

## Our 70 day trip through Namibia, Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania 29 May to 6 Aug 2011

### Part 2

#### Day 23-25, 20-22 June 2011

Cool Runnings to Fat Monkeys, Cape McClear, S14.02379 E34.84140, 164 km, Accommodation: 2 x Mkw1000pppn and chalet 1xMkw 8500 = Mkw 12 500 Seeing that we could get some petrol, we decided we will go down to Cape McClear for a few days. We refueled again at Salima, exchanged dollars at the bank and bought some groceries at the shop. Our next stop was Toys R' Us just before Cape McClear. These guys can do wonders with a piece of wood and I bought a Land Cruiser for R250 and a digger-loader for R150, whilst Philna ordered a Prado. The guy just took a good look at the Prado and said that he will have it ready 3 days time.

We were told before that you could only buy with Mkw at the stalls, but everywhere they accepted Rands, dollars and Mkw.

We could refuel again at Cape McClear, but they had no diesel.

Everywhere you look in Malawi there are people on bicycles, the preferred mode of transport. We even saw bicycle-taxis in some of the bigger places. We decided to camp at Fat Monkeys and I think it was a very good choice. The ablutions are very good (they even burn doom coils in the showers and toilets), very nice stand with electricity under a big tree a few meters from the lake, lodging also available and of course a good restaurant with bar next to the lake.

The sunsets are just magnificent!

We did not swim in the lake as there was a settlement a few hundred meters from the camp and we could see the locals do their washing and also wash themselves in the lake and bilharzia could be a real problem here.

At a stall next to the camp I bought myself a nice piece of material and had a Madiba shirt made...I thought I looked quite spiff in the shirt... ☺

A guy from Holland arrived on a motorbike, and then 3 guys from South Africa also on bikes with a Land Cruiser as support vehicle. We joined them that evening and a few "takbökkies" were consumed.....

Our last night we decided that we want to stay in one of the chalets for a change.

And of course the electricity went off quite a few times, but we did not mind at all...we were relaxing at a lovely place for 3 days.....

Fat Monkeys is to be recommended, very nice setting and friendly staff, nice bar and restaurant...and did I say beautiful sunsets?  
We could also take quite a few photos of lovely birds...

