

ATBC + SCB Africa Arusha 2011 Meeting

Organised Fieldtrips

Lake Natron and the Mountain of God, 10 – 12 June AND 17 -19 June 2011



Description:

This trip consists of a visit to **Lake Natron**, a spectacularly pink and orange salt lake located in northern Tanzania, followed by an ascent up to **Oldoinyo Lengai**, the Maasai's Mountain of God. The lake is fed by the Ewaso Ng'iro River and mineral-rich hot springs and is quite shallow (<3 m --10 ft -- deep). The surrounding country is dry and receives irregular rainfall. Oldoinyo Lengai is the only active carbonite volcano in the world.



This fieldtrip focuses on the Flora & Fauna of Lake Natron and surrounding area. The lake's pink and orange colours are due to the red pigment of cyanobacteria. The salt and freshwater wetlands around the edges of the lake support a variety of plants. High temperatures (up to 41°C) and high salt content

(pH of 9 to 10.5) of the lake means that you won't be seeing elephants and wildebeest here, but the birdlife at L. Natron is worth this special visit as are the numerous



less-visible creatures that have adapted to this harsh environment (e.g. the endemic alkaline tilapia, *Alcolapia alcalica*). This is the only regular breeding area in East Africa for endangered Lesser Flamingoes and for Greater Flamingoes. The isolation of Lake Natron from high density human populations makes it one of the last remaining safe breeding grounds for the flamingoes.

Duration:

2 nights, 3 days

Day One: Depart Arusha early and transfer to Lake Natron in four wheel drive vehicles; Picnic lunch at the Lake amidst a spectacular volcanic landscape with beautiful wild flowers; Swim in a natural Jacuzzi (bring your suits!); We'll camp at Waterfalls campsite (or sleep at the lodge depending on group preference). **Day Two:** Leaving the campsite at midnight, we'll drive to the base of Oldoinyo Lengai. The trek up has to be done in the obscurity of night to avoid the blistering heat of day, and because with darkness you will be able to see the glowing carbonite lava. At the top of the crater, we'll admire the sunrise whilst picnicking. While descending, we'll have a chance to see the gradual process of succession and colonization of the larvae landscape. Dinner will be back at the camp or lodge. On **Day Three** we'll return leisurely back to Arusha.



Cost: Camping option: **\$480 per person**; Lodge option: **\$790 per person**. Both prices require a min. 5 pax. Cost includes transport, food and accommodation. Does not include gratuities. Excludes drinks if staying at the lodge.

Requirements

No specific requirements are needed. Some physical fitness is desired if you plan to hike up Oldoinyo Lengai. If you prefer not to hike Lengai, an alternative program can be arranged for you.

Book today!

Complete the [Fieldtrip Booking Form](#) and email us at fieldtrips@atbc-scafrica2011.org