

PAUL McDUGALL

wildlife photographer  photographic safaris

Lake Nakuru, Samburu, Lake Naivasha 10n/11 days

Accommodation: Hotel / Lodge with A/C rooms

Photo guide: Paul McDougall

Trip Duration: 10 nights and 11 days

Dates: Saturday 2nd to Monday 12th May 2026

Trip Cost: £5500 pp – no single supplement

Private Trip Cost: Available on request

ITINERARY AT GLANCE

Date	Location	Accommodation	Meal Plan	Activity
Day 1 2/5/2025	Nairobi	Weston Hotel	B	TRSF
Day 2 3/5/2025	Samburu	Sopa Lodge	B L D	EG
Day 3 4/5/2025	Samburu	Sopa Lodge	B L D	FG
Day 4 5/5/2025	Samburu	Sopa Lodge	B L D	FG
Day 5 6/5/2025	Samburu	Sopa Lodge	B L D	FG
Day 6 7/5/2025	Samburu	Sopa Lodge	B L D	FG
Day 7 8/5/2025	Samburu	Sopa Lodge	B L D	FG
Day 8 9/5/2025	Lake Nakuru	Sopa Lodge	B L D	MG, EG
Day 9 10/5/2025	Lake Naivasha	Elsamere Conservation Centre	B L D	MG, BT
Day 10 11/5/2025	Nairobi	Weston Hotel	B D	BT, TRSF
Day 11 12/5/2025	Departure			TRSF

B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner, MG - Morning Game Drive, Drive, EG – Evening Game Drive, TRSF –Transfer, FG – Full Day Game Drive, BT – Boat Trip

Please note accommodation may be altered to an equivalent option dependent on availability.

Background

Lake Nakuru

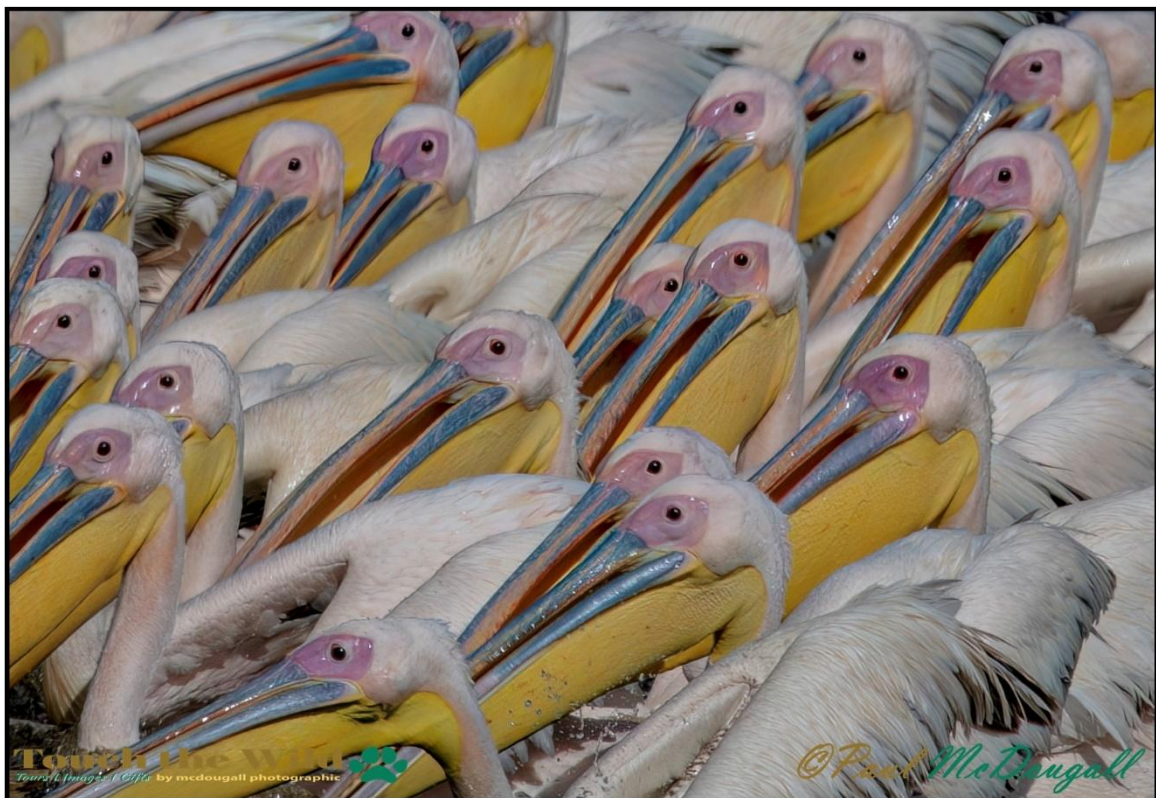
Lake Nakuru National Park (188 km², 73mi²), created in 1961 around Lake Nakuru, near Nakuru Town. It is best known for its thousands of flamingos gathering along the shores. Although the population had declined and disappeared it is now starting to recover. The edge of the shallow lake is often covered in a mass of pink. The number of flamingos on the lake varies with water and food conditions and the best vantage point is from Baboon Cliff.

