

DAVID SKILLAN'S WORLD OF TRAVEL . . .

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2009

Travelling the World Since 1951 → Leading Tours Since 1970

Dear Fellow Traveller:

Had an interesting trip to the canyons and national parks of Arizona and Utah in May. Not the trip of a lifetime, perhaps, but still worthwhile. It was a real “Ooh, ahh!” trip, full of spectacular scenery. Friends and I rented a minivan and covered roughly 2,000 miles in twelve days. After spending a day or two in Phoenix, we hit the road, first visiting Canyon de Chelly, then Monument Valley, Arches National Monument, Capitol Reef National Park, and Bryce, Zion, and Antelope Canyons, and of course the Grand Canyon. And to think the early settlers first saw these places on horseback and in covered wagons! We also visited the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Saguaro National Monument, and the very impressive but not so well known DeGrazia Gallery in the Sun, followed by the town of Tombstone and the OK Corral, scene of the famous 1881 gunfight. Very interesting to me; ever since I was a young boy, I've loved cowboy movies, where the hero always gets the girl and good always triumphs over evil.



We stopped wherever and whenever we liked, staying in Best Westerns and Holiday Inns. I must say, though, the 42- and 43-degree heat was sometimes difficult to take. It's not that hot in Africa, at least not when I go. Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda have the most temperate of climates, and it's generally hot and humid only by the lakes and at the coast.

If you tour the US, it's a good idea to buy an annual National Parks pass, which costs just US \$80 and entitles a vehicle and its occupants unlimited entry to any national park. It's cheaper than paying at each stop.

REASONS TO TRAVEL—Ever wonder why we travel? For a variety of reasons: for adventure and excitement, to escape the mundane, for prestige, to do business, to socialize, or just to soak up the sun. Some travel to learn a different language and culture, while others go to see and explore and learn about other people's lifestyles. Some go in search of a more agreeable climate, some simply want a change of pace and scenery, and some go for therapeutic reasons, to get over the loss of a loved one or to recover from a long or debilitating illness. I travel for a variety of reasons. I learned very early that it can be seductive and intoxicating.

Once in a while, I think back on my early travels and some of the adventures I had in the 1960s. I remember walking along the shores of Lake Titicaca in Bolivia on a fine summer's day, my pack on my back, singing to myself. The sky was an azure blue, birds were twittering, and as I strolled along, peasants in the fields waved at me. I probably had no more than \$50 in my pocket and no idea where I'd be staying that night or where my next job would be, but I was as content as anyone could be. I also remember sleeping by the roadside in Africa and Australia, waking up to a breathtaking sunrise, and wondering how many scorpions or snakes (not to mention lions, hyenas, or dingoes) had sniffed around my sleeping bag during the night. Must have been a few. Oh, the risks I took and the foolish things I did when I was young! It's a wonder I lived through them all. But I did. It was obviously meant to be.

Don't worry, I won't bore you with stories about my life while we're travelling together—reminiscing is strictly reserved for my newsletters! It's your trip, and I want you to enjoy it as much as possible. I'm merely there to make sure it goes well.

There's nothing remarkable about the number of tours I've led, by the way—about 210 at last count—although more than 100 to Africa is hard to beat. Many tour leaders have hosted more tours than I have. What sets me apart is my 80-month world odyssey in my twenties. Few people can match it. And it's a part of my life I continue to cherish.

Nobody knows better than me that an extensive trip is a most important chapter in your book of life, one of the wisest investments you can make. It's impossible to put a price on the trip of a lifetime. It provides memories you'll enjoy for years and years to come.

FINDING PEACE—I've just read Lawrence Scanlan's book *Harvest of a Quiet Eye: The Cabin as Sanctuary*. It's a fascinating account of how he moved a cabin from near Kingston to Prince Edward County, Ontario, then renovated it at considerable effort and expense. He talks about the healing qualities of the "solitude and silence" of the countryside and the pleasure of the "peace and quiet" of the land. He also mentions his sister Karen, who visits the Serengeti Plain and on her return speaks about the "cleansing effect" of the "pure silence" of the African wilderness.

