



MIGRATIONS

K. Ostovar ©

THOUGHTS AND REFLECTIONS FROM THE AFRICAN BUSH & BEYOND

Dear Friends and Fellow Travelers,

I apologise for my long silence – time keeps getting away from me. There has been so much going on in this past year or two that I have been out of touch.

On the business front, as many of you already know, Kayhan decided to move on to pursue other interests. We had worked together for several years both in the business and in our Mara conservation project and I wish him well. As he was the artistic talent behind the newsletters, you will have noticed their absence. I apologise as I know many of you enjoy receiving them. I now have the pleasure of welcoming Mary Zrubek back to Montana – Mary worked with me about ten years ago so she has come full circle. She has a lifetime of experience in the travel and safari industry, having worked for several of the “big name” companies. She will bring her strengths to our company. Daughter Farley is doing a magnificent job in organizing trips for our friends and clients to many different destinations. I continue to be involved in every aspect of the business as well as my Masai Maara conservation project. We organised some wonderfully diverse safaris this past year and were happy to welcome many family groups to East Africa, including a multi-generational family of 20.

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The Matriarch of this family celebrated her 82nd birthday galloping horseback across the plains of the Masai Mara and ended the day with a phenom-

enal sunset celebration on top of a hill overlooking the vast expanse of the Mara.

Anne and Farley in Northern Kenya



In August, I had the privilege of accompanying 15 amazing ladies who call themselves the Global Grannies. A more energetic, enthusiastic group would be hard to find! Earlier in the year, I accompanied great friends from Connecticut, a family of 4, on a Tanzanian safari, where we were able to witness the wildebeest migration which was in full force in Southern Serengeti. We also had the opportunity to “hunt and gather” with a small community of Hadza Bushmen, who live near Lake Eyasi in the highlands of Northern Tanzania. I loved sharing these experiences, and others, with this family – the young people’s lives will be changed forever and Africa will always be in their blood.

We organised a very successful trip to Spain for friends of ours, (yet another multi-generational family of 18). In July we welcomed a group of old, and new, friends from Los Angeles to our first Western tour of the United States – including visits to the Black Hills, Yellowstone Park and Jackson Hole. Come travel with us in our backyard.

We had several other families traveling with us both to Africa and other parts of the world. Of particular mention for journeys outside East Africa, were trips to Egypt and China for our friends/clients who came back with rave reviews.

Last year we spent Christmas with Marett and Farley on an incredible island off the Kenya Coast called Lamu where we stayed at the delightful Peponi Hotel, in Shela Village. Lamu is truly a paradise with its endless white beaches - a perfect way to end the perfect safari. This year I think we will be staying home which does not sound like nearly as much fun!

I want to take this opportunity to wish each and everyone of you a festive and happy Holiday Season. I leave for Kenya in early January. Mary and Farley will be in the office should you want us to help with travel plans for 2005.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter. Please let us know of any change in contact information and e-mail address at explore@aktaylor.com. Thank you.

With warm regards,

Anne Kent Taylor

SOME OF OUR FAVOURITE PLACES TO VISIT

Antarctica: Jan. - March. Icebergs, glaciers, penguin colonies, albatross leopard seals and whales. One of the most pristine wilderness areas on earth. Long sunny days and terrific whale watching opportunities.

Australia: Summer season Dec. - Feb., Winter season July - Aug. April. - Oct. Optimum time to visit Great Barrier Reef. Year round destination, Opera in Sydney, aborigine museum, beaches, outback and forests

Botswana: July - Sept. Canoeing in the Okavango Delta, Chobe River - large elephant herds, walking with elephants on private sanctuary bordering Moremi. Huge diversity of animal and birdlife - large lion prides, wild dog and leopard.

China: The USA spring and fall are best. The Great Wall, Yangtze River, Xian with terra cotta warriors.

Egypt: Dec. - April is coolest. Nile cruise, pyramids and tombs; El Khalili Bazaar in Cairo. A voyage back to antiquity.

Gabon: Weather is best in July – Sept. Whales, elephants on beach, hippos in sea, lowland gorillas – virgin tropical forests see article on Page 5

Galapagos: Dec. – May. Water is warmer for snorkeling or diving. June to Dec. Dry season and water is cooler. Land and marine iguanas, tortoises. Mix of polar and tropical species from penguins and fur seals to flamingos and tropical fish.

