

# **TANZANIA**

**FEBRUARY 22-MARCH 10, 2009**

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TOUR REPORT  
NORTHERN TANZANIA  
February 22–March 10, 2009

By Peter Roberts

This was my 18th tour to Northern Tanzania and, as every year, it certainly lived up to expectations and left me eager for my next safari in this magical, well-organized, friendly, and stable African paradise. I am so lucky to be able to visit annually and get to know the country so well, seeing the subtle differences from year to year.

This year, with the rains slow in coming, we experienced much drier weather than usual. This meant that the vast calving wildebeest herds were more scattered and tricky to find. But we did have a memorable morning when just our two vehicles wandered miles, mostly off-road, out on the flat vastness of the short grass plains of the Serengeti. Our brilliant driver/guides edged us quietly in towards substantial herds of gently grunting wildebeest—females with many tiny calves—numbering many, many thousands, if not the hundreds of thousands that must have been out there somewhere. In some ways it made the experience even more mind-boggling—knowing we had driven 20 miles across endless plains, yet that there were a million wildebeest “out there somewhere,” “hiding” in a huge ecosystem that is bigger than we can possibly imagine.

Despite the drier conditions and rain or no rain, the “usual” extravaganza of over 400 bird species was recorded (out of a potential 600 now noted on this tour). Such easy birding with such large, special, distinctive, and colorful species, along with some occasional more challenging forest birding for smaller species requiring more careful identification, always makes this tour a winner. There is something for all levels of birders, from keen listers to first-timers and keen photographers. The flamboyant, the bizarre, and the bright (some all rolled into one species!)—bustards, rollers, hornbills, Hamerkop, Secretary-bird, eagles, barbets, weavers, sunbirds, guineafowl, parrots, and turacos—were a constant glorious backdrop for scanning and searching for those wonderfully obscure warblers, apalises, and cisticolas (especially the cisticolas). We had lots of the hoped-for specialties showing up where I usually find them (like that Hueglin’s Courser in the same few square yards every year!), and another species added to the list—the Marsh Tchagra in the papyrus fringes of Lake Victoria.

The mammals were magnificent. On an especially noteworthy morning, just after leaving the lodge, we enjoyed stunning views of the rarely seen caracal, followed by a much sought-after leopard lounging in a splendid yellowbark acacia tree, then numerous lazing lions and two groups of cheetah families. African safaris can’t get much better than watching four superb cat species in one morning, all before our return for lunch!

With such a keen and compatible group of traveling companions, it was easy to keep attentions alert and interest high at all times, whether it be the fun of amassing those long bird lists or spending “quality time” with huge elephant herds (some of the group will be able to regale their friends with indelible memories of that bull elephant’s close inspection of their Land Cruiser). Such a great mix of habitats from mountain, forest, open savannah, acacia woodland, and fresh and soda lakes meant that

right up to the last morning, as we reluctantly returned towards Arusha, everyone in our group was keenly looking for (and finding) the last few new species, and savoring final impressions of giraffes, zebras, and elegant impalas passing by—all of us desperately trying to capture that last moment before we had to leave it all behind, like a wonderful dream.

One couple's comments adequately sum it all up: "Such an absolutely phenomenal trip! It exceeded all our expectations and was truly the trip of a lifetime. Travel through the Serengeti was just like being in a movie; it was hard to believe that we really were there amidst all those animals. We enjoyed all the different lodges, the travel in the Land Cruisers, visiting the Maasai village, and of course all the birding. We got some especially good photos of the cheetah with the gazelle kill, and also the leopard in the tree. We ended up with probably something over 350 new life birds."