My Toys R Us Bokwa



Philna's Toys R Us Prado



Sunset at Fat Monkeys



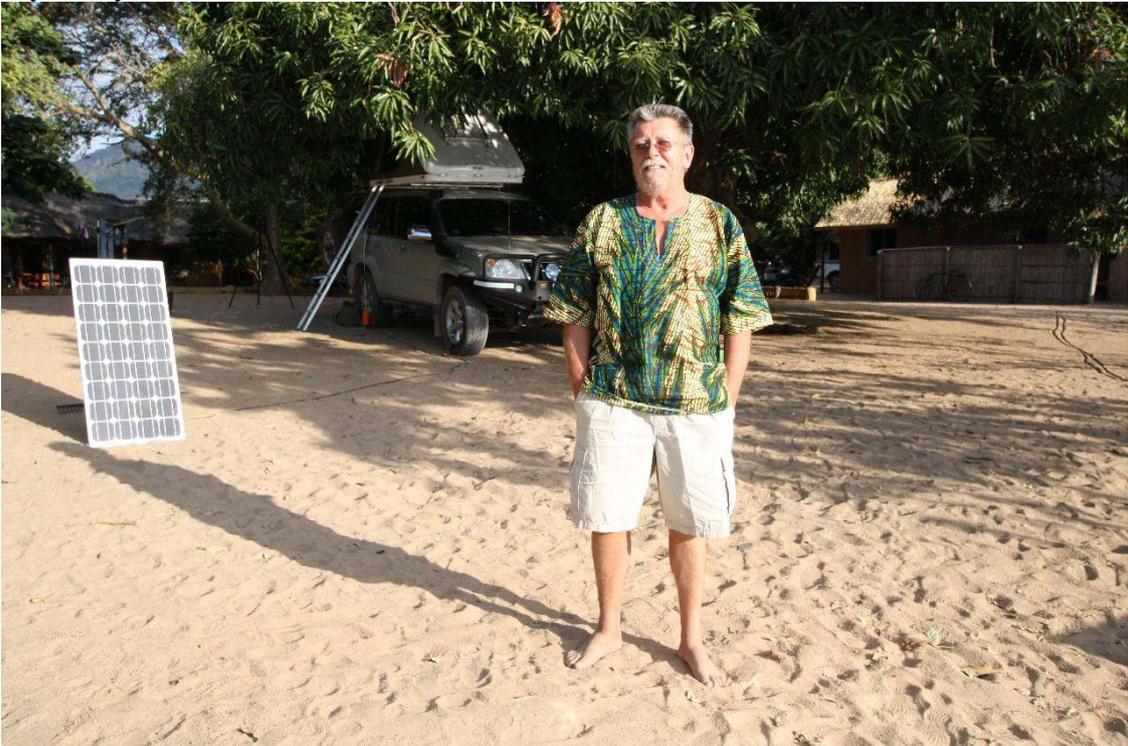
Bohms Bee-Eater



Blue Waxbills



My newly made shirt





The bikers from SA



African Fish-eagle



Just another sunset.



### Day 26, 23 June 2011

Fat Monkeys to Bua River Camp in Nkhotakota wildlife reserve, S12.83399 E34.16306, 303 km, Accommodation: 1 x Mkw1500ppn = Mkw 3000 Mkw 1800 entrance fee

The next day it was back the same way we came, after stopping of course at Toys R' Us to collect Philna's Prado...also a wooden masterpiece.

Some garages were dry but we could again refuel at Salima.

From Salima north, the road gets very narrow at times and there are many narrow single lane bridges over the rivers, definitely not to be travelled at night.

We stopped at Nkhotakota bay pottery to buy some wooden gifts for the children.

We turned of the main road for Bua River Camp at S12.85365 E34.25030 but when we left we discovered that the turn-off is actually here..

S12.83853 E34.23702 as you have to drive through the Wildlife Reserve gates and pay an extra 1800Mkw.

The facilities at Bua River Camp is very basic, no electricity and no drinking water, but a lodge with bar and food.

The campsite has an elevated wooden platform where you can relax.

They also offer guided walks in the reserve.

Bua River Camp



### Day 27-29, 24-26 June 2011

Bua River Camp to Makuzi Beach Lodge, Chintheche, S11.91885 E34.17788, 143 km, Accommodation: 3 x \$10p site pn = \$30

We took the road through the reserve gate and back onto the M5 north along the lake.

As said before, the road is very narrow with many single lane bridges. At Dwanga we refueled again, and from there the road to Makuzi is a lot better. We turned off before Chintheche to Makuzi Beach lodge which Philna has described to me as beautiful....and oh boy was it! Definitely the highlight of my visit to Malawi!

The lodge and camping is run by Richard and Lauren from RSA, good ablutions, grassed site, electricity, lodging, bar and restaurant with excellent food....and a beautiful Mauritius like beach!

No day visitors....

We immediately decided to stay for 3 nights...who can go wrong at that price and that surroundings... ☺

We swam in the clear water, relaxed in the bar overlooking the lake, went for a long hike, saw plenty birds....and just relaxed ....pure bliss...

Richard told us to be at the beach at a certain spot at 5pm as the African Green Pigeons come to this tree at that time and then fly away again.....and lo and behold...exactly on time they were there...

One night we had dinner at the restaurant and the steak was so perfect we ordered some rump and fillet to be picked up at the butcher in The People's Market in Mzuzu.

