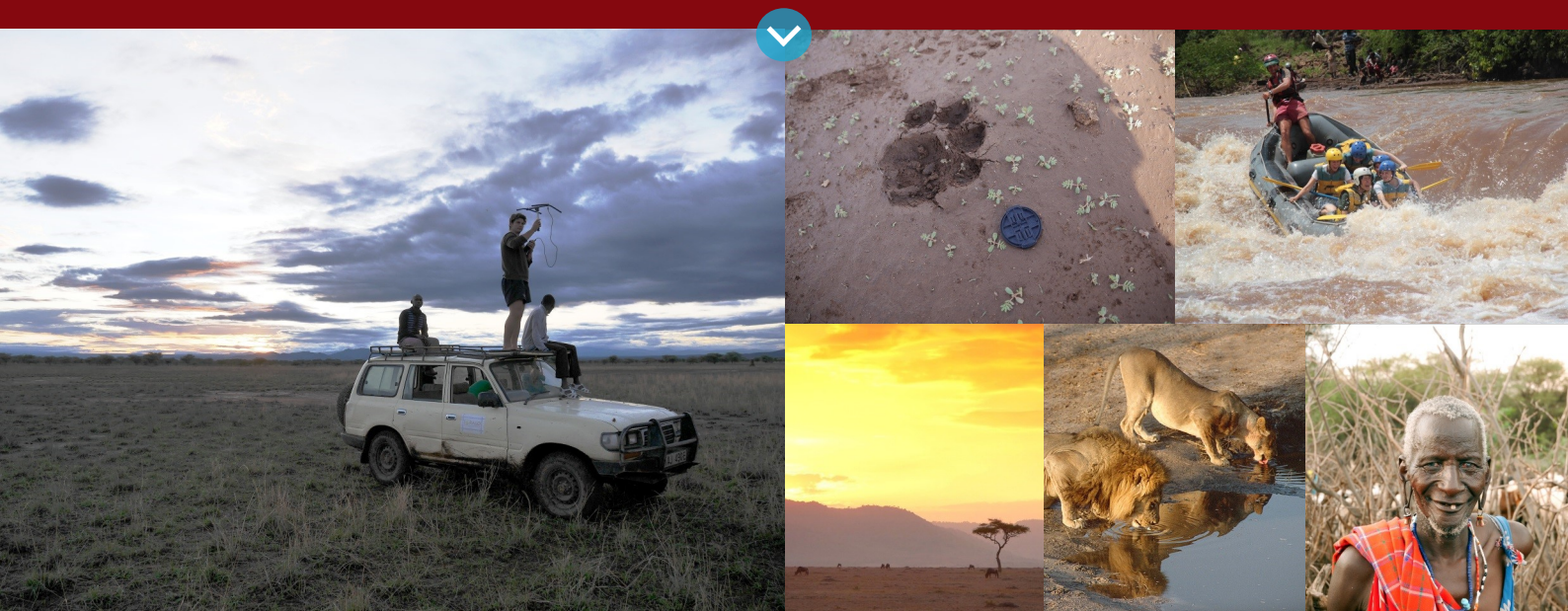


Kenya

Rebuilding the Pride



Come with us on an extraordinary adventure into the Kenyan bush. With an itinerary focused around ecology and the classic conflict between Maasai and lions, this educational adventure gives groups a hands-on insight into the work of scientists in a pristine wilderness area. Students can track radio-collared lions and learn how researchers monitor and study their movements with radio/GPS and google maps. You can devise small research projects and undertake data collection to prove/disprove scientific hypotheses. Practicals and informal discussions on numerous topics with those directly involved in conservation are combined with excellent game viewing, with plenty of plains-animals and predators which, with luck, can be seen on both day and night time game drives. All this, in a very traditional Maasai area which we are allowed a privileged insight into.



Recommended itinerary:

Culture shock rating: 

Physical rating: 

Day 1: Arrive in Nairobi Jambo! Welcome to Kenya. We will be met by our tour leader on arrival and transferred directly to our hotel in Nairobi or if using an overnight flight we'll head straight up to our base in Sagana in the Great Rift Valley.

Day 2: White Water Rafting Today we head to the Tana River, a drop pool river offering an exciting day of white water rafting. Starting with 3 km of easy class II and III white water, followed by a 6 km section with an hour or so of relaxation to view the abundance of bird life around, then cool off with a swim! The final 7 km of river, back to the campsite, starts with some easy class III waters where paddle commands are revised, followed by 3 big rapids (class IV and V) with names like Captains Folly, Can of Worms (because of its four 90 degree bends in succession) and Sphincter Flexor. Subject to water levels you may be able to "surf" in "fish eye" and then swim the next couple of minor rapids. Our camp is in beautiful surroundings right next to the river and is a wonderful introduction to rural Kenya.

