



## **ETHIOPIA:**

### **BIRDING THE ROOF OF AFRICA; WITH SOUTHERN EXTENSION A Tropical Birding Set Departure**

**February 7 – March 1, 2010  
Guide: Ken Behrens**

**All photos taken by Ken Behrens  
during this trip**

## **ORIENTATION**

I have chosen to use a different format for this trip report. First, comes a general introduction to Ethiopia. The text of this section is largely drawn from the recently published *Birding Ethiopia*, authored by Keith Barnes, Christian, Boix and I. For more information on the book, check out <http://www.lynxeds.com/product/birding-ethiopia>. After the country introduction comes a summary of the highlights of this tour. Next comes a day-by-day itinerary. Finally, there is an annotated bird list and a mammal list.

## **ETHIOPIA INTRODUCTION**

Many people imagine Ethiopia as a flat, famine-ridden desert, but this is far from the case. Ethiopia is remarkably diverse, and unexpectedly lush. This is the 'roof of Africa', holding the continent's largest and most contiguous mountain ranges, and some of its tallest peaks. Cleaving the mountains is the Great Rift Valley, which is dotted with beautiful lakes. Towards the borders of the country lie stretches of dry scrub that are more like the desert most people imagine. But even in this arid savanna, diversity is high, and the desert explodes into verdure during the rainy season. The diversity of Ethiopia's landscapes supports a parallel diversity of birds and other wildlife, and although birds are the focus of our tour, there is much more to the country. Ethiopia is the only country in Africa that was never systematically colonized, and



**Rueppell's Robin-Chat, a bird of the  
Ethiopian mountains.**



has a proud history that includes stories of King Solomon, the Queen of Sheba, and the Arc of the Covenant. A staggering variety of languages and cultures including those of the Hamar, Mursi, Oromo and Afar people, is splashed across Ethiopia. Many people here live much the same as they have for thousands of years. Traveling into the countryside can be like stepping back in time. Fields are plowed by oxen, grain threshed by hand, and homes made from plants gathered in the surrounding area. There is something magical about seeing a tree full of the grass nests of Social-Weavers above a hut whose roof is woven from the same material. This kind of harmony between humans and other creatures is long forgotten in more 'industrialized' countries. Although this country is poor by modern standards, the people are friendly and open, and few places in Africa are as safe or rich in culture.



**The endemic Thick-billed Raven, with its simply stupendous bill, the largest of any passerine!**

Ethiopia is one of the world's premier birding destinations. It supports about 850 species, putting it in Africa's top 10. But the total species count does not tell the whole story, as it is second only to South Africa when it comes to the number of endemic species it supports. There are 16 endemics restricted to political Ethiopia and another 18 'Abyssinian' endemics only found in Ethiopia and Eritrea. For the birder wanting to economize, and see the greatest number of birds in the fewest trips to Africa, Ethiopia is an essential destination, along with Cameroon, Kenya, and South Africa.

Ethiopia's most sought-after endemics are the bizarre Stresemann's Bush Crow, a communal cooperative 'white-crow', and the enigmatic, endangered, and spectacular Prince Ruspoli's Turaco. The highlands support one of the world's tamest rallids, the dapper Rouget's Rail, which shares its moist highland habitat with the delicate Spot-breasted Lapwing, the fiery-throated Abyssinian Longclaw, and the strange Blue-winged Goose, an offshoot of a group of South American waterfowl. Other more common, but no less impressive endemics include the Thick-billed Raven, endowed

with a bill that looks like it could open a tin can, the dapper Black-winged Lovebird, striking Banded Barbet, and beautiful White-cheeked Turaco.

Ethiopia is blessed with the most extensive areas of montane forest and grassland in Africa, holding 49 species that are restricted to the Afrotropical highlands biome. It is also located in the core of the Somali-Maasai biome (which it shares primarily with Kenya, Tanzania and Somalia), and supports 98 of the 129 species restricted to this bioregion. In addition, Ethiopia is home to a group of species with Sahel and Sudan-Guinea savanna influences, making it arguably the best place in Africa to look for arid-zone birds. Although one might be tempted to think 'arid-zone birding' means hordes of larks and cisticolas, the semi-deserts of Ethiopia offer an array of spectacular and inviting species. Highlights include the rufous Fox Kestel, a bounty of sandgrouse, Abyssinian Roller, the majestic Arabian Bustard, vivid Vulturine Guineafowl, Red-naped Bush Shrike, and even the erratic and unpredictable Golden Pipit and Magpie Starling. Perhaps the finest resident of these



**In my opinion, the Abyssinian Roller is the better-looking cousin of the much more famous Lilac-breasted (which we also see on this tour). It is common in much of Ethiopia.**



**A typical Rift Valley sight: birds and people at a proximity that would be unbelievable almost anywhere else on earth.**

parts is the electrifying Golden-breasted Starling, small flocks of which light up parched Acacia trees adjacent the roads.

The Great Rift Valley cuts through the heart of Ethiopia, and holds a mosaic of habitats including hill and valley bushveld, grassland, swamp, woodland, savanna, and forest, alongside a string of astonishing lakes that have formed a veritable avian Garden of Eden. Bustling wetlands such as those at Ziway and Langano hold a fantastic selection of Palearctic and resident waterfowl, which mingle



with herons and egrets strutting along the shores, Black Crowned-Cranes, Black Crakes, African Jacanas, Pied and Malachite Kingfishers, and more. The adjacent woodlands support a mélange of hornbills, starlings, rollers, bee-eaters, weavers and finches. Day lists of 150 or more birds are regular in the Rift Valley. The most amazing spectacle in the Rift is the famous Awassa Fish Market, one of the most authentic Ethiopian cultural and wildlife experiences on offer. The hardships of life in the lake are carved and tanned into the leathery faces of fishermen who gut and auction their catch in the early morning market. A few feet in front of them swarm Marabou Storks, Great White Pelicans, cormorants, Hamerkop, Sacred Ibis and up to five species of gulls, that frantically squabble over fish scraps. The birds here are oblivious to humans, their senses trained only to whatever food is discarded. One sometimes has to actually push through the birds to walk about. This market is one of the world's most impressive birding spectacles. Ethiopian cultures universally have a strong respect for birds, making them unbelievably tame. There is no destination in Africa, or perhaps the world, where a bird photographer will have more willing subjects, and comparable variety.

While Ethiopia is of course an Afrotropical destination, it supports an amazing number of Palearctic migrant birds, that bolster the already impressive avian diversity between October and March. In particular, far eastern European migrants are a feature, with Upcher's Warbler, White-throated Robin, Thrush Nightingale, Isabelline Wheatear, Red-throated Pipit, and Masked Shrike, all fairly likely. You can often see four or five subspecies of Yellow Wagtail feeding side by side, for an incredible comparative study of these northern migrants. For raptorphiles Ethiopia must rank as the greatest place on Earth. The myriad resident raptors are reinforced by migrant Lesser and Greater Spotted, Imperial and Steppe Eagles, Eurasian Sparrowhawks, and Long-legged Buzzards, Amur Falcons, and more. The Rift acts as a funnel for migrating birds, and is a major flyway. The streams of raptors, not to mention hirundines and shorebirds, moving through, are nothing short of phenomenal.



A pair of boreal breeding shrikes that spend the winter in Ethiopia: Isabelline (left) and Woodchat (right).

## TOUR SUMMARY

This trip was quite successful, netting 561 species, including every Ethiopian and Abyssinian endemic save the nondescript Yellow-rumped Serin and near-mythical Nechisar Nightjar. Three experiences stand out as particularly exceptional. One was watching a tree full of the rare endemic Linneated Pitilia in the Jemmu Valley. There were at least 40 of these beautiful birds, a mind-blowing sight, especially to a guide who has spent long hours in search of a glimpse of one or two! Another was a long visit with a Barbary Falcon, an exceptionally rare bird in Ethiopia. This handsome raptor swept over us several times before finally settling on a nearby snag to allow proper study, documentation, and enjoyment! The final was a close



Two of the 40+ Linneated Pytilias we saw in the Jemmu Valley!



This Abyssinian Long-eared Owl was one of the highlights of the tour. What a bird!

encounter with an African (or Abyssinian) Long-eared Owl. While there are records from Kenya and elsewhere in east Africa, and this species is not technically endemic, it is rare everywhere, including the heart of its range in Ethiopia. This was also an incredible trip for francolins and bustards. We saw every conceivable francolin, including Coqui, Moorland, Clapperton's, and Archer's (Orange River). The scarce Hartlaub's and Arabian bustards were enjoyed along with a suite of other bustards.

Some of the other interesting and exceptional species seen included the towering Saddle-billed Stork, Pangaea holdover Blue-winged Goose, African Pygmy-goose, Lammergeier, Western Banded Snake-Eagle, Greater Spotted, Imperial, and 8 other *Aquila* eagles, Crowned Hawk-Eagle, Amur and Pygmy Falcons, African Hobby, Vulturine Guinea fowl, Wattled Crane, the world's most extroverted rail: Rouget's, Allen's Gallinule, Somali and



Three-banded Coursers, dozens of Spot-breasted Lapwings, Chestnut-bellied, Black-faced, and Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse, Yellow-fronted Parrot, a pair of exquisite turacos: Prince Ruspoli's and White-cheeked, 6 hornbills, plus the extraordinary Abyssinian Ground-Hornbill, Red-and-yellow, Yellow-breasted, and Banded Barbets, Rufous-necked Wryneck, Abyssinian Woodpecker, White-tailed, Red-winged, Gillett's, Sidamo, Foxy, Erlanger's, and Somali Short-toed Larks, Black-crowned and Chestnut-headed Sparrow-Larks, White-tailed Swallow, fiery-throated Abyssinian Longclaw, Abyssinian Ground-Thrush, Green-backed Eremomela, Brown and 'Bale' Parisomas, Gambaga Flycatcher, 6 species of wheatear, a stunning Bluethroat, rare Brown-tailed and Sombre Chats, exuberant Abyssinian Catbird, 13 species of sunbirds, 10 or more Red-naped Bushshrikes, Stresemann's Bush-Crow, Thick-billed Raven, a passel of gorgeous starlings including Golden-breasted, Shelley's, White-crowned, Bristle-crowned, Sharpe's, and Magpie, Northern Masked- and Juba Weavers, and Ankober, Yellow-throated, and Salvadori's Serins.



Prince Ruspoli's Turaco. We spent an afternoon with 15 north of Negele!

One of its most interesting and sometimes frustrating aspects of this trip was the odd and unseasonable weather. It rained on the majority of days, and often torrentially! For dry Ethiopia, particularly during this portion of the year, this weather was most unexpected. The strange weather had significantly altered bird behavior, and some species that are normally easy to see became elusive. On the other hand, we had exceptionally good luck finding rare and unusual birds, some of whose occurrence might have been related to the atypical weather. Probably because of the weather, the night birding was much poorer than normal, particularly in Awash NP. Thankfully things weren't so dire in the arid south, and we caught up with several species that we had failed to find in Awash. The rain made it impossible to cross the remote Afar plane, and shortened our time in Melka Ghebdu, though it was a tribute to our driver's skills that we were only stuck in the mud once, and then only for a few minutes! Though the wet weather posed minor logistical problems, it was a pleasure to see the countryside greening up around us, and the normally dusty air was perfectly clear. Despite a few challenges we persevered and enjoyed another highly successful Ethiopia tour.

## ITINERARY

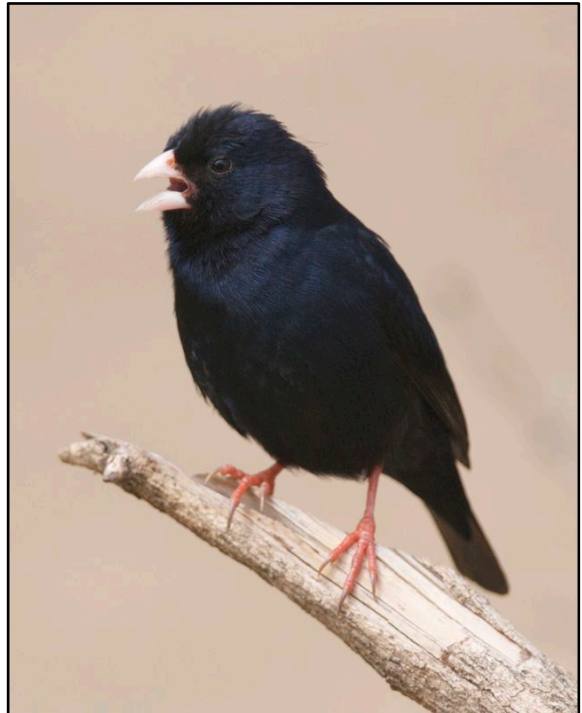
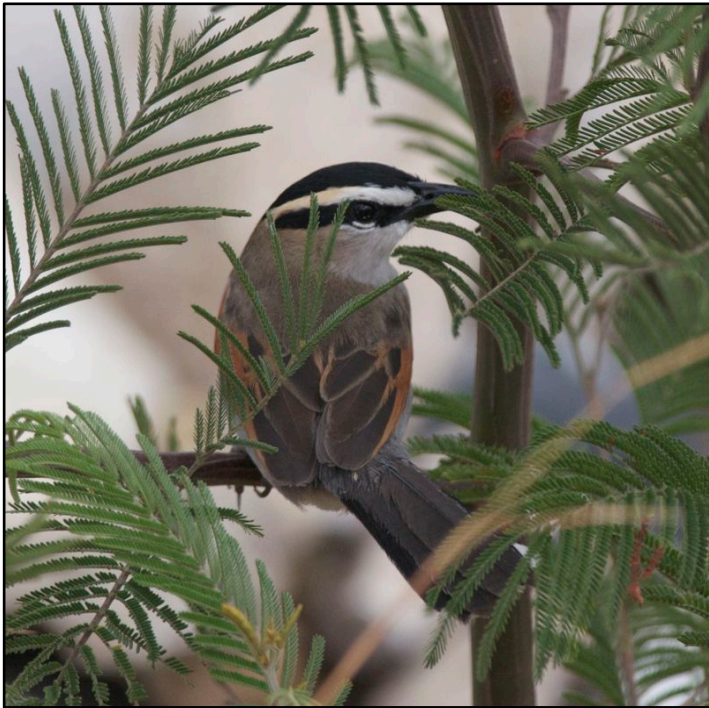
<b>February 7</b>	Arrival in Addis. Sululta Plain and Gefersa Reservoir.
<b>February 8</b>	Sululta Plain and Debre Libanos.
<b>February 9</b>	Jemmu Valley.
<b>February 10</b>	Ankober Escarpment and Melka Ghebdu.
<b>February 11</b>	Travel day to Awash NP via Addis Ababa.
<b>February 12</b>	Awash NP.
<b>February 13</b>	Awash NP.
<b>February 14</b>	Awash to Bilen.
<b>February 15</b>	Bilen to Central Rift Valley Lakes.
<b>February 16</b>	Lake Langano to Lake Awassa.
<b>February 17</b>	Awassa to Wondo Genet.
<b>February 18</b>	Wondo Genet to Bale Mountains NP.
<b>February 19</b>	Bale Mountains NP (Sanetti Plateau)
<b>February 20</b>	Sof Omar.
<b>February 21</b>	Goba to Negele (via Bale Mountains NP, Hareenna Forest)
<b>February 22</b>	Liben Plain, Negele Area.
<b>February 23</b>	Negele and Wadera areas.
<b>February 24</b>	Negele to Yabello.
<b>February 25</b>	Yabello and Mega.
<b>February 26</b>	Yabello to Arba Minch. Nechisar NP.
<b>February 27</b>	Nechisar NP.
<b>February 28</b>	Arba Minch to Langano.
<b>March 1</b>	Langano to Addis. Late evening / early morning departures.



