

# How you can help protect Ngorongoro Conservation Area

## TRAVEL - Keep to trails, but don't make new ones.

Please use the trails. This protects vegetation and prevents soil erosion. If you are hiking where no trails exist, don't hike in single file, spread out so as not to create new trails.

When you stop for a rest, choose rocky or bare areas. Sitting on vegetation may kill it.

## CAMPING - Use established campsites, don't light fires

Use established campsites if possible. This restricts your environmental impact to a small area. Where there is no previously used campsite, camp on rock or bare ground instead of vegetation. Camp at least 70m (200 ft) away from water sources to reduce contamination of the water by human waste. Try to leave your campsite in better condition than you found it.

Camp fires are not permitted in NCA. While firewood may appear to be available, the small amount present is an important source of nutrients for the soil and some is also needed by the local pastoralists. Campfires can also cause destructive forest fires. Bring your own camp stove.

## WASTE DISPOSAL - Pack it in, pack it out

Litter is not only ugly but can be harmful to wildlife, livestock and people. Buried litter may be dug up by animals, and burning it is illegal, so - "Pack it in - Pack it out". Minimise litter by careful packing and preparation. Carry all your litter with you until you can deposit it at a collection point designated by NCAA.

Help keep Ngorongoro clean - bring back more than just your own litter.

## SANITATION - Protect yourself and others from disease.

Most water sources in NCA are heavily used by people and animals, and may already be contaminated. Purify all drinking water, either by boiling, filtration or purification tablets.

You can help prevent further contamination by following these hygienic practices:

Do not use any soap or shampoo directly in water sources. Move at least 70 m (200 ft) away from the water sources before washing.

Human faeces are a major source of water contamination and infectious illness. Always bury them. Use an established toilet (choo) where available. Otherwise, choose a site well away from campsites and trails and at least 70m (200 ft) from any watercourse, and dig a shallow hole 10-20 cm (4-8 in) deep. Fill carefully with soil when you have finished.



## Protect yourself

### WATCH YOUR STEP

**In highland areas watch out for:**

**Stinging nettles** - plants which cause temporary painful irritation to bare skin, and may even sting through clothes. Shorts are not recommended in areas where these occur.

**Safari ants** - small shiny brown ants that move rapidly in dense columns across trails. They are carnivorous, and if you step in them they crawl up your legs and start chewing. Tuck your trouser cuffs into your socks, and watch where you step.

**In lowland or grassland areas watch out for:**

**Acacia thorns** - the "cat-claws" of the wait-a-bit thorn (*A. mellifera*) can rip skin and clothing. The long straight thorns of many species can pierce soft-soled shoes and even car tyres - be very careful if you wear sandals.

**Ticks** - can occur in long grass, so check your body from time to time. If tick is firmly attached to you, grasp it close to its head with tweezers and pull the tick out gently but firmly.

**Snakes** - normally avoid you before you see them. The exception is the poisonous Puff Adder, a fat, sluggish brown or yellow snake. It may lie on paths at night, so if you must walk in the dark, use a torch. Never catch or pick up a snake.

**Scorpions** - In dry country, small yellow scorpions lurk under rocks or dead wood and may climb into boots, clothing or other camp equipment left outside at night. Their sting can cause intense pain for several hours.

### DRESS RIGHT, EAT RIGHT, DRINK RIGHT

Be prepared for NCA's physical extremes. In the lowlands, shade temperatures can reach 35°C and shade may be scarce. In the highlands it may freeze at night. Fine weather can change very quickly to fog or rain.

Always carry a rainproof garment and some dry clothes in a plastic bag. To keep you warm, wool and synthetics are better than cotton or down. To keep you cool, cotton is best.

Always protect yourself from the sun. A hat reduces the risk of sunstroke. Protect your eyes with dark glasses. Protect your skin with clothes or sunblock lotion.

Drink as much water as you can (4 to 6 litres a day) to avoid dehydration. A diet high in carbohydrates will help provide the energy needed for hiking. Avoid alcohol at high altitudes.

## PEOPLE - You are their guest. Treat them with respect.

The NCA is home to the Maasai pastoralists (people whose economy is based on livestock). In the far south you may also meet Datoga pastoralists and Hadzabe foragers. Be considerate of other cultures - respect local customs, traditions, dress codes, language, beliefs and ceremonies. Do not let your tourism interfere with others' work or private lives.

Always ask permission before photographing people. Please make use of the "cultural bomas" which have been established as places where you can meet the Maasai and learn about their culture. If you are camping near a village, you may be able to visit that village if you negotiate with the village elders.

Avoid roadside photographic deals. They encourage resident people to harass tour vehicles. Never give anything to children from a car or by the roadside - you could cause the death of a child who runs out into the road to beg from cars.

Trade with sensitivity. NCA's resident people live off the land. While some may seem poor in material possessions, they are rich in culture and skills and the freedom of the open spaces. Do not feel obliged to give them gifts - instead, pay them for handicrafts or services. Try to buy handicrafts from the people who made them (e.g. in the cultural bomas) rather than from middlemen.

**Protect the health of resident people, who may be vulnerable to outside illnesses. If you are sick, do not share your illness with them - stay away.**



## Protect your health

### THESE ILLNESSES CAN KILL YOU

#### ALTITUDE-RELATED ILLNESS

Higher altitudes are colder and there is progressively less oxygen to breathe. Most hikes in NCA will be 1500-3000m (5000-10000 ft) above sea level, and you may become short of breath. Go slowly, so you don't have to pant; avoid extreme physical exertion. (If you have ever had any heart illness, be particularly careful). Drink lots of fluid, eat a light diet high in carbohydrates, and keep warm at all times.