Makuzi Beach



Makuzi Sunrise



Amethyst Sunbird-female





Purple Crested Turaco



Makuzi Beach Campsite



African Green-Pigeon



### **Days 30-31, 27-28 June 2011**

Makuzi to Chelinda camp, Nyika national park, S10.58498 E33.79927, 368 km, Accommodation: 2 x \$10pppn = \$40, Parkfees:\$5pppn+\$2vehp/n=\$24

The road towards Nkhota Bay is very twisty and passes through a rubber plantation. At Nkhota bay we turned west towards Mzuzu, picked up the meat we ordered and did some shopping at The People's market. Also met some overlanders from South Africa who were very short on diesel....big problem.

The road towards Mzuzu feels like a mountain pass with potholes everywhere and we also passed a speed trap..luckily we were on holiday.....no fast driving... We encountered quite a few police road blocks in Malawi, but had no problem at any one of them.

We turned west towards Rumphu and then the bad gravel road to Nyika National Park began...bad...big potholes with terrible corrugations...110 km took us 4 hours ☹

From the park gate to Chelinda camp the road was not any better... Luckily the camp is in a pine forest and there was a lot of firewood, the camp caretaker just kept putting pine logs on the fire, I think we went through 2 pine trees every night! But at 2600m above sea level we needed that fire every morning and evening.....very cold at night with frost in the morning.

The ablutions were good, hot water, grass stands, no electricity, drinking water available and we had a nice big lapa.

The landscape is beautiful and resembles the Scottish Highlands, we did not see the many leopards we were told about but saw many birds, roan antelope, Oryx and the most beautiful Acacia Tirtilis trees...

On the morning that we were going to leave for our next destination the fog was very thick and the grass white with frost.

Rubber tree



Chelinda Camp, Nyika NP



Roan Antelope



Wing-snapping Cisticola



Nyika Plains landscape



One cold morning



Acacia Tortilis



### **Days 32-33, 29-30 June 2011**

Nyika park to Ngara campsite on lake, S10.21218 E34.09445, 331 km,

Accommodation: 2 x \$2pppn = \$8

We left the gate at 10h30 and the 110km back to Rumphu took again 4 hours...and I doubt it if they will ever fix this road....and then north on the twisting M1 again.

Karonga was the last town before you leave Malawi, and of course it was packed with bicycles...like Angola has their motorbikes, Malawi has it's bicycles...and of course bananas...

We decided to spend our last Mkw and buy a some groceries and some Kuche Kuche....their very nice local beer...

Our plan was to camp at Mufwa lodge in Karonga, but when we reached the place we just turned around.....definitely not recommended!

So now we had to drive back about 40km to Ngara, again through 2 police checkpoints.

We drove past 2 camps on way back, but as it was getting late we thought we could not waste time now, rather go to Ngara where Philna knew there was a camp that could be used as an emergency stop.

The "Ngara Resort" was really a run-down place, no electricity, no water in the ablutions and toilets, but luckily the very friendly guy in charge allowed us to use the only unoccupied chalet for our washing and toilet needs.

Only problem was that the geyser in that specific chalet was not connected yet! So he made us big buckets of hot water in the kitchen and carried it to the chalet, all with a big smile.....Hakuna Matata...no problem in Africa...

At least there was a bar as well as restaurant with very friendly staff and quite a few friendly locals visiting....

As it was late and we had some washing to do, we decided that we will stay 2 nights.....but because of the ablutions or lack thereof, this is definitely not a place to camp, only use this place as an overnight stop if really desperate.

Unfortunately we had no choice.....

Next day we did some washing and a lot of bird watching! There were only a few trees but a lot of different bird species.

We had a nice braai that evening and were of to bed....tomorrow there was a border crossing looming again...

Sunrise Ngara



Dusky Indigobirds-Male & Female



Blue Waxbill



Ngara Campsite



Cut-throat Finch-Male



Cut-throat Finch-Female



### Day 34, 1 July 2011

Leave Malawi at Kyela to Utengule Coffee Lodge, Mbeya, S8.88569

E33.32032, 220 km, Accommodation: 1 x \$10ppn = \$20

We left Ngara early and decided to have a look at the lodge we passed yesterday that was not on T4A yet.