Golden-breasted Starling is always a highlight of southern Ethiopia.

## GALLERY

*follows chronology of trip*

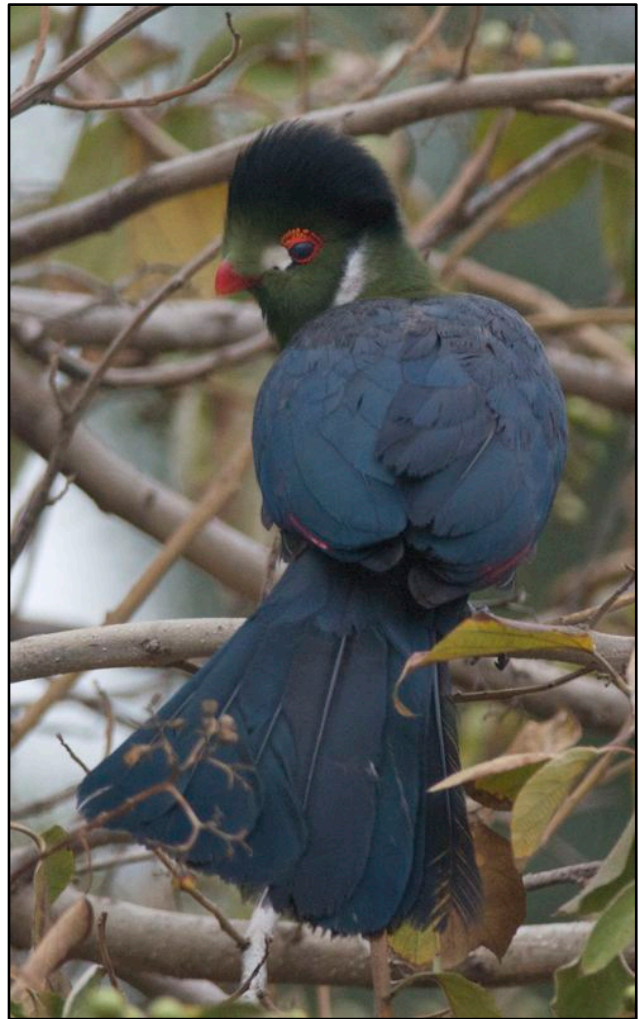


This Black-crowned Tchagra (left) distracted us from eating lunch at the Portuguese Bridge, while this Village Indigobird (right) allowed unusually close approach at Debre Libanos.



An Egyptian Vulture soars through the vast gorge below the Portuguese Bridge.





Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush (left) is a winter visitor while White-cheeked Turaco (right) is a near endemic resident. Both are found around the escarpment in the area of Debre Libanos.



Green-backed Eremomela (left) and Dark Chanting-Goshawk (right), both in the Jemmu Valley.





The Ankober Serin is close to endemic to a large slab of rock in north / central Ethiopia!



Though this photo doesn't do the scene justice, it shows part of the treeful of Linneated Pytilias that we saw in the Jemmu Valley (left). On the right is a treeful of Slender-billed Starlings near Melka Ghebdu.





One of our first mammal sightings in Awash National Park was this golden jackal, that blends remarkably well with the parched, over-grazed landscape.



Nyanza Swift (right) and Beisa oryx (left), two very different denizens of Awash.





**Hartlaub's Bustard on our final 'game drive' in Awash NP – a most satisfying conclusion to our time there!**



**The 'carnivoring' in Awash was exceptional this year. Along with the Golden Jackal from the previous page, we saw this Black-backed Jackal, plus Bat-eared Fox, and Striped AND Spotted Hyenas!**





The diminutive Mouse-coloured Penduline-Tit (left) and showy Awash specialty Nile Valley Sunbird (right).



A beautifully cryptic pair of Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse near Bilen Lodge.





**Yellow-breasted Barbet is easily seen around Bilen Lodge, sometimes in the hedges around the chalets!**



**Ethiopia is probably the best place in the world to see Arabian Bustard, which has been hunted nearly to extinction in most of the countries where it occurs.**





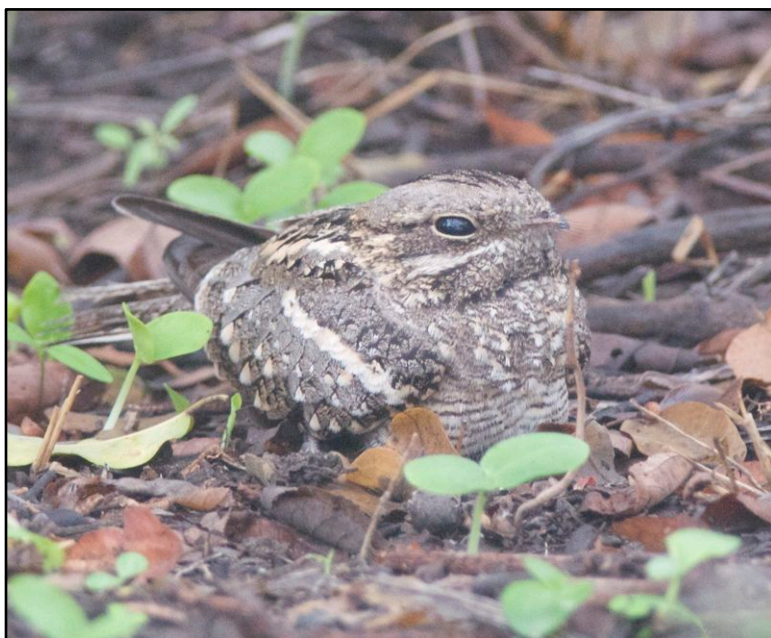
Northern White-bellied Bustard (left) and Rueppell's Weaver (right), both common around Awash.



A thunderhead looms and moisture fills the air. Very strange weather for February in Awash.



**A common denizen of the Great Rift Valley Lakes: White-faced Whistling-Duck.**



**Black-tailed Godwit at Lake Awassa (left) and a day-roosting Slender-tailed Nightjar at Langanjo (right).**





An amazing concentration of the endemic Black-winged Lovebird near Lake Langano.



Day lists in the central rift valley can easily top 160 species.  
Common Waxbill (left) is common, while Lesser Jacana (right) is quite rare.



Lake Awassa hosted an incredible concentration of White-backed Ducks this year – we saw more than 50!



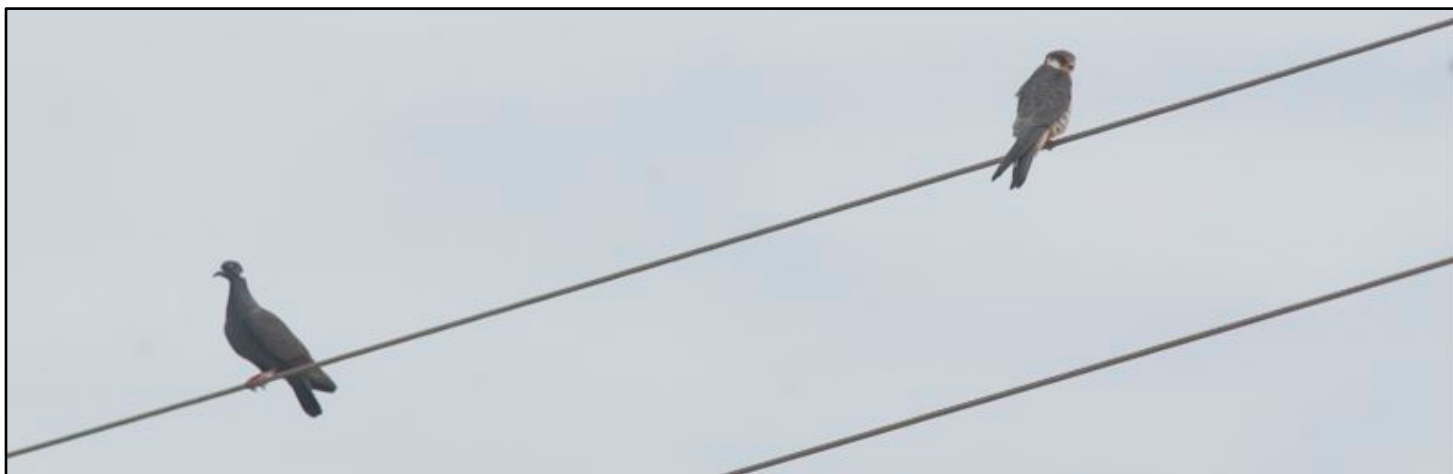


**A young African Fish-Eagle flies over a fellow fish-seeker in the marshes of Awassa.**

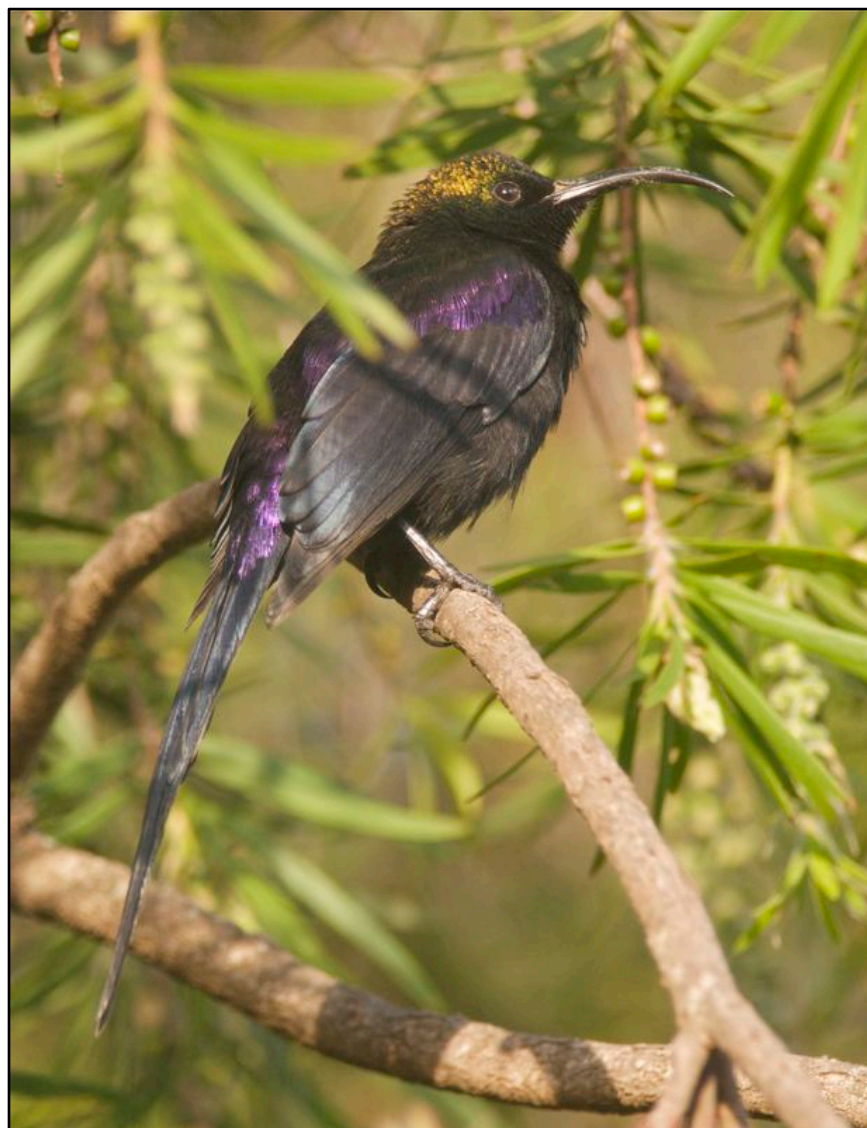


**Grivet monkey mother and child at Lake Awassa.**





On the way to the Bale Mountains, we found this Amur Falcon (right) sharing an electric wire with an endemic White-collared Pigeon (left). Amur is a rare bird in Ethiopia, particularly in February.



Tacazze Sunbird is common in the highlands, including towns like Goba, and even in Addis Ababa!



**The vitality broadcast by this bull mountain nyala belies the plight of its species, which stands on the brink of extinction. Bale Mountains National Park is the nyala's last stronghold.**





Abyssinian Wolf, another highly threatened mammals that clings to existence on the heights of Bale.



A wolf stalks its prey across Sanetti's Afro-Alpine moorland. Grass rats and mole rats beware!





**A pair of handsome pairs of francolins. The Chestnut-naped (left) is as common and conspicuous in Bale as the Moorland (right) is scarce and inconspicuous.**



**The endemic Blue-winged Goose, whose long-estranged closest relatives live in South America.**





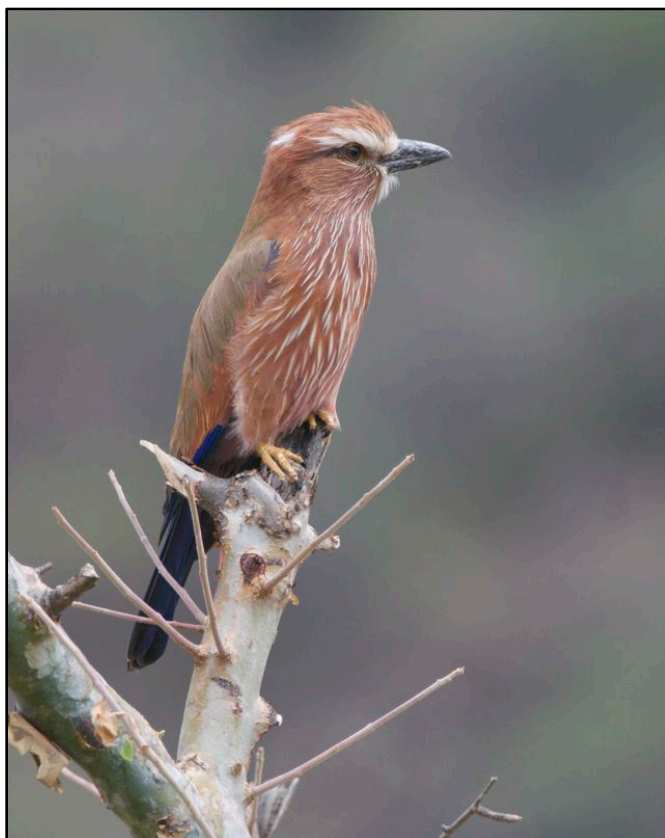
Heading south from Bale, we entered the range of the incredible Prince Ruspoli's Turaco (left). As long as I'm showing turacos in flight, here's another White-cheeked Turaco (right) from Debre Libanos.



The riparian woodland favored by Ruspoli's Turaco is also home to Spotted Palm-Thrush.



