

ORNITHOLIDAYS' TOUR TO ETHIOPIA
Undiscovered Africa

27 September – 11 October 2013



Leaders: Gabor Orban and Simon Boyes

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A Personal Diary

Friday, 27 September

We meet up in Heathrow Terminal 3 for the Ethiopian Airlines overnight flight to Addis Ababa in a 767, and take off at 2130.

Saturday, 28 September

The flight arrives ahead of schedule, at 0645 local time. We are now two hours ahead of BST. Immigration, money-changing and luggage retrieval all go smoothly, and soon we are meeting our team outside: my co-leader Gabor and his wife Andrea, our Ethiopian guide T.T., and driver Abeyna. It's only a short drive to our hotel, where our rooms are ready for us. A wander round the gardens is a great introduction to the common highland species. Endemics appear in the form of Brown-rumped Seedeater, Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher and Thick-billed Ravens. More colourful are the abundant Tacazze Sunbirds, African Paradise Flycatcher, Rüppell's Robin-Chat and Baglafaecht Weavers. Yellow Wagtail and Spotted Flycatcher open our account of palearctic migrants. A pair of endemic Wattled Ibis seem almost domesticated, feeding on the lawn like chickens.

After a fine early lunch, we set out to the west of the city, to Gefarsa Reservoir, a main source of the city's water. A stop on the way is in open country, teeming with wetland and grassland species such as Red-breasted Wheatear, large flocks of Black-winged Lapwings, Sacred and Wattled Ibis. The reservoir itself is too full to be of interest to many waders, and the Palearctic duck have not yet arrived. However, we find plenty to keep us busy, from endemic Blue-winged Geese, to overflying European Bee-eaters, Moorland Chat and Yellow-bellied Waxbill, Yellow-crowned Canaries and a superb Half-collared Kingfisher. By the dam we watch plenty of White-collared Pigeons, a skulking Ethiopian Boubou, and Red-winged Starlings.

We head back by a different route. Gabor outlines the plans for tomorrow, and I call the log. After a tasty dinner, we soon fall into overdue sleep.

Sunday, 29 September

After an excellent buffet breakfast at 0600, we find Brown Parisoma and African Citril outside the hotel entrance before Abeyna and T.T. arrive in the coach.

Climbing north out of the city, we soon reach the Solulta Plains, a huge open grassy area at 2600 m. The first stop starts with Isabelline Wheatear and Groundscraper Thrush, with Fan-tailed Widowbirds displaying in the longer grass patches. Pectoral-patch Cisticolas display-flight above us with audible wing snaps. Away from the road, we walk to a wetland area where large flocks of migrant Glossy Ibis, Ruff and Garganey are feeding or resting. A Western Marsh Harrier flies over at regular intervals, putting them all to flight and creating shifting patterns in the sky. The Ruff have a few Greenshank and Black-tailed Godwits with them. A female Pallid Harrier passes close by, with pale collar clearly visible as a diagnostic feature. A pair of Black Crowned Cranes are also an especially beautiful addition to the scene.

Another stop produces a Thekla Lark, likely to be split soon from the European species, possibly to be called Short-crested. Di finds a chestnut-capped Erlanger's Lark which quickly disappears. A coffee stop in Muketuri (what luxury Gabor allows us) adds Village Indigobird and Greater Blue-eared Starling to our list, not to mention excellent locally grown coffee. The whole landscape is brilliant green after much recent rain, quite different from the dry and dusty plains I remember from previous tours in February and March. We reach the edge of the magnificent Jemmu Escarpment, which turns into the Blue Nile Gorge further north.

Gelada Baboons forage alongside the road: a very distinctive and photogenic primate. A fig tree stop recommended by T.T. turns up the promised Banded Barbet and White-cheeked Turaco, seen well by all.

Now we take a walk into remnant forest under a cliff close to the Debre Libanos Monastery. Red-collared Widowbirds display above the crops along the forest edge. In the forest are Hemprich's Hornbill, Mountain Wagtail by a stream, Abyssinian Woodpecker, Black-winged Lovebird, White-billed Starling and Abyssinian Oriole: the last four all endemic. However, not everyone sees them all, as the group splits for a while where the terrain becomes tricky. Overhead flies an African Hawk Eagle (mobbed by Fan-tailed Ravens), above its usual altitude according to the excellent new field guide by Redman, Stevenson and Fanshawe.

We arrive for a late lunch at the new Ethio-German Lodge which commands a fabulous panorama over the huge gorge below. The stop is memorable equally for the local buffet, scenic grandeur and birdlife. Highlights are the adult Lammergeier and Tawny Eagles that come to inspect bones left out for them by the hotel's owners. A pair of Verreaux's Eagles fly past more than once, and Rüppell's Vultures cruise past regularly. A short walk down to the edge of the escarpment reveals a young Rüppell's Vulture on a cliff-ledge nest, as well as the endemic Rüppell's Black Chat, Black-crowned Tchagra and a beautiful group of Blue-breasted Bee-eaters.

