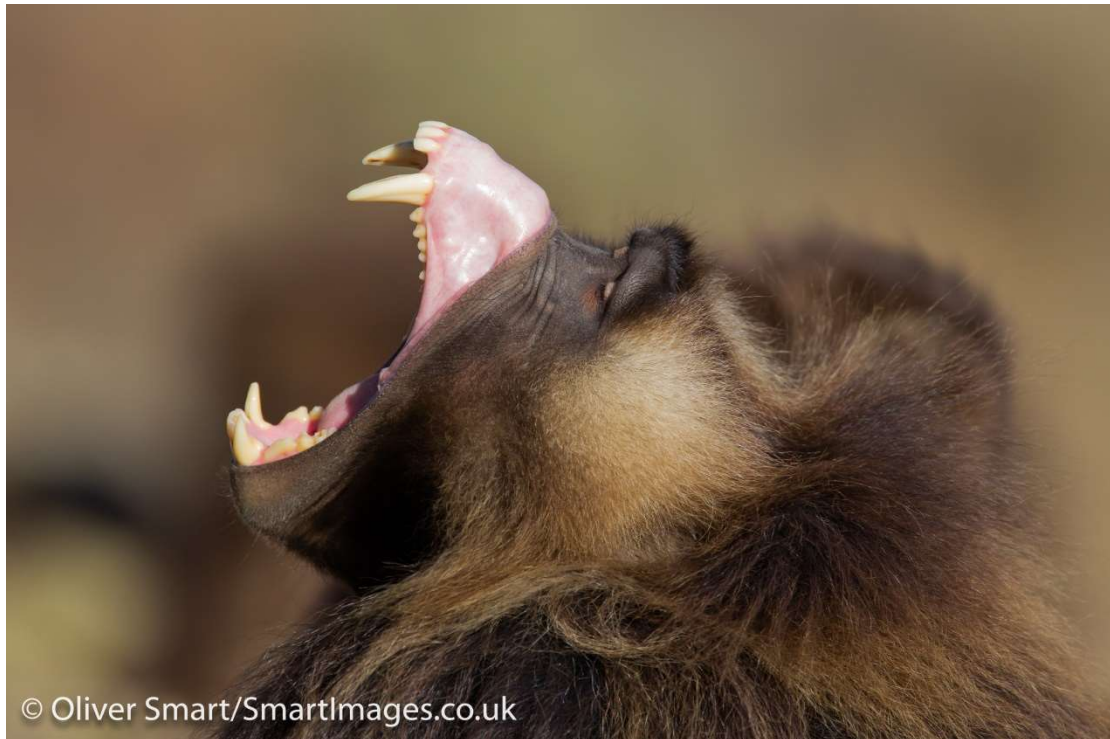


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Special Itinerary

The Photogenic Wildlife & Landscapes of Ethiopia – with Oliver Smart

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

17 November – 01 December 2020



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A Brief Description of the Group Itinerary

This expert-led small group tour concentrates on the unique, unusual and photogenic wildlife and landscapes that set Ethiopia apart from the rest of Africa. Ethiopia is truly a photographer's dream destination with many of its highlight mammal and bird species, surprisingly tolerant of people. There will be an emphasis in this group tour on photography and tuition in addition to observing Ethiopia's magnificent and varied wildlife including its mammals, birds, reptiles and other fauna and flora. The tour is suitable for those interested in observing wildlife at a leisurely pace as well as keen and amateur photographers.



It will be jointly led by award-winning wildlife photographer, ornithologist and naturalist Oliver Smart and local wildlife expert Daniel Million who will both help you make the most of the many photographic opportunities. Most of the pictures in this itinerary were taken by Oliver on his 2019 tour, which will give you some idea of his abilities and the sightings that are possible. His humour, knowledge and experience will help you gain maximum enjoyment and results from this exciting adventure. On the 2019 tour 35 species of mammal and 320 species of bird were recorded.

Highlights on the trip will include sitting among "herds" of gelada baboons (sometimes only a few feet away) as they feed and chatter on the montane grasslands of the Simien Mountains. We should also see the impressive Walia ibex, agile klipspringer and soaring lammergeiers and croaking thick-billed ravens here all against a backdrop of jaw-dropping scenery.

