) oryx and small herds of Soemmerring's gazelle which are endemic to the horn of Africa. The nimble Salt's dik dik, Abyssinian hare, warthog, Olive baboon, bat-eared fox, black-backed jackal, African wildcat, caracal and aardvark are all also present although the latter three are only rarely seen. The park was once home to large numbers of herbivores and their predators, but due to increased illegal grazing by the cattle and sheep of nomadic herders in recent years, many of the wild species have sadly now moved on or their population sizes have greatly decreased.



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The birdlife though is still very rich with many exciting species to see including dark-chanting goshawk, black-banded snake eagle, pygmy falcon, buff-crested, white-bellied and Kori bustards, Abyssinian roller, Somali fiscal shrike, green-winged



pytilia, yellow-breasted barbet and crested francolin. Return to the lodge for dinner and perhaps a traditional coffee ceremony. (Breakfast and dinner only are included today)



O/n AWASH FALLS LODGE, FB. Located next to the spectacular Awash waterfall and surrounded by thorny scrub the lodge is the ideal base for exploring this more traditional East African national park. The accommodation comprises 32 simple traditional *tukual* huts



constructed with local earth and timber, some of which overlook the Awash River. The mattresses are quite hard and the mosquito nets have a few holes, but the prime wildlife location more than makes up for the basic accommodation. Each room has a private bathroom with hot water showers and a lovely rustic dining area with raised seating areas overlooking the spectacular river.

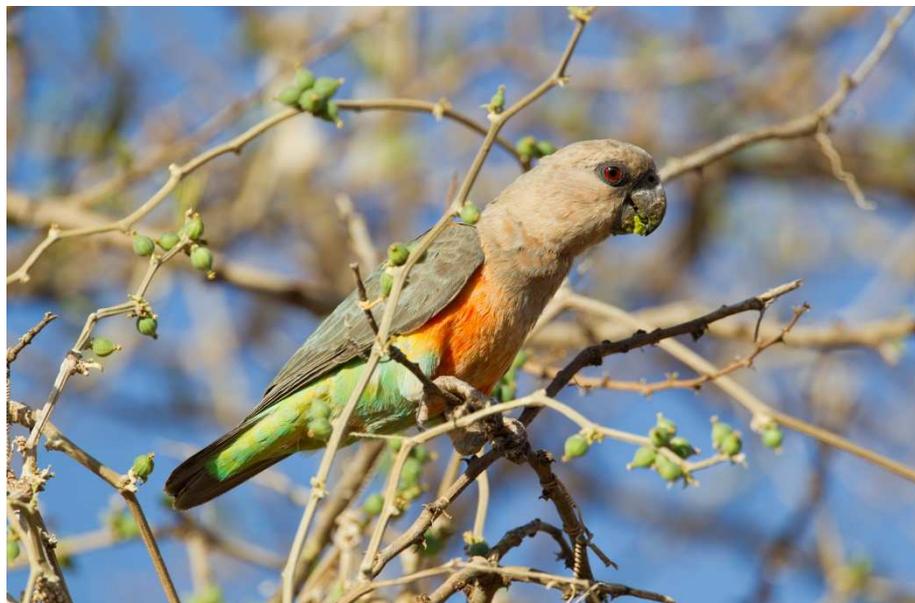
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Sun 07 Apr Rise early to explore the habitat around the lodge where elegant lesser kudus and inquisitive grivet and black-and-white guereza colobus monkeys are found.



Blue-naped mousebird, Somali fiscal shrike, Abyssinian roller, white-throated and northern carmine bee-eaters, eastern grey plant-eater, African orange-bellied parrot, crested francolin and several species of hornbill are among the birds that could be seen.

Along the river itself some very large Nile crocodiles and monitor lizards can be found basking whilst goliath herons and many kingfishers hunt the water's edge. Spend the rest of the morning and afternoon exploring Awash National Park on safari drives and/or short walks through the riverine forest to observe and photograph wildlife.



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The impressive Awash River Gorge viewpoint found at the site of the old Kereyu Lodge presents a superb panorama. This is also a good area for birding with Abyssinian ground hornbills, Gillet's larks, rosy-patched bush-shrikes and also some huge



leopard tortoises. In the late afternoon we head to Lake Beseka where migrant waders and waterfowl may be found alongside colourful saddle-billed storks, pink-backed and great white pelicans and black-necked grebes.