One stop on the return journey is by a river crossing, where Malachite Kingfisher and Ethiopian Siskin appear. There is so much more to mention too, but no room here for it all. We arrive back in the sprawling city just after dark, with an hour to shower and relax before dinner and checklist.

Monday, 30 September

On another clear, sunny day, tempered by a refreshing breeze, we drive from Addis Ababa to Lake Langano, in the Rift Valley. But before we leave our hotel, there is time to watch Thick-billed Raven and flocks of Redwing Starlings over the garden. The photographers enjoy common species such as Baglafecht Weaver, Speckled Mousebird and Tacazze Sunbird as the sun lights up the canopy.

After breakfast we load up and leave the city. This is a slow process as the traffic is heavy and the suburbs go on for miles. Around the town of Debre Zeit, we visit three lakes. First is Lake Chelekлека, after passing through fields under intensive cultivation of lettuces and cabbages. There are a remarkable number of Tawny Eagles here, many very approachable and vocal. Waterbirds include African Spoonbill, Yellow-billed and Woolly-necked Storks, (not to mention hundreds of Marabous). Closer to us we enjoy portraits of Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Larks, a Southern Grey Shrike, Chestnut Weavers and Northern Red Bishops in breeding finery.

Lake Bishoftu is a deep crater lake, which we view from a terrace while enjoying coffee. Abyssinian Wheatear, Wattled Starling, our first Mourning Dove and African Silverbills appear below us, and White-billed Starlings fly past. Finally a short stop at Lake Hora adds Rüppell's Weaver, Beautiful Sunbird, and some spectacular butterflies and demoiselle dragonflies.

After a satisfying lunch at a busy and efficient restaurant in Mojo, we head south and continue further down into the Rift Valley. As acacias and *tef* fields begin to dominate the vegetation, new species appear such as Purple and Lilac-breasted Rollers, Crowned Lapwings, Long-crested Eagle and Dark Chanting Goshawk, Superb Starlings and White-headed Buffalo-Weavers. Wetlands along the way add many Fish Eagles, plus a few Spur-winged Geese and a lone Saddle-billed Stork.

A stop at Lake Ziway is a photographer's paradise, as pelicans, sandpipers, Hamerkops, Malachite and Pied Kingfishers pose for portraits. A Black Heron fishes in the bright sun, using its wings repeatedly as an umbrella to shade the shallows. Whiskered Terns in breeding plumage rest alongside a large flock of Great White Pelicans. There are Rüppell's Starlings and Grey-headed Gull on the ground, and a Goliath Heron flying past. At 1700 we tear ourselves away, with an hour still needed to reach Langano. Luckily we have time to do justice to a family group of Abyssinian Ground Hornbills right by the road. One female is carrying around an object that looks suspiciously like a nightjar's wing. We arrive at our luxurious lodgings by the lake, set in a parkland of acacia. Outside our chalets are White-browed Sparrow Weavers, Little Rock

Thrush and White-bellied Go-away-bird. Dinner is chosen from a large menu, and results in a gourmet experience!

Tuesday, 1 October

...is a relaxing day with very short distances in the vehicle. At 0615, we start a gentle stroll round the gardens, looking at Mocking Cliff-Chat, Abyssinian Wheatear, Striped Kingfisher, Black-crowned Tchagra and three Black-billed Barbets feeding on figs. Horus Swifts fly round their colony in a sandy cliff, and there's a huge Barn Swallow migration over the lake. An enormous Goliath Heron flies over, and we are surprised to watch an Abyssinian Ground Hornbill walking along the terrace of the abandoned half-finished hotel next door. As we enjoy a leisurely buffet breakfast, a pair of Northern Red-billed Hornbills and a White-bellied Go-away-bird perch in the closest acacia, apparently preferring to watch us at our food rather than finding their own.

We cross the main road and enter the Abiata-Shalla National Park, passing Dark Chanting Goshawks and Namaqua Doves during the short drive. We are joined by Heilo, a park ranger whose official title is chief scout. Near the park gate are Grant's Gazelles and two Somali Ostrich, a male first and later a well camouflaged female. From one stop we can watch Bearded Woodpecker at a nest-hole, Red-winged Lark, Pale Flycatcher, Marico Sunbird, and a fine Pygmy Falcon. A Temminck's Courser surely has a nest from its behaviour, so after a few quick photos we retreat and leave it in peace. Further on new *Acacia* specialists continue to appear – such as Black-billed Wood-hoopoe, Northern White-crowned Shrike, White-winged Black Tit and Slate-coloured Boubou. One tree has both Blue-naped and Speckled Mousebirds, feeding on small orange berries. Von der Decken's Hornbills and Little Bee-eaters come next, followed by a dispute between an Eastern Grey Woodpecker and a Eurasian Hoopoe over a nest-hole. A Eurasian Wryneck calls repeatedly, though they are usually silent in winter quarters. We gaze over both lakes, with a thousand distant flamingos. One fine flock of deep-pink Lessers fly from Shalla to Abiata.

