



LAZING LIONS
Serengeti NP, Tanzania

Photographer: **Kym & Tonya Illman**

Safari-goers often sigh that spotting a lion on the African savannah is by no means guaranteed. It's even less likely they'll be spotted high above the ground. But Kym and Tonya Illman photographed *nine* of the big cats branch-lounging in the Serengeti sunshine. Remarkably, this is actually one of their more conventionally shot images – they have also used drones and camera-equipped remote-controlled cars to frame Africa's wildlife at its very best.

***Africa on Safari* by Kym & Tonya Illman (Papadakis; £30; <http://papadakis.net>) is out now. Kym shares his tips on how you can take better travel photos on p80**



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Safari snapper

Kym Illman explains how he took a small step backwards in order to make a big statement

At this Great Migration crossing at the Mara River, Kenya, everyone was focused on the animals in the water, but I felt there was actually a better story playing out to my left. While the wildebeest risked their lives, there were 60-plus vehicles on the riverbank watching. As guides jockeyed for the best vantage points, some of the guests stood on the roofs of their vehicles, snapping, shouting and laughing. Few realise just how many people go to watch the crossing – most photos are of the migration itself. I wanted to compare the jostling wildebeest to the herds of humans.

I love the variety of people in this shot compared to the relative uniformity of the wildebeest. It was like a circus – a little sad even, given the poor behaviour of some of the spectators and guides. Taking a photo like this shows deeper insight into a much-photographed scene. 



Kym and Tonya Illman are professional wildlife photographers. *Africa on Safari* (Papadakis, £30; <http://papadakis.net>) is out now.

1 Look around you

We can all be guilty of focusing on the action in front of us, but being aware of what's happening all around us yields rewards too. After I'd shot images of the tens of thousands of wildebeest in the river, I looked left and saw a different shot, one that revealed a story seldom told.

2 Focus is revealing

I set the camera to f/2.8 and focused on the middle of the herd. This resulted in the crowd being more out of focus the further they were away from the herd. By blurring the features of the crowd, it allowed the viewer to see what I saw: first, the Great Migration, then the pack of camera-wielding tourists as the eye gets drawn subtly to the other spectacle looming in the background.

3 Positioning is key

I'd noticed the gathered crowd previously, but on those occasions I hadn't had the time to reposition the vehicle. This time, we tried a couple of spots before settling on this one – with no other vehicles between us and the wildebeests, but yet far enough away that I could condense the whole scene using a 300mm lens.

4 Stay close to the action

When it comes to accommodation, choose properties that provide the shortest travelling time to the animals. It is cheaper to stay outside a park, but if it means you miss the first and last hour of light as you drive into (and out of) the park, that saving could cost a photographer their best shots.

TOP TIP

Always use a polarising filter once the sun is high enough to make a difference. Your colours will be richer and window glare will be eliminated, as it was in this image.

5 Protect your gear

Dust is your enemy on a safari. Use rubber lens coats on long lenses, place your cameras on sandbags on the floor of your vehicle and keep smaller items – filters, lens caps, etc – in sealed bags or tubs to minimise exposure to dust.