As the evening progresses we will drive for 30 minutes to the base of the imposing Mount Fentale volcano which dominates the scenic landscape. Here are found chattering rock hyraxes returning to their homes for the night in the cracks and fissures among the rock.



As the red African sun begins to set further we might be lucky to watch a clan of spotted hyenas emerging from their cave right in front of us, as they head out for an evening's hunting: a thrilling finale to a day of exceptional wildlife watching. (All meals are included today) O/n AWASH FALLS LODGE, FB.

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Mon 08 Apr

This morning we depart early for an approximately two-hour drive north to the ALE-DEGHI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY for a safari. This area of more open savannah has been less affected by illegal overgrazing than Awash and still supports large herds of gazelle and oryx. It also provides habitat for species such as the endangered Grevy's zebra and long necked gerenuk antelope which are absent from Awash National Park. The open grasslands are also the domain of the blue-legged Somali ostrich and snake hunting secretary bird, but this area is best known for its density and diversity of bustards. Kori bustards, the heaviest flying bird in Africa are joined by Arabian, white-bellied, buff-crested and Hartlaubs bustards.



Stunning northern carmine bee-eaters are often in close proximity to the bustards feeding on the insects they disturb from the long grass. Birds of prey are also well represented with African scissor-tailed and black-shouldered kites, tawny, steppe, booted and lesser spotted eagles, lanner and peregrine falcons and other birds including chestnut-bellied and yellow-throated sandgrouse, Senegal thick-knee and wattled starling.



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After the morning safari, we head to Doho Lodge for a relaxed lunch and some time to rest and perhaps take a dip in the thermal hot spring pools next to the lodge's lake.



Once the day has started to cool down again, we take another safari on the Ale-Deghi Plains. The wildlife here is still not yet familiar with safari vehicles as in more visited East African parks, so rarely allows close approach. However the reserve is refreshingly free from other tourists and offers a typical East African landscape in which to view wildlife.



Besides its herds of game species the reserve supports small populations of lion, leopard, cheetah, wildcat, spotted and striped hyenas and honey badger, although sightings of these species are not that common. Return to the lodge in the evening. If interested, a night walk around the lodge grounds can be arranged for possible sightings of waterbuck and various species of nightjar. (All meals are included today)



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O/n DOHO LODGE, FB. The sister property of Awash Falls Lodge, Doho Lodge offers similarly basic accommodation in traditional *tukual* huts with private bathrooms. The main building houses a shaded restaurant and bar with simple European and



Ethiopian cuisine served. There is Wi-Fi in the main building but it can be patchy. The lodge is located right next to a natural hot spring and lake surrounded by papyrus and lush vegetation in an otherwise arid scrubland. There are a number of public and private natural Jacuzzi springs to bathe in, all overlooking the lake. Beds are quite hard and the rooms can get hot but the quality of wildlife found nearby justifies putting up with the basic accommodation.

Tue 09 Apr

Today enjoy another early morning game drive on the Ale-Deghi Plains. Return to the lodge again for lunch and a rest before visiting some nearby rocky escarpments where troops of hamadryas (Sacred) baboons spend the day. Later in the afternoon drive to Adama (Nazret) in Oromia state for the night. (All meals are included today)



O/n LA RESIDENCE HOTEL, FB. Located on the edge of the town, this grand building offers accommodation in spacious colonial-themed rooms with high ceilings, four poster beds and period furniture and décor. The ground



floor features an elegant dining area where excellent European and local meals are offered alongside a wide selection of Rift Valley wines. Other facilities include Wi-Fi and a lovely garden with an infinity pool overlooking an agricultural valley.

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Wed 10 Apr

After breakfast set off for the long drive south to the Bale Mountains. The journey will take most of the day (around 8 hours in total) but we can stop often for birdwatching and to take pictures of the changing landscapes and local villages. Around lunchtime we will reach the Gaysay



Grasslands at the entrance to the Bale Mountains National Park. Here the wet meadows support great numbers of animals that have become habituated to human presence allowing a remarkably close approach.

