

THE MAMMALS OF TARANGIRE NATIONAL PARK

Tarangire National Park is a very good place for mammal watching. The varied habitat types means the park has a high diversity of mammal species, including some, such as Gerenuk and Lesser kudu, which are not found in other national parks in Tanzania. The number of species you see depends upon the timing of your visit. Tarangire is a migratory park, and during the rains the majority of the large ungulates leave the park, dispersing eastwards to the Simanjiro plains, or northwards towards Lakes Manyara and Natron. When the standing water in these dispersal areas dries up, the large herds of ungulates return to Tarangire and remain there for the duration of the dry season. The best time to see large concentrations of mammals is from July to mid November, with September and October probably being the optimal months. While there are fewer large mammals around in the wet season (December-May), it can still be an interesting time to visit – only then are you likely to see the large breeding herds of several hundred elephants.

Below is a list of the larger mammals of the park, together with a brief description of where they might be seen. For a complete mammal list, inclusive of bats and rodents, see the Tarangire Mammal List below.

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PRIMATES

Small Eared Galago

Otolemur Garnettii

Common in Sangaïwe forest, though its nocturnal habits mean it is seldom seen.

Senegal Bushbaby

Galago Senegalensis

Common in the south of the park - can occasionally be seen at night in the trees around Swala camp.

Olive Baboon

Papio Anubis

Common throughout the north of Park. A large troop can often be seen in the vicinity of the second river loop, where they use the borassus palms as a safe sleeping site.

Yellow Baboon

Papio Cynocephalus

Rare vagrant. There are records of a single male in 1998 and a single female in 1999.

Vervet Monkey

Allenopithecus Nigroviridis

Common throughout the park, and frequently seen at lodges and the picnic site.

CARNIVORES

Black Backed Jackal

Canis Mesomelas

Numbers of this species dropped dramatically in the mid 1990's probably because of a disease outbreak. Since 2000 numbers have rebounded and it is now once again common in Tarangire.

Bat Eared Fox

Otocyon Megalotis

Suffered large disease related decline in 1995. Numbers only started to increase in 2000, and can now be seen in Lemiyon and near Gursi swamp.

Common Genet

Genetta Genetta

Very common in Tarangire. Can be regularly seen at the Tarangire Safari Lodge in the evenings.

Large Spotted Genet

Genetta Tigrina

Uncommon. Has occasionally been seen at the Tarangire Safari Lodge.

Civet

Viverra Civetta

Common in north of park, though nocturnal habits mean it is seldom seen.

Egyptian Mongoose

Herpestes Ichneumon

Uncommon in Tarangire though can occasionally be seen in the open grasslands of Lemiyon.

White Tailed Mongoose

Ichneumia Albicauda

Very common nocturnal mammal, found throughout the park.

Marsh Mongoose

Atilax Paludinosus

Rare in Tarangire – most frequently seen in vicinity of Gursi and Silale swamps.

Banded Mongoose

Mungos Mungo

Common throughout the park.

Slender Mongoose

Herpestes Sanguineus

Common throughout the park. Often seen by Englehardt bridge.

Dwarf Mongoose

Helogale Parvula

Common throughout the park. There is a colony in the car park of the Tarangire Safari Lodge.

- Zorilla**
 Ictonyx Striatus
Rare – there are very few records for this species in Tarangire.

- Honey Badger**
 Mellivora Capensis
Common nocturnal mammal – can often be seen at Tarangire Safari Lodge in the evenings.

- Striped Hyeana**
 Hyeana Hyeana
Uncommon nocturnal animal – more often seen in south of the park.

- Spotted Hyeana**
 Crocuta Crocuta
The density of spotted hyeana in Tarangire is low, possibly because of the high density of lions, and they are seen infrequently during the day.

- Aardwolf**
 Proteles Cristatus
Rare – there are few sightings for the park.

- Wild Dog**
 Lycaon Pictus
Wild dog are resident on village land to the east of Tarangire, and will occasionally move through the park for short periods. Sightings of wild dog are rare in the north, though more frequent in the vicinity of Loiboserit ranger post in the south-east.

- Lion**
 Panthera Leo
Very common throughout the park; often seen along the main Tarangire river and Silale swamp.

- Cheetah**
 Acinonyx Jubatus
Generally uncommon in Tarangire - more often seen in the southern half of the park.

- Leopard**
 Panthera Pardus
Leopards are common in Tarangire and are found throughout the park. The best time to see them is the long dry season from July to mid November, when they can often be found resting in trees along the main river roads.

- Wild cat**
 Felis Libyca
Common though their nocturnal habits mean they are seldom seen.

- Serval**
 Felis Serval
Uncommon in Tarangire– most frequently seen around Silale and Gursi swamps.

- Caracal**
 Felis Caracal
Rare – there are few records for this species in Tarangire.

- ELEPHANT**
Savanna Elephant
 Loxodonta Africana
Abundant throughout park. There are approximately 2500 elephants in Tarangire and their numbers are increasing rapidly. From February to May it is possible to see large breeding herds of up to 500 elephants.