Also of interest is an area of 188 km around the lake fenced off as a sanctuary to protect Rothschild giraffes, Black rhinos and White rhinos. The park now has more than 25 black rhinoceros, one of the largest concentrations in the country, plus around 70 white rhinos. There are also a number of Rothschild's giraffe, again translocated for safety from western Kenya beginning in 1977.

Waterbuck are very common and both the Kenyan species are found here. Among the predators are lion and leopard, the latter being seen much more frequently in recent times, in fact Lake Nakuru has one of the largest densities of leopards in the whole of Kenya.

The park is also very good for hyenas, they can sometimes be seen hunting flamingos early in the morning along the lake shore. As well as flamingos, there are lots of other bird species that inhabit the lake and the area surrounding it, such as African fish eagle, goliath heron, hamerkop, pied kingfisher and Verreaux eagle.







Samburu National Reserve

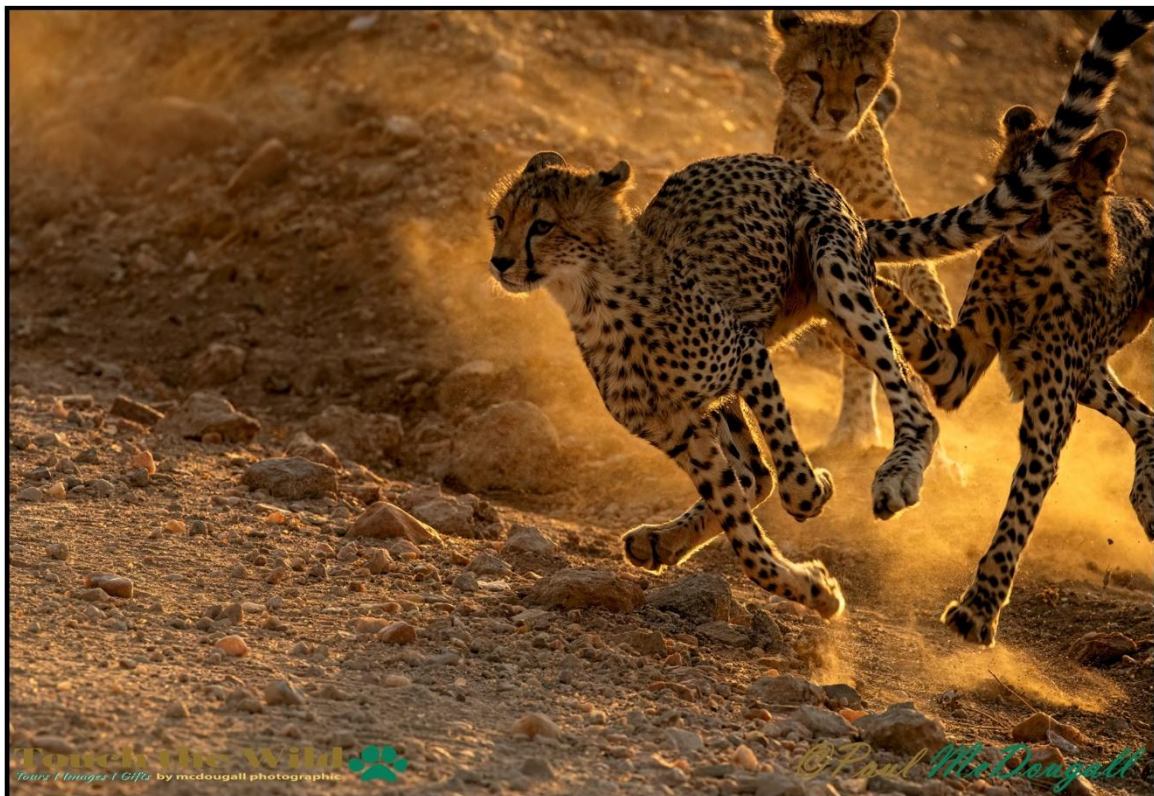
Located on the edge of Kenya's vast, hot and arid northern region, It is a photographers dream with Samburu's rugged scenery, endless skies and vast panoramas creating a powerful and unique backdrop for some of Africa's rarest game and several hundred bird species.