Be aware of the following medical situations. If not treated properly, they can be fatal:

**Hypothermia or exposure** is a life-threatening lowering of the body temperature that can occur in air temperatures as high as 10°C (50°F). It may result from being cold, wet or poorly clothed.

**Signs/symptoms:** Clumsiness, stumbling, apathy, lethargy, loss of enthusiasm and thinking ability, disorientation and unconsciousness.

**Treatment:** Act immediately to warm the patient. Create a warm dry environment, e.g. put the patient in a sleeping bag with one or two other people. Warm energy-rich drinks like cocoa will help. The recovering patient will need rest and should be taken straight to camp or a lodge.

**Acute Mountain Sickness** affects many people at or above 3050m (10,000 feet).

**Signs/symptoms:** headache, nausea, fatigue, malaise, loss of appetite and difficulty in sleeping.

**Treatment:** Slow down, stay in camp, drink water and rest while your body adjusts to the altitude. If symptoms persist after 48 hours, descend to a lower altitude.

**In case of severe symptoms (severe headache, loss of coordination, breathing difficulties) the patient should be evacuated immediately for medical attention.**

#### HEAT ILLNESS

Hiking in hot sunny weather can cause these two conditions:

##### Heat exhaustion

**Signs/symptoms:** - Weakness, fatigue, headache, vertigo, thirst, nausea/vomiting, faintness; temperature 39°-40°C (102°-104°F).

**Treatment:** Patient should lie flat in the shade. Act immediately to cool the patient by removing clothing, soaking body with cold water, and fanning. Rehydrate patient with rehydration mixture or water. Monitor patient's temperature.

##### Heat Stroke

**Signs/symptoms:** - Delirium, coma, rapid pulse, rapid breathing, skin hot and dry, temperature above 40°C (104°F)

**Treatment:** As for heat exhaustion. **This condition can be fatal if not treated promptly. Evacuate if possible.**



## WILDLIFE - Try to avoid any interaction.

Wild animals in NCA normally avoid contact with hikers. Some animals, particularly buffalo and elephant, may attack if surprised or provoked. When hiking in forest or dense bush, clap or call out frequently to warn animals of your approach. If you meet an aggressive animal, obey the orders of your ranger and guide.

Never feed wild animals, particularly monkeys and baboons. They will learn that people are a source of food and begin stealing it by force. **They can be highly dangerous.**



## To help you plan...

### HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR WALKING SAFARI

Most walking safaris are arranged in advance through tour companies specialising in such trips. If you have made no plans, you must first contact:

**NCAA Tourism Office, PO Box 1, Ngorongoro**

Tel/Fax: 255 27 2537007

e-mail: [ncaa\\_faru@cybernet.co.tz](mailto:ncaa_faru@cybernet.co.tz); or

**NCAA Liaison Office, PO Box 766, Arusha**

Tel/Fax: 255 27 2502603 / 2548752

website: [ngorongoro-crater-africa.org](http://ngorongoro-crater-africa.org)  
located near Clock Tower, on Boma Road, Arusha.

You can do a variety of short day trips with very little advance warning. Our office staff can discuss possible routes and assign you a guide. Please arrange such trips at least the day before you intend to hike.

Recommended short hikes include:

- Empakaai Crater (East or South rim to crater floor);
- Nainokanoka to Olmoti Crater and Munge waterfall;
- Ilmisihiyo to Lemagatut summit;
- Forest walks from Karatu/Tloma area

For longer hikes requiring one or more nights in camp, you must provide all necessary camping equipment and supplies, and you must give us 30 days' notice to arrange campsites, guides and donkeys for transporting equipment.

### WEATHER

**Rainy season (November through May):** Prevailing winds come from the east, so the forested eastern slopes of the highlands get much more rain than the arid country to the west. The amount and pattern of rainfall varies greatly from year to year. A dry period in January or February may split the rainy season into short and long rains. It never rains all the time. There are short showers or storms, usually in the afternoon or at night. Clouds may hang around the peaks, creating dense fog. When they lift, the views are spectacular and the air is clear. Roads, however, can be slippery or even impassable.

**Dry season (June through October):** Colder, with July the coldest and driest month. Highland temperatures may fall below freezing, and grey overcast conditions are common. Dust and smoke reduce visibility. Fires are frequent, especially in the south-west of NCA.



## Emergencies

### IF YOU GET LOST

It shouldn't happen, but it could, and the time to prepare for it is now! You can become very quickly disoriented in fog or in forest. If this happens, don't panic. Stay where you are, find shelter if necessary. Your guide will come back to look for you, but he'll find you sooner if you're still on the trail!

Your day-pack should always contain: instant body shelter (warm and waterproof), matches or a lighter, something for signalling (a mirror, also a whistle), food and drink, especially water, a basic First-Aid kit, a compass and torch.

### IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Contact nearest ranger station to alert NCAA HQ by radio. Write down all information on victim's condition and location. Be familiar with nearest source of help e.g. hospitals and airstrips - refer to the map.

**You must only hike in Ngorongoro Conservation Area with a NCAA-approved guide. Hiking alone is prohibited; it could be fatal!**