Mikoma lodge, just before Karonga is a very beautiful new lodge on the lake, a real pity we did not turn in here when we went pass to Ngara!

Brand new up-market place, lovely chalets, swimming-pool, restaurant and they are still busy planting trees for the camp.

Mikoma Beach Lodge



The road from Karonga to Songwe border control is not good.

The border crossing did not take long, no problems, we paid \$50 p/p for our Tanzania Visas, \$20 for foreign vehicle permit as well as \$5 for road tax and we were on our way. We had a Carnet and also already paid our Comesa in Chipata.

The road from the border into Tanzania was quite spectacular, beautiful mountains, banana plantations...and then the trucks and taxis....

The speed limit in Tanzania is 80km/h on highway and between 60 and 50km/h in towns. There are many, yes many police road blocks, they normally stop the trucks and buses to check papers and passengers. And they stop the trucks in the middle of the road, you have to wait behind them.....or just take a chance and go pass. We were stopped a few times, but after learning to speak some Kiswahili like : Habari - How are you; Nzuri Sana-Very Good; Asante- Thank you and Kwaheri-Goodbye, we were greeted with smiles and just waved on...

There are also many speed humps on the roads of Tanzania and in every little village you have to slow down. The speed humps and checking of trucks and buses are there for the safety of the people, but that is where it ends.....trucks, cars buses just stop everywhere and on any side of the road, either to offload or for repairs...and nobody cares a hoot...

And if a passenger bus hoots behind you, you just give way....they drive like bats out of hell.....

We reached Mbeya and were able to exchange \$1000 for 1 594 000 Tanz shillings.....we were millionaires again!

We refueled in Mbeya at a cost of 2250Tsh/lt, which was about the average price in Tanzania for petrol.

The supermarket at the garage had about everything we needed....except no beer.....

We drove through a very busy Mbeya to Utengule. Every little building next to the road was a shop of some sorts selling all types of stuff...it was just incredible how they all survive...

The Utengule Coffee lodge has a campsite just below the lodge next to the tennis court and helipad. The ablutions is good and of course there is a well stocked bar, restaurant and lodging.

We set up camp and then visited the bar for some refreshments...Kilimanjaro Premium Lager was the beer of my choice....in a 500ml bottle..and also decided to have some steak for dinner.

Tanzania started well.....

## Utengule Coffee Lodge camp



### **Day 35, 2 July 2011**

Mbeya to Old Farm House, Kisolanzo farm, S8.14577 E35.41225, 296 km,  
Accommodation: 1 x \$5 = \$10

The road from Mbeya to Iringa is in better condition than those in Zambia....but all the police road blocks are an irritation...

We encountered many sawmills and mountains of sawdust being loaded onto trucks....what do they do with the sawdust?

Kisolanzo farm has a very nice camp and lodging, with good ablutions and drinking water, and their camp and ablutions for overlanders is completely separate from ours! I wish all the camps would do that.

They have a very good restaurant where we will enjoy a good meal on our return trip, but we bought some rump and fillet steak for the road at R50 a kilo! Mutton is also available but you have to order a few days in advance.

We met some other travelers from Durbanville and we would meet them again in the Serengeti.

Old Farmhouse, Kisolanzo Farm



The ablutions



**Day 36, 3 July 2001**

Old Farm House to River Valley Camp north of Iringa, S7.79802 E35.79673, 70 km, Accommodation: 1 x \$6pppn = \$12

On our way to Iringa we turned in to the Isimila Stone age Site, where amazing finds of Stone Age tools including bones and skeletons of pre-historic animals were found, dating back 300,000 years ago.

You can also view the wonderful stone pillars that were formed as a result of soil erosion on the land leaving the red standing pillars that occurred many years ago.