2009 Northern Tanzania Checklist

SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	24	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Ostrich</b>	<b>Struthionidae</b>														
Ostrich	<i>Struthio camelus</i>			3	20	*	25	*	40	*			*	*	20
<b>Ducks, Geese &amp; Swans</b>	<b>Anatidae</b>														
Fulvous Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>											10			
White-faced Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>			25								*			
Egyptian Goose	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	*	*	*	10	10	*		2	*		*	*	*	
Comb Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>											6			
Spur-winged Goose	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>									5		30		1	
Cape Teal	<i>Anas capensis</i>	*					90								
Yellow-billed Duck	<i>Anas undulata</i>									1					
Red-billed Duck	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>				6	4				6		10			
Hottentot Teal	<i>Anas hottentota</i>	10								1		15			
Southern Pochard	<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>	*													
<b>Pheasants, Partridges &amp; Allies</b>	<b>Phasianidae</b>														
Coqui Francolin	<i>Francolinus coqui</i>			1			2								1
Crested Francolin	<i>Francolinus sephaena</i>												2	2	
Scaly Francolin	<i>Francolinus squamatus</i>								2	4					
Yellow-necked Francolin (Spurfowl)	<i>Francolinus leucoscepus</i>												*	*	*
Gray-breasted Francolin (Spurfowl)	<i>Francolinus rufopictus</i>		2		*		*	*	5						
Red-necked Francolin (Spurfowl)	<i>Francolinus afer</i>												*	*	*
Helmeted Guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	*
<b>Grebes</b>	<b>Podicipedidae</b>														
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	*													
<b>Flamingos</b>	<b>Phoenicopteridae</b>														
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopus roseus</i>	20					*			*		*			
Lesser Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopus minor</i>	*					*			*					
<b>Pelicans</b>	<b>Pelecanidae</b>														
Great White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>									3					
Pink-backed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>														
<b>Cormorants</b>	<b>Phalacrocoracidae</b>														
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	10	*	*									2		
Long-tailed Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>		*	*							2				
<b>Hérons, Egrets &amp; Bitterns</b>	<b>Ardeidae</b>														
Gray Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	2	1	2	1	1				15		10	5		
Black-headed Heron	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	*		10	*	10				5		5			
Goliath Heron	<i>Ardea goliath</i>											1			
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>												2		
Black Heron	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>			1											
Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>									1					
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		10	*						5		5			
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	*	*	*				10		*		*	*	*	
Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>		5	*						1		5		*	
Rufous-bellied Heron	<i>Ardeola rufiventris</i>													1	
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>	1													
Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	2								1		1			
<b>Ibises &amp; Spoonbills</b>	<b>Threskiornithidae</b>														
Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>									*		*			
Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	10		2		20	5					*		*	
Hadada Ibis	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	6	*	*	1							1	3	*	
African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>					1				15		3	10	4	







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<b>Swifts</b>	<b>Apodidae</b>														
Mottled Spinetail	<i>Telecanthura ussheri</i>													6	
Scarce Swift	<i>Schoutedenapus myoptilus</i>											1			
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>						5	2	*		*				
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>		*	*	*	*					*	*	*		5
White-rumped Swift	<i>Apus caffer</i>								10		*				
African Palm-Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>			6	2								10	2	5
<b>Mousebirds</b>	<b>Coliidae</b>														
Speckled Mousebird	<i>Colius striatus</i>	*	*	*	2		2			10	*	*	*	*	
Blue-naped Mousebird	<i>Urocolius macrourus</i>			6				6						4	
<b>Trogons</b>	<b>Trogonidae</b>														
Bar-tailed Trogon	<i>Apaloderma vittatum</i>	h													
<b>Kingfishers</b>	<b>Alcedinidae</b>														
Malachite Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo cristata</i>			3						1					
African Pygmy-Kingfisher	<i>Ispidina picta</i>			1											
Gray-headed Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>	1	1	10								1		1	
Woodland Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>		2		1								4	6	2
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>	1													
Striped Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon chelicuti</i>					2									
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>		*	*								3	2		
<b>Bee-eaters</b>	<b>Meropidae</b>														
White-fronted Bee-eater	<i>Merops bullockoides</i>	2													
Little Bee-eater	<i>Merops pusillus</i>	*		10	*					1			2	*	6
Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater	<i>Merops oreobates</i>										*				
White-throated Bee-eater	<i>Merops albicollis</i>								1						
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	<i>Merops persicus</i>													25	
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>		h	6						15		1			10
<b>Rollers</b>	<b>Coraciidae</b>														
European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>		4	5	*	*	*	*	*	*		2	*	*	*
Lilac-breasted Roller	<i>Coracias caudatus</i>		*	*	*	*	*	*	*				*	*	*
Rufous-crowned Roller	<i>Coracias naevius</i>								2						
<b>Hoopoes</b>	<b>Upupidae</b>														
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>			1		1	h		1				1	5	
<b>Woodhoopoes &amp; Allies</b>	<b>Phoeniculidae</b>														
Green Woodhoopoe	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>		4					1							
Abyssinian Scimitar-bill	<i>Rhinopomastus minor</i>		4					1	2			1			
<b>Hornbills</b>	<b>Bucerotidae</b>														
Red-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>		1		2									*	4
Von der Decken's Hornbill	<i>Tockus deckeni</i>		1			2	4	2	1			2	4	*	4
African Gray Hornbill	<i>Tockus nasutus</i>	2	*	*	4							10	*	*	6
Silvery-cheeked Hornbill	<i>Ceratogymna brevis</i>	2										1			
Southern Ground-Hornbill	<i>Bucorvus leadbeateri</i>												1	4	
<b>African Barbets</b>	<b>Lybiidae</b>														
Red-and-yellow Barbet	<i>Trachyphonus erythrocephalus</i>											6		4	
D'Arnaud's Barbet	<i>Trachyphonus darnaudii</i>		10		4		2								
Red-fronted Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus pusillus</i>		2												
Red-fronted Barbet	<i>Tricholaema diademata</i>					1									
White-headed Barbet	<i>Lybius leucocephalus</i>				1										
Brown-breasted Barbet	<i>Lybius melanopterus</i>	4													
<b>Honeyguides</b>	<b>Indicatoridae</b>														
Greater Honeyguide	<i>Indicator indicator</i>						1						h		