Next comes the Bale Mountains, inhabited by the world's rarest canid and Africa's most endangered carnivore; the beautiful Ethiopian wolf. Seeing this elegant 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 also home to many other endemic species including the mountain nyala, Bale monkey, serval, crowned eagle, blue-winged goose and Bale horned chameleon to name just a few.

In the Great Rift Valley Lakes of Awassa and Langano we can enjoy excellent photography with the confiding water birds including vast flocks of flamingos, plus pelicans, kingfishers and hippos. While our final destination; the Awash Valley will give us a chance to experience a more typical East African savannah and wildlife. Here the highlights include the elegant Beisa oryx, Soemmerring's gazelle, warthog, Olive baboons, spotted hyenas, five species of bustard, some exquisite bee-eaters, crocodiles and huge leopard tortoises. Ethiopia's fascinating ancient and more recent history and unique cultures also combine with its wildlife to make for an unforgettable adventure in one of Africa's most diverse countries.

With the majority of the key wildlife species that could be encountered there should be good opportunities for photography, although please note that some patience, perseverance and luck will always be a factor with any photography. For most of the wildlife on this trip a full-frame DSLR or mirrorless camera with a telephoto lens between 300-600 mm or a powerful zoom or bridge camera will produce the best results. Ethiopia has some superb panoramic landscapes so a wide-angle lens is also ideal if you have one and there will also be smaller wildlife that a macro lens will be most useful for too. A tripod can be very useful in some situations but is not that necessary for most wildlife photography on the tour. The tour will use transportation in either three or four 4WD Hardtop Toyota Landcruiser's.

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

- 17 Nov Morning arrival into Addis Ababa and transfer to hotel for breakfast and lunch. Return to the airport. Take flight to Gondar and transfer on to the **SIMIEN MOUNTAINS**. O/n SIMIEN LODGE, B, L, D.
- 18 Nov Enjoy a full day exploring the **SIMIEN MOUNTAINS** including the Chennek Valley in search of its special wildlife. O/n SIMIEN LODGE, B, L, D.
- 19 Nov Enjoy another full day exploring the **SIMIEN MOUNTAINS**. O/n SIMIEN LODGE, B, L, D.
- 20 Nov After some last wildlife watching in the mountains, we return to **GONDAR** for lunch. In the afternoon we will visit **GONDAR CASTLE** and the **FASILIDES BATH**. O/n HAILE RESORT GONDAR, B, L, D.
- 21 Nov Morning visit to **DEBRE BIRHAN SELASSIE CHURCH** and some birdwatching. Transfer to the airport and fly back to ADDIS ABABA. Visit the Addis Ababa National Museum in the afternoon. Evening dinner at the **YOD ABYSSINIA TRADITIONAL FOLK RESTAURANT**. O/n GETFAM HOTEL, B, L, D.
- 22 Nov Morning transfer to the airport. Take flight to Goba airport on the edge of the **BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK**. On arrival transfer across the **SANETTI PLATEAU** viewing wildlife on the way to the lodge. O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, B, L, D.
- 23 Nov Excursion to the **SANETTI PLATEAU** to see its special wildlife. Afternoon to explore the **HARENNA FOREST**. O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, B, L, D.
- 24 Nov Another full day to explore the **BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK**. Visit the forests at **DINSHO** and the **GAYSAY GRASSLANDS**. O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, B, L, D.
- 25 Nov A last morning to explore the **BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK**. Drive to **LAKE AWASSA**. O/n AWASSA HAILE RESORT, B, L, D.
- 26 Nov Morning visit to the Lake Awassa fish market. Rest of the day for wildlife viewing and photography around **LAKE AWASSA**. O/n AWASSA HAILE RESORT, B, L, D.
- 27 Nov Morning of more bird and wildlife viewing and photography around **LAKE AWASSA**. Later transfer to the **ABIJATTA-SHALLA NATIONAL PARK** FOR wildlife and hot springs in the late afternoon. O/n HARA LANGANO LODGE, B, L, D.
- 28 Nov Morning wildlife viewing and photography around **LAKE LANGANO**. Afternoon boat trip on the Lake. O/n HARA LANGANO LODGE, B, L, D.
- 29 Nov Morning wildlife viewing and photography around **LAKE LANGANO**. Afternoon drive to Awash Falls Lodge stopping at **LAKE ZIWAY** on the way. O/n AWASH FALLS LODGE, B, L, D.
- 30 Nov Morning and afternoon wildlife viewing and photography in **AWASH NATIONAL PARK**. Evening hyena watching. O/n AWASH FALLS LODGE, B, L, D.
- 01 Dec Morning wildlife watching in **AWASH NATIONAL PARK**. Afternoon drive to ADDIS ABABA. Day use of a room at the GETFAM HOTEL. Later transfer to airport for departure on international flight.



