



Press Release

For Immediate Release

September 23, 2019

## HKU organises East Africa Wildlife Eco-Tour to promote nature conservation



To celebrate its Oak Anniversary, a knowledge exchange East Africa Wildlife Eco-Tour was co-presented by Faculty of Science, The University of Hong Kong (HKU) and HKU Foundation in July 2019. 15 students from the Faculty had taken the role as eco-leaders and paired up with 17 HKU alumni and HKU Foundation Members in this wildlife Eco-Tour. Led by Dr Billy Hau from the School of Biological Sciences, participants had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness the Great Migration in Kenya, as well as breathtaking views of Mount Kilimanjaro in Amboseli and more. Apart from pure admiration of the fascinating nature, the Eco-Tour also aimed at bringing out the important message of nature conservation. An exhibition about the Eco-Tour will be held in HKU campus, showcasing the stunning scenery and the wonder of nature.

The 13-day Eco-Tour brought participants away from urban city life and led them to the world of gorgeous nature. Participants saw more than 330 species of birds, 60 species of mammals and 15 species of reptiles and amphibians; they witnessed large herd of elephants up close at Amboseli National Park, or simply relaxed in the balcony near the Mount Kenya National Park, overlooking the well-lit waterhole and saltlick as the animals went to drink water. During the Eco-Tour, participants immersed themselves in the wonderful scenery and plenty of biodiversity at Samburu Game Reserve, Maasai Mara National Reserve, Ol



Pejeta Conservancy, Lake Naivasha and Lake Nakuru National Park. HKU Science students were the eco-leaders and personal eco-guides of alumni and HKU Foundation Members who supported the students' participation in this meaningful learning journey.

The students were selected based on rigorous screening and had underwent six-month Eco-leader Training Programme before the Eco-Tour. The expert guide of the Eco-Tour, Dr Billy Hau, a terrestrial ecologist and conservationist, initiated the idea of student eco-leaders, committing to cultivating new generations of dedicated, professional and pragmatic young conservationists for Hong Kong and the world. Dr Hau elaborated that “the key to realise this was to nurture young students' love of nature by providing them with immersive experiential learning opportunities in global biodiversity hotspots and educate them on the spot”.

Indeed, it was a truly inspirational experience for student eco-leaders to not just witness the amazing nature, but to be inspired to re-think the relationship between human and nature, and even the impact of eco-tourism on wildlife animals. Many were motivated to pursue this academic field and vow to conserve nature after the tour. “I am glad to see the alumni and Foundation Members enjoying nature and willing to learn more about wildlife. I hope to use my knowledge to conserve nature, let people know more about our beautiful planet and care about it, this is also a great motivation for me to continue to pursue Biology” said Mr David Chan (MPhil Year 1 student). Another student Ms Jade Lam (MSc Year 1 student) also expressed that “humans are not the master of nature; we should pay our respects and be humble to nature and all animals.”

Apart from nurturing future conservationists, the Eco-Tour was organised to raise awareness of participants in conserving biodiversity. The trip is merely a spark to lighten up their motivation to make a difference, helping them to understand how our daily actions impact the environment; it is hoped that they could share their experience and insights obtained from this Eco-Tour with families and friends, and together we can create impact and save our environment. 1970 Science alumni Mr John Cheng was happy to accomplish the objectives such as witnessing the African Big Five, and the Great Migration of thousands of wildebeests crossing the Mara River. With the passionate student eco-leaders and the guidebook, Mr Cheng learnt much more about the wildlife when he saw them.

HKU members and the general public can now view the beautiful scenery and precious captures in this Eco-Tour via photographs taken by the student eco-leaders, who were also trained for wildlife photography. Details of the exhibition are as follows:

Display period: September 24 to October 4, 2019

Venue: Foyer of Chi Wah Learning Commons, Centennial Campus, The University of Hong Kong

All are welcome to come and appreciate the beauty of nature and biodiversity.

For media enquiry, please contact Ms Naussica Lau, External Relations Officer of Faculty of Science (tel: (852) 3917-7897; email: [nauslau3@hku.hk](mailto:nauslau3@hku.hk)).