As we grow older, I think we all yearn for less hustle and bustle, and better appreciate the natural order of things. Connecting with nature is always relaxing and rewarding. The theme of Scanlan's book is that today, more than ever, it's important to escape from the everyday noise, confusion, and stress of life. I know from years of travelling and spending long periods in the wilderness that an exciting trip always provides that escape.

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TOUR LEADERS AND TOUR GUIDES—Like a good tour leader, a good tour guide can make or break a trip. What's the difference between a tour guide and a tour leader? In a nutshell, a tour guide is normally a local resident, intimately familiar with the country, who speaks the native language and is trained to describe in depth the history, geography, culture, and traditions of a place. A tour leader (known as a tour manager in Europe and a tour director in the US), such as yours truly, is in overall charge of the tour and its members, leading and coordinating all of the tour arrangements and organizing the flight check-ins, transfers, and hotel rooms. He or she also looks after everybody, escorting them to their destination and home again.

Like any professional, a good tour leader or tour guide makes the job look effortless. To the casual onlooker, it doesn't seem like a job. But make no mistake—it's not all a bed of roses! Sometimes quite the opposite. It's not always easy to deal with the public. Fortunately, apart from those on business, most travellers are in a relaxed holiday mood, determined to make the most of each new experience and have a good time. For an inside peek at a tour leader's job, visit www.skillansafaris.com/david-skillan-newsletter.html and read "Confessions of a Tour Leader" and "Around the World With Just About Everyone."

BIRDWATCHING—You may have noticed that I sometimes mention the exotic birds we see in Africa. No doubt about it, the continent is a birdwatcher's paradise. Ever since my early childhood in England, where I developed a love of the outdoors and natural history, I've been interested in birdwatching, though I'm neither a bird expert nor as keen as some people I know. Birdwatching is the fastest-growing hobby in the world. All you need to get started are a good pair of walking shoes or hiking boots, a notebook, and binoculars. I'm always delighted at how many people go on safari eager to see big game, and become converts as they see many splendid bird species.

UPCOMING TOURS—If you love birds or have always wanted to see the endangered mountain gorilla, you must come on the **Uganda Wildlife Safari** with us in September! It's now last call for this tour. We leave Vancouver on September 10, so we must know by June 30 if you're joining us. After that, we have to release any unbooked space back to the airlines and hotels. The price has dropped by roughly \$300 to just \$7,990 per person. A terrific deal for an African safari. You can read about Uganda on pages 7 and 8 of this newsletter. To see the itinerary, go to http://www.wildafricasafari.com/skillan_Uganda_09.htm. For a colour brochure, kindly contact **Wild Africa Safaris** at **800-991-6111, 604-519-1610**, or africa@wildafricasafari.com.

Our **Kenya & Tanzania Safari**—the best of **East Africa**—is another remarkable journey that many dream about, but few experience. If you've always wanted to see the great migration of zebra and wildebeest (a natural wonder of the world), visit the Serengeti Plains and Ngorongoro Crater, and float over the Masai Mara in a balloon, you should definitely plan to join this tour. It's our most popular trip, and for good reason. The new price for 18 unforgettable days is \$8,415, down about \$400 from the original price. Another great price for an African trip! To learn more about this tour, please go to www.skillansafaris.com/newsletters/african-safari.pdf and read my article "On Safari in East Africa." To peruse the itinerary, go to http://www.wildafricasafari.com/skillan_EAfrica_09.htm. Call **Wild Africa Safaris** for a colour brochure. We leave on October 2, so better book your space right away!