Isimila Stone-Age site





River Valley camp (previously Riverside camp) is about 15km north of Iringa and has a very nice setting with green grass and many trees, but the ablutions do not deserve more than a 2 out of 10, whereby 1 is for the hot water, the shower is so small you have to have to leave your clothes outside and you use about a bottle of deodorizer in the long drop...why can't they learn from Old Farm house....and the other 1 is for the lovely setting.  
River Valley Camp



The terrible ablutions...



### Days 37-39, 4-6 July 2011

River Valley camp to Ruaha NP-Public Camp no 1, S7.67857 E34.94051, 315 km, Accommodation: 3 x \$30pppn = \$180,

Parkfees:\$20p/p/p/n+veh\$40p/n=\$240

We had to go back to Iringa to do some shopping and to take the road west to Ruaha National Park.

The shopping in Iringa was quite an experience, small little shops that sell nearly everything...except soda- and tonic water...and the municipal market is very well stocked. And we always felt very safe, never had any reason to believe that somebody would break into the vehicle or harm us.

Unique scaffolding at Iringa



The gravel road to Ruaha is not too bad, with a few single lane bridges. We stopped at an Art Boma, a community arts and crafts shop and bought a few of the local arts and crafts.

Our plan was to overnight at Sunset Mountain Lodge, and with about 4 km to go we had our first and only flat tyre. As the Prado was fully laden it was quite a job jacking her up, but eventually we changed the wheel, plugged the flat with 2 plugs and were on our way again.

Later we would find that the plugged wheel was losing air.....not at the plugs but on the rim....apparently a bit of sand got in between tyre and rim..

We were very disappointed with what we saw at the Sunset Mountain Lodge. They had no water for the campsite for a long time now (apparently the water truck was broken) and no maintenance had taken place for quite a while. The lodge was in a better state with a beautiful view from the hill, and we wanted to camp near the lodge and use its facilities, but the wind would not let us. This place would be lovely when it is green and maintained.. We backtracked to Ruaha Hilltop Lodge but they do not have a campsite but told us that it would be best to camp in Ruaha NP, specifically at Public Campsite No1.

We continued towards Ruaha NP, turned in at Tandala Tented Camp just to find that it is too expensive (but very nice) for our liking and continued towards the entrance to Ruaha Nat Park.

Here we had a problem as they only wanted credit cards, no cash, but after I spinned a story that our cards were cancelled by the bank at a previous town, they took our \$ and we could proceed to Public campsite No1.

As you will see from the amounts above it costs us \$420 for the 3 nights for both of us.

When we crossed the bridge over the Ruaha river, there was a dead hippo lying in the river. We would visit it again.

Public Campsite No1 is next to the Ruaha river, big open unfenced clearing, trees with monkeys, elephants walking through the camp and a little building with 2 showers and 2 toilets....but no water in the taps.....

Luckily there was a tap with running water in a block of cement outside....so for 2 of the 3 nights we had water to wash. One afternoon we had a shower at the Tourist Bandas nearby.

Afterwards I thought we were a bit "foolishly brave" to sit outside at night, but luckily there was a very big pile of firewood that came in very handy.

It would be very nice to visit here again and camp with a few friends so we can have eyes all around.....

The second night we left the water can outside and the next morning I had to go and fetch it about 200metres away where the hyaena left it with big teeth marks in the screw-cap, needless to say it was unusable afterwards.

We drove around the park for 3 days(140km), saw many hippos, giraffe, lion, elephant, kudu, impala, baobab trees, buffalo, the dik-dik, crocodiles, the defassa waterbuck without the ring and of course many, many birds, of which the Long Crested Eagle was Philna's favorite.

There are also beautiful trees in the park.

At the river crossing we saw the lions feasting on the dead hippo that we saw when we entered the park. When we returned again the park's officials were busy removing the hippo's carcass from the river.

