



KPSGA

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2010

MESSAGE FROM KPSGA

Dear Members,

We are now approaching the end of the year and a busy holiday season just ahead of us. I would like to thank you all for the support you have given the association so far.

We continued administering exams on the set dates, and it was very encouraging to see how many people turned up especially for the bronze exams. The pass rate is still low at the silver level, but we also get many candidates sitting for this on the scheduled dates. We had to administer exams for other candidates i.e. Koiyaki guiding school students and for private safaris on separately set dates. In the coming year, we will be working with KATO Coast to administer exams for candidates at the coast who may not be able to make it to Nairobi. We will announce the dates and venue once everything is in place.

We have done three gold level exams this year, with very encouraging passes. I would like to kindly ask those who are due and want to do the gold level exams to be patient. We will announce the

dates for these in the coming year. Administering a gold level exam requires sufficient logistic regarding accommodation and availability of examiners. This has not been easy since most of the examiners have been on safari at different times, making it difficult to have enough people, to commit three days for the exercise.

This year has sadly been marked with a lot of concern over poor guiding ethics. There were so many complaints especially from Masai Mara during the migration with people crowding the crossing points while others let their guests out of the vehicle during crossings! There were so many images of this posted on Facebook. Now with the social networking that Facebook has created, you can imagine the damage. I would like to appeal to our members to live up to the code of conduct that we all signed. This way, we can only be role models in the industry and help create a

positive image of the



country through professional guiding.

On a different note, Last month, I attended a meeting in Kampala for the heads (chairmen) of the East Africa guides associations. The meeting was called with the aim of forming a federation of East Africa Safari guides Associations with a view to develop guiding standards in East Africa, through professionalism. We are still working on the logistics around the formation of the federation and will let you know of the progress in our subsequent newsletter issues. I was glad when the minister and the director of tourism in Uganda officiated our meeting. I was also surprised to see

very many guides turn up for a nyama choma party after the meeting. They sent me with lots of greetings!

I would like to announce that if any member has an issue of concern or requires any info from me to contact me on my official email address.

Lastly On behalf of the board of directors and the staff, I wish you all a merry christmas and a prosperous 2011.

Paul Kirui
KPSGA Chairman

B U S H M A T T E R S



NIGHT ORDEAL IN THE LOLDAIGA RANCH

Sometimes when I sit quietly on my own, I cannot help but to recall from my memory bank some interesting and adventurous events which have happened to me in the wild as a field-guide. One such event took place in the Loldaiga hills ranch some years ago when we got lost in the depth of acacia woodlands. The ranch is in Laikipia District about 15 kilometers from Nanyuki town to the west of the main road to Isiolo and is about 50,000 sq hectares in size. It is a cattle ranch but also harbors quite a good number of wildlife like elephants, buffaloes, zebras, lions and above all, the beautiful Patas

monkey which spends most of its time on the ground. Part of the ranch to the north is semi-arid with vegetation consisting of acacia nilotica trees and shrubs. The other half is very green with beautiful pencil cedar trees on the hills and valleys and is where the main ranch house is situated.

One day in January 1999, we had driven from Nairobi to Loldaiga in a Landcruiser. There were three of us, Alex Andrews, Mike Harts and myself. We had gone there to find out the possibility of establishing a campsite as well as to explore the area for future walking safaris and other game viewing activities.

B U S H M A T T E R S

We arrived at the ranch late in the afternoon at about half past four and hastily looked for a temporary campsite about two kilometers from the Ranch headquarters on the foot of a hill. After pitching the tents we made fire and started cooking our supper.



From a distance we could hear some elephants trumpeting and breaking down trees as if coming towards our direction but they never came closer. Soon it was dark when we sat down by the fire to eat. The stars were very clear that night and Alex asked me to teach them something about the constellations as we ate. The first constellation that caught my eyes was Orion “the hunter” which is visible from all over the world. I taught them about it and then moved on to the “Seven sisters” of which only six can be seen nowadays because one of them is said to have left home and gotten married in ancient times (according to the Greek mythology). Besides the two constellations we talked of the “big dipper”, the “southern cross” and a few more till we got tired of looking up and mike said in Swahili “tosha, tosha bwana”. It did not occur to us that the stars would become useful for our direction finding the following night.

The following day at about five pm, we decide to visit the Rancher at his house and to fetch some water as well. We had a good time there and did not notice how fast the sun was going down and the

temperature was falling too. When we were about to leave, Robert our host asked if we knew our way back. Mike replied that he was conversant with the area after having been there some few days ago. We left the Ranch house at about seven taking advantage of the very last but quickly fading light of the day. As we had a spot light we decided to do a little night game drive on the way. We saw some good game but after sometime Alex and I started being suspicious and began doubting if Mike really knew the way, because we were taking too long to get home and he also begun driving in circles. Then I just asked him if he was lost. He stopped the car, looked and replied “oh yes I’m a bit lost but eeeehh, I think we should have gone the other way” as he pointed towards another direction. We then changed course immediately and drove on only to get further and further out of the right way home. All the roads started looking the same and we had no idea exactly where our camp was. We tried locating the landmarks that we had seen during the day but ended up driving round and round crazily. This was so frustrating.

