



APEX
EXPEDITIONS



Congo & Rwanda

August 5 - 20, 2015

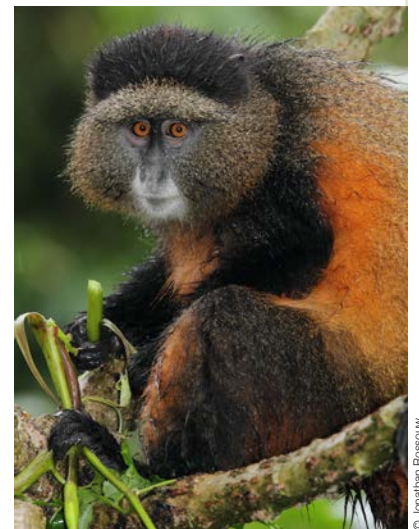




© Giovanna Fasanello. Cover: © Jonathan Rossouw

Expedition Overview

If you're a wildlife enthusiast, you've almost certainly had this dream—you're perched, motionless, beside a tangle of Galium vines, and you're watching, mouth agape, as a family of wild gorillas frolics just feet away. You gaze at the unthinkable giant Silverback, before he ambles over to wrestle with some youngsters, and marvel at our behavioral similarities. Apex Expeditions is making this dream a reality, seeing not one, but both species of gorillas on one trip. Visit two of the most pristine regions of central Africa—the Congo Basin, home to the world's second-largest tropical rainforest, and greatest density of Western Lowland Gorillas; and the towering mountains of Rwanda, to observe some of the last remaining wild Mountain Gorillas. View many other rare and fascinating animals en route, including Forest Elephants, Forest Buffalo, Guereza Colobus and Golden Monkeys, and a plethora of smaller Congolese fauna. Join us on this wide-reaching dream trip into the home turf of Africa's great apes.



© Jonathan Rossouw

Photos: (Cover) Western Lowland Gorilla, Lango Camp, Virunga Golden Monkey.





© Governorie Fésanélli

Itinerary

Wednesday, August 5: Brazzaville

Arrive in Brazzaville, capital of the Republic of Congo, the jumping-off point for our wildlife adventure. Brazzaville's past as a French colony will quickly be evident in its cathedrals, museums, and boulevards. The Republic of Congo (not to be confused with its hulking, and less politically stable, neighbor to the south of the river, the Democratic Republic of Congo) is one of the most urbanized nations in Africa, with 85% of its sparse population residing in its two notable cities. The rest of the country is quite undeveloped. Aside from a small strip of coastline, Congo is covered by virtually untouched tropical rainforest, home to the world's largest population of Western Lowland Gorillas and wild Chimpanzees. Welcome dinner and overnight at the elegant *Mikhael's Hotel*.

Thursday, August 6: Ngaga Camp, Odzala National Park

Rise early for a short flight to Odzala-Kokoua National Park, in the northwest of the Congo. At 5,000 square miles, Odzala-Kokoua is a 'frontier forest', crossing national boundaries and harboring some of the last extensive blocks of Congolese forest ecosystems. It is one of the most important strongholds for Western Lowland Gorilla conservation remaining in Central Africa. With 60 inches of rain annually, the region houses a rich diversity of swampy and terra firma forests, savannah and rivers, providing ideal habitat for more than 400 bird species, 114 mammal species and over 4,400 varieties of plants. Upon arrival at the airstrip, drive through the park to *Ngaga Camp*, in the southwest of Odzala-Kokoua National Park. Located in the heart of the rainforest, *Ngaga Camp's* comfortable, beehive-shaped huts, modeled on the design of local dwellings, are situated in a sea of *Marantaceae*, often-impenetrable giant herbs in the Arrowroot family. This is the habitat that supports Africa's densest population of Western Lowland Gorillas, which you will spend the next two days tracking. If time permits this afternoon, take a forest walk by the Ngaga stream below camp. Before dinner, there will be a briefing on



© Jonathan Rossouw

Photos: Grey Parrots, Young Western Lowland Gorilla.



Western Lowland Gorillas, and what to expect when tracking the two habituated Ngaga groups. Dinner and overnight at *Ngaga Camp*.

Friday & Saturday, August 7 & 8: Ngaga Camp

Wake up before dawn each morning. After breakfast, join your expert tracker-guide on foot, starting the gorilla tracking where the selected family group slept the night before. Though their home range sizes are relatively small, they can move quickly through the thick Marantaceae, and you may cover anywhere from two to five miles locating them. The dry season, from June to August, is the best time of year to spot and photograph these magnificent apes, as they spend larger amounts of time up in the fruiting trees, more exposed than when they're on the ground. Once the gorillas are found, settle in and note the sheer size and strength of the Silverback; watch the youngsters play as their mothers forage for food.