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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

Tue 17 Nov **(International flights are your own arrangements, but recommend carrier is Ethiopian Airlines which can be quoted for)** Arrive ADDIS ABABA. Met on arrival at the international airport and transfer to the Getfam hotel for breakfast, lunch and day use of a room to freshen up and rest after the international flight. If necessary, excess luggage can also be stored in Addis to be collected later in the trip.

Later we will return to the airport to take ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES flight ET 114 at 1440 to GONDAR (GDQ) arriving 1550. (Flight duration: 1 hour, 10 minutes). (Economy Class with one piece of checked luggage at 20kg per person, plus 1 piece of hand luggage weighing 7kg per person). Excess luggage can be stored in Addis.

On arrival in Gondar, we will transfer north to Debark, 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. We will arrive at the lodge in time for dinner. (All meals are included today)

O/n SIMIEN
LODGE, B, L, D.
Simien Lodge is the self-proclaimed highest lodge in Africa, sitting at 3,300 meters above sea level. Located on the edge of an escarpment just inside the boundary of the Simien Mountains National



Park, the lodge boasts incredible scenic views as well as easy access into the Park. Herds of geladas and thick-billed ravens often frequent the lodge grounds and can be very approachable here.

Rooms are in traditional Ethiopian style Tukels – meaning house.

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The round buildings have thatched roofs and each contain two rooms and two ensuite bathrooms. Main rooms can be arranged with double or twin beds and have enough space for an extra bed if required. Being at high altitude, temperatures can be quite cold at times.



Therefore, the Tukels have solar powered underfloor heating to take the edge off the cold and hot water bottles can be provided. Extra blankets are also available to ensure guests comfort as there are often power cuts up here.

The restaurant in the main building serves mostly international dishes in buffet format during busy times and as a set menu at quieter times. Traditional Ethiopian cuisine can also be requested and there is a wide selection of wines and other



drinks, although the stocks are not always available. Packed lunches can be prepared for guests embarking on a day's trekking or visits to other parts of the park such as the Chennek Valley as well. The bar is proud to be the highest place to get a drink in Africa and is comfortably furnished for a warm and inviting atmosphere.

They remain open until the last guests have left, and there will often be some sort of evening entertainment occurring, such as a film about the local area or wildlife. Please note that electricity supply can be very hit and miss at this location and torches are very useful to have for the evenings. Please also be aware that the paths between the Tukels can be a little uneven and you will likely feel the effects of the altitude. The lodge has also been long involved with the local community and supports many projects such as school initiatives, monastery restoration, transportation for the local village and mostly recently a community health centre.

Wed 18 Nov Today we can enjoy a full day exploring the Simien Mountains National Park perhaps with a packed lunch to travel further into the Park with.

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.

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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.



During the day we will see various habitats and 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. (All meals are included today) O/n SIMIEN LODGE, B, L, D.



Thu 19 Nov

Today we can enjoy another full day exploring the Simien Mountains National Park viewing and photographing its spectacular wildlife and landscapes.



Other wildlife to look for during the day includes the agile Ethiopian klipspringer and a wide range of 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, Abyssinian Longclaw moorland chat and 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. This evening we could perhaps also try a sky at night photography session to capture the stunning milky way. (All meals are included today) O/n SIMIEN LODGE, B, L, D.