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<b>Woodpeckers &amp; Allies</b>	<b>Picidae</b>														
Nubian Woodpecker	<i>Campethera nubica</i>							1						3	
Cardinal Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicops fuscescens</i>		2							1	3			1	
Gray-headed (Gray) Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicops spodocephalus</i>								1			1		1	
<b>Shrikes</b>	<b>Laniidae</b>														
Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>				1			1				1			
Rufous-tailed (Isabelline) Shrike	<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>			1	1										
Gray-backed Fiscal	<i>Lanius excubitoroides</i>		*	*	*	*									
Long-tailed Fiscal	<i>Lanius cabanisi</i>											5	*	*	*
Taita Fiscal	<i>Lanius dorsalis</i>	1							1						
Common Fiscal	<i>Lanius collaris</i>	*		2					1	*	*				
Magpie Shrike	<i>Corvinella melanoleuca</i>		1	1	10									*	*
White-rumped (Wh.-crowned) Shrike	<i>Eurocephalus rueppelli</i>		*	*	*	*	*	*	*			10	10	*	*
<b>Crows, Jays &amp; Magpies</b>	<b>Corvidae</b>														
Cape Crow (Cape Rook)	<i>Corvus capensis</i>					2			2						
Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>		*								*	*	*		*
White-necked Raven	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>								2	2					
<b>Monarch Flycatchers</b>	<b>Monarchidae</b>														
White-tailed Blue-Flycatcher	<i>Elminia albicauda</i>										2				
African Paradise-Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	2	4	6					2		20	3			
<b>Larks</b>	<b>Alaudidae</b>														
Rufous-naped Lark	<i>Mirafra africana</i>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*					
Foxy Lark	<i>Calendulauda alopex</i>								1						
Fawn-colored Lark	<i>Calend. (Mirafra) africanoides</i>														
Fischer's Sparrow-Lark	<i>Eremopterix leucopareia</i>		*		*	*	*	*	*	10				*	
Red-capped Lark	<i>Calandrella cinerea</i>					*	*	*	*	*					
Short-tailed Lark	<i>Pseudalaemon fremantlii</i>								2						
<b>Swallows</b>	<b>Hirundinidae</b>														
Plain Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>	*		1									*		
Banded Martin	<i>Riparia cincta</i>				1					1					
Rock Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne fuligula</i>	1			4	10	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	*
Angola Swallow	<i>Hirundo angolensis</i>		*	*											
Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>	5	*	5											
Black Sawwing	<i>Psalidoprocne pristoptera</i>	*	*						1		*				
Lesser Striped-Swallow	<i>Cecropis abyssinica</i>	*	*	*		10							1	*	*
Mosque Swallow	<i>Cecropis senegalensis</i>				2										
Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>					10			*	*	*		*		*
Gray-rumped Swallow	<i>Pseudhirundo griseopyga</i>				1	2									
<b>Chickadees &amp; Tits</b>	<b>Paridae</b>														
Red-throated Tit	<i>Melaniparus fringillinus</i>				5				3						
<b>Bulbuls</b>	<b>Pycnonotidae</b>														
Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Eastern Mountain-Greenbul	<i>Andropadus nigriceps</i>	10							1		5				
Yellow-bellied Greenbul	<i>Chlorocichla flaviventris</i>											1			
Gray-Olive Greenbul	<i>Phyllastrephus cerviniventris</i>										4				
<b>Cisticolas &amp; Allies</b>	<b>Cisticolidae</b>														
Red-faced Cisticola	<i>Cisticola erythrops</i>										2	1			
Singing Cisticola	<i>Cisticola cantans</i>	*								1					
Trilling Cisticola	<i>Cisticola woosnami</i>	6													
Hunter's Cisticola	<i>Cisticola hunteri</i>								h	*	*				