Sidamo Lark is found only on the Liben Plain, a small area of grassland within the savannas of southern Ethiopia. It is one of 3 members of the genus *Heteromiraфра*, all of which are rare, and might be headed for extinction even without human interference.



Rufous-crowned Roller (left) is a widespread African species, whereas Gillett's Lark (right) is a scarce northeastern Africa arid zone endemic. We encountered both near Negele.





Though often considered rare, Red-naped Bushshrike is fairly common at certain spots in southern Ethiopia.



The incredible Vulturine Guinea fowl, sometimes seen in groups of 100s near Yabello.





Some digiscoped photos of a Barbary Falcon from southern Ethiopia.  
A long encounter with this rarely-seen species was one of the highlights of the tour.



The termite mounds in southern Ethiopia can be huge – up to 30 feet tall! The dove on top is a Cape Turtle-Dove (left). One of a suite of northeastern Africa arid zone species in Ethiopia is Shelley's Starling (right).





The incredibly long-necked gerenuk is found in the arid, south, especially near Yabello.



Lappet-faced Vulture, widespread in Ethiopia but most common in the less disturbed areas of the south.



A monstrous Abyssinian Ground-Hornbill with a bill full of monstrous grasshoppers.



Bare-eyed Thrush (left) proved elusive this year, though we found it in the end.  
Pygmy Falcon (right) is smaller than the thrush!





Nechisar National Park has some of the most spectacular scenery in Ethiopia, plus Burchell's Zebras.



An isolated population of Red-capped Robin-Chats exists in the fig forests of Nechisar.





Two rare birds in Nechisar: Western Banded Snake-Eagle (left) and Archer's (Orange River) Francolin (right).

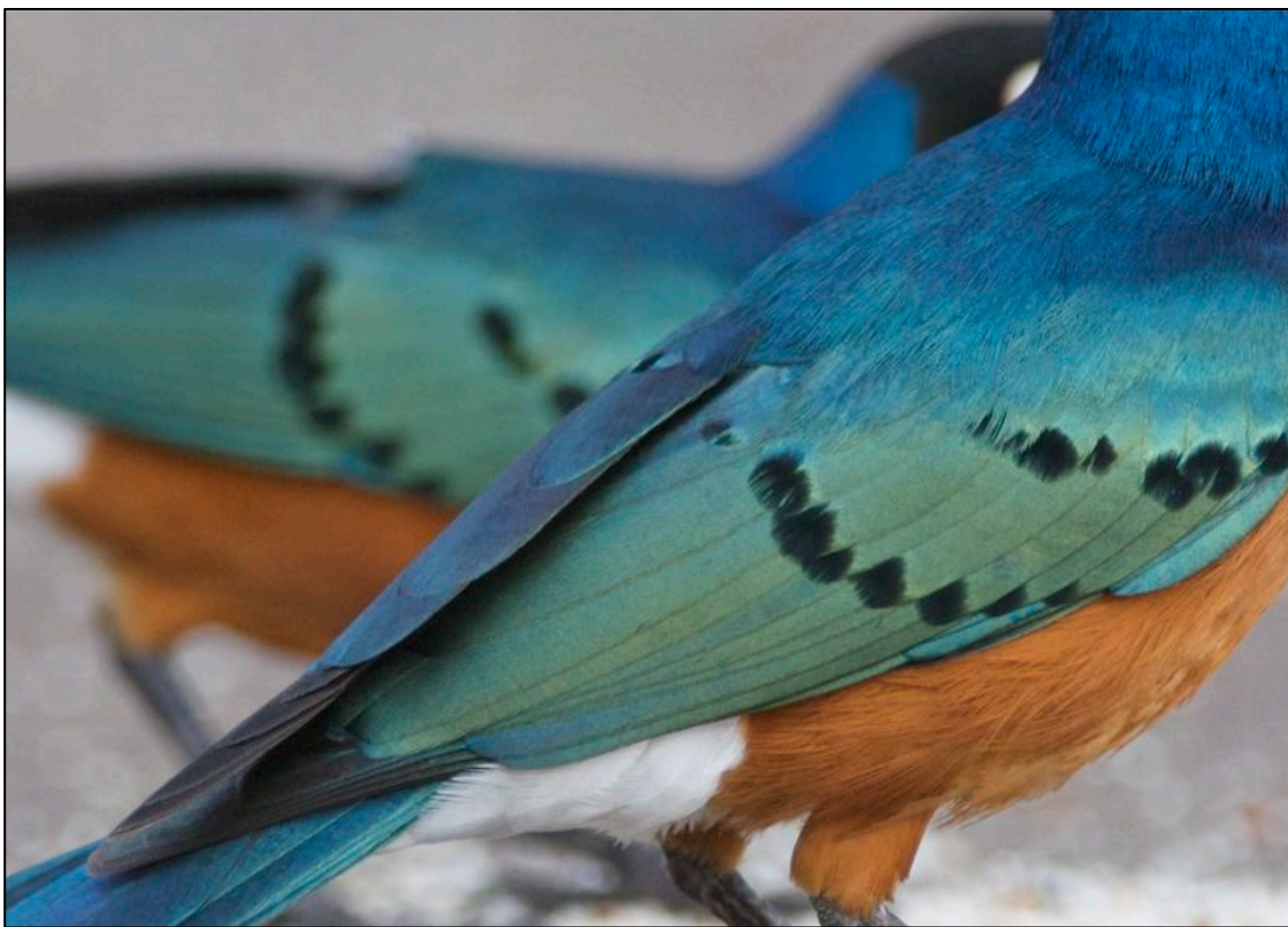


Lake Abiata's pink horde of Lesser Flamingoes.





Sights like this are common in Ethiopia: hundreds of Yellow Wagtails following a herd of cows.



A slice of Superb Starlings!

## ANNOTATED BIRD LIST

This list largely follows the taxonomy and nomenclature of *Birds of the Horn of Africa* (2009) by Redman, Stevenson, and Fanshawe.

<b>Ostrich (Somali)</b> Several seen on the Bilen Plain.	<i>Struthio camelus</i>
<b>Little Grebe</b> Common on wetlands throughout.	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
<b>Eared Grebe (Black-necked)</b> Large numbers on Lake Abiata.	<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>
<b>Great White Pelican</b> One at Lake Gefersa, and common on most of the Rift Valley lakes.	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>
<b>Pink-backed Pelican</b> Good numbers on Lake Beseka.	<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>
<b>Great Cormorant (White-breasted)</b> Small numbers seen throughout, except for the arid south.	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
<b>Long-tailed Cormorant</b> Seen throughout, except for the arid south.	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>
<b>Darter</b> Scattered sightings, including the Jemmu Valley and Rift Valley lakes.	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
<b>Gray Heron</b> Common on wetlands throughout.	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
<b>Black-headed Heron</b> Many sightings, though never of large numbers. Most terrestrial heron, seen in arid parts of the south with no water in sight.	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>
<b>Goliath Heron</b> One brief sighting at the Jemmu Valley was missed by Sonia, who was most satisfied to catch up with this towering heron at Lake Chamo.	<i>Ardea goliath</i>
<b>Purple Heron</b> Never common in Ethiopia. Several sightings in the Bilen area.	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
<b>Great Egret</b> Common in the Rift Valley.	<i>Ardea alba</i>
<b>Black Heron</b> Seen a couple of times, including both visits to Lake Ziway.	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>
<b>Intermediate Egret</b> Common in the Rift Valley.	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>
<b>Little Egret</b> Fairly common in the Rift Valley.	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
<b>Squacco Heron</b> Fairly common in the Rift Valley.	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>
<b>Cattle Egret</b> Abundant in the Rift Valley and open portions of the highlands such as the Sululta Plain.	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
<b>Striated Heron</b> Only one seen, at Lake Awassa.	<i>Butorides striata</i>
<b>Black-crowned Night-Heron</b> Several heard at dusk at Bilen Lodge.	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>



- Hamerkop** *Scopus umbretta*  
Distributed throughout, with large numbers around the Rift Valley lakes. This is one of the most prominent 'beggars' at places where fishermen are gutting their daily catch.
- Yellow-billed Stork** *Mycteria ibis*  
Seen in good numbers on this trip, mostly in the Rift Valley.
- Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra*  
Two seen in the Jemmu Valley. It wouldn't be shocking to find out that this species is breeding in that area.
- Abdim's Stork** *Ciconia abdimii*  
Large numbers around Awash, and small numbers elsewhere in the Rift Valley.
- Woolly-necked Stork** *Ciconia episcopus*  
First seen in the Jemmu Valley. Several also around Arba Minch.
- White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*  
Handful on Sululta Plain and other open parts of highlands.
- Saddle-billed Stork** *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*  
Two at Lake Beseka, and several at Lake Awassa. The elegance of this lanky wader makes up for the homeliness of the similarly sized Marabou!
- Marabou Stork** *Leptoptilos crumeniferus*  
Common around Addis and abundant in the Rift Valley. This is one of the prime 'garbage collectors' in Ethiopia, and often beats the vultures to anything remotely edible. If only they would eat plastic!
- Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus*  
Seen almost every day, except in the driest parts of the south.
- Hadada Ibis** *Bostrychia hagedash*  
Small numbers in the Rift Valley, also at Wondo Genet.
- Wattled Ibis** *Bostrychia carunculata*  
Common throughout the highlands, including right in Addis Ababa!
- Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*  
Small numbers around the Rift Valley lakes and on the Sululta Plain.
- African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba*  
Scattered sightings at locations including Lake Chelekleka and Negele.
- Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus*  
A lone flamingo at Gefersa Reservoir was an odd sight. Large numbers on Lake Abiata.
- Lesser Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus minor*  
Huge numbers on Lake Abiata. 10s if not 100s of thousands.
- Fulvous Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna bicolor*  
Often difficult to find in Ethiopia. On this trip, several were present at Lake Ziway and Lake Awassa.
- White-faced Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna viduata*  
Very common around the central Rift Valley lakes.
- White-backed Duck** *Thalassornis leuconotus*  
An astounding number on Lake Awassa. At least 50 were seen along 2 km of lake shore, including one raft of 30+ birds. This is normally a bird seen in pairs or small groups.
- Blue-winged Goose** *Cyanochen cyanoptera*  
First at Gefersa Reservoir, then commonly seen at highland sites throughout the country. The closest relatives of this odd goose are found in South America, suggesting that it's a holdout from the days when Africa and South America were still a contiguous landmass.

<b>Egyptian Goose</b>	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>
Common throughout the country.	
<b>Ruddy Shelduck</b>	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>
Good numbers in Bale NP. The Ethiopian breeding population of this species is the only one in sub-Saharan Africa.	
<b>Spur-winged Goose</b>	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>
Uncommon. 15+ seen at Lake Chelekaleka was the high count.	
<b>Comb Duck</b>	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>
Also scarce. It was surprising to see several on a pond near Negele, in the arid south.	
<b>African Pygmy-goose</b>	<i>Nettapus auritus</i>
Small numbers of this stunning species seen at Lakes Ziway and Awassa.	
<b>African Black Duck</b>	<i>Anas sparsa</i>
Uncommon in Ethiopia. A pair at Lake Chelekaleka on the first full day of the tour were much enjoyed.	
<b>Eurasian Teal</b>	<i>Anas crecca</i>
Strangely scarce, with only seen at Lake Chelekaleka.	
<b>Cape Teal</b>	<i>Anas capensis</i>
One flock of ~20 on Lake Abiata.	
<b>Yellow-billed Duck</b>	<i>Anas undulata</i>
Fairly common, mostly on the Rift Valley lakes.	
<b>Northern Pintail</b>	<i>Anas acuta</i>
Small numbers at scattered sites including the Rift Valley lakes and the Bale Mountains.	
<b>Red-billed Duck</b>	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>
Small numbers at Lakes Awassa and Chelekaleka.	
<b>Hottentot Teal</b>	<i>Anas hottentota</i>
Small numbers in Central Rift Valley Lakes.	
<b>Garganey</b>	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
Small numbers in Central Rift Valley Lakes. Highest count at Lake Chelekaleka.	
<b>Northern Shoveler</b>	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
Most common duck, seen on half of the days of the trip.	
<b>Southern Pochard</b>	<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>
A solo bird at Lake Awassa and a large raft at Lake Abiata.	
<b>Common Pochard</b>	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
Only seen at Gefersa Reservoir.	
<b>Tufted Duck</b>	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
Also only at Gefersa Reservoir.	
<b>Maccoa Duck</b>	<i>Oxyura maccoa</i>
One female at Lake Bishoftu.	
<b>Osprey</b>	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
A pair soaring over the Jemmu River came as a surprise. Another was seen high on the Nechisar Plain.	
<b>Black-shouldered Kite</b>	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
A handful in the highlands and Rift Valley.	
<b>Black Kite</b>	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
Outnumbered by the resident and possibly conspecific Yellow-billed Kite. Largest numbers in the Rift Valley.	
<b>Yellow-billed Kite (Black)</b>	<i>Milvus aegyptius</i>



Abundant throughout Ethiopia, particularly around towns – from 5-hut villages to Addis Ababa!

**African Fish-Eagle**

*Haliaeetus vocifer*

First seen at the Jemmu Valley but common at scattered locations, particularly Rift Valley Lakes.

**Hooded Vulture**

*Necrosyrtes monachus*

Seen every day of the tour save one. Almost as common as Yellow-billed Kite around all manner of human civilization.

**Lammergeier**

*Gypaetus barbatus*

Strangely scarce on this tour. We finally saw a stunning adult on the way into the Bale Mountains.

**Egyptian Vulture**

*Neophron percnopterus*

Small numbers at scattered locations. Great views below eye level at the Portuguese Bridge.

**White-backed Vulture**

*Gyps africanus*

The most common big vulture throughout the country.

**Rueppell's Griffon**

*Gyps rueppellii*

Slightly less common than White-backed. Our first encounter was at the Portuguese Bridge, where a big Rueppell's swooped in to the bone I'd brought from Addis Ababa and placed on a hill next to our lunch restaurant. We had stunning views of this big, spotty griffon as it picked bits of red meat off the gnarly bone.

**Lappet-faced Vulture**

*Torgos tracheliotus*

This is the biggest of the big vultures, and we saw it in the smallest numbers, with only a handful in the arid south, plus one in Nechisar.

**White-headed Vulture**

*Trionoceph occipitalis*

The first sighting was in the middle of a highland village, where a car full of foreigners coming to a quick stop and staring intently out the window brought the whole town running to see what was the fuss!

**Short-toed Snake-Eagle**

*Circaetus gallicus*

One was seen well near Melka Ghebdu, and could not be turned into a Beaudouin's Snake-Eagle despite our best efforts. One further sighting near Lake Koka.

**Black-breasted Snake-Eagle**

*Circaetus pectoralis*

Surprisingly small numbers. First one was at Awash.

**Brown Snake-Eagle**

*Circaetus cinereus*

The first one disturbed our lunchtime rest at the Jemmu Valley. The only other locality was Awash NP.

**Western Banded Snake-Eagle**

*Circaetus cinerascens*

We enjoyed remarkable luck with this bird, sighting one near Lake Awassa, and one in the fig forest of Nechisar National Park.

**Bateleur**

*Terathopius ecaudatus*

Scattered sightings farther north, but most common in southern arid savanna, where a Bateleur can be found in the sky at almost any point from mid morning to late afternoon!