Lunch is at the old government run resort further north along the lake shore from our much more up-market accommodation. We have no waiting time for the meal, since the order is placed as soon as we arrive; then a bout of garden birding fills the void. Four of the resort staff have a pair of Greyish Eagle Owl to show us (for a price!); and Paul finds us an obliging Red-throated Wryneck. This confiding bird uses its long tongue with amazing speed to feed on ants on the edge of the car park, while the cameras whirr and click. After a pair of Red-faced Crombecs on the way to the restaurant, our excellent lunch is ready.

The afternoon is for the shore of Lake Abiata. This is a magnificent wildlife spectacle which we will all store in our memories. There are thousands of Lesser Flamingos, with a few paler Greater among them. As they feed, they cackle contentedly. There are thousands of distant terns, mostly White-winged with fewer Gull-billed, judging from scope views of the swirling masses. Each time a Fish Eagle or a Western Marsh Harrier flies over, the air is filled with wings. Hundreds of Pied Avocets, Ruff, and smaller numbers of waders such as Kittlitz's Plover, Marsh and Curlew Sandpipers, and Little Stints all give great scope views.

This is a national park in name only. Villages, maize crops, herds of cattle and goats, were all allowed to settle inside the park in recent years, such that its wildlife is under constant pressure. Even a school has been established inside the park – perhaps an admission of conservation defeat. Even so, for a birding group, Abiata-Shalla makes a superb day visit. We return to base in good time to relax and digest our visual overload.

Wednesday, 2 October

Abyssinian White-eye, Red-faced Crombec, Cinnamon-breasted Bunting and Red-fronted Barbet are all in the hotel garden before breakfast. Like yesterday, the two breakfast hornbills take up the same perches just outside the window. Inside the restaurant, our bird list reaches three: Mocking Cliff-Chat, Rüppell's Weaver and the ubiquitous White-browed Sparrow-Weaver looking for either crumbs or insects. As we drive out, a Scrub Hare feeds on the grass by our rooms.

Abyssinian Ground Hornbill, Woolly-necked Stork and White-headed Vultures are highlights of the early part of the journey. East of Shashamene, we climb out of the Rift Valley and ever upwards towards the Bale (pronounced 'barley') National Park. There are vast state-owned farms of wheat and huge herds of cattle. A

coffee stop in Dodola produces a few Thick-billed Ravens and an adult Lammergeier. We run into low cloud and light rain as we approach 3500 m. It clears to allow us good views of Chestnut-naped Francolin, Ethiopian Cisticola and many brilliant Yellow Bishops displaying over the wheat fields. A superb Malachite Sunbird pauses below us on a red hot poker flower.

In a small ravine, local villagers find us the resident Cape Eagle Owl, but strike a hard bargain afterwards. Slender-billed Starlings and endemic Ethiopian Siskins are also here. A stop for a late picnic adds several Rouget's Rail, many beautiful kudu-like Mountain Nyala and Warthog. At Dinsho in increasing rain we walk with a park ranger who shows us first African Wood Owl and then Abyssinian Owl at roosts. We hear the Abyssinian Catbird's lively song, but seeing it must wait for another day. After a long but varied and rewarding day, we hurry on to our accommodation in Goba. Chris, our number-cruncher, counts more than a hundred species on all these last three days.

Thursday, 3 October

A Little Sparrowhawk, carrying a bird in its talons, is the highlight of a short ramble round the hotel's well-kept and colourful gardens. It perches at close range to us, showing off three distinctive tail spots. Tacazze Sunbirds are great photographic subjects on the various flowers they visit.

