

Chapter 11

Natural History Field Courses in East Africa

Vinnedge M. Lawrence

Department of Biology
Washington and Jefferson College
Washington, Pennsylvania 15301-4801

Vinnedge Lawrence is a Professor of Biology at Washington and Jefferson College. He received his B.S. in Education (1962) and M.A. in Zoology (1964) from Miami University, Ohio. After a year as an Instructor of Biology at Xavier University, Ohio, he went on to obtain his Ph.D. in Entomology (1968) from Purdue University. Vin is the author of Chapter 3 of the ninth ABLE proceedings. His research interests include the ecology of Odonata and winter stoneflies (Plecoptera) and the breeding biology of Henslow's sparrow. In addition to general biology, he teaches ecology, entomology, invertebrate zoology, developmental biology, stream biology, and natural history field courses in Everglades and East Africa.

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Introduction

Information in this chapter is intended primarily for the instructor who wants to offer a field course in Kenya or Tanzania, but is unfamiliar with these countries and may never have traveled abroad. The intent of the chapter is to encourage such an instructor to attempt an offering of this type and to provide accurate and sufficiently detailed information to enable you to do it with confidence.

Planning Your Safari

When are you going?

The answer probably depends on the size of your class. If your class size is small (fewer than 12 students), consider booking your trip through an agent that is advertising trips with predetermined itineraries at established times. You should be able to find an itinerary that suits your requirements closely enough and is scheduled for a period that fits within the constraints of your calendar. If you travel during a separate January term, as I do, it is possible to set up a trip of this type during the fall term because your agent has arranged for outfitters in East Africa to do the trip and is advertising for clients to fill the spaces. You may join a trip such as this with any number of students. Advantages of a small class include minimal lead time for planning your course, few decisions to make, and cost savings by being part of a larger group. Disadvantages of a small class are that this puts others in charge of determining your itinerary, you must share camps and vehicle(s) with other group members, and you will not receive a complimentary passage.

If you have a large class (12–17 students), I recommend booking your trip as a private safari with an agent that is very familiar with various outfitters and will arrange everything to your specifications. Now you want to fill your calendar with an itinerary that meets your course objectives. This usually necessitates more lead time, so you probably want to begin planning at least 1 year in advance of your departure. After you have conducted several safaris, you may want to work directly with outfitters in East Africa, but for your initial trip I recommend the service of a dependable agent. Put together an itinerary proposal and send it to your agent for feasibility determination and costing. As soon as you and your agent have agreed on a preliminary itinerary, release a descriptive brochure to prospective students and schedule a meeting with them.

If your course is scheduled for January, request a \$500 deposit of each student by the middle of the previous Spring term. Stipulate that this deposit is non-refundable if the course is offered at the

stated cost. If fewer than 12 deposits have been paid by your deadline, either cancel your trip or consider the small-class option. If you have received at least 12 deposits, continue to encourage applications. The ideal class size is 15. This should qualify your group for a lower cost per person and entitle you to a complimentary passage. While you usually receive a complimentary passage with 12 students, the cost per student is greater. In arranging a private safari, your agent must represent your best interest in negotiating with outfitters. You, in turn, must be able to trust your agent to provide the services you have agreed upon or to inform you of any changes that must be made.

Where are you going?

The answer depends on the duration of your trip and the amount of time you can devote to travel between parks and reserves. If your class size is small and you are joining a trip with a predetermined itinerary, look for a trip that maximizes exposure to nature. A natural history field course should include minimal time in cities or among deculturated villagers who subsist on “visits” from tour groups. Get out of town and stay out!

In planning a private safari, you have a number of considerations to balance. You will find greater flexibility in making international flight connections into and out of Nairobi, Kenya, than Arusha, Tanzania, so you may want to include Nairobi in your itinerary even though you have decided to base your course in Tanzania. The itinerary for my 1989 course, Natural History of Serengeti, had us enter and depart Africa via Nairobi although the two days in Amboseli National Park (see Appendix B) were the only field days not spent in Tanzania.

The 1989 trip was essentially a “vest pocket” safari with fairly short distances separating the game parks visited, thus increasing the time spent in the parks. The itinerary reflects my desire to visit Serengeti National Park near the end of the trip so as to coincide with the migration and wildebeest calving. The operator, Sengo Safaris, revised the itinerary by placing Lake Manyara National Park after Serengeti to reduce travel distance between camps. This had the effect of moving Serengeti up in the itinerary, conflicting with my course interest in experiencing the migration and, possibly, witnessing the onset of calving that occurs largely in February. Obviously, it is desirable to obtain firm agreements with operators through your agent to obviate unexpected shifts in your itinerary, but operators generally reserve the right to impose changes. Another change in my itinerary on this trip resulted from a bomb threat to Olympic Airlines' flight #106 shortly after departing Nairobi and caused us to spend 21 January at Kenyatta Airport instead of touring Athens.

The 1992 trip, in contrast, was a sprawling journey split nearly equally between the two countries (see Appendix B). Travelling from Nairobi to Buffalo Springs Reserve requires the better part of a day, Buffalo Springs to Lake Nakuru is more than a half-day journey, as is Lake Nakuru to Maasai Mara. The trek from Maasai Mara to Amboseli is so long that most operators will not attempt it in a day, requiring you to stay overnight in Nairobi enroute. This may be a welcome respite from camp life if it fits into your itinerary, but we pushed from our Mara camp on the Talek River to the Namanga Gate of Amboseli in a long day's drive. We arrived too late to enter the park that day, and camped overnight just outside the gate. This maneuver by our operator, Safari Camp Services, earned us a full day in Amboseli National Park, whereas leaving from Nairobi on 18 January would have used up nearly half a day enroute. The advantage of including the habitats represented in the Kenya reserves, particularly Samburu/Buffalo Springs for desert wildlife, must be weighed against increased travel time.

How are you going?