**Western Marsh-Harrier**

*Circus aeruginosus*

Common around Bilen, around the central Rift lakes, and elsewhere.

**Pallid Harrier**

*Circus macrourus*

Though this bird is near-threatened, it still occurs in good numbers in Ethiopia.

**Montagu's Harrier**

*Circus pygargus*

On this tour, much less common than Pallid. Our first was a female seen well at Langano, with a handful of sighting on later days.

**African Harrier-Hawk**

*Polyboroides typus*

Local – our only sightings were at the Jemmu Valley and Wondo Genet.

- Dark Chanting-Goshawk** *Melierax metabates*  
Common and conspicuous in and around Awash. Smaller numbers in the Nechisar area.
- Eastern Chanting-Goshawk** *Melierax poliopterus*  
Largely or entirely replaces Dark in the arid south, where it is equally common and conspicuous.
- Gabar Goshawk** *Micronisus gabar*  
A stunning melanistic bird was seen in a patch of lush, riparian woodland in Awash NP.
- African Goshawk** *Accipiter tachiro*  
Paul had a flyover at the Ankober Escarpment, while the rest of us had to wait until Wondo Genet to get a good view.
- Shikra** *Accipiter badius*  
Several sightings, mostly at arid locations including the Jemmu Valley, Dawa River, and Awash NP.
- Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*  
A single adult female was studied carefully and photographed at the Dawa River. This is a rare bird in Ethiopia and particularly surprising at a location in the far south.
- Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter rufiventris*  
Seen en route to the Ankober escarpment, dashing through a eucalyptus plantation. A perched bird was a rare treat just above the Harenna Forest.
- Great Sparrowhawk (Black Goshawk)** *Accipiter melanoleucus*  
Our first sighting was another exciting raptor in the middle of town scenario, this time in Robe, where a beautiful adult made circled over our heads for several minutes. Spectacular! Several other sightings followed.
- Common Buzzard (Steppe)** *Buteo buteo*  
Fairly common throughout Ethiopia, with a particular concentration at Wondo Genet.
- Mountain Buzzard** *Buteo oreophilus*  
Only one, inside of Harenna Forest, and only seen by Ken.
- Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus*  
One seen well in the Rift Valley south of Arba Minch. This is a rare bird in Ethiopia.
- Augur Buzzard** *Buteo augur*  
Common in the highlands, with a lowland sighting at Yabello.
- Lesser Spotted Eagle** *Aquila pomarina*  
One perched bird on the Sululta Plain was seen well and definitively identified. A couple of sighting elsewhere seemed to pertain to this species, though *Aquila* eagle ID in Ethiopia is a challenge!
- Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga*  
An uncommon bird in Ethiopia. Two sightings near Bilen Lodge, probably of the same individual.
- Tawny Eagle** *Aquila rapax*  
This resident eagle was also the most common of the *Aquilas*, particularly in the south, where we had daily sightings.
- Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis*  
Several were definitively identified early in the trip, and fairly frequent sightings later on, particularly around the Bale Mountains, seemed also to pertain to Steppe.
- Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca*  
One juvenile bird seen at the Dawa River. The plumage held by these young birds makes separation from other eagles quite simple.
- Wahlberg's Eagle** *Aquila wahlbergi*



Our first sighting was at Gefersa Reservoir, a rather odd location for this species. Scattered sightings elsewhere, mostly in lower elevation, drier areas.

**Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos*

One immature bird was seen on the Sanetti Plateau.

**Verreaux's Eagle** *Aquila verreauxii*

One tore past at the Portuguese Bridge just after I put out the big bone for the vultures, though it didn't seem interested in the carrion. Our only other sightings were near the Ankober escarpment and in the Bale Mountains.

**African Hawk-Eagle** *Aquila spilogaster*

An adult and a young bird were seen distantly at Melka Ghebdu.

**Booted Eagle** *Aquila pennata*

Pale birds seen at the Portuguese Bridge, Lake Chelekaleka, and in the Bale Mountains.

**Martial Eagle** *Polemaetus bellicosus*

This gargantuan eagle was first seen at Sof Omar, then a few more times in the south.

**Long-crested Eagle** *Lophaetus occipitalis*

Good numbers near Arba Minch and scattered sightings elsewhere, including Wondo Genet.

**Crowned Hawk-Eagle** *Stephanoaetus coronatus*

Our expert local guide at Wondo Genet was monitoring a nest, so we had amazing views of this spectacular monkey-eating eagle. A couple of birds also seen in flight display over the Hareenna Forest.

**Secretary-bird** *Sagittarius serpentarius*

Quite scarce in Ethiopia. Seen once in Awash NP and once on the way to the Bale Mountains.

**Pygmy Falcon** *Polihierax semitorquatus*

Small numbers in Awash and in the south.

**Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni*

This was a much-wanted bird for Sonia, and we finally connected with a small flock in the agricultural steppes on the way to the Bale Mountains. It was seen several additional places thereafter, with largest numbers on the Liben Plain.

**Eurasian Kestrel (Common)** *Falco tinnunculus*

Quite common; seen most days. This species shows a fascinating amount of variation within Ethiopia.

**Amur Falcon** *Falco amurensis*

An adult female was quite an unexpected sighting on the way to the Bale Mountains. A rare bird in Ethiopia, particularly in February. Photos of this bird along with a White-collared Pigeon are included in the gallery.

**Gray Kestrel** *Falco ardosiaceus*

Only one, at a small village below Arero.

**Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

One flying over the Liben Plain was perhaps an early northbound migrant.

**African Hobby** *Falco cuvierii*

One at Wondo Genet, which seems to be a regular locality for this bird.

**Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus*

Mostly seen in the highlands, with largest numbers around the Ankober Escarpment and Portuguese Bridge.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*

Seen in exceptionally high numbers this year, in the same areas as Lanner. Despite the large numbers of these two large falcons, extensive searching failed to turn up a Saker on this tour.

**Barbary Falcon***Falco pelegrinoides*

One of the undoubted highlights of the trip. This beautiful falcon graced our morning at the Dawa River. First, it flew by twice at great speed, giving fleeting views. Both times I thought it was a Peregrine. Thankfully, it perched on a tall snag and allowed extensive study. The head pattern, particularly the rufous restricted to the nape, plus a suite of other characters confirmed the ID as a Barbary Falcon. An extremely rare bird in Ethiopia with no recent sightings of which I am aware. Photographs in the gallery above.

**Coqui Francolin***Fringilla coquise*

Extensive searching of the best area for this species near Negele had failed to turn it up. Just about to give up, we started driving back to our hotel, when Sonia spotted a couple of francolins. Sure enough, they were Coquis, and they couldn't have been sighted in a more satisfying manner!

**Crested Francolin***Fringilla coquise*

Very common in lower-elevation sites throughout Ethiopia.

**Moorland Francolin***Fringilla coquise*

Finally seen in the Bale Mountains, though not without a lot of hard searching.

**Orange River (Archer's) Francolin***Fringilla coquise*

A small covey was seen in Nechisar National Park. This species is rarely seen in Ethiopia. If split, Archer's Francolin is a near-endemic to the country. A photo is included in the gallery.

**Scaly Francolin***Fringilla coquise*

Common and vocal at Wondo Genet.

**Clapperton's Francolin***Fringilla coquise*

This is a difficult bird in Ethiopia, so sighting a covey near Lake Langano was most satisfying.

**Harwood's Francolin***Fringilla coquise*

Our luck with francolins on this trip was really tremendous. In the Jemmu Valley, a large group of the normally elusive Harwood's froze on a hillside right in front of us, allowing extended scope views. They seemed convinced that we couldn't see them; otherwise they would have flown immediately!

**Yellow-necked Francolin***Fringilla coquise*

Fairly common in Awash and the south.

**Chestnut-naped Francolin***Fringilla coquise*

In contrast to the smaller and more cryptic Moorland, this francolin is common and easy to see in the Bale Mountains.

**Erckel's Francolin***Fringilla coquise*

Small number seen and many heard in the Jemmu Valley and near the Portuguese Bridge.

**Common Quail***Fringilla coquise*

One flushed in Awash NP. Another was actually seen standing in a field in Nechisar NP, a rare experience indeed, as 99% of sightings pertain to flushed and flying birds.

**Helmeted Guineafowl***Fringilla coquise*

Very common in Awash NP and the south.

**Vulturine Guineafowl***Fringilla coquise*

Though African birders often become jaded about the Helmeted Guineafowl, this beauty is among the most spectacular birds on the continent, and is not easily ignored! We encountered large flocks near Yabello.

**Black Crowned-Crane***Fringilla coquise*

The future of this bird in Ethiopia is far from certain. The huge marsh on the north side of Lake Chelekaleka, that has been a reliable spot for this species in the past, has been completely



converted to agriculture. I had always wondered what rails and crakes an exploration of that marsh would turn up, but now I'll never know. Despite the destruction, we still saw a pair of this magnificent bird at Chelekaleka.

**Wattled Crane**

*Bugeranus carunculatus*

There is a small population that breeds in the Bale Mountains, but they become very difficult to find during the dry season. We were lucky to find one pair after an extensive search.

**Common Crane**

*Grus grus*

Small numbers around Lake Chelekaleka and in the highlands near Debre Birhan.

**Rouget's Rail**

*Rougetius rougetii*

Numbers around Dinsho, in the Bale Mountains, have plummeted as a massive road project progresses. In past years dozens could be seen on and along the road, but on this trip we saw only a handful. I hope the birds have just moved away from the road, though reports of the construction crew hunting for food and cleaning out things like Blue-winged Goose are not hopeful. We did hear one in the garden of our hotel in Goba, so they can obviously survive in fairly degraded habitat.

**Black Crake**

*Amaurornis flavirostra*

Remarkably high number on Lake Awassa this year, with 50 or more seen.

**Purple Swampen**

*Porphyrio porphyrio*

Only one at Lake Awassa.

**Allen's Gallinule**

*Porphyrio alleni*

One adult seen at Lake Awassa. For a few moments it was in the same scope field as a Purple Swampen and a Common Moorhen!

**Common Moorhen**

*Gallinula chloropus*

Common in wetlands, particularly in the Rift Valley.

**Lesser Moorhen**

*Gallinula angulata*

A small moorhen that was mostly likely a Lesser was seen and photographed at Lake Ziway. This bird did show some odd traits, and I'm investigating the possibility of a hybrid.

**Red-knobbed Coot**

*Fulica cristata*

Common in Rift Valley wetlands, with small numbers in highland marshes and ponds as well.

**Arabian Bustard**

*Ardeotis arabs*

In Awash, we saw a loose group of bustards that contained several Koris and one Arabian! In the Bilen area, we saw several more Arabians, including one only a few yards away.

**Kori Bustard**

*Ardeotis kori*

Frequent sightings in Awash NP and on the Liben Plain. At Liben, we found the remains of a bird that had probably been shot for food. Our driver attributed this killing to a Somali gang, as this sort of thing is culturally and religiously unacceptable for the vast majority of Ethiopians.

**White-bellied Bustard**

*Eupodotis senegalensis*

Common in the Awash area and fairly common in the south.

**Buff-crested Bustard**

*Eupodotis gindiana*

Common in Awash and the south.

**Black-bellied Bustard**

*Lissotis melanogaster*

Several seen in Nechisar NP, on the Nechisar Plain.

**Hartlaub's Bustard**

*Lissotis hartlaubii*

The over-grazed state of Awash NP made it difficult to find this bird, but on our last drive through the park, we found a remnant patch of thicker grass, with a couple of Hartlaub's lurking within it.

**Lesser Jacana**

*Microparra capensis*

A pair was seen well at Lake Awassa. This is quite a rare bird in Ethiopia, but it seems that Awassa may host a small resident population. Photo included in the gallery.

**African Jacana**

*Actophilornis africanus*

Common on the Rift Valley Lakes.

**Black-winged Stilt**

*Himantopus himantopus*

Common on marshes and lakes throughout.

**Pied Avocet**

*Recurvirostra avosetta*

Small number at Lake Chelekaleka and larger number at Lake Abiata.

**Senegal Thick-knee**

*Burhinus senegalensis*

First seen from the Bailey bridge in the Jemmu Valley.

**Somali (Cream-coloured) Courser**

*Cursorius cursor*

A small 'herd' of at least 15 graced the normal location near Mega.

**Temminck's Courser**

*Cursorius temminckii*

Two adults attending two juveniles on the Liben Plain.

**Three-banded Courser**

*Rhinoptilus cinctus*

Easy to hear in Awash at night, but difficult to see. We finally had satisfactory spotlight views on a night drive.

**Collared Pratincole**

*Glareola pratincola*

Upon exiting the car at Lake Abiata, I heard a distant, calling pratincole, but we failed to spot any as we birded the flats.

**Spur-winged Plover**

*Vanellus spinosus*

Common throughout most of the country, with large numbers on the Rift Valley lakes.

**Black-winged Lapwing**

*Vanellus melanopterus*

Fairly common in the highlands, such as the Sululta Plain, and also in the Liben Plain and elsewhere in the south.

**Crowned Lapwing**

*Vanellus coronatus*

Small number in Awash NP, plus frequent sightings in the south.

**Wattled Lapwing**

*Vanellus senegallus*

Sonia saw one while we were driving past a wetland near Addis.

**Spot-breasted Lapwing**

*Vanellus melanocephalus*

Good numbers on the Sululta Plain and in the Bale Mountains.

**Common Ringed Plover**

*Charadrius hiaticula*

Small numbers on Rift Valley lakes.

**Little Ringed Plover**

*Charadrius dubius*

Only one, at Lake Awassa.

**Kittlitz's Plover**

*Charadrius pecuarius*

One at Lake Beseka, and good numbers around Lake Abiata.

**Three-banded Plover**

*Charadrius tricollaris*

Encountered frequently on muddy shores across the country.

**Snowy Plover**

*Charadrius alexandrinus*

Several at Lake Abiata.

**Lesser Sandplover**

*Charadrius mongolus*

A single bird was studied carefully at Lake Abiata. A rare species in Ethiopia, with most sightings coming from Abiata.

**African Snipe**

*Gallinago nigripennis*

A marsh in the Bale Mountains produced this species.

**Common Snipe**

*Gallinago gallinago*



First at Gefersa Reservoir, then several more around Rift Valley lakes.

**Black-tailed Godwit**

*Limosa limosa*

Fairly common around Rift Valley lakes.

**Common Sandpiper**

*Actitis hypoleucos*

Small numbers almost anywhere with water.

**Green Sandpiper**

*Tringa ochropus*

Perhaps slightly more common than Common, also present around water throughout the country.

**Spotted Redshank**

*Tringa erythropus*

Scarce on this tour, with only one sighting at Lake Koka.

**Common Greenshank**

*Tringa nebularia*

Fairly common in wetlands, especially in the Rift Valley.

**Marsh Sandpiper**

*Tringa stagnatilis*

Present in similar areas to Common Greenshank, in smaller numbers.

**Wood Sandpiper**

*Tringa glareola*

Small numbers on wetlands throughout the country.

**Little Stint**

*Calidris minuta*

Good numbers wherever mudflats were present, particularly in the Great Rift.