The afternoon can be spent on a forest walk, with luck spotting de Brazza's and Mustached Monkeys. Odzala is also home to the largest concentration of Chimpanzees in central Africa, which, while often heard on these forest walks, are rarely seen by visitors. Birders may catch a glimpse of the outlandish Great Blue Turaco or one of the Congolese 'specials,' such as the shy Plumed Guineafowl and Bare-cheeked Trogon. As the sounds of the Congo forest denizens rise after dark, be sure to take advantage of a night walk in search of Southern Needle-clawed and tiny Demidoff's Dwarf Galagos, also known as bushbabies. Also keep your eyes peeled for the vociferous Western Tree Hyrax, the gliding Lord Derby's Anomalure, or perhaps even Milne-Edwards' Potto, a bizarre slow-moving primate known locally as the "softly-softly".

Sunday, August 9: Lango Camp, Odzala National Park

Following breakfast, load up the vehicles for a 3- to 4-hour game drive to *Lango Camp*, located on the edge of the forest by the Lekoli and Mambili rivers. Your route passes through a mosaic of closed-canopy forest and tall savannah, where clouds of multi-hued butterflies rise off the track, raucous hornbills are conspicuous overhead, and small herds of Forest Buffalo are commonly encountered at roadside mud wallows. Dinner and overnight at *Lango Camp*.

Monday & Tuesday, August 10 & 11: Lango Camp

One of the unique aspects of Odzala is its numerous clearings, called 'bais', that offer the rare chance to view shy, forest-dwelling wildlife. *Lango Camp* overlooks one such clearing—Lango Bai—providing you the opportunity to spot Forest Buffalo or Harnessed Bushbuck grazing, and Guereza Colobus foraging overhead, as you take your morning coffee. For birders, Odzala's bais harbor rare species such as Hartlaub's Duck and Forbes's Plover, but it's often the sheer numbers of Grey Parrots and African Green Pigeons gathering to feed on minerals in the bai that most impress.

After breakfast, the options are numerous. Take a guided forest walk in search of the area's astonishingly high number of diurnal primates, such as the shy but numerous Grey-cheeked Mangabey and the Putty-nosed Monkey, as well as rare antelopes such as Bongo, Western Sitatunga, and Black-fronted Duiker. You may opt to take a boat trip down the Lekoli River, looking for Forest Elephants, scarce Red River Hogs, and Slender-snouted Crocodiles from the comfort of a traditional flat-bottomed pirogue. After dinner at camp, take advantage of night walks on safe wooden boardwalks, allowing you a close view of fascinating nocturnal wildlife.



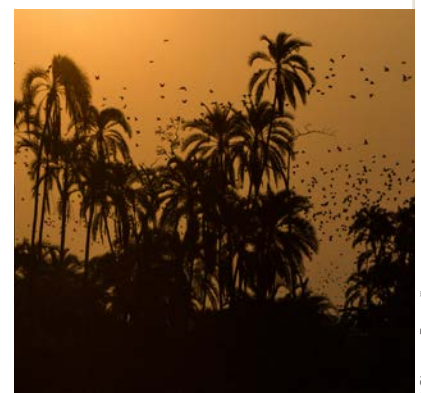
© Giovanna Fasanelli



© Giovanna Fasanelli



© Jonathan Rossouw



© Giovanna Fasanelli

Photos: Western Lowland Gorilla, Southern Needle-clawed Galago, Harnessed Bushbuck, Sunset from Lango Camp.



Spotted Hyena are frequently seen and, with a great deal of luck you may even encounter the rare Water Chevrotain, a cat-sized ungulate also known as the Fanged Deer. Overnight at *Lango Camp*.

Wednesday, August 12: Odzala / Brazzaville

Fly to Brazzaville this morning and enjoy lunch at one of its pleasant waterfront cafés. Second in size only to the Amazon, the mighty Congo River tumbles over the Livingstone Falls a short distance downstream from Brazzaville. Henry Morton Stanley named these rapids after the famous Scottish missionary and explorer, David Livingstone, and this afternoon we'll make a short excursion to marvel at the sheer power and magnitude of this, the world's largest waterfall by volume. Return to Brazzaville for dinner and overnight at *Mikhael's Hotel*.