The mode of land transportation you select can influence your course to a considerable extent. A single large safari truck usually is the least expensive option and presents a reasonable compromise between land rovers and minibuses. Open-sided and dusty, a safari truck keeps your class together and assures that each member hears your commentary and shares the same group experiences, for better or worse. Your truck can traverse terrain hostile to minibuses and offers you the option of carrying tents with you to set up camp outside of game parks if necessary or to use campgrounds as an alternative to expensive lodges.

If you select the single large vehicle option, try for a bus-like conveyance with forward-facing seats for all and a relatively unobstructed view in front. These are available, but must be requested and confirmation received through your agent. The best arrangement is to have the driver/guide in the same general compartment as your class so that communication between group and guide is not obstructed as occurs when the driver is in the cab of a truck. In the latter situation, someone must ring a bell or tap on the cab when you want to stop for extended viewing of a subject the driver may have overlooked or considered of insufficient interest to merit a stop. The safari bus has the driver essentially a part of your group rather than in a separate compartment with an assistant or two.

Particularly in Serengeti National Park but, to some extent, anywhere that vehicles are permitted off established roads, land rovers provide a different type of safari experience. Sitting much lower than in a truck or bus, a land rover's occupants feel closer to wildlife viewed at eye-level or, in the case of elephants, towering near the vehicle. The low camera angle also results in more impressive photographs. Riding standing up with one's upper body extending above the roof permits unobstructed viewing in any direction, affording an exhilarating sensation in good game country.

The ideal land rover design is the open roof, as opposed to roof hatches that always seem too small and not located where you want them. The open-roofed land rover has a snap-down canvas cover that may leak during rains, a minor inconvenience to suffer in exchange for the thrill of going topless. Be forewarned that college students, once they have experienced game-viewing via open land rover, do *not* happily switch to another type of conveyance.

Travel by land rover does have disadvantages. Four vehicles, each carrying four or five members of your group, scattered over the Serengeti with different drivers interpreting different wildlife encounters in different ways are not conducive to an experience shared by all class members. Can you be certain that all drivers and all students stick with their game run to its conclusion? Or should we ask whether one of our vehicles stopped at a different kind of water hole? You don't suppose a driver is permitting students to take turns driving a land rover across an aardvark-holed plain, do you? You may minimize such occurrences by varying group compositions on each game run and by placing yourself in a different vehicle each outing. Another approach is to require all of your drivers to stay together, but this can be a dusty adventure for anyone not in the lead vehicle.

It is interesting to have groups that have been to different parts of an area compare notes after their game run, so some spreading out is probably the best strategy, particularly when your group's vehicles can rendezvous occasionally. Land rovers do not afford a very comfortable ride, nor much luggage space when travelling between camps. Another vehicle must be used to transport tents and other camp equipment from one site to another. With so many vehicles in use, mechanical problems are almost inevitable. On the plus side, however, vehicles can help each other, whereas a breakdown in a single truck or bus can be problematic. Land rovers tend to be the most costly transportation option, but also the most exciting and capable of negotiating the greatest variety of situations.

Minibuses are a very popular transportation option in East Africa, and one that I don't care for. They probably provide the most comfortable seating and best ride of typical safari vehicles, but tend to afford the most limited access. Their drivers must either avoid a number of rough situations or

risk getting stuck — and they frequently do the latter. Land rovers routinely must tow them across swollen rivers, and they seem to depend on the willingness of groups in other types of vehicles to get out and help push them out of ruts or luggas — while their occupants generally remain seated, making the task of extricating them more difficult. Although I'm not certain that this is an obligate association, minibuses and safari lodges appear to be mutualistic. This may be another reason for my dislike of both. For connections between airport and hotel, or between the Tanzania border and Nairobi via paved roads, minibuses are fine. As safari vehicles, I don't recommend them.

Where are you staying?

This question must be approached at two levels. You probably will be staying in your city of arrival at least one night before beginning your safari. If this city is Nairobi, there are many hotels that are described in guidebooks to Kenya or East Africa. I am familiar with two quality hotels that meet my specifications of reasonable price and pleasant location out of the central city. The **Hotel Boulevard** is within easy walking distance of downtown. The **Jacaranda Hotel** is in suburban Westlands, a long walk from central city. Its courtesy bus makes infrequent runs to and from downtown. Each has a good pool and restaurant.

An ideal situation is to arrive at Nairobi's Kenyatta Airport in early morning, transfer to your hotel, and have most of the day to obtain safari essentials and survey Nairobi shops to learn prices of various gift items and souvenirs that you may want to purchase later in your trip.

Your first stop should be at a bank to change currency. Kenya's currency exchange policy is now very simple, but actual exchanges still tend to be slow processes. While it may be advisable to exchange currency at the airport upon arrival, you must avoid the interminable procedure this involves at the Bureau de Change in the Customs Hall that you first enter after disembarking from the airplane. To exchange currency at the airport, continue to the outer area where ticketing counters and ground transportation are located. Here you will find 24-hour bank branches, such as Barclay's Bank Kenya, where the exchange rate will be favorable and processing time reasonable. The problem is that, by this point, you will have encountered your pre-arranged transfer driver(s) who will be eager to proceed to take you to your hotel. Be prepared for an unhappy reception if you insist on changing currency, thus making him/them wait. If you are travel-weary and not up to a hassle at this time, go on to your hotel, check in, and rest a bit until the banks open. Unless you have brought a large sum in U.S. dollars with you (which is not advisable), plan to exchange traveller's checks for Kenya shillings (KSHS). You can't predict just what the Bureau de Change agent will require you to write on your check, but there will be some red tape to consume time and you should go mentally prepared for this. You will be required to countersign every check while the agent watches, so forget attempting to do this while waiting in line.

The amount of currency you change should depend on three variables: (1) safari days in Kenya prior to a border crossing; (2) amount of time available in Nairobi between your return from safari and your departure for home; and (3) what you expect to purchase during the Kenya portion of your safari. The greater the odd-numbered variable responses and the lesser the even, the greater the amount exchanged. You will be issued a receipt for every currency exchange you make. Keep your receipts in a safe place even though you probably will not be required to present them at any point during your trip.

