

A. K. Taylor International – July 2008 Newsletter



Masai Mara Aerial View

Dear Friends and Fellow Travellers,

As many of you are already aware, I was in Kenya for several months and have only recently returned to Montana.

I want, first of all, to thank so many of you for keeping Kenya, the Kenyans and me(!) in your thoughts during our post-election violence in Kenya earlier this year - and the months which followed. I received many messages from friends around the world, worried about my safety and the situation in my country. Thank you all.

For those of you who might want an update about those tragic few months I wanted to let you know how it was to be there. I never once felt threatened even though the news reports were indeed very frightening. I spent most of my time in one of the IDP (Internally Displaced People) refugee camps where we were feeding between 850-3500 people for three months.



Anne at the IDP Camp



Anne with supplies for the IDP's

I want to thank the many individuals, who sent generous donations to me through my non-profit organization, Anne K. Taylor Fund (501c3), during this time which allowed me to provide food, water and other necessities for these IDP's as they had lost everything. It was a desperate situation - people unloaded like cattle from trucks...the crisis affected everyone from old women to young babies (some newborn in the camps) who were living in the camps. It was a very emotional time to see people in this position - stripped of pride, belongings, home and yet still being gracious and grateful for the assistance. With help from so many of you who knew of what I was doing, I was able to relocate all the families who remained in the camp to start their lives afresh and I wish them well. I regret that as I was so "flat out" I could not be in touch with all of you to keep you abreast of information as it happened at the time. I let the IDP's know of the help I was receiving from the USA and they asked me to pass on their thanks to each of you.

We are all thankful that, after intense negotiations, the power sharing agreement was signed on February 27, 2008 by President Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga to form a coalition Government. The agreement has been widely accepted by Kenyans and the security situation throughout the country has since remained calm and peaceful.

I am confident that Kenya is now on her way to her former position as one of the most stable and successful countries in Africa. With the new Government in effect, now is the time to consider visiting Kenya once again or perhaps visit for the first time - you will not be disappointed. Even at the height of our "troubles" I travelled throughout the country from the game reserves to our beautiful East African coast and never felt any threat or danger as mentioned earlier.

Thankfully the bookings throughout Kenya are now almost back to normal and the country is back from the brink.



Masai Children



Anne with Oloisboisoto Parents and Community
Photo by Paul Benson

The majority of Kenyans are, by nature, the warmest and most welcoming people whom I have ever encountered in my travels throughout Africa – and indeed the world. They did not deserve what happened and I know they are thankful that it is now behind them.

THE AWE-INSPIRING WILDEBEEST MIGRATION IN KENYA'S MASAI MARA OR TANZANIA'S SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK:



For those of you who are thinking about a safari to Kenya or Tanzania, this year is a perfect time to travel. In July, August, September, or even October, the great wildebeest migration should still be in Kenya's famed Masai Mara. In the Serengeti, the migration is usually in evidence from January through March, moving up towards Kenya in June. In April and May it is generally wet and hard to get around. It is a magnificent

sight and should be on everyone's 'must see list'. Imagine vast grass plains dotted with wildebeest and other plains game as far as the eye can see as well as the ever-present predators who view this spectacle as a moving buffet line never a dull moment in nature's constant game of survival!

PRIVATE HOMES IN THE BUSH:

As many of you know from your past safaris, we often like to use private 'Bush Homes', which are situated on large ranches, or Conservancies, that in many cases adjoin the game reserves. These properties are hosted by friends/colleagues whom we have known for many years. They are all extremely knowledgeable and professional with a sincere love and understanding of their particular piece of Kenya. As these properties are located on private land outside the parks, game viewing can be done in traditional safari vehicles or you may be able to venture out on a guided walk which is extremely exciting as all your senses are heightened while on equal footing with the animals around you. In some places, you may also ride horses or camels a unique way to see the beautiful terrain that Kenya has to offer.