We already have more than a dozen participants signed up for our fascinating **Egypt & Jordan Tour**, so if you'd like to join us in November, get your deposit in soon! I've been in touch with Egyptologist **Fouad Salah**, who is looking forward to seeing us. Good looking, youthful, and charming, he's a brilliant tour guide, as many of my Egypt clients know. Everyone loves him. I'm proud to be his friend and mentor. You'll find our tour itinerary at http://www.wildafricasafari.com/skillan_egypt_09.html. Call **Wild Africa Safaris** for a colour brochure.

My connoisseur's **Botswana & Zambia Safari** departs on January 6 and is limited to just 12 participants. The price is a very affordable \$7,985 for 14 days—a real bargain for a flying safari! To get this special price, you must book soon. As usual, it's first come, first served. We'll stay in superb tented camps, where food and service are second to none, travel by light aircraft, enjoying magnificent bird's-eye views, and view game by boat and open safari vehicle. If you've been to Africa and yearn to return, this is the tour for you. To learn more about travelling in Botswana, please visit www.skillansafaris.com/newsletters/botswana-safari.pdf and read "Botswana—The 'In' Place for Safaris." The itinerary is at http://www.wildafricasafari.com/skillan_botswana_2010.htm. Call **Wild Africa Safaris** for a colour brochure.

My next **South Africa Tour** departs on March 2, 2010—the year South Africa hosts the World Cup. Watch for the price and confirmation of itinerary in my autumn newsletter. This will be my last tour to South Africa for a while.

We've had a lot of interest in our **Hidden Treasures of Japan Tour**, and I expect it to sell out early. My wife **Yuriko**, a classic Japanese beauty if ever there was one, will co-host this tour to the Land of the Rising Sun next April. You may have met her at a tour reunion. Come with us and experience Japan's rich history, modern society, and renowned hospitality. For a colour brochure and itinerary, kindly contact **Lisa Elliott of Collette Vacations** at **800-468-5955, extension 4098**, or lelliott@collettevacations.ca. Don't miss the Bullet train—book soon!

*All of my tours are tailor made and personally escorted.
I'm also flexible in terms of the itineraries.*

CHANGING DIRECTIONS—Though I'm still passionate about Africa, after serious consideration I've decided to reduce the number of my African tours in the future, to make way for other exciting destinations. There are other places where I'd like to lead tours while I'm still at the top of my game. Places I have in mind include **China, Iceland, Vietnam & Cambodia, Croatia, and Turkey**, so stay tuned. I'm planning a 16-day tour of **Peru** next September, in conjunction with Collette Vacations. The tour will feature Machu Pichu (lost city of the Incas) and the Amazon jungle. Have I been to Peru before? You bet! Several times. I've also led six tours to Costa Rica and nine trips to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands, so I'm quite familiar with (and very fond of) Latin America.

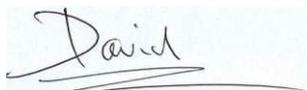
All my tours are tailor made and personally escorted, which makes them very exclusive. I'm also flexible in terms of the itineraries. If an itinerary contains too many temples or cathedrals (I know all about the ABC tours—another bloody church, castle, or cathedral!), we can always drop one or two in favour of a busy outdoor market, home visit, or scenic drive. A popular refrain is "I've died and gone to heaven!" thanks to the destinations we visit and the high standards I do my utmost to maintain. I never stop looking for ways to make my tours the best they can be.

STAYING IN TOUCH—I'd like to encourage everyone to receive my newsletters electronically, both to help the environment and to reduce expenses. If you prefer to keep receiving hard copies, however, I'm happy to oblige. Please let me know your preference and, in case I don't have it, provide your email and/or postal address. And please share my newsletters with friends and relatives who may be interested in my safaris and tours.

AS TIME GOES BY—Another birthday has quietly come and gone (like Jack Benny, I'm now 39!), and I can't help but wonder where, oh where all the time has gone. Age is a funny thing. Like good health, you take time for granted, until one day it's gone. It either flashes by or creeps up on you, and suddenly you're older than you think. One day you're 40, the next 50, and then all of a sudden you're 60 or more. Thankfully, most of the time I feel much younger than I actually am, and there's no retirement age for tour leaders. I'll keep going as long as I enjoy it.