Thursday, August 13: Brazzaville / Kigali

It's goodbye to the Congo as you catch an afternoon flight to Kigali, Rwanda. Sprawled over ridges, hills and valleys, Kigali certainly bears scars of its tumultuous past, but much rehabilitation has rendered it a pleasant and bustling small city—one of the friendliest, cleanest, and safest in Africa, in fact—with vibrant new neighborhoods and many civic developments. The extent of Kigali's recovery is a true testament to humankind's resilience. Arrive in the late afternoon and enjoy dinner and overnight at the chic *Serena Hotel*.

Friday, August 14: Nyungwe Forest National Park

Depart Kigali for a day's drive to Nyungwe Forest National Park, through Africa's "Land of a Thousand Hills". Along the way, discover Nyanza's exquisitely restored Royal Palace, the historical center of the Rwanda kingdom. Visit the National Museum of Butare, home to one of the greatest ethnographic collections in Central Africa. Arrive in the afternoon at Nyungwe, overlooking the Albertine Rift Valley, in southwest Rwanda. Covering over 400 square miles, Nyungwe is East Africa's largest remaining 'Afromontane' forest, protecting tall, closed-canopy forest and natural bamboo thickets at an elevation of between 5,000 and 9,600 feet. Best known for its 13 species of primates, Nyungwe also boasts nearly 300 bird species, including many endemic to the Albertine Rift, and over 1,000 species of plants, notably 13 species of orchid and the impressive Giant Lobelia. Dinner and overnight at *Nyungwe Forest Lodge*.

Saturday, August 15: Nyungwe Forest National Park

This morning will be dedicated to tracking a habituated troop of Angolan Colobus monkeys. Elsewhere occurring in small groups numbering around 10 individuals, Angolan Colobus at Nyungwe are exceptional in forming troops of several hundred—amongst the largest of all primate aggregations on Earth! Canopy trees literally festooned with dozens of these handsome, black-caped creatures allow for full appreciation of their delightfully acrobatic antics at close range, and offer incredible photographic opportunities. Lunch at the lodge, then take an afternoon walk across one of Nyungwe's flower-filled, highland marshes. Tall mahoganies, ebonies and giant tree ferns tower above, while orchids and other epiphytes cling to every branch. Dinner and overnight at *Nyungwe Forest Lodge*.

Sunday, August 16: Nyungwe Forest National Park

After breakfast, head to the park headquarters at Uwinka for a half-day forest hike. Nyungwe's cool climate is perfect for a long trek on the extensive network of well-maintained trails that lead to various waterfalls and viewing points. Nyungwe's



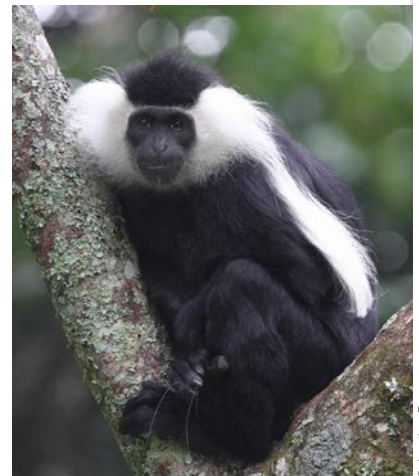
© Jonathan Rossouw



© Jonathan Rossouw



© Jonathan Rossouw



© Jonathan Rossouw

Photos: Slender-snouted Crocodile, Giant Kapok Tree, Nyungwe Forest National Park, Angolan Colobus.



forested peaks form the watershed between the Congo and Nile basins, and our route will take us past the stream that holds the distinction of being the very source of the Nile! Listen for the rustling of shy L'Hoest's and Silver Monkeys found around Uwinka, and watch for some of its 26 Albertine Rift endemics, notably Purple-breasted and Regal Sunbirds, and Red-collared Mountain-Babbler. Dinner and overnight at *Nyungwe Forest Lodge*.

Monday, August 17: Nyungwe / Kigali / Volcanoes National Park

Drive to Kamembe for our flight to Kigali, then, drive north through hilly countryside to the base of the Virunga mountain range. "So high up that you shiver more than you sweat," wrote Dian Fossey about the bamboo and montane forest-draped Virungas, straddling the borders of Rwanda, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and topping out at Karisimbi's 14,787-foot summit. Volcanoes National Park, the 100-square-mile Rwandan portion of the Virungas, comprises five major volcanoes, three of which are still active, and would be a thrill to hike even without the prospect of stumbling upon a wild Mountain Gorilla. Dinner and overnight at the private home of Jack Hanna, well-known American animal expert, who rents his house out as a fully staffed, five-star lodge when he's away.