Day 3: Lale'enok Research Centre An early start as we have a long drive to get to our destination at the Lale'enok Research Centre. We break the journey for lunch at Olorgesailie, a geological formation with evidence of early man. On arrival at Lale'enok we set up camp and are given a detailed briefing from our guides on the do and don'ts, what to look out for and the general safety of living in the bush. There is nothing quite like camping under the African skies, as you help prepare your wholesome evening meal you'll see the night sky light up above you. With so little light pollution you'll see stellar constellations you'll rarely spot back in Europe.

Day 4 to 9: Lale'enok research centre, South Rift Valley Over the next 5 days we will split into sub groups of between 3 or 4 smaller groups (depending on the group size) as we undertake a number of projects on rotation. We have a different activity planned each morning and afternoon, with two afternoons set aside to go out as an entire group. We will be hosted by a team of passionate environmentalists, scientific researchers and local Maasai. For 10 years the team here have been researching ecology and lion behaviour, developing long term strategies to understand and help combat human/animal conflict. It's this longevity of their relationship with the local population which is key; opening doors that otherwise would remain firmly closed.

Morning

Afternoon / Evening

- Day 4** Rebuilding the pride. A very early start you go out with the team to track the collared lions and see the work they do. (Please note groups are not guaranteed to see the lions, it's more about the work the team does, how they collect their data and the importance of the project)
- Day 5** Visit local tourism facilities to understand how they contribute to the conservation of the area. Whilst not in a recognised game reserve, and therefore not overly touristy, this area does have a few small upmarket lodges which contribute significantly to the overall conservation fight.
- Day 6** Go tracking with the local community Wildlife Scouts and find out more about their role in community-based conservation. We will have a hands on lesson in how to track animals (and humans!) and students can take part in interactive tracking challenge.
- Day 7** Investigate the different land-use practices found in the area, such as pastoralism, agriculture and wildlife conservation and how the local Maasai community use all three to support their local livelihoods.
- Day 8** This morning we are up early to spending time with a habituated baboon troop, learning about these social animals and how they forage for food. We get to hear from the researcher that is studying them as we follow the troop on their morning forage for breakfast.
- Whole group does an afternoon game drive. The scenery here is stunning - set in the base of the rift valley with a dramatic escarpment rising to the west. In the evening, we can sit around the camp fire and have a large group led discussions and reflections on the day and how the whole research projects runs and works.
- Visit local Maasai homes to learn about their culture and way of life. Often we do this as the cows come home in the evening, enabling us to help walk the cattle back to the 'Boma' with the herders. This is a prime example of a working community-based Maasai-wildlife conservancy. In the evening we have a talk with a local women's group to talk about gender equality challenges in Kenya, and what it's like to live and grow up as a women in Maasai culture.
- Attend talks with local medicine men, traditional birthing attendants, chiefs, camp staff, resource assessors and such like - this is an opportunity to discover just how intricately intertwined the whole ecosystem and human population really is. In the evening we have a talk from the Kenya Wildlife Service about their work and efforts in conservation.
- Float down the River on a stand-up-paddle board or a Raft. Later, we enjoy a game boat trip (float) to see the area and river wildlife from a different perspective.
- The program has been rather intense so we leave this afternoon free for relaxing, optional game drives, SUP/ Raft down the river. In the evening we have a last chance to sit around the camp fire and have similar group led discussions and reflections on what's been learnt and see how their perspective of the project work and the area has changed from first arrival.

Day 9/10: Transfer back to Nairobi and fly (possibly overnight) back to UK

We transfer back to Nairobi Jomo Kenyetta International airport for our flight back to the UK. Depending on times, we may arrive back into the UK on day 11.

Important information: It is important to realise that the itinerary needs to be flexible. While every effort will be made to follow the above schedule, in the event of political problems, airline schedule changes or natural events, we will do our best to make your trip as enjoyable and hassle-free as possible, but it is important to EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED and be prepared to accept some slight changes. Relax and have faith in your guides.



The School
Travel Consultancy

For more information and a detailed quote, please contact us:

telephone: 01392 660056

email: schools@thestc.co.uk

website: www.thestc.co.uk