I'm off to the Yukon with friends at the end of August. Have a great summer! *Safari njema* (travel safely)!

Yours in everlasting travel,



David (Around the World in Eighty Months) Skillan
Incurable romantic, restless vagabond, and free spirit . . . ➔

WILD AFRICA SAFARIS
Proudly Presents
DAVID SKILLAN'S AFRICA
An Overview of Upcoming African Tours and Safaris

“Living in Africa, there is an extraordinary sense of well-being . . . an atmosphere of excitement and euphoria . . .”

~Kuki Gallman, author of *I Dreamed of Africa* and *Night of the Lions*

“There is a freshness about dawn in Africa that is very invigorating. Everything is clear and sparkling and joyous . . .”

~V. M. Carnegie, author of *A Kenyan Farm Diary*

UGANDA WILDLIFE SAFARI

Departs September 10, 2009 → 17 days → \$7,990 per person (sharing)

Often referred to as “the Pearl of Africa,” Uganda is a lush, green, tropical land with some of Africa’s friendliest people and a safari circuit that encompasses breathtaking landscapes. You’ll see Africa’s Big Five (lion, leopard, elephant, rhino, and buffalo) and hundreds of other animals, including four different species of jackal, pygmy antelope, Nile crocodile, bush pig, giant forest hog, the Uganda cob (Uganda’s national antelope), and of course the endangered mountain gorilla. Uganda is a birdwatchers’ paradise, boasting the largest concentration of birds in all of Africa—more than 1,000 species. Our tour includes Lake Victoria (the largest lake in Africa), the Ruwenzoris (the Mountains of the Moon) and the acclaimed national parks of Murchison Falls, Queen Elizabeth, Kibale and Bwindi (the rainforests that are home to the mountain gorillas), and Ngamba Island (a sanctuary for chimpanzees). All this and much more. To learn more about this wildlife adventure, go to www.skillansafaris.com/newsletters/uganda.pdf. **You must book by June 30, so send your deposit now!**

KENYA & TANZANIA SAFARI

Departs October 2, 2009 → 18 days → \$8,415 per person (sharing)

The ultimate adventure . . . the two most famous safari destinations in Africa . . . a romantic journey that many dream about, but few experience. This tour includes the finest game lodges and tented camps, splendid game-rich wilderness, and the magical Serengeti Plains, Ngorongoro Crater, Mounts Kenya and Kilimanjaro, Masai Mara, Aberdares, Lakes Nakuru, Naivasha, and Manyara, and the Olduvai Gorge (the Cradle of Mankind). Take a balloon ride over the East African plains and visit a Masai village, the Karen Blixen Museum, and more. The perfect tour for those who yearn to see a wildlife spectacle unrivalled anywhere in the world. October coincides with the great migration of wildebeest and zebra—often called the greatest show on earth. Imagine warm, sunny days, spectacular scenery, and amazing experiences: they’re all yours on this incomparable trip! Learn more about it by visiting www.skillansafaris.com/newsletters/african-safari.pdf. This tour can be extended to conclude with the island of Zanzibar or Kenya’s Coral Coast. **Don’t miss out on this, our most popular tour!**

EGYPT & JORDAN TOUR

Departs November 4, 2009 → 16 days → \$6,775 per person (sharing)

