

## **East African Safari – what's in the bag?**

From my recent East African safari to the countries of Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda, I have compiled a list of the gear that I took, what worked and what didn't. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to email me.

### ***Camera Gear***

Canon 5D Mk2 – Brilliant camera with no problems. No dust on sensor issues, although some inside LCD window.

100-400mm lens – worked fine for the money, but if you feel the inclination to buy me a 500mm...

24-105mm lens – didn't use for wildlife, but for a few landscapes and dare I say it - human portraits

Lens hoods, ND filter/holder

NN5 Pano Head – (didn't use)

Cable Release

Batteries x2 – (fantastic long life batteries, work great!)

Sandisk CF Cards – 32GB, 8GB, 2x4GB, 2GB

Fuji Finepix F10 – snapshot camera

Blower Brush, lens-cleaning equipment

Manfrotto Pro Tripod – only used once, but would still take again, and next trip I would take more landscapes.

Beanbag – filled with 5kgs of rice – worked really well, and was able to give the rice to a local at the end of my safari. I also had a plate made that screwed into the foot of the lens for more stability, and to allow the lens barrel to rotate freely from the beanbag. I had seen similar ones commercially made for about \$200 USD, and had mine made locally (although a more basic design) for a mere \$10AUS. Got to be happy with that! It worked like a charm!! (When attached, I kept the camera out of the bag for quick shooting, putting a top over the camera to keep the dust off)

### ***Backup Gear***

Mac 13" laptop – everything you'd expect from a Mac, only thing I'd change is to increase the size of the Hard drive, filled the 160GB drive easily.

WD My Passport Studio 320GB External Drive – Unfortunately when I purchased this with my Mac laptop, the retailer didn't realise that the new Macbook isn't compatible with this 400 Firewire connection Hard drive, so for the whole trip I could only use the USB connection. I'm not sure how much of

a difference this would have made, but with the power issues of Africa, especially in the bush, downloads were verrry slow... I have rectified this however. After contacting the retailer, they were only too happy to change this HD for the 500GB 800 Firewire which is compatible with the new Macbook, so, watch out Africa, here I come!!!

Mouse/Pad

All cables for Mac, Hard drive, Battery charger, phone etc

Card reader

Travel Plug Adapter

Powerguard (2 plug)– This is something where I only decided to purchase a really good (expensive) one at the last minute. This Powerguard not only protected equipment from power surges, but also low voltages, and as I knew that power in a lot of Rural Africa is generator run, I knew this would be essential. (In one of the safari camps, there was a problem with the power. One guy's new Mac Laptop fizzed –as you can imagine, he was NOT a happy camper, and 4 mobile phones blew up, and need I say it – my gear purred along perfectly!

NB: As I camped in tents African style, power was usually only available for a few hours a day via the generator, so downloading was always a bit of an issue – especially the 32GB CF Card.

Notebook/Pen – essential for recording those moments... “filter and holder fell off camera and onto ground, is that elephant watching...cat...er...what cat...”

## ***Backpack***

All of this gear was put into my smaller Lowepro Minitrekker backpack. I debated whether to take this or my brand spanking new Tamrac Expedition 7, but decided against it for 2 reasons; one because I had read that internal flights within Africa were very strict on baggage, (even though the Tamrac is suppose to be airport friendly, it definitely wouldn't have fitted in the overhead on the plane to Rwanda – I had trouble getting the Lowepro in), also I thought the older bag would look less conspicuous in Africa. And of course, all this weighted the allocated 7 kgs – sure it did!!

Well, to sum it all up, what would I do differently next trip. Not much really, bigger Hard Drive, faster External Download connection, maybe take one extra CF card as I was maxed at the end of this trip, although with the bigger Hard drive, it should be good. Oh, and more time in Africa – love the place, happy friendly people, and of course the wildlife...especially the cats...here kiddy, kiddy, kiddy...

**Sam**