

Serengeti 2020 (1) by Walt Anderson

In all my world travels, I have found nothing to compare with the amazing Serengeti National Park in Tanzania for wildlife diversity and abundance. I have already shared some images from my January 2020 safari from several wonderful parks (Ngorongoro, Tarangire, Lake Manyara, Mkomazi, and Arusha).

Now I want to share some of the wildlife we saw in the Serengeti. Rather than focusing on one group (e.g., big cats) at a time, I will mix it up with installments showing mammals, birds, landscapes, and more. This is the first set, and it is indicative of the amazing photo and observation opportunities a safari like this can yield.

2020 was a lost year for safaris, but with coronavirus vaccinations happening, we are comfortable heading back to Tanzania late this summer. My early August safari filled (12 people) already, but I have decided to add a second safari with the same itinerary, and if this is on your bucket list, I urge you to sign up quickly, as reservations are already becoming a scarce item at that time. This is surely an opportunity not to miss!

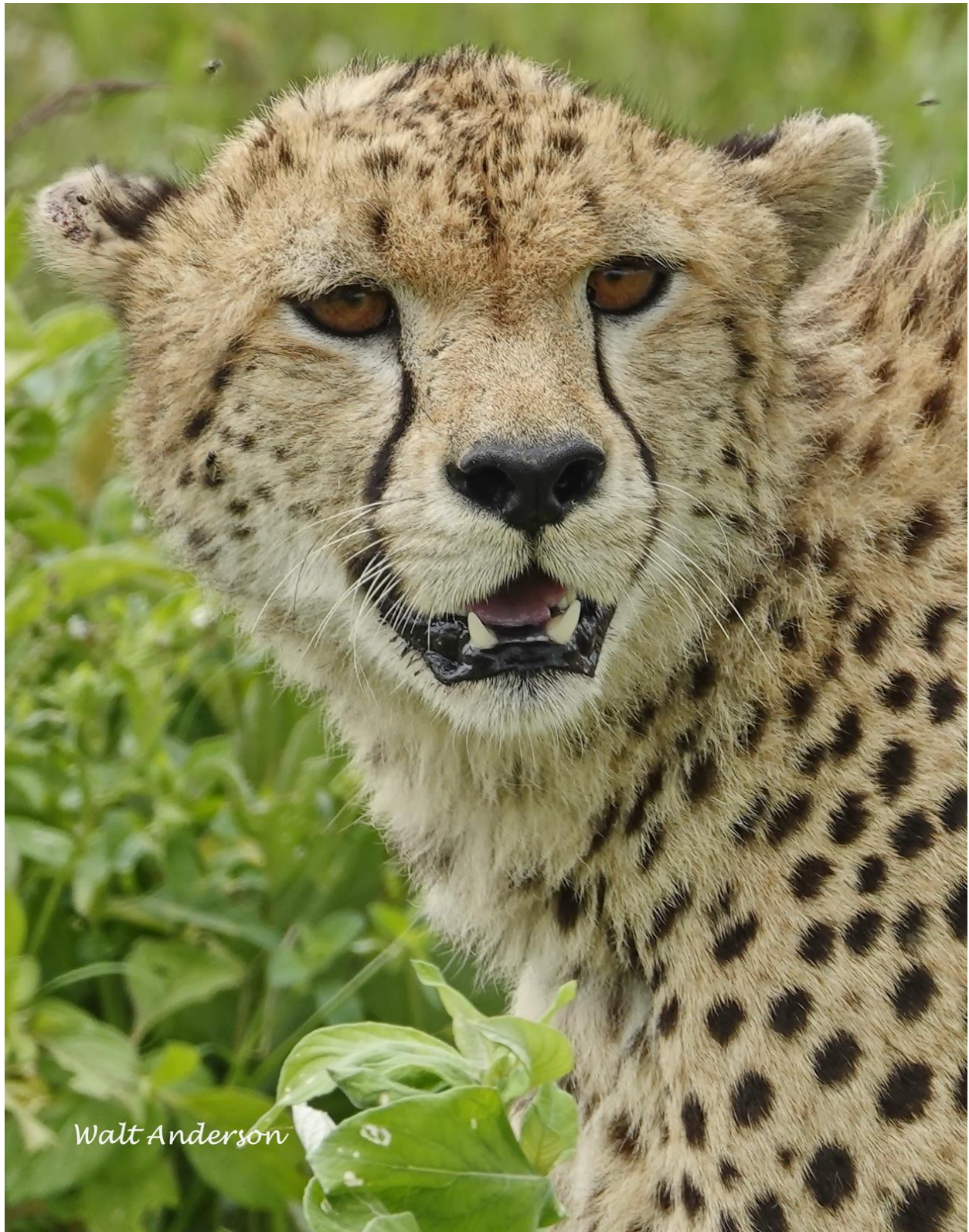
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The Serengeti is “the land of endless space,” as the Maasai word implies. Here the Great Migration of wildebeest, zebras, and gazelles is one of the most amazing natural wildlife phenomena in the world. No photo can do justice to the sight of animals extending from horizon to horizon. It is awesome in the best sense of the word.



This “ombre hairstyle” may not have been the model for the current fashion rage, but it does reflect the carnivorous habits of the King of beasts. Lions are always a highlight of any trip to the Serengeti.



Cheetahs are cats highly modified for speed, and it is such a treat to see them break into a sprint as they pursue a gazelle or hare.



Predators also come in feathered garb. This Tawny Eagle is one of over 50 species of diurnal birds of prey found in the Serengeti.



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The African Hoopoe, source of many human legends, is one of many sensational birds that grace the landscape. It is omnivorous, though invertebrates (beetles, crickets, termites, cicadas, grasshoppers, etc.) are its primary prey. It can raise its crest into a striking fan, and it secretes a foul chemical that may help protect it and its chicks from some predators.



The Lesser Striped Swallow is strictly insectivorous.



Black-lored Babblers are noisy and social. It is touching to watch their mutual preening sessions.



Fischer's Lovebirds are absolutely adorable, with "lovebird" being an appropriate moniker. Can you spot them all?



Antelope diversity is also high in the Serengeti. Here is a curious Coke's Hartebeest, known locally as a Kongoni.



One of the tiniest of the antelopes is the Dikdik. Monogamous pairs are territorial in brushy thickets where they scamper quickly into cover as needed.



The Serengeti National Park is a World Heritage Site, and because of its global importance, richer countries need to help support Tanzania to protect this in the face of never-ending threats of encroachment, roads, poaching, and other pressures that could destroy one of the planet's finest wild areas. Responsible ecotourism as we practice it is one approach that can help.