If you are staying at the Jacaranda Hotel, there is a branch of Barclay's Bank Kenya across the street. Its Bureau de Change is upstairs and to your left.

Once you have KSHS, certain purchases for safari are highly recommended. Obtain a supply of the antimalarial drug **Paludrine**, available over-the-counter at a pharmacy or chemist. Two Paludrine tablets per day provide the recommended adult dose of 200 mg of proguanil hydrochloride. As recently as I am aware, the Flying Doctors' Society of Africa recommended

Paludrine as an effective, safe drug for malaria prevention. Produced in England by ICI Pharmaceuticals, Paludrine is not available in the United States. It is not mentioned by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Public Health Service Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and a CDC spokesperson has told me that they do not consider it an effective antimalarial agent

The International Association for Medical Assistance to Travellers (IAMAT; 417 Center Street, Lewiston, NY 14092) should be contacted for recommendations. I suggest that you request membership in IAMAT when planning your trip. In return for a donation, IAMAT will send updates of its recommendations. IAMAT has suggested that Paludrine be taken in addition to the drug you use as your weekly antimalarial regimen. IAMAT also provides a World Immunization Chart that you may find helpful. Try to arrange through your travel agent, for your safari operator to obtain a supply of Paludrine for your group to take on your first day in Africa before you have an opportunity to purchase individual supplies. Ideally, you should begin taking the drug 24 hours before arrival. Purchase a quantity sufficient to last for the duration of your stay in Africa and for 4 weeks after you return.

Follow malaria-prevention precautions as closely as possible. *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria is a serious threat to travellers in East Africa and must be regarded as potentially fatal. The best advice is to avoid contracting this disease.

Another highly-recommended purchase is bottled water if your safari operator(s) will not be providing it. You will find the best prices for this, and other grocery-store items you may wish to purchase in Nairobi, at an **Uchumi**, the “supermarket” chain where “regular” people shop. There is an Uchumi near the Jacaranda Hotel.

Only bottled or boiled beverages should be consumed on safari to avoid gastrointestinal problems. Bottled water is usually available at game lodges, but may cost substantially more than the supermarket price. Do not run (no pun intended) the risk of consuming non-bottled water on safari unless you are certain it has been boiled.

After obtaining your essentials, you may want to go into downtown Nairobi to shop for prices. Avoid making purchases if your itinerary affords time in the city at the end of your safari for two reasons: (1) you may find a better buy while on safari, and (2) you want to avoid carrying your purchases with you while out in the bush if you can obtain them later. Your hotel may keep purchases safe for you if you are returning there after your safari; if so, determine this before shopping.

The place that every shopper in Nairobi must visit is the **City Market**. Part indoors, part outside in stalls, this fascinating melange of shops fills the block set off by Muindi Mbingu and Koinange Streets, running northerly-southerly, and Market Street and Tubman Road, running easterly-westerly. Prices in most shops are negotiable, and bargaining is expected in the market. While malachite necklaces and bracelets are available in some of the shops, amber is offered only in jewelry stores where prices are firm.

You may encounter people selling amber necklaces on the road between Nairobi and Samburu/Buffalo Springs Reserves near Isiolo. Jewelry may be obtained at very good prices by bargaining with roadside salesmen. By determining prices in Nairobi before departing on safari, you are in a good bargaining position during your trip where you may find the best buys. Whether in Nairobi or on the road, it is now legal in Kenya to make purchases in U.S. currency which is in great demand. Prices may be lower in dollars than in KSHS, but be certain as to the currency in which you are negotiating.

Good bookstores in Nairobi often have natural history field guides at substantially lower prices than in the U.S., but you may not find these in sufficient quantities to have students wait to purchase them in Africa.

The other level of determining where to stay on your trip concerns the very matrix of your course. Will you book a lodge-based or a camping safari? This decision, in my estimation, sets the

tone of your course. Do you want to go out for the day and return to the lodge at night, or do you go out for the duration of your safari where the African experience permeates the darkness even more than the day? For a natural history field course, the natural choice is the tented camp. Camping safaris may be more expensive than lodge safaris, but the price of a quality camping safari where a staff prepares meals and handles chores while your group is out on game runs is competitive with most lodge safaris. Beds are on cots or foam pads on the floor of a roomy, two-person tent. There are toilet and shower tents. Plain food is served under a dining fly. The camps are not luxurious, but provide the authentic bush experience that is the essence of the African safari. Wildlife may come right into your camp at night, so be sure that everyone is prepared for visitors.

A camping safari offers the instructor potential advantages beyond ambience. A problem for the instructor on any travel course is consumption of alcoholic beverages by students. A student under the influence of alcohol may forget to take antimalarials on schedule, and alcohol may exacerbate other health problems associated with travel. Alcoholic beverage access can be minimized in camp if the instructor makes this policy clear with the agent when booking the trip. Some safari operators discourage use of alcohol by clients, whereas others offer beer for sale in their camps. You can arrange, through your agent, to have no alcohol sold by any operator with whom you contract. You should clarify your policy with each driver, if your class is travelling in land rovers, so that none of the drivers provide students an opportunity to purchase alcoholic beverages for consumption in camp. Unless you make such arrangements, you could encounter any of these situations. Consumption of alcoholic beverages cannot be controlled on lodge-based safaris.

The tented camp is an ideal environment for students to bring species lists or journal entries up to date between game runs or after an active day afield. Bird life is readily observable around the camp, and many species seen here will not be noticed elsewhere. One of my favorite sites for wildlife is the Maasai campground on the edge of Amboseli National Park. This is one of the few places where the Taveta golden weaver is common. An evening stroll around our campsite there yielded close encounters with a genet, black-backed jackals, dik-diks, an impala herd, and an elephant. As one guidebook indicates, this place is "swarming with wildlife, so be prepared for adventures." On the down side, toilets at public campgrounds such as this can be adventures of another kind. Be sure that you at least have an emergency supply of toilet paper with you. You must also be prepared to forgo a shower at this campground, as its water system is notoriously non-functional. These are minor inconveniences in comparison with the indelible experience of camping in this wildlife oasis at the foot of Mt. Kilimanjaro.