India: Nov. - Feb. and April - Sept. for the Himalayas. Nov. Pushkar camel fair. Palaces, game reserves with tigers, rhinos and other endemic species; culturally interesting, colourful and diverse.

Kenya: Jan. - March warmest season; July - Oct. Migration (1.5 + million animals) in Masai Mara (river crossings with crocodiles); Nov. - Dec. short rainy season, lovely and green. Ultimate safari destination - wonderful tribes, animals, and active safari options, beautiful beaches, horseback, walking and camel safaris, private game ranches – exclusivity.

Namibia: July - Oct. Skeleton Coast – fascinating wild country; desert elephants, seal colonies, “painted desert”, hardy plants/animals/people in desert environment; huge sand dunes, amazing colours, photographers’ dream. July- Sept. Etosha for rhino, large elephant herds and endemic species – black faced impala and Damara dikdik.

Seychelles: Oct. - May Warm season/water. Romantic escape; beaches; diving; exceptional bonefishing. March – May and Sept. - Nov. best season for diving. April - Oct. best time for birdwatching; Oct. - April best time for fishing.

South Africa: A world in one country. Luxury lodges in private Game Reserves plus Garden Route. Aug. - Sep., Feb.- March. Cape Town; Winelands, world famous Kirstenbosh Gardens; July - Oct. Whales at Hermanus/Walker Bay.

Tanzania: Jan. - April, Serengeti, Ngorongoro Crater, Lake Manyara, Migration on Serengeti plains. June - Oct. game-viewing in Tarangire. June - Sept. Southern Tanzania (Ruaha, Selous, and Mahale) less travelled and chimps.

Uganda: Jan.- March, June - Oct. Churchill’s description “Pearl of Africa”; Impenetrable Forest, Gorilla stalking, primates; Queen Elizabeth Park – the Nile. Incredible bird diversity – rare species. Anne and Farley will be visiting in March.

United States: The Western States June – Oct. Yellowstone Park, “Dude” ranches, riding, fishing, wildlife viewing, American Indian culture and history; battlefields; Mt. Rushmore – the Badlands. Great family trip.

Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Laos: Nov. - March. A trip through these four countries is culturally rewarding.

Altruism in Elephants?

Article by Kayhan Ostovar


Many people believe that altruism is nonexistent in the animal world and only exhibited by humans. An observation that I made in the Masai Mara while working on the Anne K. Taylor Fund may be the first documentation of this behavior in elephants. The full account with other photographs will be published in the winter edition of Swara magazine. The behavior occurred between two elephants, one with the tip of his trunk recently cut off by a wire snare. From the field observations and examination of my series of photographs by elephant expert Joyce Poole it appears that the injured elephant approaches the healthy adult male in a greeting posture. The healthy male seems a bit startled but then approaches the injured elephant with a seedling in his mouth. Finally the injured elephant is seen eating the seedling passed from the healthy male.



Kayhan Ostovar ©

This rare observation raises the question whether elephants can exhibit truly altruistic behavior. On a first look it appears that there may be other explanations and levels of altruism attributed to animals as not truly “real altruism” to account for the behavior. The photos document that the two individuals involved are adult males and therefore not members of a permanent social group, which most likely rules out Reciprocal Altruism (described as “you scratch my back I will scratch yours”). While

we can't be positive, there is a high probability that these elephants are not related due to their physical appearance. The injured male on the right is most likely of mountain elephant descent (note the small ears ending at chin level and the sloping forehead), while the male on the left is of savanna/plains descent (note the larger ears and forehead). This would rule out Kin Selection (described as altruistic acts

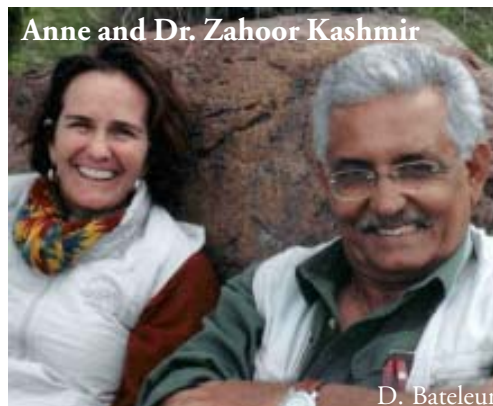
towards family relatives for family genes) as another explanation for their behavior. Scientists often attribute most apparently altruistic acts to the “selfishness” of genes (Kin Selection) or delayed self interest (Reciprocal Altruism). Even most human behavior can be explained by extrinsic or intrinsic rewards or other benefits. In conclusion it appears that the behavior observed may indeed be a good example of “real altruism”. 