**Temminck's Stint**

*Calidris temminckii*

Much less common than Little. First seen at Bilen Lodge, then more sightings around the Rift Valley lakes.

**Curlew Sandpiper**

*Calidris ferruginea*

Large numbers on Lake Abitata and smaller numbers on other Rift Valley lakes.

**Ruff**

*Philomachus pugnax*

Large numbers on Lake Abitata and good numbers on other Rift Valley lakes.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**

*Larus fuscus*

Several seen at Lakes Langano and Awassa.

**Heuglin's Gull**

*Larus heuglini*

One fairly large and heavy-billed bird at Lake Awassa was very likely a Heuglin's.

**Great Black-headed Gull**

*Larus ichthyaetus*

Only two sightings, one at Langano and one at Awassa.

**Gray-headed Gull**

*Larus cirrocephalus*

Small numbers on the Great Rift lakes.

**Black-headed Gull**

*Larus ridibundus*

Surprisingly small numbers, with only a handful of sightings at Ziway, Awassa, and Langano.

**Gull-billed Tern**

*Gelochelidon nilotica*

Several hawking insects on the flats at Lake Abiata, and several seen at Chelekleka.

**Caspian Tern**

*Hydroprogne caspia*

Several on the shore of Lake Langano. An uncommon species in Ethiopia

**White-winged Tern**

*Chlidonias leucopterus*

Much like Black-headed Gull, this species was present in surprisingly low numbers. Only a handful on the Great Rift Lakes.

**Whiskered Tern**

*Chlidonias hybrida*

Small numbers on the Great Rift Lakes.

**Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse**

*Pterocles exustus*

Seen often and at close range in Awash NP. A large flock that swept by at Lake Abiata was a surprise.

**Black-faced Sandgrouse**

*Pterocles decoratus*

Several flying along the Dawa River.

**Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse**

*Pterocles lichtensteinii*

Seen only once in Awash NP, but common around Bilen Lodge.

**Rock Pigeon**

*Columba livia*

Not as common in Ethiopia as in most places, perhaps due to competition with White-collared Pigeon. Some birds seen on cliffs in the highlands may have been 'legitimate' Rock Doves.

**Speckled Pigeon**

*Columba guinea*

Common around towns and cities.

**White-collared Pigeon**

*Columba albitorques*

Quickly seen upon arrival in Addis and common throughout the highlands. A flock of several hundred on the way to the Bale Mountains was exceptional.

**Rameron Pigeon**

*Columba arquatrix*

Seen twice in the Hareenna Forest.

**Lemon Dove**

*Columba larvata*

One cooperated for nice views at Wondo Genet. Also in the Hareenna Forest.

**Dusky Turtle-Dove**

*Streptopelia lugens*

Common in the highlands, including towns and cities.

**African Collared-Dove**

*Streptopelia roseogrisea*

Skipping the Afar Plains meant skipping our normal spot for this bird, but we still managed to find one in a rarely-visited corner of Awash NP.

**African White-winged Dove**

*Streptopelia reichenowi*

A pair that was singing and courting near the Dawa River was much enjoyed.

**African Mourning Dove**

*Streptopelia decipiens*

Most common in the Rift Valley, especially around Lake Langano.

**Red-eyed Dove**

*Streptopelia semitorquata*

Common throughout, especially in the highlands.

**Ring-necked Dove (Cape Turtle)**

*Streptopelia capicola*

Common at lower elevations.

**Vinaceous Dove**

*Streptopelia vinacea*

Fairly common in the Jemmu Valley, but that is the only locality where we encounter this *Streptopelia* on our Ethiopia tour.

**Laughing Dove**

*Streptopelia senegalensis*

Common at low to mid elevations.

**Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove**

*Turtur chalcospilos*

Common at low to mid elevations, though less conspicuous than Laughing.

**Blue-spotted Wood-Dove**

*Turtur afer*

One posed nicely at Lake Langano.

**Tambourine Dove**

*Turtur tympanistria*

One seen at Wondo Genet, and plenty heard there and in the Hareenna Forest.

**Namaqua Dove**

*Oena capensis*

Largest numbers in Awash NP.

**Bruce's Green-Pigeon**

*Treron waalia*

Scattered sightings in the Rift Valley and the south. Several were sharing a fig tree with a pair of Prince Ruspoli's Turacos north of Negele!

**Black-winged Lovebird**

*Agapornis taranta*

This colorful little endemic is fairly common in the highlands and parts of the Rift Valley. We saw a flock of 20 or more picking grit off the ground near Lake Langano.



**African Orange-bellied Parrot***Poicephalus rufiventris*

Small numbers in Awash and the south.

**Yellow-fronted Parrot***Poicephalus flavifrons*

Though Wondo Genet is under siege, this bird is still present in good numbers. I wonder how long this will be the case, as the Wondo valley echoes with chainsaws and axes and a constant procession of people carries bundles of wood out of the forest. Even in the last year the forest has been drastically degraded, and a spot that I remember as a cathedral-like forest is now a brushy open area.

**White-cheeked Turaco***Tauraco leucotis*

Debre Libanos was bursting with ripe figs, and held large numbers of this beautiful turaco. This turaco's distribution does just creep into Sudan, but who's going to go see it there?

**Prince Ruspoli's Turaco***Tauraco ruspolii*

This incredible turaco, with its bushy crest and odd red comb above the eye is always a highlight of our tours to Ethiopia. The normal spots produced this bird, plus we saw it in several new places. The particularly good site near Wadera that Keith Barnes and I found a couple of years ago held at least 15 turacos, and we spent an enjoyable afternoon in their company.

**Bare-faced Go-away-bird***Corythaixoides personatus*

Sonia's sister had instructed her to demand her money back if we didn't see this odd turaco, so I was most relieved to find a few at Melka Ghebdu!

**White-bellied Go-away-bird***Corythaixoides leucogaster*

Common at low to mid elevations.

**Eastern Plantain-eater***Crinifer zonurus*

On a day trip the day before the main tour started, Paul saw this bird near Gibe Gorge.

**Great Spotted Cuckoo***Clamator glandarius*

A stunning bird seen in a roadside thicket between Yabello and Arba Minch.

**Red-chested Cuckoo***Cuculus solitarius*

Seen well in the Hareenna Forest, and heard several other places.

**African Cuckoo***Cuculus gularis*

One allowed careful study and identification near the Dawa River.

**Klaas's Cuckoo***Chrysococcyx klaas*

Frequently heard at low to mid elevation sites, and first seen at Melka Ghebdu.

**African Emerald Cuckoo***Chrysococcyx cupreus*

A singing bird was scoped and thoroughly enjoyed at Wondo Genet.

**Yellowbill (Green Malkoha)***Ceuthmochares aereus*

Two in Nechisar NP. Though both responded well to tape, we never managed great views of this skulker.

**Blue-headed Coucal***Centropus monachus*

A monstrous coucal that is uncommon though conspicuous, particularly around Lake Awassa.

**White-browed Coucal***Centropus superciliosus*

Though it sometimes seems to disappear from Ethiopia, this coucal was common during this tour, with scattered sightings, including 15 or more in Awash NP.

**African Scops-Owl***Otus senegalensis*

We saw a pair during our late drive back to Negele from the Prince Ruspoli's Turaco motherland.

**Grayish Eagle-Owl***Bubo cinerascens*

During the heat of the day, we stumbled onto one in the Jemmu Valley.

**Verreaux's Eagle-Owl***Bubo lacteus*

One bird seen during the day in a patch of lush woodland in Awash NP. We also had a brief view of a pair of this monstrous owl near Lake Langano.

**African Wood-Owl**

*Strix woodfordii*

Seen at dusk near Dinsho Lodge, having just left its day roost.

**Pearl-spotted Owlet**

*Glaucidium perlatum*

The low numbers of this bird were utterly astounding. We only heard it twice, and saw it once, whereas it is normally an almost daily bird at low to mid elevations. Although whistling a few notes of this small owl's song is normally sufficient to bring in a crowd of angry passerines, on this trip they seemed unconcerned by my endless tootings. Something strange is going on... have the owlets and their prey reached some sort of peace after long millennia of animosity?

**African Long-eared Owl**

*Asio abyssinicus*

Our expert local guide in Bale had located a bird on a day roost, allowing us to quickly and easily encounter this wonderful and rare bird upon arrival. This was a definite highlight of the tour.

**Marsh Owl**

*Asio capensis*

At the end of an Awash night drive that was otherwise remarkably uninteresting, we spotted one of these rare owls sitting right next to the road.

**Eurasian Nightjar**

*Caprimulgus europaeus*

Two seen on a night drive near Yabello.

**Dusky (Sombre) Nightjar**

*Caprimulgus fraenatus*

One seen and heard well on a night drive near Yabello.

**Donaldson-Smith's Nightjar**

*Caprimulgus donaldsoni*

Several vocalizing and one seen briefly near Yabello.

**Abyssinian (Montane) Nightjar**

*Caprimulgus poliocephalus*

Though we heard this bird several times, it proved difficult to see. We finally spotlighted one near Goba.

**Freckled Nightjar**

*Caprimulgus tristigma*

Another last-minute nightjar, we had it on early on our final morning, at the Lake Langano escarpment.

**Slender-tailed Nightjar**

*Caprimulgus clarus*

Several seen roosting during the day near Lake Langano.

**African Palm-Swift**

*Cypsiurus parvus*

Fairly common around palms at lower elevations.

**Alpine Swift**

*Tachymarptis melba*

Only a few seen at Sof Omar and in Nechisar NP.

**Mottled Swift**

*Tachymarptis aequatorialis*

Large flock at Sof Omar, a normal location for this species.

**Common Swift**

*Apus apus*

Widespread sightings of this common Palearctic migrant.

**Nyanza Swift**

*Apus niansae*

Seen right in Addis and also at Kerereyou.

**Little Swift**

*Apus affinis*

Surprisingly, Kerereyou provided our only sighting. The often cloudy weather seemed to generally reduce the numbers of aerialists that we saw through most of the tour.

**Speckled Mousebird**

*Colius striatus*

Very common, seen throughout the country.

**Blue-naped Mousebird**

*Urocolius macrourus*

Common in Awash and the south.



- Narina Trogon** *Apaloderma narina*  
Right at the hotel gate at Wondo Genet, and also several in the Nechisar fig forest.
- Half-collared Kingfisher** *Alcedo semitorquata*  
Though this bird is widespread, it is shy and scarce, and Ethiopia may be the easiest place to see it. We enjoyed sightings at Melka Ghbedu and Wondo Genet.
- Malachite Kingfisher** *Alcedo cristata*  
Common on the Rift Valley lakes.
- African Pygmy-Kingfisher** *Ispidina picta*  
Fairly common in a variety of habitat, often far from water.
- Gray-headed Kingfisher** *Halcyon leucocephala*  
First spotted at the Jemmu Valley. Uncommon in Ethiopia.
- Woodland Kingfisher** *Halcyon senegalensis*  
Seen in the lush woodland around the central Rift Valley lakes.
- Striped Kingfisher** *Halcyon chelicuti*  
Fairly frequent sightings in Awash and the south.
- Giant Kingfisher** *Megaceryle maximus*  
A couple of these heavyweights flew by our picnic spot in the Jemmu Valley.
- Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis*  
Present around larger streams, ponds, and lakes. Very common on the Rift Valley lakes.
- Little Bee-eater** *Merops pusillus*  
Fairly common – frequently seen at low to mid elevations.
- Blue-breasted Bee-eater** *Merops variegatus*  
Widespread, though absent from the arid south. Seems to prefer generally moister habitat than Little Bee-eater, though they do overlap.
- Blue-cheeked Bee-eater** *Merops persicus*  
A few flew by our chalets at Bilen.
- European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster*  
This was a much wanted bird for Sonia, so a sighting near Lake Chelekaleka was most satisfying.
- Northern Carmine Bee-eater** *Merops nubicus*  
Fairly common around Awash, plus scattered sightings in the south. This big bee-eater often rides on the back of large domestic mammals, or even Kori Bustards, swooping to catch the insects disturbed by the large animal's movements.
- Abyssinian Roller** *Coracias abyssinicus*  
Fairly common in most of the country, though absent from the arid south.
- Lilac-breasted Roller** *Coracias caudatus*  
One sighting in the Rift followed by many, many more in the arid south.
- Rufous-crowned Roller (Purple)** *Coracias noevius*  
Fairly common, but not in large numbers, at low to mid elevations throughout.
- Broad-billed Roller** *Eurystomus glaucurus*  
Several in Nechisar NP.
- Eurasian Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*  
Fairly common throughout the country.
- Black-billed Woodhoopoe** *Phoeniculus somaliensis*  
This vocal and conspicuous species was first spotted in the Jemmu Valley. In the savanna east of Negele, a group of woodhoopoes seemed to follow us around for an hour as we searched for Three-streaked Tchagra!
- Abyssinian Scimitar-bill** *Rhinopomastus minor*

Fairly common in savanna habitat throughout.

**Red-billed Hornbill (Northern)**

*Tockus erythrorhynchus*

Common in savanna.

**Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill**

*Tockus flavirostris*

Common in savanna.

**Von der Decken's Hornbill**

*Tockus deckeni*

Sighted briefly in Awash, but it wasn't until Langano that we had satisfying views of this sharp hornbill.

**Hemprich's Hornbill**

*Tockus hemprichii*

Fairly common throughout the country except the arid south, wherever there are cliffs nearby for nesting.

**African Gray Hornbill**

*Tockus nasutus*

Common in savanna.

**Silvery-cheeked Hornbill**

*Ceratogymna brevis*

Common around Lake Awassa and in Nechisar's fig forest.

**Abyssinian Ground-Hornbill**

*Bucorvus abyssinicus*

This is another bird that benefits from the lack of persecution in Ethiopia. We saw it in some heavily populated areas, something that is unthinkable in most African countries, where this bird is restricted to large protected areas. We saw one ground-hornbill north of Negele with a bill jammed full of huge grasshoppers, undoubtedly to feed a hungry nestling in a cavity somewhere nearby!

**Red-and-yellow Barbet**

*Trachyphonus erythrocephalus*

The first was perched on top of a termite mound in characteristic fashion, north of Negele. Several more sightings later around Negele.

**Yellow-breasted Barbet**

*Trachyphonus margaritatus*

This scarce north African barbet just gets into north and northeastern Ethiopia. We saw several at Melka Ghebdu and Bilen, where they lurked in the brushy enclosures around the chalets!

**D'Arnaud's Barbet**

*Trachyphonus darnaudii*

Fairly common and conspicuous near Yabello.

**Red-fronted Tinkerbird**

*Pogoniulus pusillus*

Widespread sightings at low to mid elevations.

**Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird**

*Pogoniulus chrysoconus*

A bird singing at Wondo Genet was very likely this species, but we never managed to get a view. Another singing bird inside the lush Nechisar fig forest was almost certainly Yellow-fronted, but also could not be lured into view.

**Red-fronted Barbet**

*Tricholaema diademata*

Fairly common and conspicuous around Lake Langano, where we even found a nest hole.

**Black-throated Barbet**

*Tricholaema melanocephala*

We managed to find one near Bilen Lodge on the main tour. On the southern extension, near Negele and Yabello, we saw several more.

