

# A WILDERNESS *exclusively for you*

In a groundbreaking partnership with international conservationists, a ranch has been created that represents the future of ecotourism...

If you are looking for your own private wilderness, a place unspoiled by a procession of safari vehicles, it may be closer than you think. There is no signpost leading to Manyara Ranch Conservancy. A small weathered house on a hill marks the unassuming dirt road leading to the 35,000 acres of stunning animal-studded landscapes.

At first, it's hard to believe that such a place exists only an hour from Arusha. Away from the common safari itinerary and roadside curio shops, Manyara opens up a fresh opportunity to experience Tanzania's amazing ecosystem on a completely exclusive basis.

There is only one small, tented camp on the Conservancy – meaning you have private access to tens of thousands of acres of your own wilderness area. On a typical safari itinerary elsewhere, you are literally queuing to see a lion kill or elephants playing in the mud.

Here, you are alone with the animals. You can go on bush walks, experience the area on horseback, go fly camping, watch animals from a hide or head out for one of the best night drive experiences in the country. It is an exceptional safari experience and nothing like what is available elsewhere.

What is also great about Manyara Ranch is that its operators are environmentally conscious and community minded. In a first for Tanzania, Manyara Ranch is operating in partnership with the Maasai communities through the Tanzanian Land Conservation Trust (TLCT) and the African Wildlife Foundation, after the area was acquired by the TLCT in response to the potential threat of privatisation for commercial farming in 1998.

Neither a national park nor a game reserve, the ranch is situated in a large conservation area in the middle of the crucial Kwakuchinja wildlife corridor, which connects Lake Natron, Ngorongoro and Manyara to the Tarangire ecosystem and the Maasailand to the south.

Once an area devastated by poaching and destructive farming practices, ten years on, and despite many challenges, the TLCT has produced several positive results including: preventing cultivation and the fencing off of the Manyara Ranch area (both of which would have formed barriers to wildlife) extensive and progressive community cooperation, improved security of the corridor and consequently an increase in wildlife numbers. Improved services

for communities include a new school and support for community livestock activities.

To help sustain Manyara Ranch, a tourism development programme was initiated which now offers facilities for visitors to experience the wildlife and culture in and around this vital wilderness area.

There are several large dams on the ranch that attract and retain the wildlife within the conservancy area. These include groups of large bull elephants, breeding herds of giraffe, many lesser kudu, wildebeest, zebra, gazelle, oryx and eland. There are also predators, such as lion, cheetah, leopard, hyena, jackal and bat-eared foxes. For many years, wild dogs have denned on the ranch. There is also a large number of species of birds including many raptors on the ranch.

The camp offers a luxurious and private East African-style tented accommodation. It has all the modern comforts such as a spacious double bed, en suite bathroom, hot showers and a flushing toilet. Each tent also has a private viewing deck allowing guests to enjoy their morning cup of coffee with a panoramic view onto the surrounding plains. The guest lounge is a spacious tent, thoughtfully designed for those lazy afternoon or pre-dinner drinks. At the end of your game drive, enjoy some delectable bush cuisine, with warm and hospitable service in a romantic bush setting.



## MANYARA RANCH CONSERVANCY – UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL



Our safari begins at the ecosystem of the 'mini Serengeti' made up of long golden grass and open plains, scattered with grazing wildebeest and elephants in the distance. Hidden among the trees are an abundance of giraffe and zebras accompanied by an unusual amount of young.

We soon reach a river lined with old fig trees purging their glorious long roots to its bed. We take the time to walk through the dried up river, only to spot a few elephant footprints. With anticipation increasing, we continue on. Fifteen minutes later the thrill begins as we sight at least five elephants lazily

grazing among the acacia trees. Patiently and quietly we approach the elephants constantly maintaining a safe distance. What starts out as a somewhat nervous experience, turns into one of the most exhilarating things I've done to date.

However, what completes our safari is being able to experience the remarkable comeback of this area, which today delivers on all levels, if not more, when compared to some of the more famous Tanzanian National Parks."



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## Manyara: conserving our future

Protected areas such as national parks are important for wildlife, but if the land surrounding them is not properly conserved, they risk becoming isolated and unviable for the animals. Lake Manyara National Park and Tarangire National Park are 40km apart. About ten years ago, the migration route that connects them, known as the Kwakuchinja corridor, began to disappear. Habitat fragmentation and degradation such as this have become the greatest threats to conservation in northern Tanzania.

To address these threats, the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) helped establish the Tanzania Land Conservation Trust (TLCT). TLCT is a non-profit institution whose main goal is to acquire critical wildlife areas threatened by private development. TLCT manages these lands to protect the needs of pastoral communities as well as to preserve the integrity of these areas for wildlife conservation. In April 2001, Manyara Ranch became the first property acquired by TLCT.

The ranch offers exciting conservation outreach potential for showcasing how communities can benefit from wildlife conservation, and serves as a laboratory to study habitat degradation and human-wildlife conflicts.

Today, Manyara Ranch successfully manages cattle in conservation-friendly ways, and rangers patrol the ranch, monitoring wildlife and warding off poachers. With the help of the Annenberg Foundation and others, a pre-existing boarding school for Maasai children was moved out of the wildlife's way, and relocated to an ultramodern facility.

But, most important of all, a huge portion of the Kwakuchinja corridor is secured for the future.

**For more information about the AWF visit <http://awf.org>**



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