London Event Supports Vet and More Animal Rescues

In September last year a friend and supporter, Christian del Valle together with Friends of Conservation in London, threw a fund-raising party, “White Mischief” for the project which was great fun and raised a lot of support for our work. I am most grateful to them for the hard work that went into organizing this event and also am grateful for the generosity of all those who donated auction items and of course to all who came to partake in the festivities – many of whom were friends of mine from many years ago. It was a wonderful reunion! AKTF is “going global”!

Much of the funding from this event went towards purchasing veterinarian drugs for Dr. Zahoor Kashmir who is so generous in volunteering his time, resources and energy to help take care of injured animals in the Mara. He is now


an integral part of the project and if we are able to raise the funds we hope to have a permanent veterinarian based in the Mara, with a mobile clinic, to help both the wildlife and the local community's livestock. Currently “Kashmiri” has to travel from Mombasa or the Kenya Wildlife



D. Bateleur

Service vets have to come from Nairobi, whenever we receive word of an injured animal. This means a long delay between a reported animal injury and the arrival of the

vet. In many cases the animal has disappeared before they arrive. However, we have done many rescues this year, including removing a snare from a badly injured young elephant's leg and a spear all the way through the leg of a babyelephant. We also doctored a cheetah mother and four cubs as they had bad mange. That was indeed a challenge – putting all five animals to sleep so that they would wake up at the same time. We took care of a large male lion who had chewed his toe off trying to remove a snare. The foot was badly infected but he is doing much better now. We also took care of another lion who had a bad gash over his eye.

We are seeking support to start a vet clinic in the Masai Mara. If anyone is interested in helping support this project please let us know. 



COMMUNITY BASED CONSERVATION

When spider webs unite they can tie up a lion - Ethiopian Proverb


I am so grateful to all of our supporters. I particularly want to thank the individuals who donate several thousand dollars each year to keep this project going, along with the support of Care for the Wild, UK and Kenya, who supported the majority of our patrols in 2004, the Johnson Family Foundation, Grace Jones Richardson Trust, American Foundation, WildiZe Foundation from Aspen, Friends of Conservation in England, USA and Kenya for their logistical support, the Denver Chapter of APTA, Born Free Foundation for the use of their vehicle at a reduced rate, Abercrombie and Kent for allowing us the use of a vehicle at reduced rates and the camps in the Mara who offer their logistical support – particularly Kichwa Tembo, Olonana, Governors’ Camp, Little Governor’s Camp and Serena. Our thanks go to Lori Bergemann of Amara and Eli Weiss of WildiZe Foundation, who covered a huge amount of territory in the Mara showing conservation films to several hundred members of the local communities. Many thanks to Derek Fehmers who donated many videos to be shown to the communities. It was especially fun to be able to have Jim Johnson of the Johnson Family Foundation in attendance during our cheetah rescue operation.



D. Bateleur ©

Cheetah rescue for bad mange.

I also want to recognize our team from the local Masai community, along with our team leader James Evanson and his assistant Peter Kamau from Nairobi. They are a brave and committed team and have removed literally thousands of wire snares since we started our desnaring patrols five years ago.

For detailed information about our accomplishments and goals for the upcoming year please see our annual report which will be posted on our website after the New Year at www.aktaylor.com - see Anne K. Taylor Fund. 

During the last year we have accomplished great things. Between February and September our team collected 629 snares from their patrols in the bush around the Masai Mara, sighted 91 animals with human induced injuries, found 49 animals that had been killed by poachers and assisted with 10 different animal rescues which included baby elephants, teenage elephants, a buffalo, two lions, a family of cheetahs and a giraffe. School children continued to be interested in actively participating in our project. Children from Mararianta, Olkaya and Emurototo Primary schools were some of the most active. Other community members have also become active and support our work, including community scouts and herdsmen. Word is spreading. We have now supplied additional textbooks and sports equipment to 13 schools.