This is one of the best locations to see the magnificent mountain nyala, endemic to the Bale Mountains, alongside herds of Bohor reedbuck, Menelik's bushbuck, warthogs, Olive baboons and bush duikers. The rough grasslands also support a high density of rodents which in turn attract beautiful servals that can even be spotted during the day. We will make a stop at the Bale Mountains National Park headquarters at Dinsho to explore the mystical juniper forests, home to the rare Abyssinian long-eared owl and African wood owl.



These nocturnal forest-dwelling owls can often be located in their day roosts with the help of a local park ranger. Other birds include the white-backed black tit, golden-backed woodpecker and African wood owl. Continue the drive to Bale Mountain Lodge crossing the Sanetti Plateau and into the Harenna Forest. (All meals are included today)



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O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, FB. Built with sustainability in mind, the comfortable Bale Mountain Lodge is located at 2,600 metres above sea level in a remote forest setting in the heart of the Bale Mountains National Park. The lodge's location in the Katcha forest clearing within the lush



Haremma Forest is the perfect setting for exploring both the high altitude moorlands of the Sanetti Plateau and the cool cloud forest habitat below. The lodge is perhaps the best in the country, with a stunning design, superb friendly service and high quality, traditionally inspired accommodation. There are four chalets spaced next to the main building for those with more limited mobility and twelve newer lodges and treehouses scattered around the forested grounds.

Each room offers comfortable beds, modern toilets with hot water showers, safety deposit box, luggage racks and a cosy wood burning stove for guests to use on the cooler evenings. Each room also has a small veranda from which to watch birds and soak up the surroundings.



The treehouse rooms feature outdoor showers and greater privacy but the trails to them can be slippery after rainfall.

The main lodge is built from local slate and stone and features a homely living area with a bar and plenty of coffee table books and Wi-Fi. The dining area is joined to the main lodge and built within a traditional *tukual*. Meals are tasty and utilise local produce wherever possible. The lodge has a very strong environmental ethos with water sourced from the local stream, a mini hydro plant to provide electricity, and a bio gas unit and waste reduction scheme.



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Thu 11 Apr Morning excursion with packed lunch to the montane landscapes of the SANETTI PLATEAU. It takes around 50 minutes to drive from the lodge on to the magnificent Afro-alpine landscapes of Bale's highest plateau.



Most of the Sanetti Plateau sits at an altitude around 4,000 metres above sea level. This treeless big-sky landscape is dominated by low heath, giant lobelias and rocky moonlike escarpments. During the day, we will explore this unique habitat on safari style drives along the highest all-weather road in Africa, where we'll take a few gentle strolls. This is the best place in the world to see Ethiopia's flagship species; the beautiful Ethiopian wolf. These striking ginger and white canids are most genetically similar to the European wolf but have evolved their own specialism for hunting the abundant rodents found in Ethiopia's highland plateaus. They live together as a pack, but split up each morning to hunt individually during the day, conveniently making them relatively easy to observe and photograph.



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These wonderful canids are sadly threatened with extinction and their total global population sits at around 450 individuals, with around 160 in the Bale Mountains. Encroachment of livestock and the increase in domestic dogs has degraded their natural habitat as well as passing on dangerous diseases such as canine distemper and rabies to the wolf populations. The wolf's favourite prey is another endemic species, the bizarre giant mole rat which we will also search for during the day. The huge numbers of rodents in general (mostly Blick's grass and black-clawed and yellow-spotted brush-furred rats) on the plateau occur at densities which have been estimated at 4,000 kg of rodents per hectare.



This abundance of small mammals attracts many other predators including numerous augur buzzards, lanner falcons, and tawny, steppe and golden eagles. Another endemic animal we will look for is the Starck's hare which favours the rockier areas where it can be well camouflaged.



The Plateau is also one of the most important areas in Africa for endemic birds including blue-winged geese, spot-breasted lapwing, black-hooded siskin, Rouget's rail, and chestnut-naped francolin. The numerous moorland pools on the plateau support the only population of ruddy shelduck in Africa and also attract many other migrant and wintering waders and waterfowl.



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In the afternoon we will descend back into the Hareenna Forest passing through some wonderfully tangled and stunted Ericaceous and juniper forest.



After some drinks and time to rest back at the lodge, we can perhaps take an evening game drive deeper into the primary forests of Hareenna to the south of the lodge. There is only one road through the Hareenna Forest so many of its secretive forest dwellers such as giant forest hogs and bushpigs use the road as a corridor.