What about guidebooks?

I haven't found a guidebook that has prepared me for the situations I've encountered during three trips in East Africa. I have found disagreements among them concerning positive and negative recommendations of the same restaurant, but more disconcerting is their uneven coverage. None comes close to providing all of the information you should have for your first safari, leaving me unable to recommend just one. The best one I've read is:

Bechky, Allen. 1990. *Adventuring in East Africa: The Sierra Club travel guide to the great safaris of Kenya, Tanzania, eastern Zaire, Rwanda, and Uganda*. Sierra Club Books, San Francisco. (\$14.95 US)

Even though its subtitle does fail to mention the inclusion of Burundi among the countries covered, this book attempts too much. Kenya and Tanzania, however, are treated in detail insofar as their parks are concerned, with each country being accorded over 100 pages. Contrast this with 65 pages for the other four countries combined and you discover uneven coverage. Also you will find comparatively little information on cities and towns of even

Kenya and Tanzania. Bechky doesn't tell you how to get from one place to another. His book has few maps, and these aren't very detailed. But Bechky has been a tour leader and safari guide, and he does know the parks. He also likes to do the kind of trip I do, so I find much to agree with in his book. I don't agree with his choice of a field guide to mammals. The book includes good appendices.

If you plan to travel in Kenya or stay in Nairobi, a good companion guide is:

Trillo, Richard. 1989. *The real guide: Kenya*. Prentice Hall, New York. (\$12.95 US)

This is a revised edition of Trillo's 1987 *The Rough Guide to Kenya*. It offers good maps of cities and game parks as well as detailed descriptions that blend with, rather than duplicate, those in Bechky's book. Where Bechky gives one place to stay, this guide lists four with a brief analysis of the virtues of each. If you want to know the hours when the library in Kakamega is open, this guide is for you. Although I haven't tried, you should be able to travel through Kenya in your own vehicle with directions contained here. It is also cost-conscious, detailing potential bargains in every aspect of foreign travel.

I am not aware of a comparable guide to Tanzania, but the following is included in what must be the bottom-line in budget travel guides to East Africa:

Crowther, Geoff. 1987. *East Africa: A travel survival kit*. Lonely Planet Publications, Berkeley, California. (\$9.95 US)

If Bechky's book spreads itself too thinly, this guide goes beyond the pale! Abridged too far may well describe it, even though it is a regional expansion of Crowther's 1986 *Africa on a Shoestring*. It is too lacking in details to appeal to me, but includes extensive information on Tanzania with 79 pages of coverage. Its maps are plentiful and reasonably good, even if they curiously combine professional printing with hand-written notation. Its quotations of prices are out of date, but a second edition is now available that may be more useful in this regard. In discussing accommodations in Nairobi, it makes the places I've stayed sound like the Ritz. Crowther is still travelling Africa on a shoestring. This guide explains the terrible currency exchange situation in Tanzania, where black market rates are much higher than rates you may obtain legally.

Since the phrase "banker's hours" must have been coined in Tanzania, you probably won't be anywhere near a bank when one is open. So as to get an entry on my currency declaration form and a bank receipt in case of official inquiry as to where I was changing money, I exchanged (in 1992) some traveller's checks at a hotel in Arusha at 230 Tanzanian shillings per US dollar. A "gentleman" on the street had mentioned 350 or higher, and our safari outfit was willing to exchange at 350. If you aren't afraid to carry US dollars on safari, Bechky offers the suggestion of carrying undeclared cash into Tanzania for unexpected purchases and to tip safari drivers. You may be arrested, heavily fined, or even temporarily imprisoned for making black market exchanges, but you may not run much of a risk if your safari operator is offering them.

If Crowther's guide is of questionable value, some guidebooks are worthless:

Heminway, John. 1990. *African journeys: A personal guidebook*. Warner Books, New York. (\$12.95 US)

Heminway may be chairman of the African Wildlife Foundation and executive producer and host of the 12-part PBS series *Travels*, but if he is "one of America's foremost experts on Africa" he fails to come across as such here. His recommendations are at the opposite end of

the price range from Crowther's, as he refers to the Hotel Boulevard, for example, as "low priced" while the same establishment is listed under "top end" by Crowther. This is not a guide so much as it is a ramble through some recollections of places Heminway has been, and where he seems to have lived very high at that. Don't enrich his coffers by purchasing this book. You both can live without it.

What about field guides?

If you want to minimize expenditures for books as well as the number of books each student must pack, there is a reasonable compromise:

Williams, John G. 1981. *The Collins field guide to the national parks of East Africa*. Revised edition. Stephen Greene Press, Lexington, Massachusetts.

This guide consists of three parts: (1) the national parks, game reserves, and other faunal areas of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda; (2) the mammals of the national parks of East Africa; and (3) the more common birds of East Africa. Its major disadvantage is the limited extent of the faunal coverage.

If you are undaunted by the extra expense and bulk of two field guides instead of one, the following provide far more extensive coverage that justifies the price differential:

Williams, John G., and N. Arlott. 1988. *The Collins field guide to the birds of East Africa*. Revised edition. Stephen Greene Press, Lexington, Massachusetts.

Dorst, Jean, and Pierre Dandelot. 1988. *The Collins field guide to the larger mammals of Africa*. Revised edition. Stephen Greene Press, Lexington, Massachusetts.

These guides are available in the original Collins publications in the better bookstores in Nairobi at lower prices than the Greene publications, but quantities for an entire class may be problematic. You may be able to prearrange purchase in Nairobi, itinerary permitting.

As a mammal field guide, I prefer Dorst and Dandelot to the more comprehensive:

Holden, Theodor, and Helmut Diller. 1980. *A field guide to the mammals of Africa, including Madagascar*. William Collins Sons, Toronto.