**Banded Barbet**

*Lybius undatus*

The bounty of figs at Debre Libanos brought in Banded Barbets along with the White-cheeked Turacos. We enjoyed quite a few further sightings, mostly in the Rift Valley.

**Black-billed Barbet**

*Lybius guifsobalito*

First seen near the bridge in the Jemmu Valley.

**Double-toothed Barbet**

*Lybius bidentatus*

This big and striking barbet is uncommon in Ethiopia. We only found them in Wondo Genet.



- Lesser Honeyguide** *Indicator minor*  
Small numbers at Wondo Genet, Sof Omar, and elsewhere.
- Scaly-throated Honeyguide** *Indicator variegatus*  
We were delighted when a cooperative bird came bombing in to tape in Nechisar NP. Another was heard later at a different location in the park.
- Greater Honeyguide** *Indicator indicator*  
After a bit of coaxing, we called one in at Sof Omar.
- Eurasian Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*  
Just after sighting our first Ruspoli's Turaco, near the Genale River, we spotted a wryneck creeping through a hedge. This is a very scarce bird in Ethiopia, but as a long distance migrant, it shows up in some strange places.
- Rufous-necked Wryneck** *Jynx ruficollis*  
Very easily seen around Lake Langano this year.
- Nubian Woodpecker** *Campethera nubica*  
Fairly common and vocal throughout the country.
- Abyssinian Woodpecker** *Dendropicos abyssinicus*  
Our first sighting was in a beautiful *Acacia abyssinica* patch near Gefersa Reservoir. We also had it at Debre Libanos and Wondo Genet. This smartly-patterned, green-backed little woodpecker is a sought-after endemic.
- Cardinal Woodpecker** *Dendropicos fuscescens*  
Fairly common in dry woodland throughout.
- Bearded Woodpecker** *Dendropicos namaquus*  
First seen in lush woodland in Awash, and subsequently near Lake Langano.
- Gray-headed Woodpecker** *Dendropicos spodocephalus*  
The same patch of *A. abyssinica* that had Abyssinian Woodpecker also had this species. Fairly common elsewhere, in forest and thicker woodland.
- Singing Bushlark** *Mirafr cantillans*  
Small numbers in Awash NP.
- White-tailed Lark** *Mirafr albicauda*  
The Nechisar Plain is the only known site for this bird in Ethiopia. We were very happy to find one doing a display flight over the short, parched grassland inside the national park.
- Red-winged Lark** *Mirafr hypermetra*  
This localized lark was difficult to find this year, but we finally managed a couple of sightings in Awash NP.
- Flappet Lark** *Mirafr rufocinnamomea*  
Several heard before one was seen only about 3 yards away in Nechisar. Nice looks at a bird that is common elsewhere in Africa, but quite scarce in Ethiopia.
- Gillett's Lark** *Mirafr gilletti*  
We saw a couple in Awash, and then a few more around Negele. This is an uncommon and local bird of northeastern Africa.
- Sidamo Lark** *Heteromirafr sidamoensis*  
Though it's not as sought-after as some Abyssinian / Ethiopian endemics, this might be my favorite. It is a cryptic but incredibly beautiful bird whose range is so small that when standing at its center you can see almost the whole thing. It lives in a tiny patch of open grassland surrounded by woodland on all sides. We managed to find this bird after an hour of walking about, ensuring we had something to celebrate as we enjoyed a great 'field breakfast' in the open expanse of the Liben Plain

- Foxy Lark** *Calendulauda alopex*  
I was surprised to find a singing Foxy Lark in Abiata-Shala National Park. The only other place we saw it was in its more regular haunts near Yabello.
- Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix leucotis*  
A small flock in Awash and hundreds if not thousands on the Bilen Plain.
- Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix nigriceps*  
We eventually found a couple of Black-crowned Sparrow-Larks amongst the huge flock of Chestnut-backed at the Bilen Plain.
- Chestnut-headed Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix signatus*  
Small numbers near Lake Beseka, on the Bilen Plain, and at the spring close to Bilen Lodge.
- Greater Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla*  
Several amongst the horde of Sparrow-Larks on the Bilen Plain.
- Erlanger's Lark** *Calandrella erlangeri*  
Small number seen in the agricultural highlands south of Debre Libanos.
- Somali Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella somalica*  
On the Liben Plain, this lark is much more common, vocal, and conspicuous than the Sidamo.
- Thekla Lark** *Galerida theklæ*  
Fairly common in the highlands, particularly favoring ploughed fields.
- Black Sawwing** *Psaldiprocne pristoptera*  
Small numbers at Wondo Genet, and around Wadera.
- Gray-rumped Swallow** *Pseudhirundo griseopyga*  
This is one of the most scarce swallows in Ethiopia. We were happy to find a flock of them on the way to the Bale Mountains, though they didn't stick around long enough for very satisfying views.
- Plain Martin (Brown-throated)** *Riparia paludicola*  
Quite common in the highlands and the Rift Valley.
- Bank Swallow (Sand Martin)** *Riparia riparia*  
Good numbers around Nechisar, but only singletons elsewhere.
- Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*  
The swallow numbers around Lake Abiata were just beginning to build, but were still impressive. There must have been at least 100,000 Barns in the area.
- Red-chested Swallow** *Hirundo lucida*  
Also seen on the way to the Bale Mountains – a most satisfying sighting after missing this bird on the increasingly developed Sululta Plain.
- Wire-tailed Swallow** *Hirundo smithii*  
Several at the Jemmu Valley, and scattered sightings elsewhere.
- Ethiopian Swallow** *Hirundo aethiopica*  
Most common in the Awash region, particularly around the town of Metahara.
- White-tailed Swallow** *Hirundo megaensis*  
As usual, we saw this dainty endemic swallow even before reaching Yabello.
- Eurasian Crag-Martin** *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*  
A large flock of martins at the Portuguese Bridge provided a good opportunity to dig a couple of these uncommon palearctic migrants out of the more common resident Rock Martins.
- Rock Martin** *Ptyonoprogne fuligula*  
Common throughout the highlands and Rift Valley wherever there are cliffs and rocky areas for nesting.
- House Martin** *Delichon urbicum*  
Widespread sightings of this fairly common migrant.



<b>Lesser Striped-Swallow</b>	<i>Cecropis abyssinica</i>
First seen well at the Bailey bridge in the Jemmu Valley.	
<b>Mosque Swallow</b>	<i>Cecropis senegalensis</i>
Small numbers around Arba Minch.	
<b>Red-rumped Swallow</b>	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>
Most common in the highlands, particularly north of Addis Ababa and in the Bale Mountains.	
<b>African Pipit</b>	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>
Studied well near Lake Koka, with a few sightings elsewhere.	
<b>Long-billed Pipit</b>	<i>Anthus similis</i>
One seen on the rocky hills above the Jemmu Valley.	
<b>Tawny Pipit</b>	<i>Anthus campestris</i>
Very common Palearctic wintering bird. Most common in the agricultural areas of the Rift Valley.	
<b>Plain-backed Pipit</b>	<i>Anthus leucophrys</i>
Fairly common on the Liben Plain and strangely absent elsewhere on this tour.	
<b>Red-throated Pipit</b>	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>
Another common Palearctic pipit. More tied to water than Tawny Pipit, with large numbers in sites like Lakes Chelekaleka and Koka.	
<b>Tree Pipit</b>	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>
Seen in the <i>Acacia</i> woodland near Gefersa and at Wondo Genet.	
<b>Abyssinian Longclaw</b>	<i>Macronyx flavicollis</i>
Beautiful, fiery-throated endemic that we found on the Sululta Plain and in the Bale Mountains.	
<b>White Wagtail</b>	<i>Motacilla alba</i>
Fairly common Palearctic migrant, particularly around Lake Gefersa and the central Rift Valley lakes.	
<b>African Pied Wagtail</b>	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>
Singles seen at the Jemmu Valley, Awash NP, and at the Dawa River.	
<b>Yellow Wagtail</b>	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
One of the most abundant Palearctic migrants / wintering birds in Ethiopia, with flocks of hundreds around Lakes Abiata, Gefersa, and elsewhere. Even on the Liben Plain, we found a flock of dozens of Yellow Wagtails following a herd of cows around.	
<b>Gray Wagtail</b>	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
Scarce palearctic wintering bird. One was seen in the same binocular field with a Mountain Wagtail at the Portuguese Bridge!	
<b>Mountain Wagtail</b>	<i>Motacilla clara</i>
A pair at Gefersa Allowed very close approach. Other sightings were at the Portuguese Bridge, Wondo Genet, and in Nechisar NP.	
<b>Gray Cuckooshrike</b>	<i>Coracina caesia</i>
Seen only in the beleaguered montane forest at Wondo Genet.	
<b>Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike</b>	<i>Campephaga phoenicea</i>
First encountered at Debre Libanos. Later also at Wondo Genet.	
<b>Common Bulbul</b>	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>
'Common' is the most common and widespread of the Common Bulbul subspecies (sometimes considered full species) in Ethiopia.	
<b>Dark-capped Bulbul</b>	<i>Pyconotus (b.) tricolor</i>
Dark-capped Bulbul was only seen near Goba and on the southern slope of the Bale Mountains, near Wadera.	
<b>Somali Bulbul</b>	<i>P. (b.) somaliensis</i>

Bulbuls at Bilen Lodge looked good for Somali, though it's hard to rule out some 'Common' genes. Most of the bulbuls in Awash NP appeared to be integrades.

**Dodson's Bulbul** *Pyconotus (b.) dodsoni*

First seen at Sof Omar and common in the arid south.

**Northern Brownbul** *Phyllastrephus strepitans*

Fairly common but local in the arid south. Several good sightings.

**Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis*

Most of our sightings were in the northern highlands, plus one near Yabello.

**Little Rock-Thrush** *Monticola rufocinereus*

Only seen near Debre Libanos and on the upper slopes of the Jemmu Valley.

**Blue Rock-Thrush** *Monticola solitarius*

Our only sighting was on the way down into the Great Rift Valley from Chelekaleka.

**Abyssinian Ground-Thrush** *Zoothera piaggiae*

We spotted this beautiful Ground-Thrush sitting at the top of a tree and singing at Wondo Genet. Unusual behavior for this skulking species.

**Groundscraper Thrush** *Psophocichla litsipsirupa*

Common in the highlands plus one sighting in the town of Yabello.

**Olive Thrush (Mountain)** *Turdus olivaceus*

Common in the highlands. On the first morning of the tour, at our hotel in Addis, it is a pleasure to wake up to a dawn chorus of these songsters.

**African Thrush** *Turdus pelios*

Replaces Olive Thrush at lower elevations, such as the Rift Valley. Also common.

**African Bare-eyed Thrush** *Turdus tephronotus*

This beautiful *Turdus* is uncommon in the arid south. We finally found one south of Yabello in a lush area of woodland.

**Red-faced Cisticola** *Cisticola erythrops*

Common and vocal in the rank thickets around Lake Awassa.

**Singing Cisticola** *Cisticola cantans*

Several seen around the Portuguese Bridge and below the Ankober Lodge. Also heard near Wadera and in the lower reaches of the Haremma Forest.

**Boran Cisticola** *Cisticola bodessa*

We finally caught up with this scarce cisticola near Mega.

**Rattling Cisticola** *Cisticola chiniana*

Fairly common in savanna in Awash and the south.

**Ashy Cisticola** *Cisticola cinereolus*

Common in Awash NP, and also encountered on the way to Negele, and near Yabello.

**Ethiopian Cisticola (Winding)** *Cisticola lugubris*

Common in the highlands, even in the weedy patches around towns and villages.

**Stout Cisticola** *Cisticola robustus*

A vocal pair was near the Portuguese Bridge.

**Foxy Cisticola** *Cisticola troglodytes*

As normal, found in the farmbrush in the Jemmu Valley.

**Tiny Cisticola** *Cisticola nana*

I was the only one who had a glimpse of one in the savanna east of Negele, which was frustrating, but it was very satisfying when we finally saw this bird well near Mega, particularly since it was Sonia's 2500<sup>th</sup> bird! The bird actually displayed right over our heads for several



minutes, seeming to sense the importance of the occasion, and compensating for its drabness with a display of unbridled exuberance!

**Zitting Cisticola**

*Cisticola juncidis*

A widespread and common bird that is strangely uncommon in Ethiopia. Only seen twice: in Awash NP and in Nechisar NP.

**Pectoral-patch Cisticola**

*Cisticola brunnescens*

Vocal birds on the Sululta Plain and Liben Plain.

**Tawny-flanked Prinia**

*Prinia subflava*

Common throughout most of the country.

**Pale Prinia**

*Prinia somalica*

Replaces Tawny-flanked in the arid south, where it is quite common.

**Yellow-breasted Apalis**

*Apalis flavida*

Fairly common in the arid south, and a frequent member of bird parties.

**Red-fronted Warbler**

*Urorhipis rufifrons*

Only seen twice, once on the way to Bilen Lodge, and once east of Negele.

**Gray-backed Camaroptera**

*Camaroptera brachyura*

Common throughout the country, and seen or heard nearly every day.

**Gray Wren-Warbler**

*Calamonastes simplex*

Several sightings in Awash NP followed by more in the arid south.

**Cinnamon Bracken-Warbler**

*Bradypterus cinnamomeus*

Seen extraordinarily well near Gefersa Reservoir on our first day. We had a bird singing and hopping around in a bush in front of us at close range. As a guide who has had to dive into a thicket to ensure that this bird is seen at all, I fully appreciated this rare encounter with a true skulker! Fairly common in higher areas with thick ground cover, such as the sides of the Ankober escarpment and the lower portions of Bale NP.

**Sedge Warbler**

*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Seen in good numbers in marshes around the Rift Valley Lakes.

**Eurasian Reed-Warbler**

*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

One seen near Lake Chelekleka.

**Great Reed-Warbler**

*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

One seen at Lake Awassa.

**Lesser Swamp-Warbler (Cape Reed)**

*Acrocephalus gracilirostris*

Common in marshes around the Rift Valley lakes, especially Lake Awassa.

**Eastern Olivaceous Warbler**

*Hippolais pallida*

Scattered sightings at lower elevations.

**Upcher's Warbler**

*Hippolais languida*

Several seen in thickets near Bilen Lodge.

**Dark-capped Yellow Warbler**

*Chloropeta natalensis*

One bird sang loudly in a thicket next to Lake Awassa, but only allowed the briefest of glimpses.

**Buff-bellied Warbler**

*Phyllolais pulchella*

Common in the woodland around Lake Langano.

**Yellow-vented Eremomela**

*Eremomela flavicrissalis*

Only one seen in the arid savanna east of Negele.

**Yellow-bellied Eremomela**

*Eremomela icteropygialis*

Fairly common at low to mid elevations, particularly in Awash and the arid south.

**Green-backed Eremomela**

*Eremomela canescens*

We had one poking around in the fig tree over our heads while eating lunch at the Jemmu Valley.