At this time of year the little known population of black-maned Ethiopian lions that inhabit the forest are occasionally encountered on the road as are leopards. (All meals are included today) O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, FB.



Fri 12 Apr

Another full day to explore the Bale Mountains. Today we may focus more on the wildlife of the Hareenna Forest and walk the trail through moss- and lichen-clad trees to the lodge's hydro plant. This trail is mostly flat and easy going and passes by excellent stands of bamboo where the highly localised Bale monkey, a relative of the



vervet, can often be found. The monkeys can be shy at first, but with patience they can be approached for some close views and photography. Colobus monkeys are often in the same location and this is also a good area to see raptors such as African crowned eagle and mountain buzzard, plus a variety of butterflies and other insects seen in the forest clearings.

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Along the clear water stream, tiny endemic frogs and newts are occasionally found and the endemic Bale two-horned chameleon (*Trioceros balebicornutus*) can often be located here too. There are a variety of trails to explore in the area, some leading to waterfalls and others to viewpoints overlooking the nearby mountains. Birdlife around the lodge includes colourful species such as the white-cheeked turaco, narina trogon, Abyssinian crimsonwing, Abyssinian oriole, African emerald cuckoo and silvery-cheeked hornbill. In the late afternoon we could perhaps take another game drive to look for the more secretive forest dwelling mammals such as giant forest hog and bush hyraxes. (All meals are included today)



O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, FB.

Sat 13 Apr

After a last morning walk or game drive in the Harena Forest, we say farewell to new found friends at the lodge and depart for the journey to Lake Awassa. This journey will again take most of the day, but there will be many opportunities to stop for wildlife viewing in the Gaysay Grasslands and other locations. On arrival at Hawassa town we will check in to the hotel and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

O/n HAILE RESORT, FB. The flagship property in the chain owned by the legendary Ethiopian athlete Haile Gebrselassie. Located on the shores of Lake Awassa, with wonderful sunset views and excellent amenities and accommodation, the hotel is one of the best in the country.



Accommodation is in 126 rooms all with comfortable beds, smart and modern private bathrooms and feature LCD TV's and minibars, air-conditioning and balconies in most room categories. The hotel is very popular with families and features a large outdoor swimming pool, children's pool and play area, indoor tennis court and lakeside beach bar and seating.

There are four restaurants serving western and Ethiopian cuisine and there is free Wi-Fi throughout the hotel although the Wi-Fi is time limited. Insects can be an issue in the early mornings and evenings by the lake shore but the rooms are very well screened. The gardens have been planted with many nectar rich species and attract many sunbirds and also waders along the shoreline.

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Sun 14 Apr This morning we will visit the local fish market where the fishermen haul in their catches and sell them on to the locals. Although not the most attractive of sights, the experience offers an insight into the everyday life of this part of Ethiopia.



It is also an excellent opportunity for bird photography as hundreds of attendant marabou storks gather on the lake shore looking for scraps and handouts from the fishermen. The storks are joined by hamerkops, African jacanas, black-winged stilts, little stilts and a variety of other waders all allowing exceptionally close approaches.

After some time spent enjoying and photographing the birds here, we will take a boat trip onto Lake Awassa itself. By exploring the quieter reed-fringed edges of the lake we should have good views of malachite, giant, African pygmy and pied kingfishers, black crakes, African pygmy goose, hottentot teal, white-backed duck, African fish eagle and flocks of white-winged terns and Great white and pink backed pelicans. We may also encounter hippos on this boat excursion. Back on dry land we will drive north to Lake Langano, maybe stopping on the way for birds such as Abyssinian woodpecker, spotted creeper, red-throated wryneck and Ruppell's starling. We will arrive at Lake Langano in time for lunch and have some time to rest from the heat of the day in the beautiful setting. (All meals are included today)



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O/n HARA LANGANO, FB. A rustic and peaceful birdwatcher's paradise on the eastern edge of Lake Langano, this little-visited side of the lake is teeming with birds in the wooded grounds and offers a great base for excursions on the lake and to other points of interest further afield. Accommodation is in 26 simple wood and bamboo cottages with private bathrooms scattered throughout the wooded grounds with plenty of privacy. The main building has Wi-Fi and an open sided restaurant with a set menu featuring plenty of local produce from the lodge's own garden and the nearby village. Due to hippos grazing at night, guards are on site to escort guests to their rooms after dark.