Join us in the land of pharaohs, mystery, and enchantment! This exciting tour includes Cairo, Memphis, Aswan, Luxor, the Pyramids of Giza, the Valley of the Kings, a four-night Nile cruise, and the famous temples of Abu Simbel, Philae, Edfu, Kom-Ombo, and Karnak. Visit the renowned Egyptian Museum, ride a camel, watch a belly-dance display, haggle for souvenirs, take a horse and buggy ride, sail in a felucca, and peer into King Tut’s Tomb. You’ll also be transfixed by the wildly beautiful country of Jordan, as we follow in the footsteps of Lawrence of Arabia, explore the World Heritage Site of Wadi Rum, see the Roman ruins at Jerash (reminiscent of Turkey’s Ephesus), dip your toes into the Dead Sea, and visit the extraordinary forgotten stone city of Petra, one of the newly named Seven Wonders of the World. **If you’ve always wanted to see one of the world’s greatest ancient civilizations, this is the trip for you!**

BOTSWANA & ZAMBIA SAFARI

Departs January 6, 2010 → 14 days → \$7,985 per person (sharing)

You'll adventure in style and comfort on this exclusive connoisseur's tour, which is limited to just 12 participants. Described by aficionados as "Africa's Gem," Botswana has become a favoured destination among seasoned travellers. Masses of wildlife roam the woodlands, savannahs, plains, and wetlands of this sparsely populated country, including many species of antelope (nyala, waterbuck, kudu, sable, eland, tsessebe, lechwe, impala, and sitatunga), hyena, jackal, bat-eared fox, wild dog, wild cat, giraffe, zebra, hippo, and of course all of Africa's Big Five (lion, leopard, elephant, rhino, and buffalo). In this remote, peaceful region of Africa, we stay at the finest places, where food and service are second to none. Accommodations are in luxurious tented camps . . . travel is by specially chartered light aircraft . . . game viewing is by boat and open safari vehicles. We'll visit the Moremi Game Reserve, Vumbura Plains, Linyanti, world-famous Okavango Delta, and breathtaking Victoria Falls. To learn more about this superb tour, go to www.skillansafaris.com/newsletters/botswana-safari.pdf. **Call now for a colour brochure, and place your name on the list!**

SOUTH AFRICA & ZAMBIA TOUR

Departs March 4, 2010 → 18 days → Price TBA

Described as "a world in one country," the breathtakingly beautiful South Africa is one of the most diverse countries on earth. Our incomparable tour, which includes both city and safari, goes to Cape Town (one of the world's loveliest cities), Durban, and Pretoria, as well as the world-renowned wineries, Cape of Good Hope, Blyde River Canyon, Zululand, Swaziland, sensational Sun City, Mpumalanga, Kruger National Park, Hluhluwe Game Reserve, and day and night game drives in open safari vehicles. Take in the scenic Panorama route, and visit a penguin colony and rhino sanctuary, as well as the magnificent Drakensburg Mountains. In Zambia, we visit Livingstone, the adventure capital, during a two-day excursion to the awe-inspiring Victoria Falls, a sunset cruise on the mighty Zambezi River, and a thrilling optional helicopter, ultralight, or elephant-back ride. We'll sip fine wines, enjoy gourmet meals, and experience close encounters with extraordinary bird and other wildlife. You can extend the tour with an extra three days at an exotic beach resort in Mozambique's famed Bazaruto Archipelago. To learn more, visit www.skillansafaris.com/newsletters/cape-town.pdf. **Plan ahead—book soon!**

. . . And Collette Vacations Proudly Presents
DAVID SKILLAN'S JAPAN

JAPAN'S HIDDEN TREASURES TOUR

Departs April 14, 2010 → 14 days → \$5,828 per person (sharing)

This journey through rich history and traditional culture is like no other tour you've ever taken! You'll visit Japan's first ancient capital at Nara and the vibrant metropolis of Tokyo, as well as Hiroshima, Hakone, Nagano, Takayama, Kanazawa, Otsu, and Kyoto. Stroll along the Ginza, wander through stunning Japanese gardens, explore Meiji Shrine and Matsumoto Castle, and enjoy a cable car ride that provides spectacular views of Mount Fuji, Japan's highest mountain. Travel on the bullet train, relax in luxurious hot-spring baths, see traditional farmhouses with thatched roofs, learn the art of origami, and participate in both traditional and modern Japanese entertainment. This one-of-a-kind tour of the legendary Land of the Rising Sun takes place during the season of cherry blossoms. To learn more about the country, please read the article at www.skillansafaris.com/newsletters/japan.pdf. **Don't miss out—reserve your place now!**

David Skillan is a writer, photographer, and tour leader par excellence. He has travelled, lived, and worked all over the world, including Japan, Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa. He's had a love affair with Africa since 1962, when he first set foot there.