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Fri 20 Nov

This morning we can enjoy some final photography of the geladas, hopefully in beautiful early morning light. Or we could perhaps focus on the landscapes or other wildlife. We will then head back Gondar for a tasty lunch at a traditional Ethiopian restaurant. 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 (Gonder) 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 these castles is the Fasilides Bath, which is filled with water once a year and celebrated by the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. The site is also a good location to spot many endemic birds and is used as a roost site by a greyish eagle owl, which we will hope to find. (All meals are included today)



O/n HAILE RESORT GONDAR, B, L, D. A comfortable hotel, close to the main attractions in Gondar and with nice views towards the city. The rooms feature modern private bathrooms, flat screen TV, Wi-Fi and a mini fridge. There is an outdoor terrace and restaurant serving both international and some Ethiopian dishes.

Sat 21 Nov

This morning we will make a visit to the impressive 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 burn it. We will also have some time for bird photography in the greener areas of the city.



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Later we transfer back to the Gondar airport to take our ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES flight ET 123 to ADDIS ABABA arriving 1530.

In the afternoon we will take a short city tour of Addis Ababa and make a quick visit to the National Museum which houses the famous Lucy exhibit and some of the earliest hominid remains ever discovered. This evening dinner will be at the wonderful Yod Abyssinia Cultural Restaurant, where energetic traditional dance performances and live music from around the country complement a tasty and memorable dinner.



O/n GETFAM HOTEL, B, L, D. 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.

Sun 22 Nov After breakfast, we transfer 20 minutes to the airport to take ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES flight ET 175 at 1145 to GOBA via a stopover in AWASSA arriving 1330. On arrival we will transfer approximately 2 hours to the lodge, crossing the Bale Mountains' Sanetti Plateau on the way and looking for a range of wildlife on the journey. This could include our first Ethiopian wolves, highland (Stark's) hares, giant mole rats and a plethora of mountain birds.



We should arrive at the lodge in the late afternoon and perhaps have time for a short walk in the forest next to the lodge or make an evening drive into Haremma Forest for giant forest hogs and bushpigs. (All meals and selected alcoholic and soft drinks are included today)

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O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, B, L, D. 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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Mon 23 Nov Today we will take a morning excursion with packed lunch up 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 3,800 - 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 can explore this unique habitat on safari style drives along the highest all-weather road in Africa, where we can stop at any point to photograph wildlife.

This is the best spot in the country 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.

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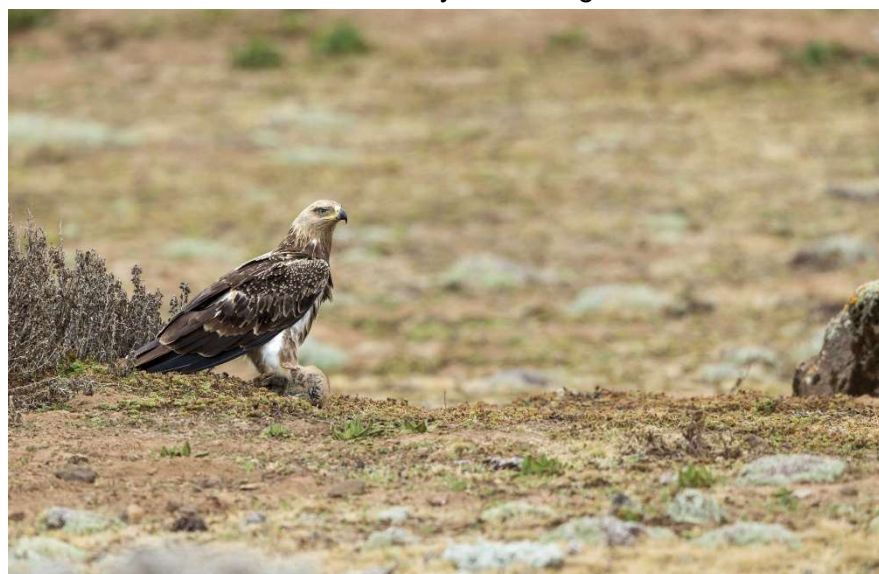
These wonderful canids are sadly threatened with extinction and their total global population sits at around 450 individuals, with around 160 found in the Bale Mountains. Encroachment of livestock has degraded their natural habitat and the increase in domestic dogs in these areas has also passed on dangerous 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 can often be spotted with just its head poking out of a burrow.



