

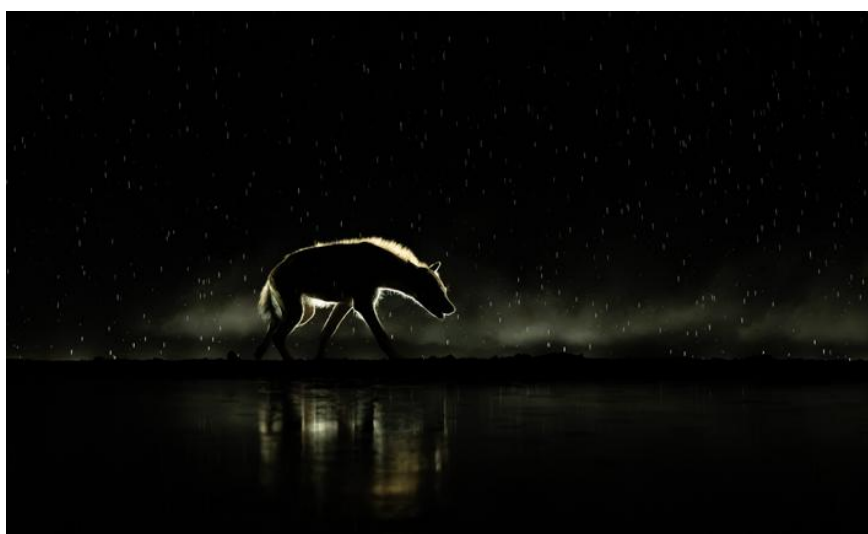
KENYA 2025

This year I finally managed to return to Africa after a gap of 8 years due to ill health and Covid. Kenya is a remarkable and diverse country with a population of 56 million of which 6 million



live in the capital Nairobi.

We had booked a photo trip with Natures-Images (a UK based photography company) to visit Amboseli National Park and Shompole Conservancy close to the southern border with Tanzania. To make the long journey worthwhile my wife and I decided to add an extension to the trip to visit Meru National Park and the Mara North Conservancy. We visited during the



final stages of the dry season in September/October.

Getting from one lodge to another on safari in Kenya to avoid long bumpy and dusty road trips involves flying in a light aircraft like the Cessna Grand Caravan. The safari routine is one that involves getting up before dawn and heading out for a few hours, having breakfast in the bush and returning to camp to relax, have lunch then out again late afternoon, enjoying a sundowner and returning after sunset for your evening meal. Apart from nocturnal mammals most wildlife are active in the mornings. The first hour after sunrise and before sunset are the most productive time for photographers.



The light is soft and there are no harsh highlights and shadows. Being close to the equator means that the window of good light is very narrow and getting the shot involves an element of luck.

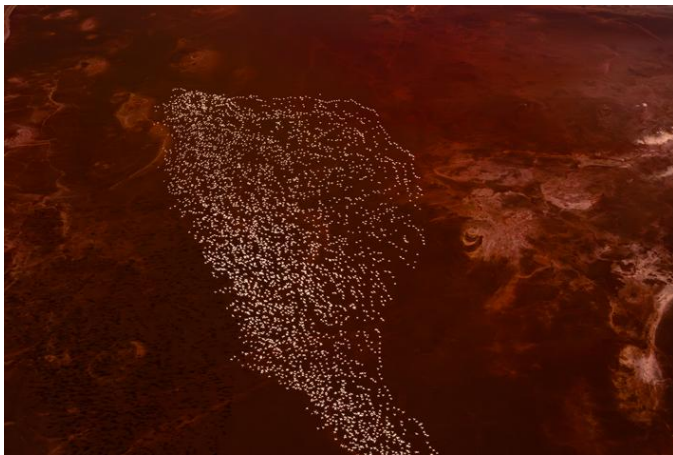
We enjoyed our visit to Meru and Mara North. The Masai guides we had were excellent. The landscape is varied and interesting and tourist traffic volumes here were very low. We also had our own vehicle and driver which made a big difference.

Amboseli National Park is world famous. This is where the BBC wildlife team filmed the big tusker elephant sequences in the 'Dynasties' series. The downside of the popularity is the high volume of tourist traffic. The backdrop of Kilimanjaro is nice when visibility permits but the flat terrain, the dusty environment and the hoards of tourists in their Toyota Land Cruisers at wildlife sightings create a stifling experience.





The highlight of the trip for me was the visit to Shompole Wilderness Camp. This is a small camp nestled on the banks of the Eweso Ng'iro River in southern Kenya in the Shompole Conservancy which is part of the Great Rift Valley. What was special about this camp is that they have two photo hides - the Plains Hide and the Bush Hide. These are normally visited in the late afternoon and you can stay all night should you wish to do so. The Plains hide is the established one and the



one which has front and back lighting for night photography. The images I captured here were truly otherworldly. The dust kicked up by the animals approaching the water hole was backlit - an amazing sight. The cherry on the cake was the helicopter flight (4 seater) with the doors off, organised by Natures-Images over lakes Magadi and Natron. The aerial views over the Magadi soda lake with thousands of pink flamingos below us was breathtaking. We then flew over Lake Natron, a huge alkaline lake. The riverine patterns on the lake shore just felt unreal. Soon our

one hour flight was over and we had to return to camp. This was certainly a once in a lifetime experience.

Also for the first time in several years I have a new talk for Camera Clubs. It's called "Islands - Landscapes and Wildlife from the Arctic to Antarctica" If you'd like more information please contact me via my website www.aneurinphillips.com or mobile 07734798248.