Mon 15 Apr

Enjoy a morning of guided walks in the wooded grounds of the lodge, where exciting species such as Hemprich's and Von Der Decken's hornbills, white-cheeked turaco, little and blue-cheeked bee-eaters, Nubian woodpecker, superb starling, yellow-fronted and orange-bellied parrots, banded barbet and bare-faced go-away bird can be found. Hippos frequent the waters in front of the lodge most mornings too offering nice photographic opportunities in the early morning light.



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We will then visit two very different lakes in Abijatta-Shalla National Park. Lake Shalla sits within a volcanic caldera with a depth exceeding 260 metres in places, making it the deepest lake in Ethiopia, while Abijatta's highly alkaline waters rest in a shallow pan no more than 14m deep. Sadly, Abijatta is also shrinking each year as its waters are diverted to irrigation projects and a soda-ash factory. Unlike many African national parks, people still live within Abijatta-Shalla.



Small herds of Grant's gazelle and many birds can be found in the wooded grasslands of the park. Both lakes also support interesting birdlife, with large flocks of greater and lesser flamingos creating shimmering lines of pink into the distance and a wide range of waders, ducks and pelicans are also present.

Return to the lodge for lunch and a rest during the hottest part of the day. Monitor lizards, Gambian sun squirrels and colobus monkeys frequent the woods around the lodge. While an evening night walk occasionally produces a



sighting of an aardvark, African civet, or lesser bush babies. (All meals are included today) O/n HARA LANGANO, FB.

Tue 16 Apr

Enjoy another morning exploring the wooded grounds of the lodge or perhaps just enjoy some time at leisure in the peaceful surroundings. After lunch we'll drive (approximately 4-5 hours) back to Addis and to our hotel. Later in the evening we will have a farewell dinner at the wonderful Yod Abyssinia Cultural Restaurant, where energetic traditional dance performances and live music from around the country complement a tasty dinner and farewell drinks, all amounting to a fitting finale to our time in Ethiopia. Return to the hotel for day use of a room at the GETFAM HOTEL before a late transfer to the airport. (All meals are included today)



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Wed 17 Apr After an early breakfast we transfer to the airport. Take ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES flight ET 700 at 0150 to LONDON HEATHROW arriving 0735. (Flight duration: 7 hours, 45 minutes)

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Minimum group size is 7, maximum 8 people, plus the two tour leaders.

<i>Departure Date from UK</i>	<i>Adult Price</i>	<i>Single Supplement</i>
Monday 01 April 2019	£5,333*	£375*

*Prices are subject to possible revision.

Please call **01803 866965** if you have any queries, would like to secure your place on the tour, and/or if you would like to extend the tour to include other locations in Ethiopia. **NB:** Extensions are available to the Rock Hewn Churches of Lalibela and other areas of the country: please ask for details.

Please note: The wildlife viewing on the Sanetti Plateau will mostly be from vehicles and will be at an altitude of around 3,800–4,000 metres above sea level. You will therefore need to be aware of the altitude which can affect people in different ways regardless of age and fitness. Even with gentle acclimatising, you will likely still feel the effects of altitude on this trip and should be prepared, although most people have no serious problems as the walking is minimal and you will sleep at much lower altitudes. Please inform us if you think the altitude might be problematic for you

Please Note: This itinerary involves some long overland transfers, some of which will be over rough, bumpy and unsurfaced roads. This is because many of the locations of interest are spaced far apart.

Please Note: This itinerary involves walking along some forest trails in the Bale Mountains which could be slippery in places, especially after rainfall as well as some short and gentle walks in hot conditions in Awash National Park. Although all walks within the parks will be taken at a very leisurely pace, the tour is not suitable for those with mobility problems.



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IMPORTANT NOTES TO ACCOMPANY THE ABOVE ITINERARY

NB: This itinerary involves some long overland transfers, some of which will be over rough bumpy and unsurfaced roads.

NB: With any trip involving wildlife it is impossible to guarantee a sighting, but each trip is designed around known habitats. Every effort will be made to ensure a sighting, but cannot be held responsible if no sighting is made due to the wildlife itself, weather, or any other elements beyond our control.