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Serval is a secretive small wild cat species in Africa. It has been extremely lucky to encounter this species in our eco-tour.

By Jackson Lau



By Sze Wing Yiu



By Wai Lun Tse

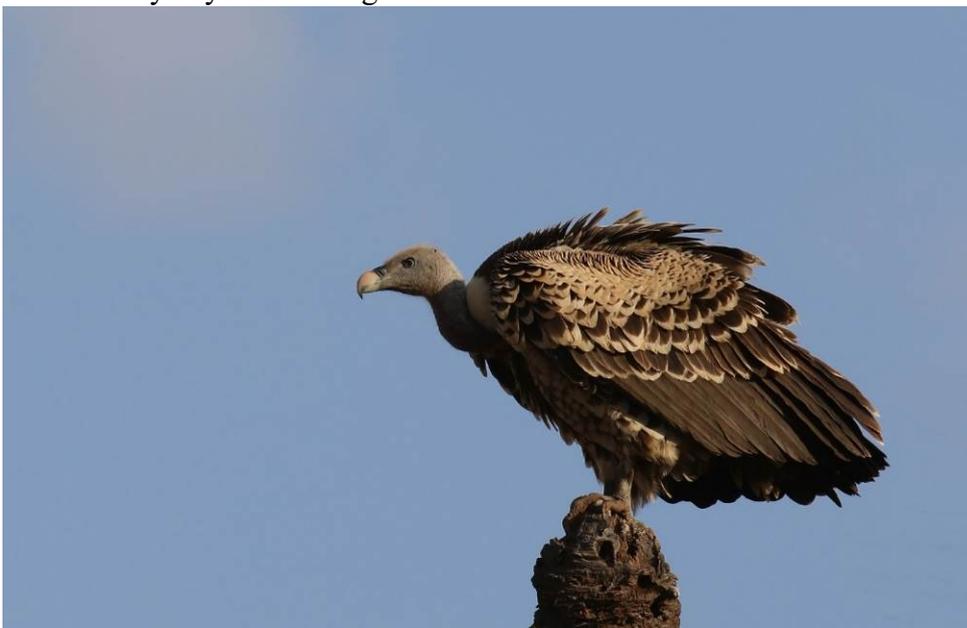
The Great Migration in action: Thousands of Blue Wildebeests crossing the Mara River



Amboseli by Matthew Cheng



Mount Kenya by Jamie Fung



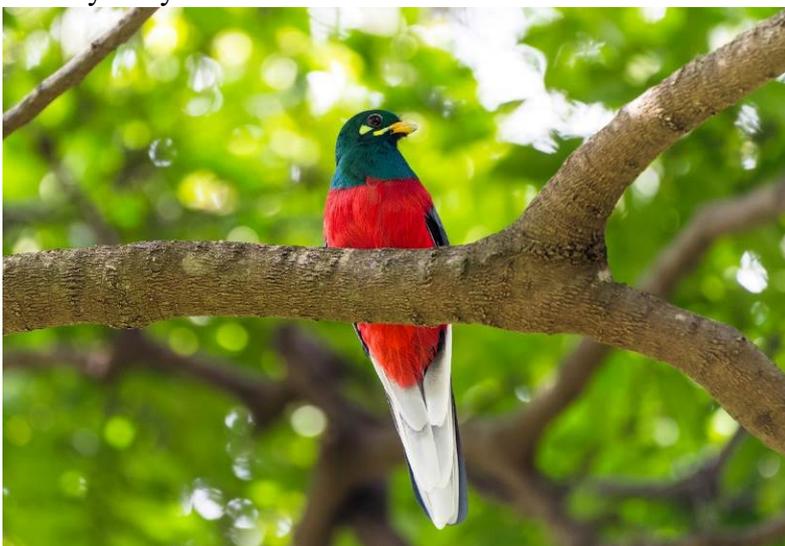
Ruppell's Griffon Vulture by Billy Hau



Spotted Hyena by Billy Hau



Lion by Billy Hau



Narina Trogon by Kenneth Lam



Lake Nakuru by Sherry Tse



Sun rise in Kenya by Billy Hau