

THE TWGA TIMES

PRESERVATION, CONSERVATION, AND EDUCATION



“Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike.”

John Muir

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Letter from the Director

As summer winds down our energy is picking up. We are excited to announce a number of leaps forward.

First, we have a new avenue for generating resources. Kefas’ company, Go To Kili is offering to donate 70% of profits from any adventure packages directly to The World Giraffe Alliance. This means anyone looking for a safari, a mountain climb, a visit with Maasai, a trip to the elephant orphanage or a day trip to visit wild giraffes can arrange their travel through The World Giraffe Alliance. Imagine if your vacation money went to preserving giraffes!!

Second, we have connected with officials in Tanzania to create an international partnership in East Africa. This connection makes us a nonprofit in the US and in Tanzania.

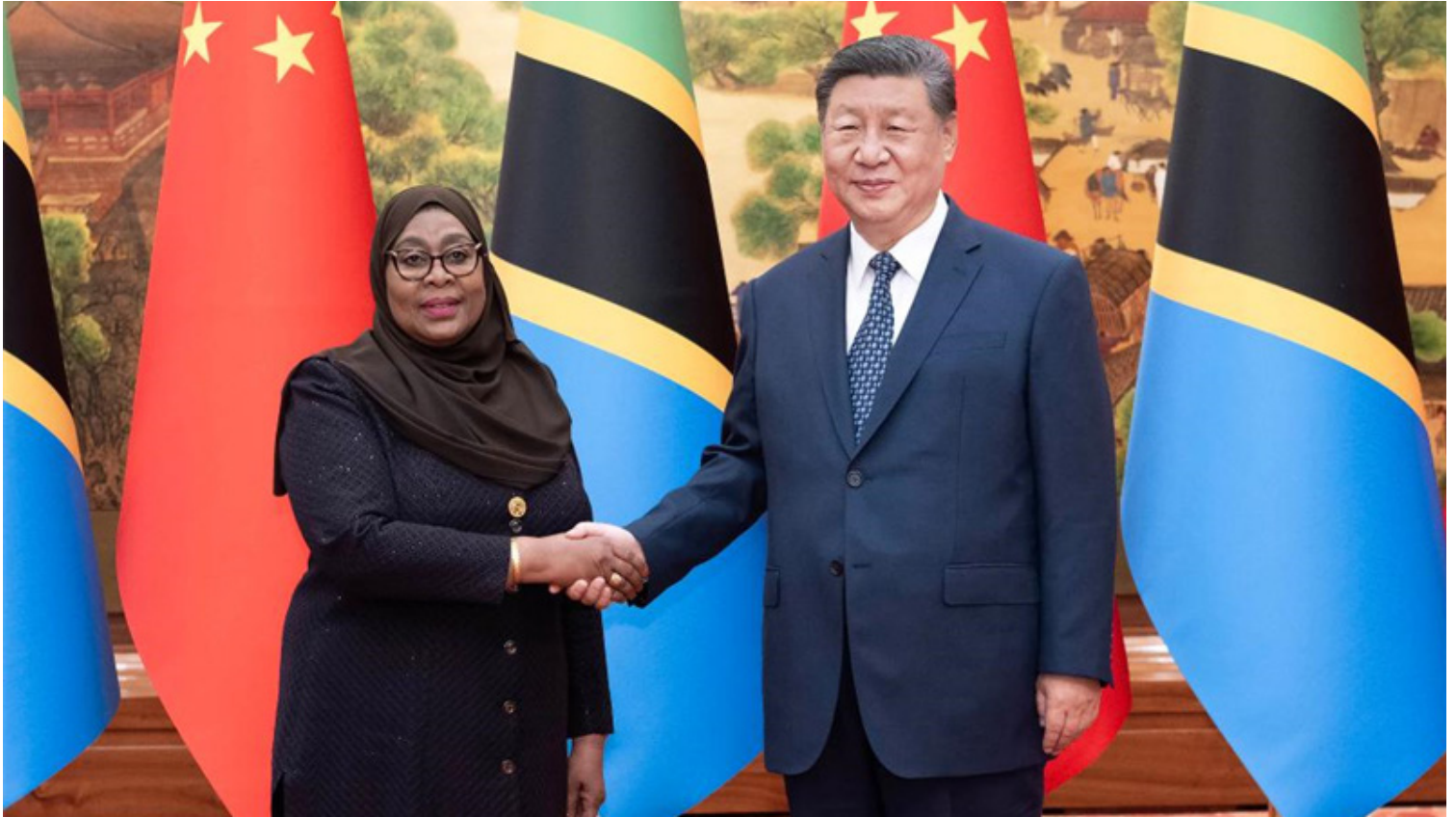
Finally, most exciting of all, we have spoken with land owners adjacent to Tafakari and have learned they are willing to sell us some of their acreage. This is exciting because the land is the most coveted of all that is available

near us. It is property that leads to a natural water source and makes perfect roaming lands for our tall friends.