Samburu National Reserve is one of the 56 protected areas in Kenya. It is famous North of the equator because of the richness of flora and fauna found there; it can be reached through Nairobi-Isiolo-Marsabit road and Maralal-Wamba-Isiolo road. Lying on the flood plains and bottom land of Ewaso Ng'iro drainage system in the Great Rift Valley. It rises to an altitude of 2785 ft above sea level and covers an area of 390 km². Samburu National Reserve was established in 1948 as part of the enormous Marsabit National Reserve under the national park ordinance.

The reserve is part of the ancestral territory of the colourful Samburu people, close relatives of the Masai, and is home to a number of species rarely found elsewhere in any number.

Species to be seen include, Grevy's zebra, Reticulated giraffe, Greater and Lesser Kudu, Beisa oryx, and the long-necked gerenuk, a graceful antelope that spends much of its time on its hind legs seeking out succulent leaves in the withered scrub that dots this harsh terrain.

Samburu's dramatic scenery is scorched for most of the year by the relentless equatorial sun, but the wide Ewaso Ngiro River offers some relief. This river rises some hundreds of kms to the west in the foothills of the Aberdares and eventually vanishes beyond Samburu into the recesses of the Lorian Swamp, but is at its wide and dramatic best in the reserve, where you can see large numbers of crocodile on sandbanks at almost every turn. There are also many hippos, and the banks are lined with giant acacias, figs and doum palms, which provide shade and a vital food source to the wildlife that comes to the water. Herds of elephant roam the gaunt hills that punctuate the scrubland, some appear a vibrant red colour after rolling and bathing in the mud and dust.