Tuesday, August 18: Volcanoes National Park

After breakfast, drive to park headquarters for a briefing from your gorilla tracking guides. This area is where Dian Fossey conducted her studies before she was killed in 1985, and her grave is nearby. Once assigned to a gorilla family, you'll follow your guide up steep trails, passing moss-covered *Hagenia* and through stands of native bamboo, listening for the songs of the endemic Archer's Ground Robin and Collared Apalis. Signs of the gorillas' whereabouts lead you off the path and into the open clearings of wild celery favored by the giant apes. Once the group is located, you'll have a full hour to sit with them. Through years of habituation, they have become accustomed to visitors and behave normally, totally unfazed by human presence. Watching the peaceful scene of a family of wild Mountain Gorillas, females feeding and babies play-fighting around the immense Silverback, against a backdrop of the misty Virungas volcanoes, is an experience that will remain in your memory forever. After lunch, tour Ibyiwachyu, a nearby village founded by ex-poachers to help fund conservation activities and showcase traditional Rwandan culture. Learn about fire making, archery, and traditional medicine. Dinner and overnight at *Jack Hanna's House*.

Wednesday, August 19: Volcanoes National Park

Spend this morning visiting a different gorilla family group. Currently, there are ten habituated groups in Volcanoes National Park. Though the families tend to occupy different home ranges, gorillas are not actually territorial. When gorilla groups do cross paths, Silverbacks have been known to fight to the death, but it's to defend family, not territory. Numbering only about 700 individuals worldwide, this giant primate, which shares 95% of its genes with humans, is now listed on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Endangered Species due to ongoing habitat loss, poaching, disease and war. Tourism in the park contributes significantly to the preservation of this magnificent species. Weather permitting, spend the afternoon exploring the Twin Lakes—Burera and Ruhondo—ringed by steep hills and waterfalls, with jaw-dropping views of the Virunga Volcanoes, or amble through the colorful, local markets in nearby Musanze, with their famous basket-weaving handicrafts. Dinner and overnight at *Jack Hanna's House*.



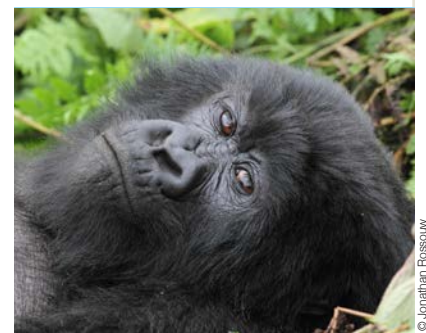
© Jonathan Rossouw



© Jonathan Rossouw



© Giovanna Fassinelli



© Jonathan Rossouw

Photos: Silver Monkey, L'Hoest's Monkey, Intore Dancer, Mountain Gorilla.



Thursday, August 20: Volcanoes National Park / Kigali

Even without gorillas, Volcanoes National Park would be endlessly interesting to animal enthusiasts. Its various montane ecosystems harbor shy Forest Elephant, Forest Buffalo, and elusive Giant Forest Hog, as well as the exquisite, endemic and highly endangered Virunga Golden Monkey. There is a fully habituated group of Virunga Golden Monkeys in the park, and they will be our focus this morning. Once the troop is located, watch the monkeys frolic in plain view, feeding on bamboo leaves and leaping from perch to perch while females carry their young, completely oblivious to the human interlopers. After lunch at the lodge, bid farewell to the Virungas and drive back to Kigali, where you will transfer to the airport for your international flights home.



© Jonathan Roscow

Photos: **Fruit Vendor in Kigali, Mountain Gorilla.**



© Giovanni Fisarrelli



Your Expedition Leaders

Jonathan Rossouw

Jonathan Rossouw is one of the world's most experienced expedition leaders, having guided wildlife trips in over 150 countries on all seven continents. He combines a legendary energy and enthusiasm with a broad knowledge of all aspects of natural history, gained from three decades spent in the pursuit of the world's mammals, birds, reptiles and coral reef fishes. Indeed, having seen over 8,000 species of birds, 800 mammals and 2,000 coral reef fishes, he will likely experience more species of vertebrate animals than anyone in history!

A medical doctor by training, Jonathan was born and raised on South Africa's east coast and spent his family vacations in the games reserves of Zululand. It was here that the foundation was laid for a lifelong passion for wildlife and wild places and, in 1996, a "short break" to cycle across South America from Buenos Aires to Cusco led to two years spent guiding at eco-lodges in the Amazon and doing bird surveys in the Andes. He returned to Africa to start a birding travel company, before joining Peter Harrison and Shirley Metz, to assist in expanding their global portfolio of natural history destinations. An accomplished photographer, Jonathan's images have appeared in many books and magazines, and he has co-authored birding site guides to Uganda, Southern Africa and Madagascar.