Since 1970, David has hosted more than 200 foreign tours, including more than 100 to Africa—Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Zaire, Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia, Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco. He spends four to five months of each year travelling the world, mostly to African destinations.

He has been publishing newsletters about his life, travels, and tours since 1978. →

EXCLUSIVE

The David Skillan Travel Collection

A Special Series of the Finest Personally Escorted Tours and Safaris

2009				
September 10	UGANDA WILDLIFE SAFARI	17 days	\$7,990	Wild Africa Safaris
October 2	KENYA & TANZANI SAFARI	18 days	\$8,415	Wild Africa Safaris
November 4	EGYPT & JORDAN TOUR	16 days	\$6,775	Wild Africa Safaris
2010				
January 6	BOTSWANA & ZAMBIA SAFARI	14 days	\$7,985	Wild Africa Safaris
March 4	SOUTH AFRICA & ZAMBIA TOUR	18 days	Price TBA	Wild Africa Safaris
April 14	JAPAN'S HIDDEN TREASURES TOUR	14 days	\$5,828	Collette Vacations
<p><i>Tour prices are per person, in Canadian dollars. Prices include all international and domestic flights (round-trip from Vancouver, Canada, though you can make your own flight arrangements and meet your tour), fine accommodations, most meals, and all sightseeing, as outlined in the respective itineraries. Taxes are extra. All dates, itineraries, and prices are subject to change. Most tours can be extended at the ends.</i></p>				

David Skillan's tours are promoted and marketed exclusively by Wild Africa Safaris of New Westminster, BC, and Collette Vacations of Langley, BC. For full details about a tour or safari, including the itinerary and booking information, please contact the tour operator indicated in the schedule above.

<p>Wild Africa Safaris</p> <p>Suite 104 713 Columbia Street New Westminster, BC V3M 1B2 Canada</p> <p>800-991-6111 or 604-519-1610</p> <p>africa@wildafricasafari.com www.wildafricasafari.com</p>	<p>Collette Vacations</p> <p>Suite 6A 5761 Glover Road Langley, BC V3A 8M8 Canada</p> <p>800-468-5955 Extension 4098</p> <p>lelliott@collettevacations.ca www.collettevacations.ca</p>
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Call now for colour brochures and detailed itineraries! →

Uganda—The Pearl of Africa

I've been considering returning to Uganda for some time. Yes, I've been there a number of times, and I think it should be on every Africa aficionado's short list of preferred destinations.

In the early 1970s, when I was based in East Africa on behalf of an international travel company, safaris included a few days in all three East Africa countries: Kenya, Tanzania (or, before it merged with the island of Zanzibar, Tanganyika), and Uganda. The beautiful, hilly, green country of Uganda has long been known as the Pearl of Africa. A good friend of mine who used to live there often claimed it was the prettiest and friendliest place in all of Africa.

Uganda is a landlocked country of 236,040 square kilometers, bordered by Kenya to the east, Sudan to the north, the Democratic Republic of Congo to the west, Rwanda to the southwest, and Tanzania to the south. It has several large lakes, including Lake Victoria, Kyoga, Lake Edward, and Lake Albert, sharing the last three with its neighbours. Victoria is the largest lake in Africa, and generally thought to be the source of the Nile, the longest river in the world.