Although less detailed, Dorst and Dandelot's work features larger print, plates less crowded with illustrations, illustrations highlighted by lines indicating field marks, and plates located nearer descriptions of taxa illustrated. These are important considerations for students unfamiliar with African mammals.

What about a textbook?

Although it includes only 15 species of mammals, the accounts of animal behavior presented in *Portraits in the wild: Animal behavior in East Africa* should orient your students to the kind of observation they should be making during game runs, in camp, or wherever an opportunity presents itself. The only species coverage considerably in need of updating is that of the cheetah. See the reference to Caro's article in my *Africa Notes #2* (Appendix A) or *Cheetahs: In a race for survival* (Frame, George W., and Lory Herbison Frame, National Geographic, 157(5):712–728, 1980).

Moss, Cynthia. 1882. *Portraits in the wild: Animal behavior in East Africa*. Second edition. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. (\$14.95 US)

Moss' book is of the genre that causes a student to contact you years after taking your course, requesting the reference for “that book you assigned that I read in the library.” Yes, you need to read it again after being there because now you understand what it was about.

What else should I know?

After three trips to East Africa, I'm unable to answer this question completely. The series of *Africa Notes* I developed (see Appendix A) to update student at various stages of preparation for departure should address many of your remaining questions. Above all, be confident that you can offer a course such as I've done without special preparation. My purpose is to help you avoid some of the problems I've encountered, thereby making your trip more enjoyable. The most difficult task is getting your class together with deposits paid. You cannot accept excuses, and you must begin early enough to determine the type of course you can offer, based on enrolment, and whether your class is going to materialize. The rest is easy!

APPENDIX A

Africa Notes #1

(20 May 1991)

This is the first of a series of information packets and updates you will receive as a member of Africa '92. If you were on campus this spring term, you should have a copy of the Washington and Jefferson College *Intersession Abroad Catalogue*. If you weren't on campus, you will find a copy enclosed. On page 3 you will find information for obtaining a passport. This is the first step you should take if you do not have a passport that expires no earlier than 30 July 1992. If you do not have a valid passport, begin the process of obtaining one immediately. Do not put it off. You must have a passport in order to obtain visas for Kenya and Tanzania. You will receive information on visas later. In the meantime, be sure to obtain your passport unless you already have one that is valid for at least 6 months after our return.

If you plan to borrow through an educational loan program to assist in meeting expenses of your Africa Intersession trip, contact the College's Financial Aid Office immediately. As indicated on page 7 of the *Intersession Abroad Catalogue*, loan applications must be submitted early so as to insure that funds are available by the deadline for payment of the trip balance. The deadline for paying the balance of your Africa Intersession trip is 30 October 1991.

The College requires that each student enrolled for Intersession take a travel insurance policy for an off-campus trip. The cost of this policy is not included in the cost of the trip and must be paid separately to the Business Office. More details on trip insurance will be available in September.

The course description of Biology 225: Natural History of East Africa begins on page 15 of the *Intersession Abroad Catalogue*. The cost of \$3,975 is based upon an enrolment of 15 and assumes no increase in the \$1,500 air fare for New York to Nairobi and return. Some of our group members have guaranteed their air fare at this cost by submitting payment with their deposits. Should we have a group of fewer than 15, the cost per member will be an additional \$350. The orientation meetings during the fall term will feature videotapes of game parks and wildlife, and will include discussions of all aspects of travel in East Africa.

You should select at least three titles from the reading list that follows, and read these over the summer in preparation for your trip. We could call this required reading, but you should find it enjoyable as well as essential preparation for your upcoming Intersession experience.

The Long African Day by Norman Myers. 1972. Macmillan, New York. This has been called the one book that everyone planning to visit East Africa must read. Excellent, though a bit dated.

Season on the Plain by Franklin Russell. 1974. Reader's Digest Press, New York. A novel that provides a detailed account of the lives and deaths that comprise the natural history of the African plains. My personal favorite.

The Last Place on Earth by Harold T. P. Hayes. 1983. Stein and Day, Scarborough Books Editions. Originally published in 1976, this account of a Serengeti safari with commentary on the politics of conservation is highly recommended.

Serengeti: Dynamics of an Ecosystem edited by A. R. E. Sinclair and M. Norton-Griffiths. 1979. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. A more technical work that requires some background in ecology, this is the definitive study of Serengeti. Each chapter is a research report.

The Tree Where Man Was Born/The African Experience by Peter Matthiessen and Eliot Porter. 1972. E. P. Dutton, New York. Superb photographs combined with an interesting narrative that ties together the wildlife, tribesmen, geology, and geography of East Africa. Describes a foray into Ngurdoto Crater in Arusha National Park.

The following titles concentrate on a particular species:

- The Marsh Lions: The Story of an African Pride** by Brian Jackman and Jonathan Scott. 1983. David R. Godine, Boston. The fascinating story of a pride of lions in Kenya's Maasai Mara Reserve.
- The Serengeti Lion** by George B. Schaller. 1972. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. Winner of the 1973 National Book Award in science, this is one of the classic studies of predator-prey relations. Schaller is one of the world's foremost wildlife biologists and conservationists.
- Golden Shadows, Flying Hooves** by George B. Schaller. 1983. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. Although this is a 1973 book with an Afterword added in the 1983 edition, it remains an interesting and enjoyable account of Schaller's observations in the Serengeti. Most of the book is on lions, the "golden shadows."
- The Leopard's Tale** by Jonathan Scott. 1985. Elm Tree Books, London. Scott is a master photographer and gifted artist whose photographs are rivalled by his drawings.
- The Spotted Hyena** by Hans Kruuk. 1972. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. A study of predation and social behavior that *Scientific American* called "indispensable for the method, the detailed argument, the unfolding of the science."
- The African Buffalo** by A. R. E. Sinclair. 1977. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. This study of resource limitations of populations has been called "a model of careful methodology."
- Elephant Memories** by Cynthia Moss. 1988. William Morrow and Co., New York. A popular book about elephant behavior in Amboseli National Park that includes interesting accounts of life in the researchers' camp.