NB: The above itinerary and its quoted price are based on specific hotels and lodges. Should there be insufficient availability at the time of booking or if the lodges over-book their rooms alternative hotels and lodges of a similar standard may have to be booked instead, in which case the itinerary and/or price may change.

NB: Prices are based on specific airlines and specific seating classes. The price may change if those are not available at the time of booking. We strongly advise booking early to secure the prices quoted, particularly as the seating classes quoted for are usually the first to be filled.

NB: The quoted price for the above itinerary is based on current airline fares (both international and domestic), fuel surcharges and flight taxes. These (and other tour costs) may be subject to unanticipated increases beyond our control at short notice, either before or after you have booked the tour, in which case the price would need to be revised accordingly.

NB: Prices are based on standard rooms unless otherwise stated in the itinerary. Should you wish to upgrade please let us know.

NB: All itineraries are subject to change without notice to take into account possible airline flight schedule changes which can take place before the departure date or during the tour, and other operational factors.

NB: Once the tour has been booked and a deposit paid, any further changes initiated by the client may be subject to additional charges.

NB: Inclusive tours and excursions as stated in the itinerary will have been pre-paid. Once full payment has been made and/or clients are actually at their destination, should clients be disinclined to partake of any inclusive tour or excursion, no refunds will be possible.

NB: Some service providers may require that guests sign an indemnity waiver form and may refuse services if these forms are not signed. Reef and Rainforest Tours cannot give refunds for services not provided due to a refusal to sign such forms.

NB: Excursions marked as 'Optional' are not included in the price.

NB: This tour involves some travel in remote areas. This adds to the adventure and increases the opportunity to enjoy a true wildlife experience. However, due to terrain, weather, road conditions, and other factors beyond our control, some elements of the tour may have to be altered. Times of some activities may need to be changed or even cancelled due to the conditions. If an activity is cancelled it will usually be replaced with an alternative activity that is more appropriate for the conditions. Advance notice will be given for any changes where possible, although at times changes may need to be made whilst the tour is in progress.

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NB: Despite recent improvements, Ethiopia still has some accommodation of a lower standard than that normally expected by western travelers, and a precarious infrastructure including unreliable domestic flights, poor telecommunications and bad roads. Many of our tours visit areas well off the beaten track, and therefore far from medical and other services. Trails can often be arduous and slippery, and campsites are usually very basic. Bookings will only be accepted on the understanding that the client accepts Reef and Rainforest Tours has done everything in its power to ensure there are no difficulties, but has no control over standards of some equipment, available accommodation and services, airline reservation policies, flight schedule changes or possible breakdowns in communication in Ethiopia.

NB: Before and after booking, clients must familiarise themselves with current UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) travel advisories so as to satisfy themselves as to the suitability of the destination(s) to be visited in this itinerary. All decisions relating to the tour will be based on UK FCO advisories, and not those of any other countries' governments. In the event of any emergency or other problem encountered in the destination, it is advisable if appropriate to contact the local UK Embassy, High Commission or Consulate for assistance. The FCO in London also has dedicated telephone call centres: Crisis Management Dept - 0207 008 5335 (during UK office hours), and Global Response Centre - 0207 008 1500 (out of UK office hours).

NB: It is a condition of booking that full travel insurance including Emergency Medical Repatriation is taken out by each person travelling. Your insurance cover must also include Missed Departure and/or Missed Flight Connection for both outbound and return flight sectors (such cover might be subject to a small additional premium – please confirm with your insurers). We ask that you send us a photo/fax/electronic copy of your policy document together with the 24hr medical assistance telephone number issued by your insurer.

NB: Flight timings are subject to change. Ethiopian Airlines domestic flight schedules can change and affect itineraries and connections.

NB: Visas are now easily obtainable on arrival or online for EU residents (\$52 USD per person at time of writing but subject to change without notice). PLEASE CHECK THE LATEST INFORMATION WITH YOUR LOCAL EMBASSY/CONSULATE.

NB: Tips/gratuities are payable locally.

NB: In some hotels and lodges, English will be spoken either badly or not at all.

Reef and Rainforest Tours Ltd.

A7 Dart Marine Park, Steamer Quay, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5AL, UK

Tel: ++ 44 (0)1803 866965 Fax: ++ 44 (0)1803 865916

Websites: www.reefandrainforest.co.uk

E-mail: mail@reefandrainforest.co.uk