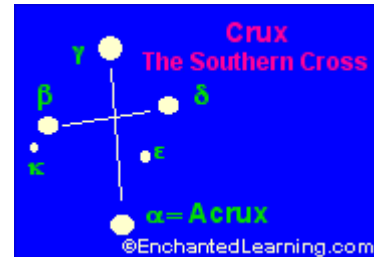
We had not found our camp by nine and we were getting worried with each passing minute. The thought of spending the chilly night inside the vehicle occupied my mind. Then Alex said he could remember the way and we asked him to take over.



B U S H M A T T E R S

He drove on for awhile on a track which suddenly led us to a “manyatta” which seemed deserted but for one corner in which there was a makeshift structure which looked occupied and in which we heard some grumbling noises. We realized that we had disturbed the occupant who was one of the ranch cattle herder and we quickly reversed before he came out.

A few minutes after we left the “manyatta” we got lost “kabisa” and came closer to the edge of the Ranch. We stopped there again to find our bearing and switched off the lights. It was now almost four hours after sunset and very cold. With the lights switched off, the stars became clearly visible from all directions, the constellation Orion was above us at about 30-degree angle, the Southern Cross was also showing. I told Alex and Mike that it was now my turn to try and lead them home using the stars. We looked up in the sky silently .The only sounds we could here were the crickets and some frogs. Then I started talking, “yesterday I taught you some basic astronomy and Orion was right above our campsite at the same angle as it is now, and over there is the southern cross and our camp is north of the Ranch house, so lets find north with the southern cross as our beacon”



We drove towards the south making sure that we didn’t lose the Southern Cross and after a short drive I saw the hill behind our campsite and said “here we are at last”. “What are you saying” Mike asked. I repeated the same words, “we are here at last”. The tents were not visible as we approached and both Alex and Mike thought that I was joking and that we hadn’t arrived home yet. When we stopped the vehicle by the tents, they basically jumped with joy and said “Gordon your trick worked”

Everything was safe when we arrived, the hyenas hadn’t come to scavenge on our food and the “sufurias” and other utensils were in the same positions as we had left them. The first thing that we did was to make fire for cooking and to warm ourselves. I quickly gathered some firewood while Alex washed the dishes and Mike prepared the “Ugali”. When we finally retired to sleep, it was some minutes past midnight and we were all worn out.

Gordon Omondi
KPSGA Silver-Level Member



B U S H M A T T E R S

This is a message to the Chairman and to all Members. What do all of us think about Maasai Mara? I have just come back from this place and again as I wrote sometime back grazing of cattle in this reserve is disgusting. Most of this reserve around Sekenani and Talek are closed to all tourists to allow recovery.



However, this happens ONLY during day time, while at night Hundreds if not thousands of cattle are grazed till morning.

On driving from Tipiriwkani towards Ol Kiombo the first animals we saw with our clients are sheep, goat and cows. Clients ask a lot of questions on seeing all these domestic animals in the reserve. No matter how good a guide we want be, this is letting us down. I am sure we can do something through the ministry and the government is concerned, it is now or never. I suggest that during the next “Be a Better guide” coffee morning we call for somebody from the Ministry, and from KATO who only sell the Mara to tourist to see all above, so that we can talk and maybe find the solution.

Regards to all members.

Zachary Methu
KPSGA Silver-Level Member

W I L D W A Y S

This was on 27th May 2010 on a morning game drive in the Masai Mara when I came accross these two snails crossing the road. I stopped to watch them. We stayed for 30 minutes, and at first we thought they were fighting only to later realise that they were mating. My guests were very happy to see this. Not only the big five but also the small things can make a guest happy. I am interested in both the elephant and the ant!



Vincent Lenkoko Ketuyio
KPSGA Silver-Level Member



B U S H M A T T E R S



WHAT I HATE AS A GUIDE

1. Pilots who will never apologise whenever they fly in late to pick or drop-off guests. To them the word 'apology' does not exist in their language!
2. "**When all the animals have gone for holiday to the beach**" and you drive for along time with no game to show your guests.
3. Guests who repeatedly come late for game-drives and yet they do not have exclusive use of the vehicle forcing others to wait.
4. Guests who bore others with non-stop conversations at dinner table and they want the attention of everybody.
5. Guests who are prejudiced.
6. Questions at the start of game-drives like, "what are we going to see" or "which animals are you gonna show us?", as if the game is static! Even if they were, you always want to use the "**surprise element**" (not telling the guests of the animals you are about to see).

Gordon Omondi
KPSGA Silver-Level Member

E X A M D A T E S F O R 2 0 1 1

BRONZE-LEVEL:

26 th January	23 rd February	30 th March	27 th April
25 th May	29 th June	27 th July	31 st August
28 th September	26 th October	30 th November	

SILVER-LEVEL:

17th February

21st April

19th May

22nd September

24th November

[Please note that you can still pay your annual subscriptions via **m-pesa**]

Season's Greetings



The KPSGA office would like to wish you all a wonderful holiday season with family, friends & loved ones. May the season be filled with laughter, love & peace to last all through the new year!

*Best wishes,
Tanwira*

