



Tsavo East: Bustards and Baboons



We were observing Waterbucks and Zebras at a tank in Tsavo East and pulled around onto a cross road, when I caught sight of what could only be a Kori Bustard maybe 50 yards across the savanna. I had seen a pair of Kori Bustards in South Africa, and they were high on my list of birds I wanted to see in Kenya. I was not expecting to see them on our first full day of safari. And I certainly was not expecting to see the male in mating display, but as we watched, he stalked up to a female and indeed went into display.







As we were watching and photographing the Bustards, I caught sight of something running full tilt at an angle toward us. I thought at first it was a lion, but was a large male Baboon. It was soon followed by the whole troop, all running, and all headed in the same direction.



We never did figure out what they were doing or where they were going. Once across the road they disappeared into the deep grass of the savanna on the other side...following that first big male.



One family stopped to rest on a fallen tree trunk and I snapped some shots. I did not see the infant until processing the photos a few days later.

In following the Baboons across the road we could not miss another pair of Kori Bustards, this time within 5 yards of the road. We pulled up along side them, and though the male did not display, we still had amazingly good looks at this very unique bird. The Kori Bustard is the largest living bird that can still fly. I have seen their close kin, the Great Bustard (almost as big and certainly as strange) in flight in Portugal.

Bustards and Baboons! That is the way Kenya treated us.