An additional reading assignment consists of two articles in the May 1989 issue of *National Geographic*, a spectacular photographic essay *The Serengeti: A Portfolio* by Mitsuaki Iwago (pages 560–584), and *The Serengeti: The Glory of Life* by Shana Alexander (pages 585–601). Together, they provide a superb introduction to a major segment of the course.

Africa Notes #2
(23 September 1991)

Here is our departure and return travel information so that you may plan connections to and from JFK International Airport:

- 8 Jan Departure via British Airways flight 176 from JFK at 9:00 p.m.
30 Jan Return via British Airways flight 175, arriving JFK at 1:35 p.m.

Allow a minimum of 3 hours between connecting flights. A longer interval probably is better to cover time that may be lost in delays.

Our next step is to secure visas for Kenya and Tanzania. Application forms are included with this update. Be sure to fill these out very carefully, following all regulations. Dates are to be given in the international day/month/year format. Use all capital letters.

On the Kenya visa application:

- 2b. Your occupation is STUDENT.
- 6a. Your reason for entry is TOURISM.
- 6b. Date of entry is 10 JANUARY 1992.
Duration of stay is 20 DAYS.
7. Leave blank.
8. Circle "NO".
10. YES.

On the Tanzania visa application form:

6. Give home address as your present residential address and leave the permanent address box blank.
7. Your occupation is STUDENT, WASHINGTON & JEFFERSON COLLEGE.
12. Check "YES" and enter KENYA, 10/1/92, TOURISM.
13. Check "TOURISM"; it is not necessary to elaborate.
14. Leave blank.
15. Enter: 19/1/92.
16. Check "LAND"; it is not necessary to give transport service.
17. Enter: NAMANGA.
18. Duration of stay is 10 DAYS.
19. Check "YES"; travel agent will provide proof.
20. Leave blank.
21. Enter: 28/1/92.
22. Check "LAND"; it is not necessary to give transport service.
23. Enter: NAMANGA.

You must include two passport type photographs for each visa. The fee for a Kenya visa is \$10 US and for Tanzania visa \$10.50 US. Our travel agent will process our applications for a fee of \$10 per visa. Your passport must be sent with your visa applications. If you want our travel agent to handle your visas, you must give me the following:

1. Two completed visa applications with two photos for each visa (four photos total).
2. Your passport.
3. A check for \$40.50 made payable to "Washington and Jefferson College."

As soon as I receive them, I will send all of our applications together to our travel agent. Please submit this material at your earliest convenience.

The following articles should help expand your background in the natural history of East Africa: (I particularly recommend Tim Caro's article on cheetahs because it updates the information in our text concerning this species.)

- Altmann, Jeanne, and Amy Samuels. 1989. Upscale baboons. *Natural History*, May (1989):60–63.
- Caro, Tim. 1989. The brotherhood of cheetahs. *Natural History*, June (1989):50–59.
- Cavallo, John A. 1990. Cat in the human cradle. *Natural History*, February (1990):52–61.
- Fanshawe, John Hew. 1989. Serengeti's painted wolves. *Natural History*, March (1989):56–67.
- Geertsema, Aadje. 1991. The servals of Gorigor. *Natural History*, February (1991):53–61.
- Jones, Robert F. 1990. Farewell to Africa. *Audubon*, 92(5):50–105. (September)
- Payne, Katherine. 1989. Elephant talk. *National Geographic*, 176(2):264–277. (August)
- Richardson, Philip R. K. 1990. The lick of the aardwolf. *Natural History*, April (1990):78–85.
- Stager, Curt. 1990. Africa's Great Rift. *National Geographic*, 177(5):2–41. (May)

For the benefit of those planning to take 35-mm slide film on safari, here are some recommendations. The film that I recommend is Fujichrome in 36-exposure rolls with ISO ratings ("speeds") of 100 and 400. At least half of your rolls should be of the higher speed (ISO 400), and you should take at least enough film to equal one roll per day. Fujichrome is a color-saturated film, meaning that you will get the brightest and deepest colors by using it. Not only are 36-exposure rolls more economical, but you will have to change film less frequently, thus missing fewer photo opportunities. Although high-speed film is grainier than those with lower ISO ratings, many of your best opportunities will be under less than ideal light conditions. Therefore you aren't making a very great compromise in using the faster film. The films I suggest are Fujichrome RD135-36 (ISO 100) and Fujichrome RH135-36 (ISO 400). These may be obtained with prepaid processing from the following suppliers at reasonable prices (the prices quoted below are current, but you should always confirm prices before ordering):

Adorama, Inc. (42 West 18th St., New York, NY 10011) lists RD 135-36 at \$6.49 per roll and RH135-36 at \$8.69 per roll, plus shipping. Adorama accepts telephone orders on major credit cards at 1-800-223-2500, although this number is often busy and you must keep trying. They are open Monday through Thursday 9–7, Friday 9–1:45, and Sunday 9:30–5:45.

B&H Photo & Electronics (119 West 17th St., New York, NY 10011) lists RD135-36 at \$6.59 per roll and RH135-36 at \$8.69 per roll. Shipping is a minimum of \$7.00 for up to 3 lbs. and 60 cents for each additional pound. The number for credit card orders is 1-800-221-5662. Hours are Wednesday and Thursday 9–7:30, Monday and Tuesday 9–6, Friday 9–2, and Sunday 10–4:45. Delivery from either company takes some time, so orders should be placed well in advance of our departure. Do not plan to obtain any film during the trip. Buy all film in the U.S. and take it with you.

On safari, keep cameras and lenses sealed in plastic Zip-Lock bags and carry them in a well-padded camera bag. Photography from a vehicle is greatly aided by the use of a bean bag on which the camera is placed during shooting. Take along extra Zip-Lock bags in case replacements are necessary. Put fresh batteries in all photo equipment that uses them and also take along spare batteries of each type you use.