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A former British colony that peacefully obtained its independence in 1962, Uganda has adopted English as the official language and retains Swahili as the lingua franca. The country has a population of some 31 million and substantial natural resources, including regular rainfall and sizable deposits of copper and cobalt, as well as largely untapped reserves of crude oil and natural gas.

Unfortunately, the nation underwent great upheaval during the 1970s, under Idi Amin's brutal, dictatorial rule. Although the Tanzanian army eventually overthrew his regime and he fled into exile in Saudi Arabia (where he died a few years ago), Uganda experienced nine horrific years that reduced it to a shadow of its former glory. Today, I'm happy to report that Uganda is again peaceful, stable, and prosperous. Many Asians who were unceremoniously evicted by Amin's ruthless regime have returned to set up successful businesses, and Uganda again attracts visitors from all over the world, including increasing numbers of Canadians.

Less commercialized and less well known than neighbouring Kenya and Tanzania,

Uganda is an outstanding destination for those who enjoy bird and wildlife. It's renowned for its many different primates, including chimps, gorillas, baboons, and colobus, spot-nosed, and vervet monkeys. While the chimps are relatively easy to get close to, the gorillas are another story. Gorillas are shy and reclusive, tending to hide in thick underbrush. Their whereabouts determines whether you can reach them in a leisurely ten-minute walk or only after a strenuous two-hour mountain hike. However long it takes, everyone who gets to see them at close quarters agrees that it's the most unique and satisfying of experiences. It's well worth the time, effort, and expense required to see these creatures in their natural habitat.

My Uganda wildlife adventure, which departs in September, encompasses the major game reserves and an optional one-day excursion to see the gorillas. This one-of-a-kind, life-enriching tour includes Lake Victoria (largest lake in Africa), the Rwenzoris (mountains of the moon) and the internationally acclaimed national parks of Murchison Falls, Queen Elizabeth, Kibale and Bwindi (the rainforests that are home to the mountain gorillas), and Ngamba Island (a sanctuary for chimpanzees).





Uganda is well known for the African Big Five (elephant, lion, buffalo, leopard, and rhino), as well as the common zebra, giraffe, bushbuck, hartebeest, four species of jackal, Nile crocodile, hippo, bush pig, giant forest hog, and Uganda cob (one of many varieties of antelope and the country's national symbol). Uganda is also a bird-watcher's paradise, boasting the largest concentration of birds in all of Africa—more than one thousand species— including the secretary bird, ground hornbill, black-chested snake eagle, tawny eagle, marshal eagle, Goliath heron (the largest heron, shown below at left), shoebill stork, African goshawk, red-necked spurfowl, tropical boubou, red-wattled lapwing, white-throated bee-eater, southern red bishop, Denham's bustard, purple swamphen, papyrus gonolek, and Abyssinian ground-hornbill. No birds sing sweeter than those in Africa.

Tourist accommodations range from rest houses to fine hotels, game lodges, and tented camps. Some are a bit rustic, but always clean and comfortable, and invariably built into spectacular settings that make for an even more memorable and authentic African safari than you might expect. And the famous Kenya-based Serena hotel group has moved into Uganda in recent years, raising standards of accommodation to international levels.

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From my perspective, as an old Africa hand who has lived, worked, and travelled over much of the so-called Dark Continent, Uganda is one of Africa's most exciting safari destinations. If you like Africa, as many people do, you owe it to yourself to visit this intriguing country. The sooner, the better. ➔



For details about David Skillan's wildlife tour to Uganda, please visit www.skillansafaris.com/david-skillan-tours.html.



Excerpts from Recent Emails, Cards, and Letters

“Wow! Love the slide show. Viewing it is like going back to those fantastic places and reliving the trips I’ve so far taken with you—Kenya, Egypt, and Namibia. Not only did I see pictures of folks I know, I also saw those I’ve been fortunate to travel with.”

~Helen A. (Tsawwassen, BC)

“We really enjoyed the trip to Botswana, and especially your company. Let us know once you have some tentative dates, so we can make some suggestions for your August trip to the far North.”