This is really a park that we would like to visit again with friends so that we do not have to be so scared at night alone at the fire... 😊

Acacia Tortilis, Ruaha



Defassa Waterbuck



White-headed Lapwing



Northern White-Crowned Shrike



Tawny Eagle



Von Der Decken's Hornbill-female



Ruaha Public campsite no1



Long-Crested  
Eagle





Simba...



Little Bee-Eater



Kudu



### **Days 40-41, 7-8 July 2011**

Ruaha NP to Baobab Valley Camp, S7.52288 E36.59987, 251 km,

Accommodation: 2 x Ts 12000pppn = Ts 48 000

We took the eastern road out of the NP which was in a better condition.

At Iringa we did some shopping again.....and then onto the A7. This road is now in a very good condition, with road works here and there. We refueled at Ruaha Village and then the beautiful Valley of the Baobabs with thousands of Baobab trees.....

We had a look at Crocodile Camp but it was run down with an ablution block with no roof...apparently it had burnt some time ago but nothing has since been done to repair the roof.

Baobab Valley camp's turn-off was just 2km further and we were so glad we turned in here. The place is run by Darrin who has worked in 7 countries, he likes to grow his own vegetables and has a beautiful lodge overlooking the Ruaha river as well as campsite.

We set up camp and had a drink at the bar and decided that we will stay here for 2 days. Many birds kept us busy....

We had to do some washing, had a nice braai the evening and decided to eat at the restaurant the next evening. The chicken portions were overwhelming, only bad taste was the "charity auction" wine we brought along from home, under the impression it was red but nobody could drink the semi-sweet white that came out of that bottle..... ☹

The ablutions are very good(you have never seen such spacious toilets and showers), no electricity, drinking water from a borehole and as said before, bar, restaurant and very nice lodging, can be recommended.

Baobab Valley Camp



Black-headed Oriole-juvenile



The bar and restaurant



**Day 42, 9 July 2011**

Baobab valley camp to Morogoro hotel, S6.83517 E37.67176, 207 km,  
Accommodation: 1 x B&B = \$60

We encountered some roadworks just outside the camp with a stop-go situation, but soon on our way again. Drove through the Mikumi NP with a speed limit of 70km/h with many speed humps but still some trucks were lying next to the road. This was something we would see a lot, and can only contribute those accidents to speed. The road was old but not bad.

Today we were on our way to Kilamatembo camp in Morogoro, but unfortunately no place like that existed at the waypoints as per T4A.....actually we only found a nunnery there.....

We then had a look at Kola Hill hotel for camping but that did not suit us so we ended up at Morogoro Hotel, they had no camping so we booked in for B&B for \$60 for both of us! That evening we had steak and chips for \$5 each.

It was a Saturday and the town was very busy, but we found a good supermarket that stocked nearly everything we needed.

Philna also bought a Maasai Shuka at the hotel.

### **Day 43, 10 July 2011**

Morogoro to Elephant Hill motel, Same/campsite via Chalinze, S4.07127  
E37.75068, 437 km, Accommodation: 1 x \$5ppn = \$10

The road to Chalinze where we had to turn north towards Moshi was in pretty good shape but then we got more speed humps....big ones...

We also encountered speed traps in the form of hand-held machines but luckily we were warned by oncoming motorists.

I also need to mention that the motorists in all these countries, except RSA, use their hazards in the correct way! When there is an animal or obstacle in the road they would use the hazards to warn you, and not as a tool to greet or say thank you. And if the right hand side flicker is on then it means that it is NOT safe to pass, when it is safe they would use the left flicker. That to me is the correct way and not the way we in RSA use our flickers and hazards.....

We were on our way to Temba campsite, but alas that was closed down as well so decided to proceed north.

Philna knew about Pangani campsite but we heard from people that it did not exist anymore so when we saw the sign for Pangani as well as Zebra camp we decided to go and have a look.

We found them both to be in a good state and as it was still early we decided to push on. On our return trip we would stay at Pangani campsite.