Africa Notes #3 (7 October 1991)

Keep in mind that the deadline for paying the balance of your trip cost is 30 October. This is just over 3 weeks away. Also, you should be actively completing your visa applications so that you can return them to me with your signed passport and four photos as soon as possible. You may either pay the \$40.50 visa fee at the Business Office and give me a receipt, or pay me \$40.50 when you bring in your completed applications and passport.

The textbook for the course is available at the bookstore. You should obtain a copy of the following book at your earliest convenience:

Moss, Cynthia. 1982. *Portraits in the wild: Animal behavior in East Africa*. Second edition. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

This book should be read before our trip to provide you with essential and interesting background information. During the safari, you will be too busy to read anything except the species accounts in your field guides. You will want to include information from both your text and field guides in your journal of the trip.

You will need a sleeping bag that is suitable for warm evenings. You would be quite uncomfortable in a bag rated for use in cold weather, so find something lightweight that is rated for temperatures down to 45°F or something in this range. If there is an old sleeping bag around home that on one really wants very much, that may be ideal for this trip because you may want to leave it behind if you want to bring gifts or souvenirs back home. There may be a weight restriction on one or more of our flights of around 40 lbs., so you should pack accordingly.

An ideal luggage item for your trip would be something like the 14" × 30" Eastpak that is available from Campmor (P.O. Box 997-C, Paramus, NJ 07653-0997). This is item #60438-N in the Campmor catalog. Campmor is a highly reputable outfitter that offers quality merchandise at reasonable prices. You will need a neck safe or other hidden secure compartment for your passport and currency. A hat with a wide brim will help protect you from the sun. It should be able to be flattened for packing and should be able to be tied under your chin so it doesn't blow off. If you put tie straps on Campmor's Adventure Hat, you have an ideal, low-cost hat for safari. If you want something from Campmor, you can save on shipping by ordering along with someone else.

You may want to take a small cassette recorder to capture the sounds of the African bush, both diurnal and nocturnal. A plastic rain poncho may come in handy and can be carried in a small day-pack along with field guides. Your jacket and pants should have pocket space adequate for the various items you want to carry with you.

Film should be taken out of the box it comes in and carried in a clear plastic Zip-Lock type bag so that it may be inspected visually at airport check points, rather than being exposed to x-rays. Have your camera empty until you have passed through any check point you may encounter.

A lightweight windbreaker with plenty of pocket space is ideal for carrying film and other items you may want with you on the plane. This, along with a warm sweater or sweatshirt, will be adequate outerwear. Earth tones are better than bright colors for wildlife viewing, but camouflage clothing should not be worn in East Africa. You will need sunblock of at least SPF 15 and there may be occasions when you will want insect repellent. You will receive a more complete checklist later.

Africa Notes #4
(2 December 1991)

Protection against malaria is a concern of every visitor to East Africa. A great majority of the cases of falciparan malaria among American civilians reported to the CDC were acquired in sub-Saharan Africa. You will be able to obtain prescriptions from the Student Health Service for Lariam and Fansidar. Take the Fansidar with you for use only in the event that you develop symptoms of malaria on safari. Begin taking one Lariam tablet per week at noon Friday, 3 January. We will all take a tablet at 8 p.m. each Friday we are in Africa, then you will take a tablet at noon each Friday through 21 February. When we arrive in Nairobi, we will purchase a supply of Paludrine. This will be taken at dinner for the 20 days we are in Africa and continued at lunch for 30 days after our return.

Although college students seldom follow this recommendation, the condition called "jet lag" may be avoided by adjusting your wake/sleep cycle prior to departure. This must be done gradually and consistently to be effective. It requires going to bed 30 minutes earlier each night prior to 10 January for as many nights as necessary to make up the time differential. The actual number of nights depends upon your normal bedtime. A good bedtime while on safari would be 9 p.m. (2100 hours) to avoid malarial mosquitoes. In order to adjust to a 9 p.m. in Kenya, you would have to reach a 1 p.m. bedtime prior to departure. For someone with a usual bedtime of 11 p.m., 20 days would be required to make an effective adjustment.

In addition to money you wish to take for miscellaneous expenses, there are several costs you need to budget for as we travel. One is the \$20 departure fee at Kenyatta Airport that must be paid in US dollars when we leave Kenya. This means that you must take \$20 in cash, not traveller's checks, with you for this purpose.

Several meals are on our own, including dinner at JFK on 8 Jan.; lunch and dinner in Nairobi on 10 Jan.; dinner in Nairobi on 28 Jan.; and lunch in Nairobi on 29 Jan. Tips for safari drivers in the range of \$2 to \$2.50 per day are expected and would come to \$16 to \$20 gratuity for the personnel of each company. Porters are eager to carry your luggage to your room at your hotel and tipping is expected for this service. It may be difficult to prevent having your luggage carried unless you hang on to it in the lobby.

Kenyatta Airport is a good place to change some currency, but do not use the bank inside the Customs Hall. It will be very slow. Out in the area with the ticket counters, you will find banks that operate more efficiently. Barclays Bank has a branch there, and the Bureau de Change is open 24 hours. You will find a good rate of exchange here. Be sure to get your receipt. It is a good idea to keep receipts with your passport.

The Jacaranda Hotel is in suburban Westlands. There is free bus service into the city, the schedule for which is at the cashier's desk. There are two banks opposite the hotel in case you did not change enough currency at the airport. The hotel has a restaurant, and there are several nearby. Out the main entrance and to the right is the Agip pizza garden; to the left is the Hunters' Den. Chinese food is available at the Tin-Tin in the Sarit Centre behind the Jacaranda. If you are in Nairobi at lunchtime, you might try Supermac (on Kimathi St.) for fish and chips. Get there early to avoid lines. For lunch or dinner, the South Indian vegetarian cuisine at the Supreme Hotel is said to be the best in Nairobi — fiery hot and very inexpensive. The Supreme is at the corner of Kilome and Ngariama Roads at the top of River Road. Highly recommended for Swahili cooking is Malindi Dishes on Gaborone Road. More expensive, but very good, is the Ethiopian cuisine at the African Heritage Cafe on Banda Street.

