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Producer [00:00:03] This is sound roll, 37. It's the 26 of the third 1992. Channel 13 WNET Travels, Le Mal D'Afrique project number 401. Sound roll 37. turns at neg eight.

Producer [00:00:26] We are continuing the wild track with Peter and John in the car. But the engine not running.

John Heminway [00:00:35] Peter, I have to tell you that that for me, the Serengeti is kind of the heart of wild Africa. You come here. I've been here maybe 20, 25 times in my lifetime. I never get tired of it. It's just something new to see every single time. And I don't feel that trip to Africa is really complete without the Serengeti.

Peter [00:00:55] Serengeti is certainly my favorite national park. It's a it's a vast area. It really is a reserve for animals and not a recreational area yet for people, the way many other parks are. The great thing about the Serengeti for me is that you could see anything, anywhere. Serengeti has everything. I have to tell you, though, that, having traveled a lot and done a lot of walking in many parts of Tanzania, some of my favorite areas are actually outside the national parks because people, and I think it's it's the people of Tanzania that that I find one of the most important things about the country. People are, in my view, part of the landscape. And it's great to come to the Serengeti and see everything here. But for me, there's this there's this one element missing, the people. And I love spending time outside of the parks where there are people. And of course, not so long ago we were here, too, and. Not not very long ago we were part of this ecosystem. Not just in cars, driving through it, looking at it almost from the outside. And that, that, that's what fascinates me. Our, our relationship to nature and and how that's changed.

John Heminway [00:02:14] Sure. It would. What strikes me is that this is the last great major migration in the world. There are a couple of others, one in Alaska, one in Botswana. But this is it. This is the creme de la creme of migrations. But 150 years ago, there were many out migrations like this. And I mean, I think the most impressive one must have been the bison going across the middle of America in the tallgrass prairies and so forth. We wiped it out. All we have left is the Serengeti, as far as I'm concerned, and Africa has preserved it. We owe much to Africa for that reason, and we come back here every year because it reminds us of, of our own past in a very, very odd and wonderful way.

Peter [00:03:01] Yeah, it does. I think that there are a lot of things about East Africa that rings many bells at a very deep level. But just talking about migrations, I think, I think the Serengeti migration of the wildebeest and zebra is safe. And I think it's going to be here for a long time to come because we don't just have the Serengeti National Park, we've got the Maasai Mara that it adjoins. And Kenya. We've got the Ngoroongoro Conservation Area, which actually includes half of the Serengeti Plains, the geographical feature. And, so you've got a huge area well in excess of 20,000 square kilometers, that almost entirely includes the wildebeest and zebra migration. It's a good area. Good size for elephant, too. It's great rhino habitat. Not that there are that many rhino left. And it's it's very, very good for cheetah, for example, and wild dog. Two other species that are that are endangered. And I think that the the combination of these areas is really viable for a long, long time, as long as, as long as things don't change dramatically.

John Heminway [00:04:13] But don't you feel that the Serengeti, because of its uniqueness, is not solely the responsibility of Tanzania? We can't only expect Tanzania to protect it. I think it's the world's responsibility to come in and help Tanzania.

Peter [00:04:28] That's absolutely I think it's a little bit unfair for, for outside countries to say, well, we insist that you set aside all of this land for wildlife. And one of the reasons we insist you do this is because we've already blown away all the wildlife in our own country.

John Heminway [00:04:45] Precisely.

Peter [00:04:46] Over the last 150 years. I think that that that everybody should contribute. Tanzania is a country that is facing quite a lot of problems and is under a lot of pressure in many ways. And almost 25% of Tanzania's area is taken up by a national park, a game reserve, a forest reserve, some kind of protected area.

John Heminway [00:05:12] Far more than the United States. We have about 2% or something. They have 25% of their country that they set aside. Yes, we don't pay them credit for that.

Peter [00:05:22] They deserve a lot of credit for that. And they certainly deserve a lot of help with maintaining that, because as the population rises, the pressure for that land, for the direct use of the population is going to increase.

John Heminway [00:05:39] Five. God, I must say, these lions are absolutely beautiful. You see a huge number of lions in the Serengeti, don't you? I mean, it seems that you can stumble across maybe two or three prides in the course of day just with a normal drive through the Serengeti.