- ODD-TOED UNGULATES**
Burchell's Zebra
 Equus Burchelli
Very common in dry season when they can be seen in large numbers throughout the park.

- Black Rhinoceros**
 Diceros Bicornis
Formerly common, now extinct in Tarangire. Last seen in 1986.

- EVEN-TOED UNGULATES**
African Buffalo
 Syncerus Caffer
Large herds of several hundred buffalo can be seen throughout the park in the dry season.

- Hippopotamus**
 Hippopotamus Amphibious
Rare and not commonly found in the park. Few numbers are often seen near Silale Swamp.

- Warthog**
 Phacochoerus Africanus
Common throughout the park.

- Bushpig**
 Potamochoerus Porcus
Uncommon - only recorded from Sangaiwe hills where their nocturnal habits mean they are rarely seen.

- Masai Giraffe**
 Giraffa Camelopardis Tippelskirchi
Common throughout the park in the Acacia microphyll woodlands.

- Cape Eland**
 Taurotragus Oryx
Small numbers can be seen throughout the park in the dry season. Numbers have fallen sharply in the past decade.

- Greater Kudu**
 Tragelaphus Strepsiceros
Uncommon. Best sighting opportunities are at the southern end of Sangaiwe hills, on the road around Gursi swamp, and on the boundary road leading south to Chubi ranger post.

- Lesser Kudu**
 Tragelaphus Imberbis
Rare in the north of the park, though relatively common south of Kuro. Can occasionally be seen in the lake Burungi area.

- Bushbuck**
 Tragelaphus Scriptorius
Uncommon - disappeared from much of the park in the mid 1990's, though numbers are now increasing. Most often seen in the riverine vegetation west of the Tarangire Safari Lodge.

Fringe Eared Oryx

Oryx Beisa Callotis

Oryx are becoming increasingly uncommon in Tarangire due to over-hunting outside the park. In the dry months they can often be seen in the open plains below Gursi hill, and occasionally in the Lake Burungi area.

Common Waterbuck

Kobus Ellipsiprymnus Ellipsiprymnus

Common particularly around Tarangire Safari Lodge and Kuro ranger post.

Bohor Reedbuck

Redunca Redunca

Commonly seen in the dry season along the Tarangire river and in Silale swamp. There is often a pair in the vicinity of the Englehardt bridge.

Mountain Reedbuck

Redunca Fulvorufula

Vagrant – known only from a few records at Boundary hill in 1994.

Coke's Hartebeest

Alcelaphus Buselaphus Cokii

Common in the dry season.

Blue Wildebeest

Connochaetes Taurinus

Common in the dry season when they return to the park. Large herds can be seen north of the Tarangire Safari Lodge.

Gerenuk

Litocranius Walleri

Previously common around Mkungunero in very south of the park, but numbers appear to have declined greatly in the past 10 years. Can occasionally be seen on the road to Loboiseret ranger post.

Grant's Gazelle

Gazella Granti

Can be seen in small numbers throughout the park.

Impala

Aepyceros Melampus

Common throughout the park at all times of the year.

Thompson's Gazelle

Gazella Thomsoni

Vagrant - only found in very northern tip of Tarangire.

Klipspringer

Oreotragus Oreotragus

Uncommon – can be seen on Tarangire hill and the surrounding rocky outcrops.

Kirks DikDik

Rhynchotragus Kirki

Abundant throughout the park.

Steenbuck

Raphicerus Campestris

Common on ridges and open grassland areas.

Grey Duiker

Sylvicapra Grimmia

Rare - occasionally seen in deciduous vegetation on the ridges.

HYRAX (DASSIE)

Bush Hyrax

Heterohyrax Brucei

Colonies can be found in rocky outcrops throughout park. One large colony can easily be seen on the rocky slope just south of Englehardt bridge.

Southern Tree Hyrax

Dendrohyrax Arboreus

Common in trees along main river and side tributaries. Nocturnal habits means it is more frequently heard than seen.

INSECTIVORES

African Hedgehog

Atelerix Albiventris

Rare - only a few records for the park.

RODENTS

Huet's Bush Squirrel

Paraxerus Ochraceus

Common throughout the park, and often seen around lodges and campsites.

Unstriped Ground Squirrel

Xerus Rutilus

Common in the north of the park.

Crested Porcupine

Hystrix Cristata

Common throughout the park, though nocturnal habits mean it is seldom seen.

HARES & RABBITS

Hare

Lepus Capensis or Lepus Saxatilis

Hares are common throughout Tarangire and can be seen around Tarangire Safari Lodge at night. It is likely that both species co-exist in the park.

Red Rock Rabbit

Pronolagus Rupesstris

Known only from Sangaiwe hills, though possibly occurs on other rocky outcrops in the park.

AARDVARK

Aardvark

Orycteropus Afer

Nocturnal habits means it is very seldom seen. Large number of burrows in south of park means it is probably common in that area.

PANGOLIN

Pangolin

Manis Temminckii

A combination of nocturnal habits and general rarity means this species is very seldom seen.