Wild Dog Photo by Shawn Catterall

Whilst at **Oi Malo** this year, a "Bush Home" which belongs to my good friends Colin and Rocky Francombe, **we were extremely fortunate to see a pack of wild dog** hunting successfully in the valley in front of the lodge. This was amazing as wild dogs are only now starting to be seen at all having almost been wiped out. We watched them all afternoon from the comfort of our verandahs.

Several of these properties are situated on Masai or Samburu lands where our friends, the owners, have an excellent relationship with these local nomadic tribes and often share joint community projects such as women's beading, conservation, health, and education which you can learn about during your stay. This is a great way to be exposed to the current issues facing Kenyans today.

On a personal note, when I am in Kenya I try to meet as many of our guests as possible when visiting the Mara so that I can also share my Anne K. Taylor Fund Masai community conservation project – we visit schools, I introduce my Masai de-snaring team and guests join us where possible as we go about our business. My Masai friends really enjoy the visits with our guests and I think it is mutual, from the feedback I receive. A quick game of football with soccer balls that we take to them (you should see the children's eyes light up!) – delivering text books to children who have not even had access to a pencil; installing a water tank in a school and so on.....it is a multi faceted project and I am fortunate to have such great support from so many of you.



Anne with school children

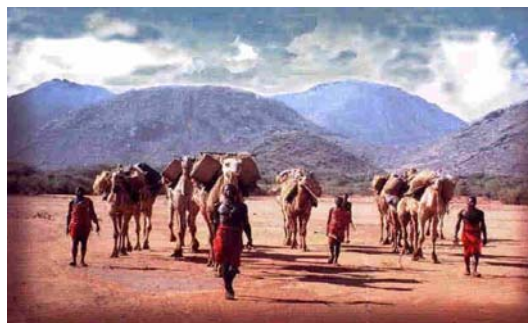


Anne delivering text books

Photos by Sandee O.

GORILLA TREKKING IN RWANDA OR UGANDA, WALKING IN ZAMBIA AND CAMEL ASSISTED WALKING SAFARIS IN NORTHERN KENYA

If you are interested in a more adventurous safari, a camel-assisted walk in Northern Kenya is also an amazing way to experience Kenya. You walk through wild country, as the traditional nomads have done for centuries. As one walks, the Samburu nomads sing to their camels – and to us! You sleep in small netted tents under the stars where you can fully appreciate the myriad of stars in our Kenya heavens. It is certainly better than any planetarium – our skies are beyond compare!



Camel Trek

While we are on the topic of ‘must sees’ a remote walking safari in Zambia, or gorilla viewing in either Uganda or Rwanda, remain favorite experiences of ours. There are no words to describe the feeling of sitting within just a few feet of these gentle creatures as they go about their daily routine. The likeness of gorillas to us is amazing, especially the babies in the group. Their curious and mischievous personalities are similar to their young human counterparts! **A brand new camp in Rwanda, owned by friends of mine, has just opened up in Rwanda** – a great addition as there has not been any suitable place to stay for quite some time. **The base for gorilla trekking in Uganda is a delightful tented camp with wonderful staff.** It is situated right on the edge of the impenetrable forest and sometimes the gorillas come into the camp– so you do not even have to “work” to see them! They are truly gentle giants and take my breath away.



Mountain Gorilla

ADVENTURE IN ZAMBIA

Visiting this country with its delightful, small and personal camps is a must for those of you who would like an off-the-beaten-track experience. It proves to be a perennial favourite with all the guests whom we send there. The game viewing is excellent with few other visitors around. When Farley and I were recently there, we saw many leopards during the daytime which we were able to sit and watch for several hours at a time. The walking is terrific and exciting – as your armed and well-trained tracker takes you through the bush perhaps with elephants watching you with interest! One can also do walking safaris moving from place to place and watching the wildlife as they come to drink from the Luangwa River or the numerous oxbows.