Peter [00:05:57] Quite easily. And the great thing about the prides that are in the Serengeti is that they're quite often over 25, 30 strong. And, you know, as you say, I see lions a lot, but it's still a thrill every time you come around the corner and there's, there's this huge animal sitting there, and then you start looking in the bushes and you find one here and one there, and you realize you're in the middle of the whole pride.

John Heminway [00:06:21] What I find so interesting about the dynamics of predation here is that these lions, unlike the the prey species, are permanent. They stay in one territory, more or less. And they, and the prey, prey species moves through. The wildebeest, move through, the zebra, move through. And and so they have a kind of a moveable feast going through. But unfortunately, it's not year round. So there are times of plenty and there are times of nothing for these guys. And right now, of course, they look pretty fat. These ones look as if they just had a meal this morning. But they're in great shape. But, you know, perhaps in six months time, we'll come back and see the same lions and they'll be just, you know, skeletal.

Peter [00:07:09] Oh, yeah. That their body weight fluctuates dramatically. Rainy season to dry season. And of course, that the carnivore population is geared to the leanest time of year. Right now, it's a time of plenty. All of the carnivores are full and well-fed, and hunting is relatively easy. It never gets very easy. It's always hard work. A lot of people think that Lion simply has to get up and go out there and, you know, grab a wildebeest and haul it off and eat it. In fact, it's very, very hard work. And I've seen lionesses very, very badly hurt and indeed die from the wounds they have received from wildebeest, zebra, buffalo. So there's quite a lot of selection going on there, but the population is geared to the lean time of year. It's been said that if, if, when the migration is actually in the Serengeti, Serengeti could handle a population of more than seven times the current number of carnivores.

John Heminway [00:08:10] Peter, looking at these lionesses here, I'm struck by, you know, they say the lion is the king of the jungle. I'd like to rephrase that. The lioness is the queen of the jungle. That's where it really is. I mean, she's she's them. She's in charge as the chief. She's the matriarch.

Peter [00:08:27] Yeah, it's the females that do most of the hunting. There's been an interesting process with the lions. The males compete with each other for access to groups of females, which are called prides, and for territories within which those prides live. And just, the selection there has been for bigger and stronger males. Males with more impressive manes. And so the males have done this at the expense of their own hunting ability. The males are very, very powerful, but they're too big to hide and stalk as effectively as the females. And so the really big, tough, strong, dominant males are dependent on the females for their food. And in fact, males that are unsuccessful in taking over pride or get kicked out of a pride will often starve to death because within the pride they keep an eye on the females and when the females make a kill, they bully their way in and eat their fill first. But the females aren't, I want to get this, get this right. The females aren't hunting for the males. The females are hunting when the females get hungry. So if the males miss out on a kill, they're going to get mighty hungry before the females hunt again.

John Heminway [00:09:37] I think we got a lot to learn from these females. Did I hear they.

Producer [00:09:43] Bit of wild track atmos.

Peter [00:09:45] And then we want to.

Producer [00:09:48] Here we go, sit nice and quiet. [background sound].

Producer [00:10:09] And here's some wild track atmos for 3-80. Take one, mute front board. [background sound].

Producer [00:11:28] And you could possibly use that as a loop. It was a wild track of the Land Rover underway running in the bush. It was, in fact, just going around in circles around me. So it was quite a long wild track of the Landrover atmos as it's going over the bush. Shot from the road. 3-8-2 coming up. [background sound].

John Heminway [00:12:05] Yeah.

John Heminway [00:12:23] Okay. They're going to start going.

Unidentified [00:12:25] hang on, you know.

John Heminway [00:12:34] Careful here. Careful. That's great Peter. Pry another dead wildebeest.

Peter [00:12:52] Some times we get, surprisingly, quite [indecipherable]. It looks like they're going to start moving soon. Looks like they got something big.

John Heminway [00:13:10] Do you think it's bigger than a baby, baby wildebeest?

Peter [00:13:11] No, I think it's an adult.

John Heminway [00:13:14] I guess. Oh, I sure don't want to move. Wonder if they want to negotiate. Bet you feel like an early hominid out here, doesn't it?

Peter [00:13:48] Oh, yeah. Yeah. Adult wildebeest like this could have a lot of scrapes on it.

John Heminway [00:13:59] Rather ripe.