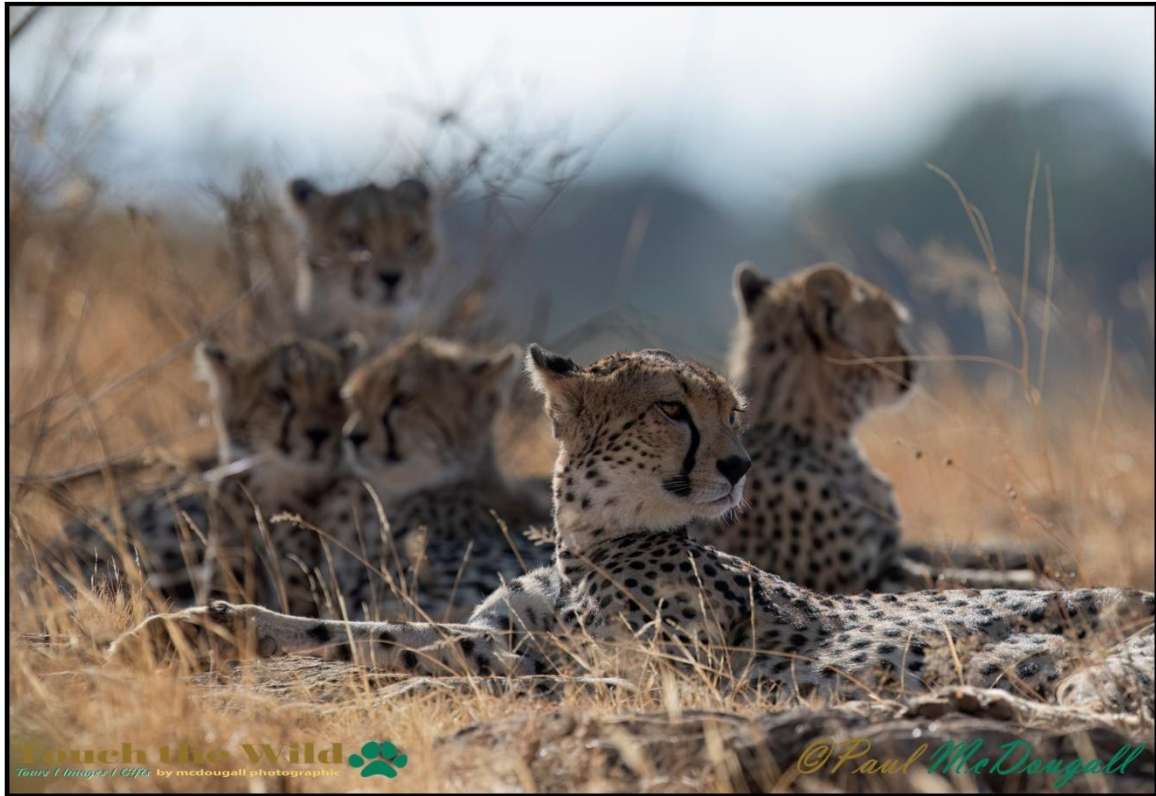


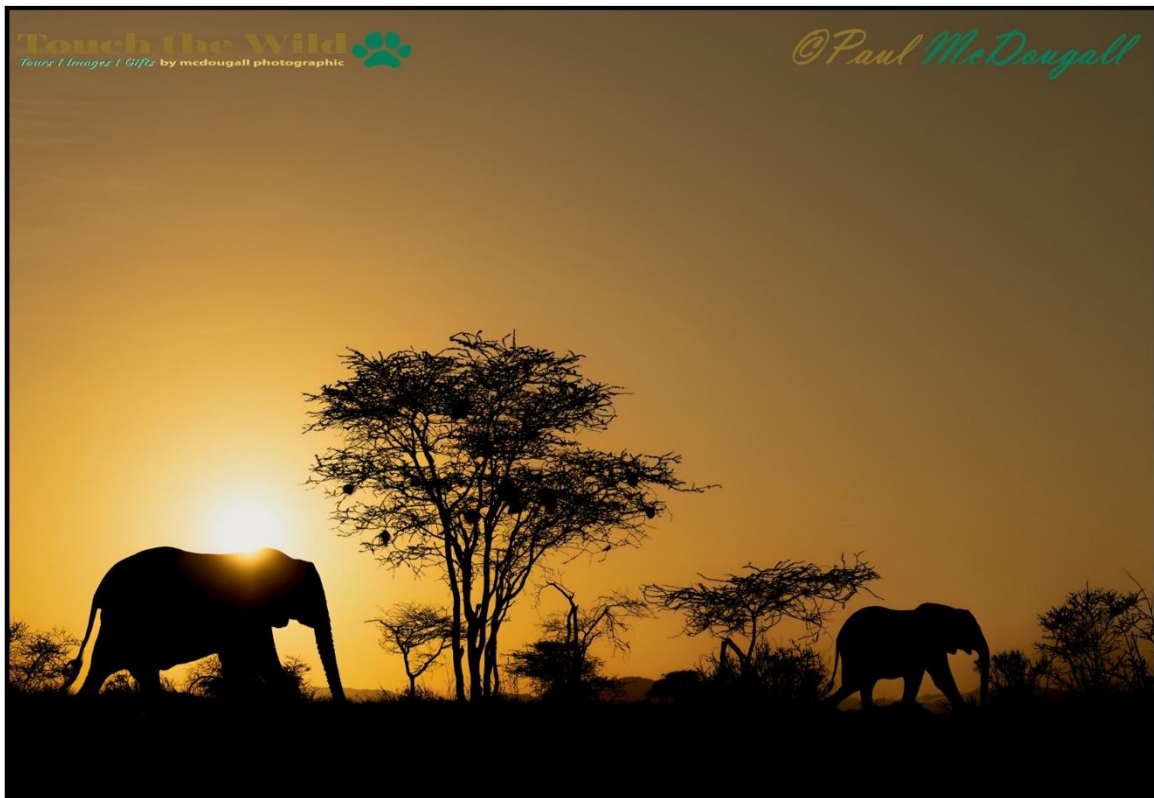










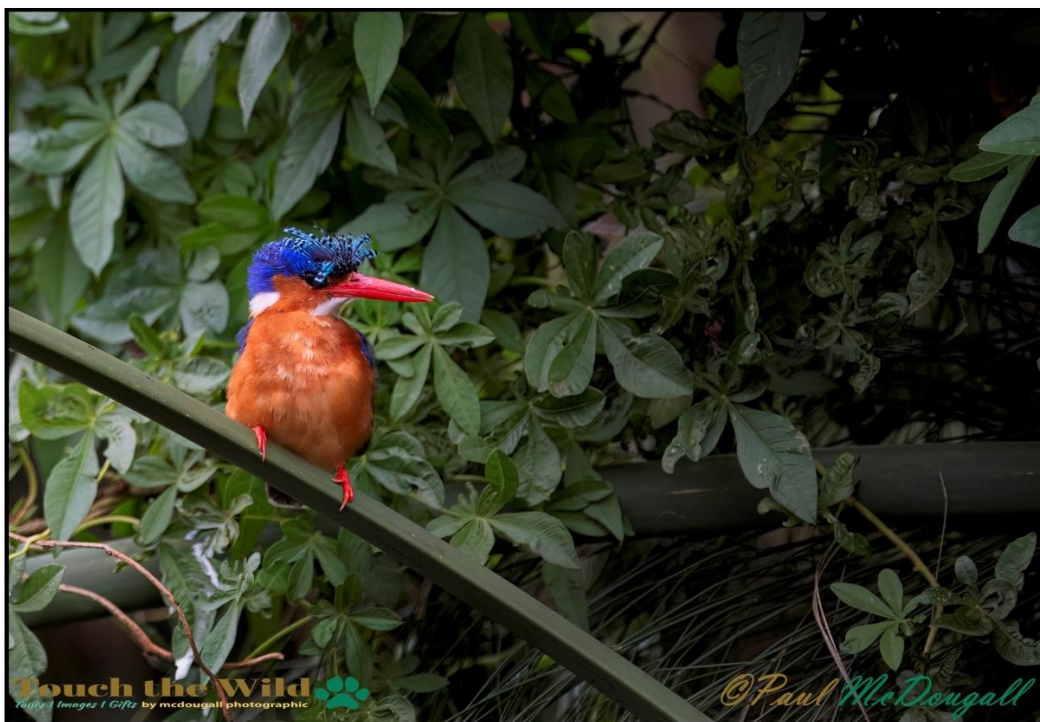


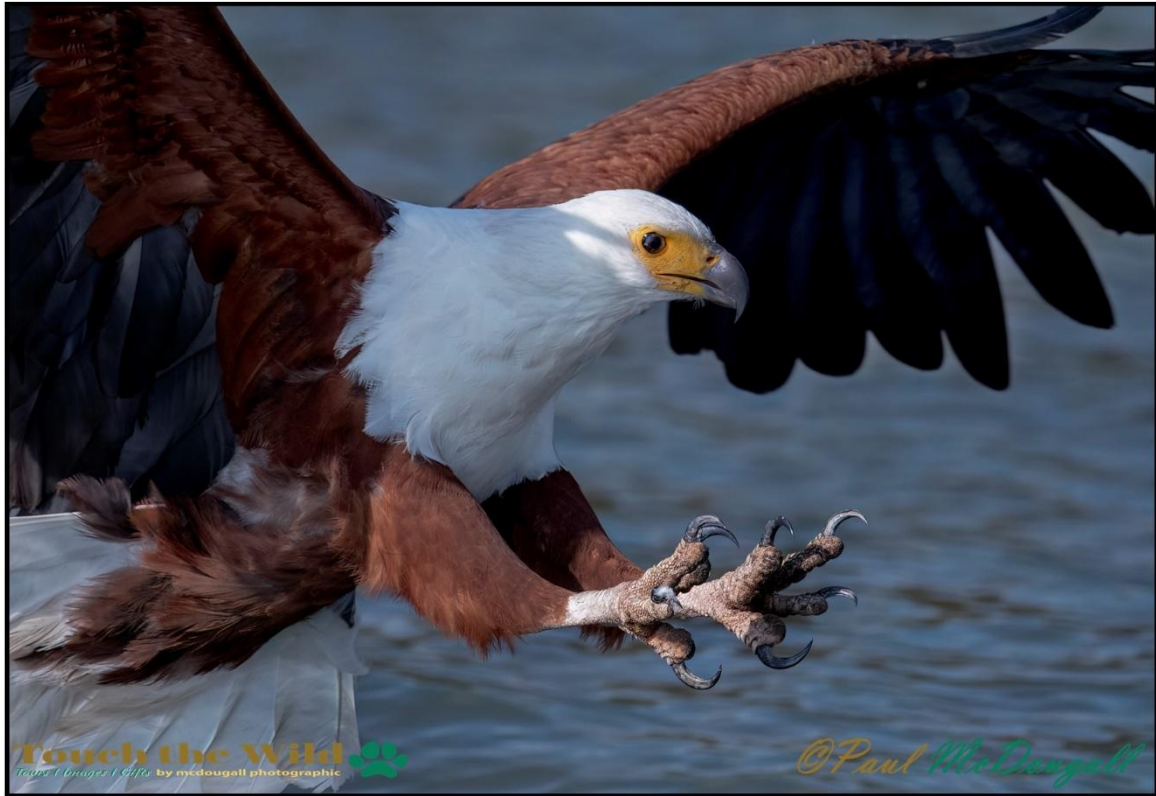
Lake Naivasha

Lake Naivasha is a beautiful freshwater lake, fringed by thick papyrus. The lake is almost 13kms across, but its waters are shallow with an average depth of five metres. Lake area varies greatly according to rainfall, with an average range between 114 and 991 sq kms.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, Naivasha completely dried up and effectively disappeared. The resulting open land was farmed, until heavy rains a few years later caused the lake to return to existence, swallowing up the newly established estates. Afternoon wind and storms can cause the Lake to become suddenly rough and produce high waves. For this reason, the local Maasai christened the lake Nai'posha meaning "rough water", which the British later misspelt as Naivasha. The lake and its surrounds are rich in natural bounty, and the fertile soils and water supply have made this one of Kenya's prime agricultural regions.