An exciting addition to the project is that I have now figured out what to do with the thousands of snares I had stored in my garage in Nairobi – I am working with world-renowned Kenyan artist, Kioko Mwitiki, who is making beautiful small wire sculptures of all of our favourite animals. This is recycling with a flare! They cost \$50.00 each, which goes back to the conservation work we are doing in the Masai Mara. Please give us a call if you would like to order one or more (406) 656-0706.



D. Bateleur ©



Gabon - A New Destination in Africa



We have recently been included in an exciting new venture to promote GABON, a relatively unknown destination in West Africa. This country has been much in the news due to their President having the foresight to dedicate a large portion of its land to Reserves in order to protect its animals – currently 11%, with more being considered. Gabon has the largest intact rain forest block in Africa, political stability, compara-

tive wealth and a tiny human population (1.2 million) mostly in the capital. As a result it's a place with few people and lots of lowland gorillas, forest elephants, chimps, hornbills, sitatunga, etc. Its wild Atlantic beaches extend for hundreds of kilometers a la Robinson Crusoe where the only footprints besides one's own are elephants, hippos, and signs of giant leatherback turtles laying the night before....and a whale migration for months just offshore. The spectacle and photos of hippos in the surf are a bit mindboggling, yet true.

We would love to explore this area, so if anyone is interested in doing an exploratory trip with us, please let us know and we can put together a small group of adventurous souls in 2005, probably some time in the summer/fall. I have been in touch with Mike Fay, who has been largely responsible for bringing this beautiful country to the forefront of the news due to his mega transect walk across West Africa, which was covered by National Geographic. He would welcome our guests if he is available and in-country. He is passionate about this country – he must have been to do that incredibly difficult trek through the jungles. It was quite an adventure, to say the least!



Farley's Travels in Egypt

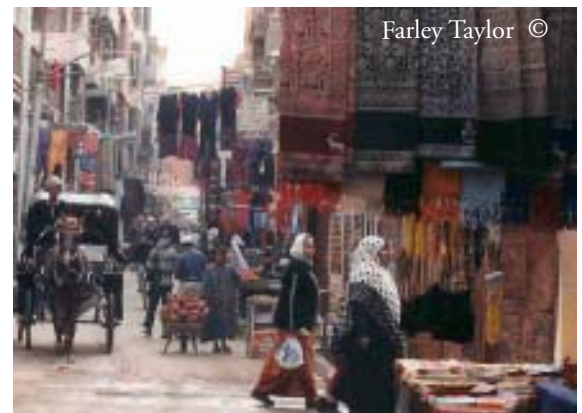
I recently had the opportunity to explore Egypt with my sister Marett. I embarked on this journey armed only with the usual thoughts of pyramids, tombs, pharaohs, and mummies. I quickly discovered how short-sighted my thinking was!

Our first morning in the bustling city of Cairo was spent with our private Egyptologist who drove us to the Pyramids of Giza where the pyramids literally rose up from the edge of the city buildings. We went from being inside one of the oldest structures in the world to the El Khalili Bazaar, which is perhaps one of the most energizing places I have ever been. The vibrant colors of Kilim rugs, gold plates, bejeweled lanterns, ornate perfume bottles, and alabaster mementos all being sold in narrow winding

alleys was almost overwhelming. Bartering is the universal language here which is enjoyed and expected. We ended the day in a little outdoor café in the middle of the Bazaar and enjoyed a *shisha* pipe while hearing the calls for prayer at a nearby mosque and watching people of every age and color pass by. It was perhaps one of the most memorable and truly exotic days I have ever experienced – I felt as though I was in another world.

The unexpected surprise of the trip was our boat cruise down the Nile. It was the ideal way to see the country and get a sense of life outside the

cities. We began in Aswan and ended in Luxor and made numerous stops at important sites each day. I left Egypt armed with more than simple thoughts of mummies and cartouches. Egypt touched me in ways that I was not expecting and I hope that some of you will have the opportunity to experience the same.



Farley Taylor ©