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<b>Wattle-eyes</b>	<b>Platysteiridae</b>														
Black-throated Wattle-eye	<i>Platysteira peltata</i>										1				
Chinspot Batis	<i>Batis molitor</i>		3						1	h	1	2			
<b>Babblers</b>	<b>Timalidae</b>														
African Hill Babbler	<i>Pseudoalcippe abyssinica</i>										1				
Rufous Chatterer	<i>Turdoides rubiginosa</i>								4						
Black-lored Babbler	<i>Turdoides sharpei</i>					10	*	*	10						
Northern Pied-Babbler	<i>Turdoides hypoleuca</i>													4	
Arrow-marked Babbler	<i>Turdoides jardineii</i>			2							6	6			
<b>White-eyes</b>	<b>Zosteropidae</b>														
Broad-ringed (Montane) White-eye	<i>Zosterops poliogaster</i>	6							4	5	*				
White-breasted (Abyss.) White-eye	<i>Zosterops abyssinicus</i>								2						
<b>Sunbirds</b>	<b>Nectarinidae</b>														
Kenya (East.) Violet-backed Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes orientalis</i>								1						
Collared Sunbird	<i>Hedydipna collaris</i>	5									2				
Green-headed Sunbird	<i>Cyanomitra verticalis</i>										2				
Eastern Olive Sunbird	<i>Cyanomitra olivacea</i>	1													
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>			2		3	5	5	*			4		4	2
Tacazze Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia tacazze</i>									6	6				
Bronze Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia kilimensis</i>										*	*			
Golden-winged Sunbird	<i>Drepanorhynchus reichenowi</i>								2	4	4				
Eastern Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris mediocris</i>								6	6	6				
Beautiful Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris pulchellus</i>				1	4	5	5	6						
Mariqua Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris mariquensis</i>				2	2									
Red-chested Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris erythrocerus</i>		5	5											
Variable Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris venustus</i>	1		1			2	4	2		5		2		
<b>Old World Orioles</b>	<b>Oriolidae</b>														
African Black-headed Oriole	<i>Oriolus larvatus</i>	1								1				1	
<b>Bushshrikes &amp; Allies</b>	<b>Malaconotidae</b>														
Brubru	<i>Nilaus afer</i>				1	2	h	h							1
Black-backed Puffback	<i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>	1													
Marsh Tchagra	<i>Tchagra minutus</i>			1											
Black-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra senegalus</i>												1		
Brown-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra australis</i>				1			h	1				2	2	4
Tropical Boubou	<i>Laniarius aethiopicus</i>	6							h	10	*	2			
Black-headed Gonolek	<i>Laniarius erythrogaster</i>			4											
Slate-colored Boubou	<i>Laniarius funebris</i>		*		6	10		2	4		1	2	5	5	2
<b>Drongos</b>	<b>Dicruridae</b>														
Fork-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>		10		6		5	*				2	*	10	4
<b>Starlings</b>	<b>Sturnidae</b>														
Wattled Starling	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>				*	*	*	*	*				*		
Rueppell's (Long-tailed) Glossy-Starling	<i>Lamprotornis purpuropterus</i>		*	*											
Superb Starling	<i>Lamprotornis superbus</i>		*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	*	*
Hildebrandt's Starling	<i>Lamprotornis hildebrandti</i>		*		*	*	*	*	*			1			
Violet-backed Starling	<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>	10				6									10
Ashy Starling	<i>Spreo unicolor</i>													*	* *
Red-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>	5												*	10 10
Waller's Starling	<i>Onychognathus walleri</i>									2					
Sharpe's Starling	<i>Pholia sharpii</i>										3				
Red-billed Oxpecker	<i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>					1		1		1		*			
Yellow-billed Oxpecker	<i>Buphagus africanus</i>			1		2	4	*					1		2