Walking in Zambia



Elephants in the Luangwa River

A PRIVATE JET TRIP “AFRICA”: DESERT KINGDOMS AND NATURAL SPLENDOR” – DATES FEBRUARY 14-MARCH 9, 2009

I also wanted to mention a unique trip that may appeal to some of you and would be an experience of a lifetime. **A private jet trip "Africa: Desert Kingdoms & Natural Splendor"**. The private jet accommodates only 50 passengers in VIP seats onboard a Boeing 757-200 ER Aircraft. It is Africa rediscovered visiting Ethiopia, Tanzania, Mauritius, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mali and Morocco. Most of the guides on this adventure are old friends of mine who are an absolute joy to travel with and their personalities are just as great as the knowledge they have about the places you will visit.



Please call or email us for further details – Mary at 406 294 9430 or mary@aktaylor.com or Janice at Janice@aktaylor.com . We will be happy to forward a brochure to you for in depth information on this exceptional departure. It fills up fast so do call soon if it sounds appealing! If you are interested, we will give you the full advantage of our personal service and knowledge of these destinations. Regrettably, I will not be available to speak to you about this trip as I will be on safari in Kenya for the next several months.

We hope that you will think of us for your upcoming travel plans not only to Kenya but to other African countries and destinations worldwide. Farley recently returned from a fascinating trip in Russia and highly recommends a visit to this burgeoning country. We plan to send out future emails on recent trips we have done in an effort to whet your appetite and excite you about the world you are living in!

We have sent, and continue to send, our guests all over the globe where we have personal knowledge and/or excellent operators. Recently we have sent our guests to Antarctica, India, Egypt, China, South America, Galapagos, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Botswana, Namibia (the Skeleton Coast is amazing!) South Africa, Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda (gorillas and chimps are a must-see!), Rwanda (gorilla trekking) and, of course, Kenya where we offer a variety of experiences – traditional safaris, luxury camping, camel treks, horseback safaris and many other adventures.

We generally have personal experience in most of the destinations which we recommend to you, our friends and guests, which enables us to design itineraries perfectly suited to your personal needs. We have an excellent working relationship with lodge owners and operators with whom we are in almost daily contact. This allows us to hear about special events first hand and immediately.

Should you want any assistance with travel plans, we would be delighted to work with you in designing an itinerary with your needs in mind. Between us we have many years of experience in the travel business and we have personally travelled to most of the destinations which we handle. This helps tremendously to ensure the smooth operation of a trip.

We look forward to helping you put together a memorable travel experience in the near future. Please call Farley in Chicago at: 312 440 9830 (farley@aktaylor.com); Mary, in Montana, 406 294 9430 (mary@aktaylor.com) or Janice (janice@aktaylor.com). We would love to assist you. I will be in Kenya so it would be difficult to contact me but I communicate regularly with both offices whilst I am away.

Thank you again to all of you who have been in touch with us and who have kept Kenya in your thoughts. I am returning to Kenya next week as BBC Big Cat Live has requested to film my (Anne K. Taylor Fund) project in the Masai Mara, which is very exciting. (While on the subject of filming, Josh Bernstein the host of "Into the Unknown with Josh Bernstein" on Discovery Channel joined myself and my team in the Mara in March. They filmed our patrols and conservation activities. This is apparently to be aired in September 2008. We will try to keep you posted and I hope some of you may see it – (I will be on safari again so will miss it!). I hope that with this international exposure it will bring positive attention to the Masai Mara which is truly one of the great natural wonders of the world".

I hope I will be able to be back in touch with everyone again before too long. In the meantime Farley, Mary, Janice and I send you our warmest greetings and we hope you all have an enjoyable and fun summer. Please let us know if you no longer want to receive these rather sporadic e-newsletters. Thank you.



Lions in Long Grass by Shawn Catterall



Two week old Elephant by Shawn Catterall

Warmest Regards,

Anne Kent Taylor

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