We would like to close out our year with a positive account and right now funds are running low. Remember that your donation is tax deductible. Please consider a one time, end of the year donation for any amount. Every day we are getting closer to the promise land. We can't do it without you.

Kupenda na amani

Michele and Team Twiga



President of Tanzania Samia Suluhu Hassan with Xi Jinping, the party leader, head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the CCP (Chinese Communist Party).

Tanzania's Election and Wildlife Concerns

Opinion

By Grace Hartwell

DAR ES SALAAM — According to Reuters, on Wednesday, August 27, Tanzania's electoral commission barred the second-biggest opposition party candidate from contesting polls in October, leaving President Samia Suluhu Hassan to face only candidates from smaller parties.

The Independent National Electoral Commission approved Hassan and her running mate, Emmanuel Nchimbi, to run in the October 29 election after receiving their nomination forms earlier on Wednesday. The leading opposition party, CHADEMA, was disqualified in April after failing to sign the electoral code of conduct as part of its call for electoral reforms. This kind of bureaucratic tape is just what corrupt leadership depends on.

INEC also declined to take nomination forms from presidential candidate Luhaga Mpina of the Alliance for Change and Transparency (ACT-Wazalendo), the second-largest opposition party, on Wednesday. The election commission's chairperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment after a commission spokesperson referred Reuters to him.

“This decision is not only shameful, but it is raising more questions about the integrity, seriousness, professionalism, and independence of the electoral commission,” Ado Shaibu, ACT-Wazalendo’s Secretary General, said in a statement on Wednesday.

Hassan is running for the presidency for the first time after assuming office following the death of her predecessor, John Magufuli, in 2021.

Hassan’s leadership has been marked by numerous decisions that negatively affect native communities and wildlife. She has openly expressed her predilection for Zanzibar (her place of birth) and reinforced policies that favor Zanzibar.

Interestingly, Zanzibar was an independent commonwealth until the revolution in 1964, when they overthrew the Sultan. That same year they formed a People’s Republic of Zanzibar and merged with Tanganyika, becoming Tanzania. Zanzibar continues to operate as a “semi-autonomous region.”

Hassan has collaborated with the Chinese and continues to promote changes that undermine the sanctity and pastoral culture of Tanzania, choosing instead to push for more westernization throughout the country.

There is still time to rectify this corrupt disqualification of opposition candidates. We will know the outcome in October.

Why Tafakari?



While traveling across the Great Plains on the 180-mile walk to save giraffes, I had the opportunity to speak with many people about The World Giraffe Alliance, about our mission, and our vision. They all understood about the importance of giraffe conservation. What they didn’t understand was Tafakari. In what way did a tourist destination help

giraffes? I smiled. Then I explained.

Tafakari is not a place. It is an idea. In Swahili the word means reflection. It is a way of seeing the unseen that lives deep inside of us. To reflect is to be with one’s own thoughts in a profound way, without distraction or disturbance.



Every day we scroll, we text, we talk, we do, we meet, we act, we complete, we search, we share, we work, we watch, we plan, we discuss, we go, we travel, we Zoom, we FaceTime, we listen—to music, to podcasts, to news. Our world is full of forward movement and action. Reflection requires stillness, the deepest kind of quiet.

We rarely reflect.

Our lives are too busy to sit quietly. When did you just sit and think about your life, your choices, your friends and family, your place in the world??

Exactly.

Tafakari is solace and solitude. A simple home with just four rooms on a spacious stretch of African landscape.

We have all, at sometime, attended a retreat experience, for yoga, or work, or religious reasons.

The problem is that those retreats require people to “do” things. It is an extension of the same world. But Tafakari requires nothing. There is no phone, tablet, computer, or screen. There is no contact with your life at home because for a time, this is home.

And it is magical.

Here we awaken with the sun to the smell of the rain forest and the aroma of coffee. We watch from bedroom windows as zebras pass by, then descend the stairs to a sumptuous family style breakfast of homemade bread, fruits and local cuisine. We spend our days at play. . . from piano or guitar, to checkers and chess. We paint or draw, we read or engage in inspired conversations. We take walks with giraffes or visit the village and watch the local artisans at their crafts.

And when the orange sun disappears we gaze at the Milky Way before we fall asleep to the sounds of the velt.

In this place is the elegance of the 19th century with crystal glasses, linen table cloths and handmade bed quilts, and all the inspiration of the great writers and thinkers of that era. Tafakari is childhood joy and beauty wrapped in hospitality and grace. It is innocence and wonder, bringing out the best in each of us.