When you enter Tanzania you will be given a Currency Declaration Form, or CD3. List the exact amount of your funds on it and carry it in a safe place. Whenever you change currency, the changer must stamp you CD3 and give you a receipt.

Your journal should be an essential part of your experience in East Africa. It should be authoritative, reflecting the background information you have gained from the pre-departure meetings and assigned readings. If you have not obtained your copy of *Portraits in the Wild* by Cynthia Moss, be sure to pick it up at the Bookstore as well as *A Field Guide to the Birds of East Africa* by John G. Williams. Both books provide much information of the type that should be incorporated into your journal. The field guide to mammals may be in before you leave campus, so be sure to look for it also.

In addition to accurate times of entries, your journal should indicate conditions such as weather (% sky cover, current or recent precipitation, winds, dust, etc.), location (you may have to ask your guide where you are in the larger parks), names of streams, bodies of water, or visible hills. The Musiara Marsh, for example, is a famous feature of Maasai Mara Reserve that you would want to specify along with observations made in that area. Try to get the kinds of prominent plants as well as species of animals that you observe in a particular area. While striving for technical accuracy, you should also include your personal feelings about a place, the wildlife, your driver, life in camp, etc. Try to balance your account so that in future readings it will help you recall what you saw and heard as well as how you felt. A student on a previous trip summed it up:

“I realize I have strayed from the biological aspects of the trip — in the most common use of that word. Biology, though, is the study of life, and that is what I have tried to record — a preserved cross-section of life on this trip. I want to store the glimpse of life in ‘the bush,’ now sadly separate from human life. The delightful, self-regulating naturalism of the plains and woodlands into which we looked. I have also tried to record the brief, shallow exposure to the foreign human culture (the Third World) that one can appreciate only through firsthand experience. I have included as well, aspects of our daily existence in this marvellous land: the food, campsites, activities, people, etc., in an attempt to capture forever ‘What it was like’ to be in Africa for the first time.

I am eagerly awaiting my return to Africa, which is inevitable. To never go there again is not conceivable. Though technically the homeland of my species, I was not prepared for its enchanting charm and beauty. I will always remember the days recorded in this journal as among the best of my life.”

It should be apparent that the account of your trip you record in your journal will serve as much more than the basis on which you will be evaluated in the course. To an ever increasing extent, it will become a link between you and the African experience, a medium through which you can return to the gold and green savanna where your kind were born.

Although English is a very useful language in East Africa and you can get by on it very nicely, you will be regarded much more favorably if you make the effort to speak some Swahili. There are some words you definitely should know to “keep up appearance.” The multipurpose greeting is “Hujambo,” although this usually is shortened to “Jambo.” Literally, the word asks “Any problems?”. The response is “Sijambo,” which means “No problems.” To say “Thank you,” the word is “Asante.” To add emphasis, such as “very much,” add the word “sana,” so that “Thank you very much” would be “Asante sana.” To someone who says “Habari?” (How are you?), respond with “Mzuri” (good). Be careful it doesn't sound like “Missouri” though, just add a bit of an “m” sound to -zuri. How would you respond that you are “Very well”? If you do not see what your guide is pointing out, say “Wapi?” (where?) or, if you are trying to see the leopard (chui) that is being pointed out, “Iko wapi chui?” (Where is the leopard?). “Karibu” means “Come in” or “Welcome.” If you want to ask “How much?”, the word is “Ngapi?” or “Ngapi pesa?” (How much money?). Words for some common animals are nyani (baboon), mbobo (buffalo), duma (cheetah), simba (lion), fisi (hyena), twiga (giraffe), kifarua (rhino), tembo (elephant), mamba (crocodile), kiboko (hippo), nyumbu (wildebeest), and swala (gazelle). A word we may not want to use is “Kwaheri” (goodbye) because “Tutapenda Africa.”

APPENDIX B
Itineraries

Biology 225: Natural History of Serengeti (1989)

- 2 Jan Depart JFK International Airport 6:45 p.m.
- 3 Jan Arrive Athens, Greece, 10:05 a.m.
- 4 Jan Free day for touring Athens.
- 5 Jan Depart Athens 11:10 a.m., arrive Nairobi, Kenya, 5:40 p.m.
- 6 Jan Depart Nairobi for Amboseli National Park.
- 8 Jan Depart Amboseli for Tarangire National Park, Tanzania.
- 10 Jan Depart Tarangire for Lake Manyara National Park.
- 12 Jan Depart Lake Manyara for Ngorongoro Crater.
- 14 Jan Depart Ngorongoro for Serengeti National Park, stopping for lunch at Olduvai Gorge.
- 19 Jan Depart Serengeti for Arusha National Park.
- 20 Jan Return to Nairobi, Kenya.
- 21 Jan Depart Nairobi 1:05 a.m. for Athens, Greece.
- 22 Jan Depart Athens 12:40 p.m. for New York.

Biology 225: Natural History of East Africa (1992)

- 8 Jan Depart JFK International Airport for London 9:00 p.m.
- 9 Jan Depart London 4:45 p.m. for Nairobi, Kenya.
- 10 Jan Arrive Nairobi 6:30 a.m. and transfer to hotel.
- 11 Jan Depart Nairobi for Samburu National Reserve.
- 13 Jan Depart Samburu for Lake Nakuru National Park.
- 14 Jan Depart Lake Nakuru for Maasai Mara National Reserve.
- 17 Jan Depart Maasai Mara for Amboseli National Park.
- 19 Jan Depart Amboseli for Arusha National Park, Tanzania.
- 20 Jan Depart Arusha for Ngorongoro Crater.
- 23 Jan Depart Ngorongoro for Serengeti National Park, stopping for lunch at Olduvai Gorge.
- 27 Jan Depart Serengeti for Lake Manyara National Park.
- 28 Jan Return to Nairobi and the Jacaranda Hotel.
- 29 Jan Depart Nairobi 10:15 p.m. for London.
- 30 Jan Depart London 11:00 a.m. for New York.