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Yellow Bishop	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>	2								2			1		
Fan-tailed Widowbird	<i>Euplectes axillaris</i>			4						25					
White-winged Widowbird	<i>Euplectes albonotatus</i>			1	1										
Red-collared Widowbird	<i>Euplectes ardens</i>									2					
Jackson's Widowbird	<i>Euplectes jacksoni</i>									5					
Grosbeak Weaver	<i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>										1				
<b>Waxbills &amp; Allies</b>	<b>Estrildidae</b>														
Gray-headed Negrofinch	<i>Nigrita canicapilla</i>										1				
Abyssinian Crimson-wing	<i>Cryptospiza salvadorii</i>										1				
Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>									2					
Black - (faced) cheeked Waxbill	<i>Estrilda erythronotos</i>				6	6								2	
Red-cheeked Cordonbleu	<i>Uraeginthus bengalus</i>				4								5	*	*
Blue-capped Cordonbleu	<i>Uraeginthus cyanocephalus</i>		*	*			*	1	1			*	*	*	*
Purple Grenadier	<i>Granatina ianthinogaster</i>								6	2					
Green-winged Pytilia	<i>Pytilia melba</i>		2			4							2	6	
Red-billed Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>								2	15	*	4	5		
African Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>								2		5				
African Quail-Finch	<i>Ortygospiza fuscocrissa</i>	3													
Bronze Mannikin	<i>Spermestes (Lonch.) cucullata</i>		5	2							5	3			
<b>Indigobirds</b>	<b>Viduidae</b>														
Steel-blue Whydah	<i>Vidua hypocherina</i>			1											
Pin-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>		1	1	1					2					
Eastern Paradise-Whydah	<i>Vidua paradisaea</i>			10								2			
<b>MAMMALS</b>	<b>SCIENTIFIC NAME</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Colobid monkeys</b>	<b>Colobidae</b>														
Guereza (Black & White) Colobus	<i>Colobus guereza</i>	*	h												
<b>Cheek-pouch Monkeys</b>	<b>Cercopithecidae</b>														
Vervet Monkey	<i>Cerc. (aethiops) pygerythrus</i>		5	*	*	*			6	10	1	5	*	10	*
Gentle (Blue/Syke's) Monkey	<i>Cercopithecus (nictitans) mitis</i>	6										10			
Olive Baboon	<i>Papio anubis</i>	*	*	*	*	*					1	*	*		*
<b>Large-winged Bats</b>	<b>Megadermatidae</b>														
Yellow-winged Bat	<i>Lavia frons</i>		6	5		4									
<b>Unidentified Small Bats</b>	<b>Microchiroptera</b>														
Bat sp.			*	*						*				*	
<b>Rabbits &amp; Hares</b>	<b>Leporidae</b>														
Scrub Hare / Cape Hare	<i>Lepus saxatalis / capensis</i>			1		2		1	4						
<b>Squirrels &amp; Chipmunks</b>	<b>Sciuridae</b>														
Unstriped Ground Squirrel	<i>Xerus rutilus</i>												*	*	4
Tree Squirrel sp.											2				
<b>Rats &amp; Mice</b>	<b>Muridae</b>														
Grass Rat sp.						4	*	*	*						
Mouse sp.								1							
<b>Foxes, Jackals &amp; Dogs</b>	<b>Canidae</b>														
Common (Golden) Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>							4	3	2					
Black-backed Jackal	<i>Canis mesomelas</i>						2	8							1
Bat-eared Fox	<i>Otocyon megalotis</i>						15								
<b>Mongoose</b>	<b>Herpestidae</b>														
Ichneumon (Egyptian) Mongoose	<i>Herpestes ichneumon</i>					1									
Slender Mongoose	<i>Herpestes sanguinea</i>				1	1			3	1		1			
Dwarf Mongoose	<i>Helogale parvula</i>				10								5	3	
Banded Mongoose	<i>Mungos mungo</i>												20	*	