An experience like this is rare. It is special and unique and not everyone will want it. But some will. Those are the people who leave knowing they have provided for the needs of the giraffes, and the local people, too, preserving both a species and a way of life.

The world needs Tafakari. We need it to save us from our frantic, frenzied world. We need it to remind ourselves that life is passing quickly and we can slow it down.

“Why Tafakari?”

That’s why.

Vienna's Giraffe Craze: A Tale of Diplomacy, Delight, and Disappearance

In the summer of 1828, Vienna was gripped by an exotic fever. A giraffe, sent as a diplomatic gift from Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt to Emperor Franz II of Austria, arrived at Schönbrunn Zoo after a long and grueling journey. The animal, captured in Sudan and shipped through Alexandria and Venice, was escorted across the Alps to Vienna. Its arrival on August 6 was nothing short of sensational.

For most Europeans, the giraffe was a creature of myth. Known in old texts as the “kamelopard,” part camel and part leopard, it seemed almost unreal. The sight of a living specimen in the imperial capital created a frenzy unlike anything the city had ever seen. Crowds thronged to Schönbrunn Zoo, which suddenly became the most fashionable destination in Vienna.

The giraffe's presence sparked a cultural mania. Fashion houses rushed to produce clothing and accessories patterned with giraffe spots. Women styled their hair in tall arrangements topped with little tufts that imitated the animal's horns. Perfumes bore the name “à la giraffe,” and jewellers crafted brooches and ornaments to capture the long-necked wonder. Confectioners sold cakes, candies, and pastries shaped or decorated like the giraffe, with names such as “Giraffeln” and “Giraffentorten.” Viennese theaters staged lighthearted productions about the giraffe, and even the city's ballrooms joined in the craze. A newly composed dance, the “Giraffen-Galopp,” became the step of the season, and musical pieces celebrated the giraffe's image.

Artists too were captivated. Paintings and engravings immortalized the animal, often portraying its awkward stance, a reminder of the injuries it had sustained during transport. Despite the hardships it endured, the giraffe stood



as a living symbol of diplomacy and exoticism, an emissary of Africa that reshaped European imaginations.

The enchantment, however, was short-lived. Less than a year after its triumphant arrival, the giraffe died in June 1829. Its skeleton and hide were preserved for a time in Vienna's scientific collections, but the living magic it had brought to the city was gone. Still, the craze it inspired left an indelible mark. For months, the giraffe had turned Vienna upside down, influencing its fashion, music, cuisine, and art.

Today, Schönbrunn Zoo still celebrates the memory of its first giraffe. Though the animal itself survived less than a year in captivity, it became one of the most remarkable figures in the history of the zoo. More than a curiosity, it was a symbol of cultural exchange and wonder, reminding us how a single creature could ignite the imagination of an entire city.

The Gyroscopic Giraffe and The Hat Snatcher: The Playful Side of Giraffes



Just when we think giraffe behavior is predictable, they surprise us.

At the Pittsburgh Zoo, visitors have been charmed by Lewis, a Masai giraffe with a flair for performance. According to a zoo worker, Lewis has developed a peculiar habit: when he spots a sizable crowd gathered at his enclosure, he walks forward and begins to sway his neck rhythmically from side to side. The moment the crowd joins in and sways with him, he freezes, fixes them with a long stare, and then, as if ending the show, turns his back and strolls away. He never performs this routine for just one or two people—it's a spectacle reserved for an audience.

This kind of behavior raises intriguing questions. Is Lewis seeking attention, mimicking human movement, or simply amusing himself? Whatever the reason, his playful swaying

suggests that giraffes may have more social awareness than we often give them credit for.

Stories of giraffe mischief don't end there. On safari, one curious giraffe plucked a woman's sunhat right off her head and sauntered away with it. Moments later, it returned and dropped the hat beside the safari truck. As if to punctuate the joke, the giraffe found the woman again and gave her arm a long, deliberate lick, leaving both her and the other passengers laughing.

These moments—Lewis's crowd-swaying act in Pittsburgh and the hat-snatching prank in Africa—remind us that giraffes are not only graceful but also capable of humor and play. They may tower above us with their quiet dignity, yet sometimes they reveal a lighter side, one that feels surprisingly familiar.

Don't be fooled. Giraffes do have a sense of humor.

Giraffic Facts

A giraffe's tongue can be up to 20 inches long and is dark bluish-black to avoid sunburn while feeding.

They only need about 30 minutes of sleep in a 24-hour period—often taken in short naps while standing.

A giraffe's heart can weigh more than 25 pounds and pumps blood up that long neck at high pressure.

Despite their height, giraffes and humans have the same number of neck vertebrae: seven.

Giraffes can run up to 35 miles per hour over short distances.

The World Giraffe Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to the preservation of giraffes and the land they inhabit. Through global collaboration, we educate, raise awareness, and take action to protect nature and save these gentle giants.

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