At the Elephant Hill Motel we enquired about camping. Unfortunately the camp was only suitable for ground tents, we could not get in with the Prado and rooftop tent, so we were told that we could park near the Motel. They also have a very good ablution block but unfortunately there was no water in the showers so it was arranged that we could use the showers in the motel.

As luck would have it the electricity went off for a few hours.....yes Tanzania have more power problems than RSA....but we could shower by lamp.

It was a Sunday night but there were quite a few guests at the Motel for dinner, and we had a drink or two in the lounge...

## Elephant Hill Motel



### **Day 44, 11 July 2011**

Elephant hill to Maserani Snake park, Arusha, S3.41000 E36.48294, 269 km,  
Accommodation: 1 x Tsh 13000= Tsh 26000

At the fuel station at Kisangara was a tyre repair shop and they found that the spare was leaking air between tyre and rim and soon it was fixed.

At the T-junction near Himo we decided to first drive to Marangu to the parking at Kilimanjaro HQ. It was a hive of activity as the climbers and guides were getting ready for Kili. Philna bought a few books at the curio shop and then we were off to Moshi where we exchanged dollars again as we need to shop in Arusha.

We were lucky to catch a glimpse of Kilimanjaro through the clouds...



A friend of Philna informed her that the SA4x4 had a good write-up about Maserani Snake Park so we decided to camp there.

Shoprite in Arusha was a very big disappointment! No beer (only Castle and who drinks Castle in a country where there are so many different beers!), no coke, no meat and really a sad shop.

I then found this gem of a shop called Sakina Supermarket that stocks everything, including Wine, beer, brandy and even Savanna Light! (S3.36261 E36.67056)

The traffic in Arusha is madness, no stop signs you just move your vehicle into an opening and off you go...but saw no accidents.

When we arrived at Maserani Snake Park there were already 30 overlander tents, and when the sun set that evening there were 7 overlander trucks in the park! Luckily we had already parked at a cement shelter that serves as a kitchen.

I had a look at the bar and restaurant, it was alive with customers but the campsite was a sad affair, just sand and dust everywhere, not an inch of grass, no electricity, no drinking water.

There were more than 100 people in the camp, and 1 ablution block per sex, each with 2 cold showers and 2 toilets! Nowhere during the day or night were there ever hot water.

Definitely not a camp that I can recommend.

The next morning we had a look at all the snakes and crocodiles, no extra cost it is included in the overnight tariff.

Philna and I also bought us each a tshirt with the word "Msungu" meaning white person. We had quite a lot of fun wearing the tshirts on the remainder of the trip....

For the first time ever I saw speckled mousebirds having a sandbath!

Maserani Snake Park camp



Speckled mousebirds having a sand bath



Yellow-Collared Lovebirds



**Day 45, 12 July 2011**

Arusha to Kudu Camp, Karatu, S3.34903 E35.66922, 115 km,

Accommodation: 1 x \$10pppn = \$20

At Makuyuni we turned north-west onto a magnificent tar road! There are however 5 low water cement bridges on this stretch that you have to watch out for.

In Mto Wa Mbu we bought some tshirts and Philna bought another Maasai Shuka as well as some paintings.

There are many traders in the small villages making a livelihood off the tourists that come to the Serengeti. Overlander trucks and game drive vehicles are everywhere. Luckily we were the first to arrive at Kudu camp so we could quickly shower as we knew that the overlanders would arrive soon.

The ablutions are ok but quite a problem when many overlanders arrive, but still a lot better than Maserani. And some lovely birds too...

The whole camp is under grass, there is no electricity or drinking water, big swimming pool, bar and very good restaurant with upmarket lodging.

We made a big fire and had a braai...tomorrow we would enter the Ngorongoro Conservation area on our way to the Serengeti.

Baglafecht Weavers, male & female



Common Fiscal-juvenile



Ablutions, Kudu Camp



Kudu Camp, Karatu



Kudu camp swimming pool



To Be Continued....