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, imperial and golden eagles. Another endemic animal to look for is the Ethiopian highland or Stark's hare which favours the rockier areas where it can be very camouflaged.



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



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

After perhaps a drink and some time to rest back at the lodge, we could take an evening drive deeper into the primary Haremma Forest to the south of the lodge. There is only one road through this dense forest so many of its secretive inhabitants such as giant forest hog and bush pig use this road as a corridor. Please note sightings and photography of mammals here in this dense forest environment is not easy and views can often be fleeting, and photography opportunities limited.



The little-known population of Ethiopian black-maned lions that inhabit the Haremma forest have been encountered on these drives in the past, but sightings are very rare. (All meals and selected drinks are included today) O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, B, L, D.

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Tue 24 Nov

Today we can enjoy another full day of exploration of the Bale Mountains. Each day's activities are reasonably flexible and can be discussed the night before, based on interests. Today we can perhaps focus more on the wildlife of the forest and start with a walk-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 monkey, can often be found. The monkeys can be shy at first, but with patience they can be approached for some closer views.



Colobus monkeys are also often in the same location and this is 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.

Along the clear water stream, tiny endemic frogs are occasionally found and the endemic Bale two-horned chameleon (*Trioceros baleicornutus*) is regularly spotted too. There are a variety of trails to explore in the area, some leading to waterfalls and others to viewpoints overlooking the nearby mountains.



We can then return to the Sanetti Plateau for more wolf sightings and continue into the lush stunted forests and rolling Gaysay grasslands at Dinsho. 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.

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The rough grasslands also support a high density of rodents which in turn attract beautiful servals that can even be spotted during the day if very lucky (scan the more grasslands near the forest edge with binoculars). We will also 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 more. (All meals and selected drinks are included today) O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, B, L, D.

Wed 25 Nov After a last morning walk or game drive in the Harenna Forest, we say farewell to newfound friends at the lodge and depart for the journey to Lake Awassa. This journey will take most of the day, but there will be many opportunities to stop for wildlife viewing in



the Gaysay Grasslands and other locations on the way. On arrival at Hawassa town we will check in to the hotel and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure. We can perhaps catch some evening light at the lake and enjoy the plentiful birdlife in the hotel grounds. (All meals are included today)

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O/n HAILE RESORT
AWASSA, B, L, D.
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 and pin-tailed whydahs along the shoreline.

Thu 26 Nov

This morning we will
visit the Awassa fish
market where the
fishermen haul in their
catches, process them
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.

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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 can explore more of Lake Awassa. The reed-fringed edges of the lake can provide sightings of malachite, giant, African pygmy and pied kingfishers, black crakes, African pygmy goose, hottentot teal and white-backed duck.

Later we can explore nearby forest patches where we can encounter grivet and colobus monkeys and a range of different birdlife. The colourful sunbirds, bee-eaters, starlings and barbets will make for particularly photogenic subjects and local specialities include the spotted creeper and red-throated wryneck. (All meals are included today) O/n HAILE RESORT AWASSA, B, L, D.

Fri 27 Nov

This morning we can revisit the Awassa fish market or visit another site for different species and photography, depending on recent sightings. 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, many people still live within Abijatta-Shalla and the Park is no longer a very natural landscape.

Small herds of Grant's gazelle, Somali ostrich, helmeted guineafowl, hornbills and many birds can be found in the woodlands and grasslands of the park.



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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 sometimes pelicans are also present.



In the evening we will drive to our lodge on the remote side of Lake Langano. (All meals are included today)

O/n HARA LANGANO, B, L, D. 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.

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Sat 28 Nov

Today we can enjoy a morning of gentle guided walks in the wooded grounds of the lodge, where exciting bird 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 may be found. Hippos frequent the waters in front of the lodge most mornings too offering nice photographic opportunities in the early morning light.



In the afternoon, we will take a boat trip around Lake Langano at the best time of day for the early evening light. Here we can hope to encounter a range of bird species and gain a different perspective on the Lake. African fish eagle, monitor lizards and Gambian sun squirrels can all be found in the lodge grounds. While night walks can also sometimes reveal bushbabies (galagos) and even African civets. (All meals are included today) O/n HARA LANGANO, B, L, D.