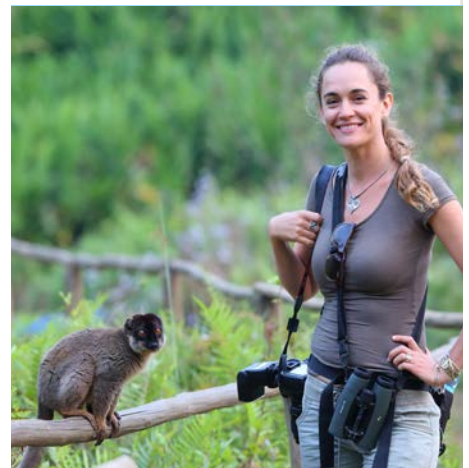


Giovanna Fasanelli

A life-long love affair with the sea propelled Giovanna into the world of marine biology, conservation, underwater photography and natural history documentaries. From an early childhood exploring the rock pools of South Africa's shorelines she immigrated to Australia and wasted no time in getting her PADI Dive Master certification. She has since logged over 1,000 dives throughout the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Whilst completing her marine biology degree at Australia's James Cook University, Giovanna worked at an underwater film company, gaining experience tagging Tiger Sharks and Green Turtles in the Coral Sea and assisting with film production. This opportunity spawned a decade-long career in television, presenting the latest developments in aquaculture and fisheries science. In 2013 Giovanna worked with National Geographic Channel in co-presenting a documentary series, *Australia: Life on the Edge*, as the marine biologist and submarine pilot showcasing stories from around the continent's shores.

Giovanna's passion for wilderness and animals has driven her to explore habitats around the world from Snow Leopards in the Himalayas to Komodo Dragons in Indonesia and Mountain Gorillas in Uganda. Fast approaching 100 countries visited, Giovanna has extensive experience as a guide and naturalist all over the world. A talented photographer and skilled writer, Giovanna's work is regularly featured in several Australian magazines. Her deep love and concern for the environment has led her to be an advocate for conservation.



"When it comes to expedition travel, in particular, one needs to be led by a knowledgeable, enthusiastic, entertaining and confidence-inspiring professional. We have yet to meet anyone quite like Jonathan who so completely ticks all these boxes!"

– Pat G., Durban



Expedition Details

Congo & Rwanda August 5 – 20, 2015

\$23,970 Per Person Rate

\$28,770 Solo Rate

16 Days Trip Length

10 Guests Group Size

Brazzaville / Kigali Start/End

Included

Apex Expeditions' rates include all accommodations; all meals, activities and excursions as described in the itinerary; air within the itinerary; services of two Apex Expedition leaders and local guides throughout the itinerary; local beer & wines at lunch & dinner; all gratuities; airport transfers; permits and entrance fees; all taxes.

Not Included

Costs not included in the price of your Apex expedition include travel to and from start and end point of trip; premium brand drinks and liquor; travel insurance (Trip Cancellation and Interruption, as well as Emergency Medical and Evacuation insurance, is highly recommended); airport departure taxes; excess baggage fees; passport and/or visa fees; items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, souvenirs, etc.); and independent travel arrangements pre- or post-trip.

Payments & Terms

20% of the trip cost will confirm your place on the expedition. The final balance is due 150 days prior to departure. All prices are quoted in U.S. dollars and must be paid in U.S. dollars. Per person pricing is based on double occupancy. The Solo Rate is paid by participants who specifically request single accommodations and is subject to availability. If you are traveling alone and wish to share accommodations, we will try to match you with a roommate of the same gender. However, if a roommate is not available, the published Solo Rate will be charged. Upon confirming your reservation you will be required to pay the published Solo Rate, if we are able to pair you with a roommate, the difference will be refunded at the time that the final trip payment is due for all participants. Note that solo accommodations are limited and cannot always be guaranteed throughout. For our full set of Terms & Conditions, please visit our web site at www.apex-expeditions.com.

One-of-a-kind adventures to the world's most fascinating places. Join us.



Reservation Form

Congo & Rwanda August 5 – 20, 2015

Person 1: (Primary Contact)

Passport Name: _____

Preferred Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Details:

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

ZIP Code: _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Double

Solo

Person 2: (If applicable and at same address, otherwise please submit a second Reservation Form.)

Passport Name: _____

Preferred Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Email Address: _____

Deposit Information:

My deposit check is enclosed (20% of total tour fare)

Charge my deposit to my: VISA MasterCard American Express

Card #: _____

Expires: _____

CCV Code: _____

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____

**Please return this completed form to Apex Expeditions.
E-mail: info@apex-expeditions.com or Mail: 3275 36th Ave SW, Seattle, WA 98126**