~Gary U. and Carla P. (Whitehorse, YT)

“The beauty of having your DVD is that whenever we feel like an Africa fix, we can relive our wonderful journey [to Kenya and Tanzania] and do it all over again. And what a trip it was. The best ever!”

~Dan and Hazel P. (Vancouver, BC)

“Can’t tell you how amazing it is to have, thanks to your DVD, more glimpses of the great sights and sounds of the Egypt and Jordan tour. It’s like being right there again. Such a magical and mysterious place!”

~Lynn D. (North Vancouver, BC)

“It is indeed time for an exotic adventure! Today I’m sending our deposit for your Japan tour. Norm was in Japan on a business trip in 1970, and hasn’t been back since, and I’ve never been there. South Africa, Kenya, and Tanzania are always on our minds. We’d love to go back, and will, time and money permitting, so please don’t retire yet!”

~Lois B. (New Westminster, BC)

*“It is indeed time for an exotic adventure!
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“We’ll be glad to forward your newsletter to any of our friends who might be interested. Robert and I took your Kenya tour in 1993 and have never forgotten it. You said at the time that Africa would get under our skin, and how right you were! We are very glad we did it together while we could.”

~Harriet K. (Victoria, BC)

“Am about to sign up for your Uganda wildlife adventure, and can’t wait to get going. If it’s as good as your Tanzania and Egypt tours, then it will be exceptional!”

~Mike J. (Pitt Meadows, BC)

“My husband and I are interested in your next tour to Botswana and Zambia, scheduled to leave in January 2010. Please put our names down and keep us informed about prices, dates, etc.”

~Gill W. (Delta, BC)

“Your last newsletter has to be one of your very best. I think what made it so enjoyable was the combination of your writing and the color photographs. And your message is always so upbeat. Needless to say, I’ve passed it on.”

~Bill K. (Surrey, BC)

“I was on your tour to Russia and Finland a few years ago, and enjoyed it so much I’ve now signed up for Japan!”

~Mary M. (Castlegar, BC)

“Gerry and I watched the DVD you made of our Kenya and Tanzania safari, and thoroughly enjoyed it. It took us back there, and during the course of an evening we relived the whole trip. I agree with you: East Africa is a very, very special part of the world. Thanks for enhancing it for us so well.”

~Carole O. (Richmond, BC)

“Loved your last newsletter, and particularly enjoyed “Portrait of a Travelling Man.” We are very interested in a couple of your upcoming tours—Botswana and South Africa—and certainly Peru, as and when you do it.”

~Sheena and Chris C. (North Vancouver, BC)

We’re all here for a reason, and mine, it seems, is to help make other people’s dreams come true! ~DS ➔

This newsletter comes to you with our compliments.

It is intended to create a greater awareness of the world we live in, to promote worldwide travel and tourism, and to motivate you to get up and go.

You only live once, so do everything while you can! ➔



Africa has a wonderful way of putting everything into perspective, and a safari provides great peace of mind. ~DS

Words of Wisdom . . .

“If you obey all the rules, you miss all the fun!”

~Katharine Hepburn

“When someone shares with you something of value, you have an obligation to share it with others.”

~Chinese Proverb

“An optimist sees opportunity, while a pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity.”

~Winston Churchill

“Life is too short to wake up with regrets. So love the people who treat you right. Forget about the ones who don't. Believe everything happens for a reason. If you get a chance, take it. Nobody said life would be easy; they just promised it would most likely be worth it.”

~Michael Gartner, winner of the 1997 Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Writing

“It's only truly the wilderness that allows us to replenish our souls.”

~Beverly Joubert

David Skillan's Travel Enterprises
#123 – 2083 West 33rd Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6M 4M6
604-261-4656
davidskillan@skillansafaris.com
www.skillansafaris.com

“Adventure is the champagne of life!”

~G. K. Chesterton