<b>Northern Crombec</b>	<i>Sylvietta brachyura</i>
Most common in Awash NP, with scattered sightings in the south.	
<b>Red-faced Crombec</b>	<i>Sylvietta whytii</i>
Only seen in the Rift Valley, and most common around Langano.	
<b>Somali Crombec</b>	<i>Sylvietta isabellina</i>
We struggled to find this bird on this tour, finally locating one south of Yabello.	
<b>Brown Woodland-Warbler</b>	<i>Phylloscopus umbrovirens</i>
Initially seen near Gefersa, with later sightings at Debre Libanos and Bale NP.	
<b>Willow Warbler</b>	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
One bird near Bilen was the only definite sighting, though I'll confess to not looking carefully at every chiffchaff-like warbler we encountered!	
<b>Common Chiffchaff</b>	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Very common throughout Ethiopia except the arid south.	
<b>Blackcap</b>	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
Sightings at a few sites in the highlands, including Wondo Genet and Harenna Forest.	
<b>Greater Whitethroat</b>	<i>Sylvia communis</i>
Only seen once, in the Jemmu Valley.	
<b>Lesser Whitethroat</b>	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>
Small numbers, mostly in the Awash / Bilen region.	
<b>Brown Warbler (Parisoma)</b>	<i>Parisoma lugens</i>
Seen in the gardens of our hotel in Addis, as well as in the <i>Acacia abyssinica</i> patch near Gefersa. A very local bird in Ethiopia, mainly confined to these patches of highland acacias.	
<b>Bale Warbler (Brown)</b>	<i>Parisoma (lugens) griseiventris</i>
Although most authorities lump this bird with Brown Parisoma, it does use very different habitat – timberline scrub rather than highland acacias. In any case, we found one on the flanks of the Bale Mountains.	
<b>Banded Warbler</b>	<i>Parisoma boehmi</i>
Uncommon in the arid south, seen several times.	
<b>African Gray Flycatcher</b>	<i>Bradornis microrhynchus</i>
One of the most common birds in the arid savanna of Awash NP and the south.	
<b>Abyssinian Slaty-Flycatcher</b>	<i>Melaenornis chocolatinus</i>
Common in the highlands, with some seen in the middle of towns.	
<b>Northern Black-Flycatcher</b>	<i>Melaenornis edolioides</i>
Fairly common at low to mid elevations in open woodland. Seen frequently.	
<b>Gambaga Flycatcher</b>	<i>Muscicapa gambagae</i>
We had brief looks of a bird that was almost certainly this species next to Lake Awassa. Unfortunately the bird disappeared before allowing satisfying looks and photos.	
<b>African Dusky Flycatcher</b>	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>
Common in the highlands, particularly in forested areas.	
<b>Gray Tit-Flycatcher (Fan-tailed)</b>	<i>Myioparus plumbeus</i>
One seen at close range in Sof Omar, and several more heard in Nechisar NP.	
<b>Thrush Nightingale</b>	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>
A long dive into a thicket at Sof Omar finally produced satisfying views of this scarce species.	
<b>Common Nightingale</b>	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>
Seen only in the hotel garden at Lake Langano.	
<b>Bluethroat</b>	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>



We found a single bird in the swamp thicket adjacent the Lake Ziway jetty. This species is very rarely seen in Ethiopia.

**Rueppell's Robin-Chat**

*Cossypha semirufa*

Seen in good numbers in highland forest sites such as Wondo Genet and Debre Libanos.

**White-browed Robin-Chat**

*Cossypha heuglini*

A singing bird was lured into view in the garden of our Awassa hotel.

**Red-capped Robin-Chat**

*Cossypha natalensis*

Nechisar's fig forest gave up this skulking species. The population here seems to be resident, and is quite isolated from the species' main range.

**Spotted Morning-Thrush**

*Cichladusa guttata*

This noted songster greeted us in a thicket near the Genale River, and also serenaded us during a field breakfast south of Yabello.

**White-browed Scrub-Robin**

*Cercotrichas leucophrys*

A common bird present throughout the country at low to mid elevation savanna sites.

**Common Redstart**

*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Handful of sightings, with the largest number in the garden of our Langano hotel.

**African Stonechat**

*Saxicola torquatus*

Fairly common in open portions of the highlands. The race in Ethiopia is quite distinct from stonechats elsewhere in Africa.

**Northern Wheatear**

*Oenanthe oenanthe*

Scattered sightings, perhaps totaling 8 birds. The last sighting was of a gorgeous breeding male near Negele.

**Abyssinian Black Wheatear**

*Oenanthe lugubris*

Only seen on the slopes of the Jemmu Valley and below Ankober.

**Pied Wheatear**

*Oenanthe pleschanka*

The most common wheatear, occurring throughout Ethiopia, and seen on every day of the tour.

**Black-eared Wheatear**

*Oenanthe hispanica*

A lone male seen in Awash NP.

**Isabelline Wheatear**

*Oenanthe isabellina*

Very common throughout Ethiopia, preferring slightly drier and more open areas than Pied.

**Red-breasted Wheatear (Botta's)**

*Oenanthe bottae*

Fairly common in open portions of the highlands.

**Familiar Chat**

*Cercomela familiaris*

As usual, seen only in the Jemmu Valley.

**Brown-tailed Chat**

*Cercomela scotocerca*

An extremely localized bird of northeast Africa. We saw several at Sof Omar, which is the normal site.

**Sombre Chat**

*Cercomela dubia*

We easily found this rare species at the lava fields adjacent Lake Beseka, in the Awash region.

Though identification can be difficult, the birds allowed long study through the scope, satisfying all of us as to their identity.

**Blackstart**

*Cercomela melanura*

Also present on the Beseka lava fields, and more common than Sombre Chat.

**Moorland Chat**

*Cercomela sordida*

This doughty little chat was seen frequently in the highlands in places such as the Ankober Escarpment and the Bale Mountains.

**Rueppell's Chat (Black-Chat)**

*Myrmecocichla melaena*

This endemic is only found in Ethiopia's northern mountain massif. Here we found them easily near the Portuguese Bridge and Debre Libanos.

**Mocking Cliff-Chat** *Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris*

Most common in the Portuguese Bridge area, though also seen at Langanu.

**White-winged Cliff-Chat** *Thamnolaea semirufa*

Sharp-looking endemic fairly common around the Portuguese Bridge, with another sighting at Wondo Genet.

**Brown-throated Wattle-eye** *Platysteira cyanea*

Seen at Wondo Genet, and heard in Nechisar.

**Gray-headed Batis** *Batis orientalis*

Common in lower elevation sites such as Awash NP and the south.

**Black-headed Batis** *Batis minor*

Though separation from Gray-headed Batis can be quite difficult when these birds are silent, we found vocalizing birds near Gefersa Reservoir and in several other places.

**Pygmy Batis** *Batis perkeo*

This diminutive batis is fairly common in the south.

**African Paradise-Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone viridis*

A showy species whose males show several different color patterns. Fairly common throughout Ethiopia in a variety of habitats.

**African Hill Babbler** *Pseudoalcippe abyssinica*

Seen spectacularly well at arm's length in Wondo Genet. Normally a skulking bird that is difficult to see well.

**Scaly Chatterer** *Turdoides aylmeri*

Two small groups seen in the south, one near Negele and one near Yabello.

**Rufous Chatterer** *Turdoides rubiginosa*

Not uncommon in the Rift Valley and quite common in the south, where it is much more common than Scaly.

**White-rumped Babbler** *Turdoides leucopygia*

Sightings at diverse sites including Melka Ghebdu, Wondo Genet, and Wadera,.

**Abyssinian Catbird** *Parophasma galinieri*

Paul and Sonia glimpsed one at Debre Libanos, and we heard several at Dinsho, but didn't get a really satisfying look until our first visit to the Harennu Forest.

**White-winged Black-Tit** *Melaniparus leucomelas*

Seen only at Langanu, on both of our visits to the area.

**White-backed Black-Tit** *Melaniparus leuconotus*

This endemic is uncommon and unobtrusive in highland forest. Slightly surprising was a sighting in the Gefersa *Acacia* patch. Further sightings followed in Wondo Genet and Harennu.

**Somali Tit (Northern Gray)** *Melaniparus thruppi*

One of the most common and conspicuous members of bird parties in southern Ethiopia.

**Spotted Creeper** *Salpornis spilonotus*

We were rewarded by a superb sighting after a long climb up the Wondo Genet valley.

**Mouse-colored Penduline-Tit** *Anthoscopus musculus*

Fairly common though unobtrusive in Awash and around Bilen, as well as in the south.

**Kenya Violet-backed Sunbird** *Anthreptes orientalis*

A pair in Awash was welcome as it an uncommon bird in that area. Many more sightings followed in the south.

**Collared Sunbird** *Hedydipna collaris*



Common in the southern savannas.

**Nile Valley Sunbird**

*Hedydipna metallica*

This beautiful sunbird stands out even in a superlative family. Numbers fluctuate considerably, so we were happy to find it fairly common in the Awash area, and approaching abundant around Bilen!

**Western Olive Sunbird**

*Cyanomitra obscura*

Only seen at Wondo Genet.

**Scarlet-chested Sunbird**

*Chalcomitra senegalensis*

Most common in the Rift Valley.

**Hunter's Sunbird**

*Chalcomitra hunteri*

Very similar to Scarlet-chested, but found only in the arid savanna of the south. We had definitive views of a male east of Negele, and a few subsequent sightings elsewhere in the south.

**Tacazze Sunbird**

*Nectarinia tacazze*

Common in the highlands, and often in gardens. Our first birds were at our hotel in Addis.

**Beautiful Sunbird**

*Cinnyris pulchellus*

Another exceptional looker even among sunbirds. Fairly common, especially in the Rift Valley.

**Marico Sunbird**

*Cinnyris mariquensis*

Surprisingly scarce on this trip, only seen near Langano and Yabello.

**Black-bellied Sunbird**

*Cinnyris nectarinioides*

Sonia had a good look at one near the Dawa River, but was the only one who saw this northeast Africa endemic.

**Shining Sunbird**

*Cinnyris habessinicus*

Present in small numbers throughout the Rift and the south.

**Variable Sunbird**

*Cinnyris venustus*

Fairly common throughout. The white-bellied form in the south is quite different from the yellow-bellied highland bird, as befits a bird of this name.

**Montane White-eye**

*Zosterops poliogastrus*

Fairly common in the highlands in forest and thick scrub. First sighted at Debre Libanos.

**Abyssinian White-eye**

*Zosterops abyssinicus*

Though separation from Montane is not always clearcut, there was no doubt about a few seen in the Jemmu Valley, and the yellow-bellied birds present in the far south are quite distinctive.

**Abyssinian (Dark-headed) Oriole**

*Oriolus monacha*

Common in highland forests. Seen first at Debre Libanos.

**Black-headed Oriole (African)**

*Oriolus larvatus*

Small numbers seen throughout the south.

**Rufous-tailed (Isabelline) Shrike**

*Lanius isabellinus*

Fairly common boreal migrant, we enjoyed widespread and frequent sightings.

**Lesser Gray Shrike**

*Lanius minor*

A sharp member of this species furnished a surprising sighting in a scrubby field bordering the scrubby border town of Negele. Usually only seen on passage in Ethiopia, and February is early for a northbound migrant.

**Red-backed Shrike**

*Lanius collurio*

Sighting this species near Mega was also surprising.

**Southern Gray Shrike**

*Lanius meridionalis*

Frequently spotted in the Awash region. A big beast of a shrike.

**Gray-backed Fiscal**

*Lanius excubitoroides*

This big, social shrike was seen several times in the Rift Valley. We found it particularly common around Arba Minch.

**Taita Fiscal**

*Lanius dorsalis*

Several seen in an open, grassy area of savanna south of Yabello.

**Somali Fiscal**

*Lanius somalicus*

One seen in the same area as the Taita Fiscals, south of Yabello. Also fairly common in Awash NP.

**Common Fiscal**

*Lanius collaris*

A common roadside wire-sitting bird throughout the country.

**Masked Shrike**

*Lanius nubicus*

Only seen near Bilen and Langano. This is one of the sharpest looking of the bounty of palearctic birds we see on every Ethiopia tour.

**Woodchat Shrike**

*Lanius senator*

First seen in the Jemmu Valley, then a few sightings elsewhere. Another cracker of a Palearctic shrike.

**White-crowned Shrike (Northern)**

*Eurocephalus rueppelli*

A big, weird, social shrike. Most common in Awash and the arid south.

**Brubru**

*Nilais afer*

Also seen many times in Awash and the south.

**Northern Puffback**

*Dryoscopus gambensis*

First seen in the forest at Debre Libanos, then in a variety of other locations.

**Pringle's Puffback**

*Dryoscopus pringlii*

This dinky puffback can be one of the harder southern specialties to find, but furnished no challenge this year, easily seen at a good savanna site east of Negele.

**Black-crowned Tchagra**

*Tchagra senegalus*

Frequently seen throughout most of the country, though much more scarce in the arid south.

**Three-streaked Tchagra**

*Tchagra jamesi*

This is a scarce skulker, and always tough to see well. A long bushwhack in the savanna east of Yabello finally revealed a pair of birds that seemed to be building a nest, perhaps prompted by this year's unusually strong early rains.

**Red-naped Bushshrike**

*Laniarius ruficeps*

Seen several times and heard frequently in the arid south. This is a beautiful bushshrike with a small northeastern Africa range.

**Ethiopian Boubou (Tropical)**

*Laniarius aethiopicus*

Heard frequently, but took a while to see well. Uses a variety of habitats.

**Slate-colored Boubou**

*Laniarius funebris*

First seen in some lush woodland in Awash NP. Frequently heard and seen subsequently in the Rift and the arid south.

**Rosy-patched Bushshrike**

*Rhodophoneus cruentus*

This is an odd and very attractive bushshrike. We first connected with a pair in Awash. Also seen fairly frequently in the arid south.

**Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike**

*Telophorus sulfureopectus*

Long taunted by its voice, we finally spotted a beautiful specimen in riparian woodland in Awash. Other sightings followed, with one near Yabello particularly cooperative.

**Gray-headed Bushshrike**

*Malaconotus blanchoti*

The long, hooting call of this species sounds ghost-like to some. We called one in at Sof Omar, then saw a few more in the south.



