



Friendly Lake Turkana faces.

it nearly impossible to grow any food. I noted in my journal that I would be more impressed with the wisdom of their culinary superstitions if they allowed fish and made apples taboo.

I also stopped in at the small Kenyan Wildlife Service office and asked for road information to our next destination of the Sibiloi National Park, a day's drive to the north. I knew that in the rainy season it was impossible to drive there and the only access was by plane or boat. This I regarded as a potential problem because most afternoons treated us to massive downpours. The wildlife service sent a Land Rover truck every week to the park and one was scheduled to leave the next day. I returned the next evening to radio the Sibiloi camp and got confirmation that the road was mostly dry with no unusually bad sections. Coming from strangers, the description "not unusually bad" wasn't particularly reassuring – road terminology can be horribly discretionary – and Guy, Marleen

and I hung onto the only qualitative word: dry. We packed and left at the next day's first light.

Forty kilometres north of Loiyangalani, we arrived at an intersection marked by a three-metre-wide circle of rocks. This was our last possible exit before committing to the road north on to Ethiopia. If we followed the tracks east, we would cross the Chalbi desert and eventually intersect



the main all-weather and corrugated north-south highway.

After a quick re-confirmation that everybody was game to try our route, we were off, enjoying large flats of compact sand lengthy enough to get the motorcycle into fourth and fifth gears, a treat after days of crawling slowly over rocks.

The fast flats ended as quickly as they started, and the next three hours passed slowly as

One of the fast sections to Sibiloi.

we continued north, stopping only occasionally to check the maps and the GPS. Herds of camels stood uninterested as we passed by, and I wondered where their owners were. The road settled into decent tracks for dozens of kilometres, but if the tracks got too corrugated I would slide up onto the ground beside the road. I smiled as my tires made fresh tracks in between well-spaced bushes. This was Africa off-road riding done the safe way. Standing on the foot pegs, I could see the curve of the road, and I stayed within five metres of it. The soft ground allowed me to lean the bike between the bushes and carve wide, lazy turns as if I was skiing.

And like skiing, I was pooped after four hours of doing it in the sun. I was very happy to see the park gates and wardens' hut. The 154 kilometres had taken seven and a half hours to do, so I was not thrilled to find out that the lakeside camp was another 20 kilometres down a dead-end road. The guard told me that the road to the campsite was good. As I was to discover, he lied to me. Either that, or he simply did not know that

long stretches of sandy riverbed, followed by a deep-water crossing in a croc-infested lake, do not qualify as a good road for a loaded motorcycle.

We arrived to find that our "deluxe campsite" consisted of a big tree and a small outhouse. On the upside, we had the place to ourselves. Almost on cue, a cool breeze drifted in from the east, bringing dark clouds.

Within a few minutes the rain came, accompanied by great blasts of thunder and flashes of lightning. Out with the shampoo and off with the clothes for another desert shower courtesy of Mother Nature. I expected a brief shower like our previous bush camp shower, but after 45 minutes the rain continued to pour.

I squatted in the grass with nowhere to hide and watched the horizon for any sign of clearing skies. Like a kettle never boiling if you watch it, rainy skies will never clear if you are sitting in cold wet grass on the shore of Lake Turkana. After an hour, the skies grudgingly rolled over to a pale grey, but it continued to spit as we set up the tents. The lightning



The day's last water crossing in Lake Turkana.