Much of the lake is surrounded by forests of the yellow barked Acacia Xanthophlea, known as the yellow fever tree. These forests abound with bird life, and Naivasha is known as a world class birding destination. Highlights include the African Fish Eagle, which you can sometimes see swooping to catch fish, various kingfisher species including Pied and Malachite and various heron species including Goliath and Purple. The waters of the lake draw a great range of wildlife to these shores. Giraffes wander among the acacia, Buffalo wallow in the swamps and Colobus monkeys call from the treetops while the Lakes large hippo population sleep the day out in the shallows. The lucky observer can sometimes see Otter swimming through the reeds.







Itinerary

DAY 1

Pick up from Airport and transfer to Airport Hotel If clients arrive the day before there can be an option to do Nairobi National Park on this day (additional cost).

Dinner and overnight will be an Airport Hotel (TBC)

Day 2

After breakfast we will pack and drive North to Samburu. As we get further North, we will notice a big change in the temperature and the landscape, as we drive past Isiolo we will start to see domesticated camels and possibly wild elephants and other animals on the side of the road. We will have lunch enroute. W acclimatising to the increased temperatures of e will arrive in the afternoon at Samburu. We will do a short drive on our way to the lodge and will hopefully pick up some of the more common birds and the red elephants.

Dinner and overnight at Sopa Lodge

Day 3 – 7

The landscape of Samburu is breathtaking with semi desert and a dry arid landscape that turns green for a short period of time in the rainy season. The Ewaso Ng'iro River separates Samburu from the Buffalo Springs side of the reserve. It is lined with unique Doum Palm trees. The soil is red and dusty and the possibility of capturing red elephants in a breathtaking landscape is one of the iconic Samburu shots we will try to achieve.

Samburu is home to many unique species including:

Somali Ostrich, Gerenuk, Reticulated Giraffe, Grevy's Zebra and Oryx.

It has abundant birdlife including:

Red and Yellow Barbet, Pygmy Falcon, Golden Breasted Starling, White Throated Bee-eater.

It has 4 of the big 5:

Buffalo, Elephant, Lion and is one of the best places in Kenya to see Leopard.