- White Helmetshrike** *Prionops plumatus*  
Only a few sightings in the south. First seen north of Negele.
- Fork-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus adsimilis*  
A very common bird at most low to mid elevations sites.
- Stresemann's Bush-Crow** *Zavattariornis stresemanni*  
One of the most incredible Ethiopian endemics, this 'white-crow' has long puzzled taxonomists. It has variously been considered a starling, a crow, and its own family. Currently it's a corvid, which seems reasonable given its calls, behavior, and appearance. Though it has a tiny range, it is quite common within it, and we saw bush-crows several times around Yabello.
- Red-billed Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*  
A small group plodded through the moorland in the Bale Mountains.
- Cape Crow** *Corvus capensis*  
Common, mostly in the highlands.
- Pied Crow** *Corvus albus*  
Also common, also mostly in the highlands.
- Somali Crow** *Corvus edithae*  
Quite common in the south, particularly around Yabello.
- Fan-tailed Raven** *Corvus rhipidurus*  
Seen frequently all over the country, though less common in the arid south.
- Thick-billed Raven** *Corvus crassirostris*  
This amazing endemic is a real bruiser, with the largest bill of any passerine. We saw them frequently around the Central Rift Lakes and at Wondo Genet.
- Wattled Starling** *Creatophora cinerea*  
Our first wattleds were seen during a refueling stop in the town of Awash. Only a handful of sightings came later.
- Greater Blue-eared Starling** *Lamprotornis chalybaeus*  
Very common throughout Ethiopia. Seen on every day of the tour.
- Lesser Blue-eared Starling** *Lamprotornis chloropterus*  
This smaller, less common cousin of the Greater was only seen in the Jemmu Valley, where its calls provided definitive proof of its identity.
- Rueppell's Starling** *Lamprotornis purpuroptera*  
Something of a Rift Valley specialty. We saw large numbers between Awash and Arba Minch.
- Golden-breasted Starling** *Lamprotornis regius*  
This may get my vote for most spectacular starling! A few small groups lit up the roadside acacias between Negele and Yabello, and also near Mega.
- Superb Starling** *Lamprotornis superbus*  
Truly superb, though also very common. Common in Awash and throughout the south. They swoop in and eat table scraps at the Lake Langano hotels!
- Shelley's Starling** *Lamprotornis shelleyi*  
Seen almost every day in the south, first at Negele. Much less common and much more restricted in range than Superb.
- Violet-backed Starling** *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*  
The fruiting figs of the foothills south of the Bale Mountains attracted this starling along with Ruspoli's Turaco.
- White-crowned Starling** *Spreo albicapillus*  
This hefty starling is only slightly less odd than Stresemann's Bush-Crow, and is often seen in its company around Yabello. Our first sightings were on the Liben Plain.

- Red-winged Starling** *Onychognathus morio*  
Our only sightings were at Wondo Genet and Yabello.
- Slender-billed Starling** *Onychognathus tenuirostris*  
Far from common. We first found it in a spot between Ankober and Melka Ghebdu, then later saw a large flock in the Bale Mountains, and a few in the Hareenna Forest.
- Bristle-crowned Starling** *Onychognathus salvadorii*  
First seen at the lava fields of Beseka, that it shares with Sombre Rock-Chats. Subsequent sightings at Sof Omar and north of Negele.
- White-billed Starling** *Onychognathus albirostris*  
All our sightings of this endemic came from Debre Libanos, the Jemmu Valley, and Ankober.
- Sharpe's Starling** *Pholia sharpii*  
A couple were seen well at Wondo. This is quite a scarce and local bird endemic to east Africa.
- Magpie Starling** *Speculipastor bicolor*  
Seen fleetingly between Negele and Yabello, and very well south of Yabello. An odd and good-looking starling.
- Red-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus erythrorhynchus*  
Fairly common throughout, from lowlands to highlands. Our first oxpeckers were on the Sululta Plain. This bird seems to thrive in the Ethiopian environment, with countless domestic animals to support it.
- Shelley's Rufous Sparrow** *Passer shelleyi*  
Only in the far south. First sighted in the Liben Plain, then later near Yabello.
- Swainson's Sparrow** *Passer swainsonii*  
Common throughout Ethiopia. The default *Passer* sparrow, without any competition from House Sparrow.
- Parrot-billed Sparrow** *Passer gongonensis*  
Found again at the normal location west of Yabello. Identification requires careful study, as this species is very similar to the more common Swainson's.
- Chestnut Sparrow** *Passer eminibey*  
A large flock near Lake Abiata was our only sighting.
- Yellow-spotted Petronia** *Petronia pyrgita*  
First seen in Awash and quite common in the arid south.
- Bush Petronia** *Petronia dentata*  
Our only sightings came from the Jemmu Valley, where it is one of the most common birds.
- Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver** *Bubalornis niger*  
Fairly localized. Seen first at Awash NP, then later near Yabello.
- White-headed Buffalo-Weaver** *Dinemellia dinemelli*  
Common throughout the Rift Valley, including Awash, and the south.
- Speckle-fronted Weaver** *Sporopipes frontalis*  
Small numbers in the Jemmu Valley.
- White-browed Sparrow-Weaver** *Plocepasser mahali*  
Common bird at low to mid elevations. First seen at Melka Ghebdu.
- Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver** *Plocepasser superciliosus*  
This is not a common bird in Ethiopia, and I was very happy to find several near Melka Ghebdu. Hopefully this spot will prove reliable for future tours.
- Gray-capped Social-Weaver** *Pseudonigrita arnaudi*  
There are several colonies in the savanna east of Negele, and it is quite common around Yabello.
- Black-capped Social-Weaver** *Pseudonigrita cabanisi*



Less common than Gray-capped, though also easy to find around Yabello. We enjoyed a long photo session with a tree full of both Social-Weavers south of Yabello.

**Red-headed Weaver** *Anaplectes rubriceps*

Scattered but frequent sightings of this handsome weaver.

**Baglafaecht Weaver** *Ploceus baglafaecht*

Seen around Addis Ababa, and elsewhere in the highlands, where it is quite common. Also common in the higher parts of the Rift Valley.

**Little Weaver** *Ploceus luteolus*

First seen at Lake Langano, and later at a few other Rift Valley sites.

**Spectacled Weaver** *Ploceus ocularis*

Our only sightings were at Lakes Langano and Awassa. Not as common or colonial as most other weavers.

**Northern Masked-Weaver** *Ploceus taeniopterus*

This uncommon and local weaver was seen a couple of times in the reedbeds and scrub around Lake Chamo, in Nechisar NP.

**Lesser Masked-Weaver** *Ploceus intermedius*

Scattered sightings, most notably a colony building nests in a tree over the hotel restaurant where we had breakfast in Langano.

**Vitelline Masked-Weaver** *Ploceus vitellinus*

Seen in small numbers at widely scattered sites including the Jemmu Valley, Melka Ghebdu, and Lake Langano.

**Rueppell's Weaver** *Ploceus galbula*

Quite a common weaver in Ethiopia, with birds nest-building around Bilen Lodge.

**Speke's Weaver** *Ploceus spekei*

One sighting near Awash was most welcome, while in the south it was quite common.

**Village Weaver** *Ploceus cucullatus*

Fairly common in the highlands and the Rift, particularly in wet, brushy areas. Seen in the reedbeds of Lake Awassa.

**Juba Weaver (Salvadori's)** *Ploceus dichrocephalus*

A small flock of drab non-breeding birds was along the Dawa River. This species has a tiny range in southern Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya.

**Chestnut Weaver** *Ploceus rubiginosus*

Paul saw this species in Gibe Gorge on his day trip on the first day, but it wasn't until our last day that the rest of us saw them near Lake Abiata.

**Red-billed Quelea** *Quelea quelea*

Fairly large numbers in Awash NP and a few sighting elsewhere. All in non-breeding plumage.

**Red Bishop** *Euplectes franciscanus*

One non-breeding bird seen in the Jemmu Valley was very likely a Red Bishop, but there was no doubt about the immaculate breeding plumaged birds in the Rift Valley near Arba Minch.

**Black-winged Bishop** *Euplectes hordeaceus*

Several flocks of non-breeding birds in the Jemmu Valley.

**Yellow Bishop** *Euplectes capensis*

Seen many times in the highlands, in open, grassy areas. All were in non breeding plumage.

**Yellow-crowned Bishop** *Euplectes afer*

A small flock of these tiny bishops was seen near Lake Abiata on our last day.

**Grosbeak Weaver** *Amblyospiza albifrons*

A small flock seen in farmscrub in the Wondo Genet valley.

- Yellow-bellied Waxbill** *Coccopygia quartinia*  
One next to the road on the way into Debre Libanos came as a mild surprise. Several subsequent sightings in forested highland sites.
- Green-backed (Green) Twinspot** *Mandingoa nitidula*  
One was heard in the Harennna Forest, but never showed, despite extensive searching.
- Crimson-rumped Waxbill** *Estrilda rhodopyga*  
Fairly common in the Jemmu Valley, and also seen at Melka Ghebdu and in Awash NP.
- Common Waxbill** *Estrilda astrild*  
Not particularly common in Ethiopia. Several seen in Lake Awassa reedbeds.
- Black-cheeked Waxbill** *Estrilda chamosyna*  
We were happy to see a pair of this scarce and inconspicuous waxbill in the brush adjacent Lake Beseka, near Awash. More sightings followed in the arid south.
- Red-cheeked Cordonbleu** *Uraeginthus bengalus*  
Common at low to mid elevations throughout.
- Purple Grenadier** *Granatina ianthinogaster*  
Small numbers in the dry savanna near Negele and Yabello.
- Red-billed Pytilia** *Pytilia lineata*  
A tree full of 40 or more of this rare endemic was probably my personal highlight of this tour. It was an unbelievable concentration of a rare bird, especially considering that a big flock of pytilias of any species is unusual.
- Green-winged Pytilia** *Pytilia melba*  
We saw fewer Green-winged than Red-billed, with only a few seen in Awash NP!
- Red-billed Firefinch** *Lagonosticta senegala*  
Frequently seen in the northern highlands and the Rift Valley, with a few sightings in the Bale Mountains and the south.
- African Firefinch** *Lagonosticta rubricata*  
Fairly common at Wondo Genet.
- Cut-throat** *Amadina fasciata*  
Small numbers at the Jemmu Valley, Bilen, Negele, and Yabello.
- African Silverbill** *Euodice cantans*  
Small flock seen in the Jemmu Valley farmbrush.
- Bronze Mannikin** *Spermestes cucullatus*  
Seen at a lunch stop in Ziway, and around Lake Langano.
- Black-and-white Mannikin** *Spermestes bicolor*  
A large flock in the Harennna Forest.
- Pin-tailed Whydah** *Vidua macroura*  
Most of our sightings were in the Awash area. Whydahs were inexplicably scarce this year.
- Straw-tailed Whydah** *Vidua fischeri*  
Only one sighting, in Awash NP.
- Village Indigobird** *Vidua chalybeata*  
A few sightings of small numbers in the northern highlands and around Bilen Lodge.
- Ankober Serin** *Carduelis ankoberensis*  
This endemic has a tiny range along Ethiopia's northern Rift Valley escarpment as well as the Semien Mountains. We found a whole flock feeding in a field adjacent the escarpment, north of Ankober.
- Yellow-crowned Canary** *Serinus flavivertex*  
Seen near Gefersa Reservoir and in Harennna Forest.

**Abyssinian Siskin***Serinus nigriceps*

This striking endemic is common in the highlands.

**African Citril***Serinus citrinelloides*

Fairly common in the highlands, with the highest numbers at Wondo Genet.

**Reichenow's Seedeater***Serinus reichenowi*

A brief sighting at Melka Ghebdu. Fairly common and frequently encountered in the south.

**Yellow-fronted Canary***Serinus mozambicus*

Seen in the Jemmu Valley, at the edge of its range.

**White-bellied Canary***Serinus dorsostriatus*

One pair in Awash NP, and another near Yabello. Far from common.

**Yellow-throated Serin***Serinus flavigula*

This endemic is only regularly seen in two sites. One of these is Melka Ghebdu, where we saw a small group soon after arrival.

**Salvadori's Serin***Serinus xantholaemus*

Another endemic serin. Seen at Sof Omar soon after arrival.

**Northern Grosbeak-Canary***Serinus donaldsoni*

Uncommon, but seen a few times in the south.

**Streaky Seedeater***Serinus striolatus*

Common in the highlands.

**Brown-rumped Seedeater***Serinus tristriatus*

Common in the highlands, including right in Addis Ababa.

**Ortolan Bunting***Emberiza hortulana*

Several seen on the Sululta Plain and in the Jemmu Valley.

**House Bunting***Emberiza striolata*

Only one at the Lake Beseka lava fields.

**Cinnamon-breasted Bunting***Emberiza tahapisi*

Several singing birds at the Jemmu Valley.

**Somali Bunting***Emberiza poliopleura*

A couple of sightings in Awash NP, and seen every day in the south.

**Red** = Ethiopian or Abyssinian (Ethiopia and Eritrea) endemic



Ethiopian endemic Spot-breasted Lapwing.



## MAMMAL LIST

This list follows *The Kingdon Field Guide to African Mammals* (2003) by Jonathan Kingdon.

<b>Guereza White Colobus</b>	<i>Colobus guereza (abyssinicus)</i>
<b>Sacred Baboon (Hamadryas)</b>	<i>Papio hamadryas</i>
<b>Olive Baboon</b>	<i>Papio anubis</i>
<b>Gelada (Baboon)</b>	<i>Theropithecus gelada</i>
<b>Grivet Monkey</b>	<i>Cercopithecus aethiops</i>
<b>Vervet Monkey</b>	<i>Cercopithecus pygerythrus</i>
<b>Lesser Bushbaby (Senegal Galago)</b>	<i>Galago senegalensis</i>
<b>Scrub Hare</b>	<i>Lepus saxatilis fagani</i>
<b>Abyssinian Hare</b>	<i>Lepus capensis habesynnicus</i>
<b>Starck's Hare</b>	<i>Lepus starcki</i>
<b>Unstriped Ground Squirrel</b>	<i>Xerus rutilus</i>
<b>Striped Ground Squirrel</b>	<i>Euxerus erythropus</i>
<b>Gambian Sun Squirrel</b>	<i>Heliosciurus gambianus</i>
<b>Crested Porcupine</b>	<i>Hystrix cristata</i>
<b>Blick's Grass Rat</b>	<i>Arvicanthis blicki</i>
<b>Golden Jackal</b>	<i>Canis aureus</i>
<b>Black-backed Jackal</b>	<i>Canis mesomelas</i>
<b>Abyssinian Wolf</b>	<i>Canis simmensis</i>
<b>Bat-eared Fox</b>	<i>Otocyon megalotis</i>
<b>Slender Mongoose</b>	<i>Herpestes sanguinea</i>
<b>White-tailed Mongoose</b>	<i>Ichneumia albicauda</i>
<b>Spotted Hyaena</b>	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>
<b>Striped Hyaena</b>	<i>Hyaena hyaena</i>
<b>Genet sp.</b>	<i>Genetta sp.</i>
<b>Ethiopian Rock Hyrax</b>	<i>Procavia habessenica</i>
<b>Yellow-spotted Hyrax</b>	<i>Heterohyrax crucei</i>
<b>Burchell's Zebra</b>	<i>Equus quagga burchelli</i>
<b>Hippopotamus</b>	<i>Hippopotamus amphibious</i>
<b>Common Warthog</b>	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>
<b>Desert Warthog</b>	<i>Phacochoerus aethiopicus</i>
<b>Menelik's Bushbuck</b>	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus meneliki</i>
<b>Mountain Nyala</b>	<i>Tragelaphus buxtoni</i>
<b>Lesser Kudu</b>	<i>Tragelaphus imberbis</i>
<b>Greater Kudu</b>	<i>Tragelaphus strepsiceros</i>
<b>Grey Duiker</b>	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>
<b>Klipspringer</b>	<i>Oreotragus oreotragus</i>
<b>Salt's Dik-dik</b>	<i>Madoqua saltiana</i>
<b>Guenther's Dik-dik</b>	<i>Madoqua guentheri</i>
<b>Bohor Reedbuck</b>	<i>Redunca redunca</i>
<b>Grant's Gazelle</b>	<i>Gazella granti</i>
<b>Soemmering's Gazelle</b>	<i>Gazella soemmerringi</i>
<b>Gerenuk</b>	<i>Litocranius walleri</i>
<b>Beisa Oryx</b>	<i>Oryx beisa</i>