Peter [00:14:01] Well,.

John Heminway [00:14:03] It's been dead for a I'd say, a couple of days. Wouldn't you? Or do you think it's last night.

Peter [00:14:08] Could even be last night. It could be last night. Yeah, see that, it's still fairly soft.

John Heminway [00:14:15] Yeah. Stomach contents are a little bit here.

Peter [00:14:20] A little bit left. It's been dragged from over there. Could be the hyenas got him.

John Heminway [00:14:25] You think hyenas brought it down? Not lions?

Peter [00:14:28] Could well be or could be a completely natural death? What'll give it away would be looking at things like the end of the scapula here.

Crew Member [00:14:38] Yeah, I'm cutting.

John Heminway [00:14:39] Good.

Producer [00:14:40] Slate.

Crew Member [00:14:42] Okay.

Producer [00:14:44] 3-82 on the end. 3-8-3 coming up.

Crew Member [00:14:48] Ready?

John Heminway [00:14:49] Yeah. Okay. Do you think it was last night?

Peter [00:14:58] Yeah. Could well be. Um. Yeah. Still all, fairly soft. So it was probably last night and.

John Heminway [00:15:06] A little ripe. So, um.

Peter [00:15:09] Well, I've seen worse. Um.

John Heminway [00:15:12] Who do you think brought it down?

Peter [00:15:13] Well it's hard to, hard to know who brought it down? Could be. Could easily be a natural death. But I can see that hyenas have been working on, on it. Yeah.

There's chew, chew marks around the nose. Chew, chew marks up there. Some of the rib ends here have been chewed off. Um, now, if we were early, early hominids scavenging on the plane, there'd be lots and lots of good stuff here for us. Little bit along the spine, back in here, I'm sure. And, um, this, this is quite an interesting example, actually, because, see, these lower limbs here, absolutely nothing has been done on this, and nothing's been eaten here.

John Heminway [00:15:52] Mm hmm.

Peter [00:15:53] And the other foot as well, both front feet. These are the sorts of bones you find on early hominid sites.

John Heminway [00:16:00] So they would brought those home.

Peter [00:16:01] They would have brought that home. They got here late on the scene. All immediate parts of the body have been eaten. These lower limbs here are untouched.

John Heminway [00:16:08] Right.

Peter [00:16:09] And they can wither, with it with a stone tool. You can just cut the skin off, carry them home and remove some scraps of meat, break them open and get the marrow.

John Heminway [00:16:15] Yeah, but stone tools could have also been used to cut the skin off. You penetrate the.

Peter [00:16:21] Absolutely. If they, if they got there earlier on the scene, they could have done all kinds of butchery with stone tools.

John Heminway [00:16:27] And great. Off we go.

Speaker 5 [00:16:33] We have a history. Sorry.

Producer [00:16:37] This is a wild track of the bees. The flies buzzing here over the carcass. [background sound].

Producer [00:17:15] 3-85 coming up.

Crew Member [00:17:18] Here slate. Okay anytime.

Unidentified [00:17:23] You want do it.

Crew Member [00:17:25] Yeah yeah. Okay.

Producer [00:18:24] 3-8-6.

Unidentified [00:18:26] Where are you. Okay.

Crew Member [00:18:44] Just roll down.

Producer [00:18:48] 3-8-7 coming up. [background sound]

Producer [00:19:30] 3-8-8 coming up.

John Heminway [00:19:32] Okay.

Crew Member [00:19:32] You came there.

Crew Member [00:20:05] I have to change position as.

Producer [00:20:08] 3-8-8 on the end. 3-8-9.

Unidentified [00:20:12] Not yet. Not yet.

Crew Member [00:20:14] Okay. [background sound].

Crew Member [00:20:31] Could you get a little more coal please. little more coal. I'll give them. [background sound].

Crew Member [00:21:01] Okay.

Producer [00:21:04] 3-90 coming up.

Crew Member [00:21:08] Okay. Let's go ahead and use that. next bleep. Any time. [background sound].

Crew Member [00:22:04] Okay. .

Producer [00:22:06] 3-9-1.

Unidentified [00:22:07] And remove the left or right, whatever he does it. Okay. Now that I know that I was doing okay. Okay.

Crew Member [00:22:39] Okay.