It also has good populations of cheetah and some of the more uncommon species such as Striped Hyena, Wild Dog, Caracal and Bat Eared Fox.

Over the course of the 5 days we will take our time exploring the stunning landscape and looking for the iconic and varied Samburu species.

The usual program will be up early for sunrise. Return to the lodge for breakfast. Then straight out for another game drive. Return to the lodge for lunch. Then back out for an afternoon game drive returning to the lodge at sunset. We will have multiple vehicles so can be flexible with game drives and timings.

Our lodge is in the heart of the reserve on the banks of the Ewaso Ng'iro River and therefore we are never far from the action and where we need to be to capture the best images possible.

Dinner and overnight at Sopa Lodge.

DAY 8

After an early breakfast we will leave for our drive South to Lake Nakuru. We will aim to arrive in the afternoon and will have lunch enroute. Upon entering the park we will focus on the lake shore and look for flamingos and pelicans and capture images of these beautiful birds. We will then take a drive around part of the lake looking for rhinos and buffalo on the lake shore. We will then return to our lodge via the yellow fever forests searching for lions and leopard.

Dinner and overnight will be at Sopa Lodge

Day 9

We will be up early and out for sunrise. We will try to capture images of the many birds that use the lake shore dead trees to perch on. We will also look for interesting backlit images as the sun rises. After the sun has risen, we will do a short game drive and then will return to the lodge for breakfast.

We will drive South to Lake Naivasha aiming to arrive for a late lunch. After we have checked in to Elsamere Conservation Centre we will attempt to photograph the resident group of Colobus Monkeys. These monkeys are fed vegetable peelings and kitchen scraps, and really good images can be captured at a relatively close distance. Late afternoon we will take our first boat trip on Lake Naivasha. We will be searching for the 3 main kingfisher species, The Pied Kingfisher, Giant Kingfisher and Malachite Kingfisher. We will also search for other water birds – herons, cormorants, and storks. The highlight of the trip though is the African Fish Eagle, and we will have a session with these incredible birds where they are fed locally sourced fish and swoop down near to the boat to take them off the surface.

Dinner and Overnight at Elsamere Conservation Centre.

Day 10

After a morning boat trip we will return for breakfast. We will then pack the vehicles and get ready for departure. There will be time available in the morning before departure to have another session with the Colobus Monkeys if desired.

We will then depart Lake Naivasha and Return to Nairobi.

We will have a final trip meal and will share experiences and highlights of the trip.

Dinner and Overnight at Airport Hotel

Day 11 - Departure Day

We will organise Airport Transfers depending on flight times. Anyone departing in the evening can leave their luggage in the hotel and optional excursions can be organised for Nairobi National Park, Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage or the Giraffe Sanctuary (additional cost).

End of Tour

The Price includes:

- 2 nights accommodation in Airport Hotel. Bed and Breakfast.
- 1 nights accommodation in Sopa Lodge. Lake Nakuru. Full Board
- 6 nights accommodation in Sopa Lodge. Samburu. Full Board
- 1 nights accommodation in Elsamere Conservation Centre. Lake Naivasha. Full Board.
- 2 Boat Trips at Lake Naivasha as described
- Transport in 4x4 Landcruiser with pop up roof and large opening windows
- All park fees and government taxes.
- Services of a driver guide throughout.
- Services of photographic guide throughout.
- Airport Transfers.
- No single supplement

The price excludes.

- Any flights
- Tips and Gratuities
- Any drinks other than water.
- Travel Insurance.
- Optional Excursions as described.

To help with budgeting the following are correct to the best of my knowledge:

Samburu Village Visit Samburu NR £50pp

Additional Boat Trip in Lake Naivasha for photography £50pp

Hells Gate NP Lake Naivasha £75pp

Nairobi NP £150pp

Nairobi City Tour £100pp

Camera Gear Needed:

Bridge with wide zoom range, DSLR or Mirrorless.

Wide Angle – Ideal for landscape and wide environmental portraits.

70-200 ideal for landscapes and environmental portraits.

100-400 ideal lens for most wildlife encounters

500-600+ ideal for birds and any wildlife that we need to view from a further distance due to off road constraints.

A zoom lens is ideal for a safari if you don't want to bring more than one body or constantly change lenses.

(Please Note accommodation options detailed above are subject to availability and may be changed).