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Sun 29 Nov Today we can enjoy a final morning of gentle guided walks in the wooded grounds of the lodge, or just enjoy the tranquil surroundings at leisure. Later we will depart for an approximately 5-hour drive through changing landscapes to AWASH NATIONAL PARK. We will stop at Lake Ziway and other spots on the way to see different birdlife such as great white pelican, black-crowned crane and possibly roosting owls and nightjars. We will arrive at the lodge in the late afternoon, hopefully spotting the elegant lesser kudu on the approach to the lodge. There will be some time to settle in before dinner. (All meals are included today)



O/n AWASH FALLS LODGE, B, L, D. 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.

Mon 30 Nov Today we can explore the AWASH NATIONAL PARK on safari drives and gentle walks. This region is much more arid than those we have experienced earlier in the tour and is characterised by acacia woodland, grasslands and impressive volcanic features with the mighty



Awash River cutting its way through the landscape. In the early morning we can explore the scrub and sparse grasslands of the Illala Sala Plains in the south of the National Park on a safari drive.

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The area is home to a small population of the elegant Beisa (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 and golden jackal, African wildcat, caracal and aardvark are all also present although the latter three are only very rarely seen. The park was once home to larger 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 and their population sizes have greatly decreased.

The birdlife is still very rich with many exciting species to spot including dark-chanting goshawk, black-banded snake eagle, pygmy falcon, buff-crested, white-bellied, Arabian and Kori bustards,



Abyssinian roller, Somali fiscal shrike, Somali bunting, green-winged pytilia, yellow-breasted barbet and crested francolin.



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In addition to game drives, we could also explore the surroundings of the lodge. 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.

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 could head to Lake Beseka where migrant waders and waterfowl may be found (but usually too distant for good photography) 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 chattering rock hyraxes can be seen 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 in front of us, as they head out for an evening's hunting: a thrilling finale to a day of exceptional wildlife watching. Please note that the hyenas currently usually come out in low light conditions, so any photography is very difficult.



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Tue 01 Dec Today we can enjoy another full morning to explore the AWASH NATIONAL PARK on safari drives and gentle walks. After lunch we will return to ADDIS ABABA in the afternoon (a journey of around 4 hours) and to the Getfam hotel.

Day use of a room (until 6pm) is available and there will then be time for a farewell dinner at the hotel before a transfer to the airport later in the evening to check in for departing flights. If an overnight at the hotel is required for a flight the next day, please let us know.

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

<i>Start Date in Addis</i>	<i>Adult Price</i>	<i>Single Supplement</i>
Tuesday 17 November 2020	£5,784 GBP	£577 GBP

*Prices are based on your international flights being with Ethiopian Airlines which results in discounted domestic flights. Should your international flights into Addis Ababa be with a different carrier then the tour cost would increase by £266 per person.

Included in the above: All domestic (Economy Class with one piece of checked luggage at 20kg per person) flights with Ethiopian Airlines; all private ground transportation in either three or four Toyota Land Cruiser Hardtop 4WD with a window for each client and with the guides in walkie talkie communication and a convoy system; all accommodation as stated; all meals as indicated; (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner), all selected alcoholic and soft drinks at Bale Mountain Lodge, bottled water on car journeys; all guided excursions and photographic and lightroom tuition, applicable local National Park scout fees, all Park and Monument entrance fees and protection through ATOL.

Not included: International flights to Addis Ababa with Ethiopian Airlines (approximately £600 per person from London but subject to change); any activities marked as OPTIONAL, tips; other meals not indicated; other drinks (except 1 litres of mineral water per person per day in the vehicle and those included at the lodges); items of a personal nature; and travel insurance.

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, the Omo Valley 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

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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 will be taken at a very leisurely pace, the tour is not suitable for those with mobility problems.

Please Note: The exact day to day activities and timings in the itinerary may change slightly to take into account local conditions such as weather, traffic and recent wildlife activity. But any changes will be discussed with the group and will be suggested in order to maximize the wildlife sightings, photography and overall experience.



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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. Clients will travel in either three or four 4WD hardtop land Cruisers with a window each. The vehicles will travel in a convoy system and the guides will rotate around the vehicles and always been in communication.

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 domestic airline fares, 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, weather conditions, recent sightings and other local conditions 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.

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