After a breakfast of omelettes, toast, coffee, and fruit juice, we set off for the highest part of the Bale Mountains National Park. A pair of Mountain Wagtails make a pleasant surprise, in the dreary eucalypt zone below the native forest. Once we reach the good forest (of *Hagenia*, *Hypericum*, and weeping juniper), the Abyssinian Catbird now gives a fine performance: in fact there are two, feeding up in a tree with orange berries. These are an ongoing taxonomic mystery, tentatively placed with the babblers; they form an especially strong pair bond. Here are also Dark-capped Bulbuls and Yellow-bellied Waxbills. Overhead soar Verreaux's Eagles and a young Lammergeier. Passing through the zone of tree heather (*Erica*), we emerge onto the Sanetti Plateau, an undulating area of immense botanical and wildlife value, rising to 4100 m. Rouget's Rails, Augur Buzzards, Tawny Eagles and Ethiopian Siskins are common. Two Lanners on a rock delight the photographers. By the pools are small flocks of Spot-breasted Lapwings, an attractive endemic that stays all year in this chilly environment. During a spell of low cloud, Gabor somehow spots a pair of Ruddy Shelduck as low cloud obscures them – then it suddenly clears to offer us great views. A Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk perched and flying is a surprise at such a great altitude. Good detective work from Hans enables us to add two Foxy Larks to the list: these two birds, showing rufous in the wings, are also feeding above their usual altitudinal range.

Next comes a great moment: an Ethiopian Wolf appears close to a Long-legged Buzzard and a pair of Starck's Hares. We devour packed lunches in the coach as it's now cold and wet; but soon afterwards a second wolf appears. Scientists have pronounced that it's a wolf rather than fox or jackal, but its behaviour has more in common with fox. This one walks towards us, and starts digging for its usual prey, Giant Mole-rats. One suddenly appears, scurrying away to avoid the predator. Later we all have better views of a mole-rat as it pokes its head up at various stages of its tunnel. The plateau is full of rodents, which attract many buzzards and eagles. At one point we watch Tawny and Steppe Eagles, Lammergeier, Lanner and Rüppell's Vulture in the air together – not all after the rodents of course. A passing Great Spotted Eagle is a surprise up here.

Eventually the rain sets in, and we return to base for hot showers and a break. At dusk, Paul and Roger watch a pair of Greyish Eagle Owls mating in a eucalypt in the hotel garden, repeatedly mobbed by the resident Little Sparrowhawk.

Friday 4 October

Before breakfast, a Thick-billed Raven forages on the ground, Red-billed Oxpeckers hang around a cattle pen, and a group of Yellow-bellied Waxbills offer opportunities to the photographers. There is also a migrant Tree Pipit and a Stout Cisticola.

Omelettes, porridge, toast, coffee and tea hit the spot at breakfast. We set off for Sof Omar under sunny skies, an area famous for its caves, 120 km east of Goba. (Famous it may be, but we see no other visitors all day.) Somali Crows appear at a fuelling stop in the town of Robe, where we leave the tarmac. First stop brings us a pair of fine Erlanger's Lark, a recent split from the Red-capped of further south, and thus

becoming a new endemic. We pass through huge state farms of wheat and barley (harvested by John Deere combines). Alongside them are private farms, where ploughing is done by two yoked oxen and a hand-plough. The views up to the Bale Mountain Plateau are superb. An Orange-breasted Bush-shrike turns up at one stop, and later Abyssinian Ground Hornbills appear along the way. A throng of vultures include one Lappet-faced, standing with its pink head and shoulders above the others.

We gradually drop down into a drier habitat with many Acacias and hedges of introduced prickly pear (*Opuntia*) cactus. A pair of Rosy-patched Bush-shrikes is a good find; and two snake-eagles soaring together show all the features of the uncommon Beaudouin's: no darker than Short-toed on the back, and with distinct small bars on the breast. Yet the head is too dark for migrant Short-toed, (which would be unlikely to be soaring together in winter quarters). We discuss these fine details at length, and feel confident about claiming a rarity.

Passing through the small village of Sof Omar, we descend the steep side of a dry river valley, until a patch of bad rocky road is where Abeyna has to turn round. Walking from there, we meet a Familiar Chat, Egyptian Vultures, a magnificent pair of African Hawk Eagles in perfect breeding habitat, and several Abyssinian Rock Hyraxes on rocky outcrops. A small Nile Crocodile in a seasonal pool at the bottom of the gorge is a surprise: its neighbours are a Malachite Kingfisher and a black and white male African Paradise Flycatcher. Northern Brownbul and Shining Sunbird come next; and we have a Narina Trogon for company at our picnic place. The gorge is well known among birders as a site for the rare and recently discovered Salvadori's Seedeater, but we don't find it at home today.

Shortly after starting back, Bristle-crowned Starlings fly alongside the coach and also appear at rest. A stop for a punctured tyre allows a leg-stretch, producing Black-crowned Tchagra, Slate-coloured Boubou, and Rattling Cisticola among much else. We arrive back as darkness falls, and enjoy the hot showers and dinner.

Saturday, 5 October

We leave Goba in the morning, later than usual owing to delays with tyre repair and a visit by T.T. to the bank. In addition, an illness in the group slows our progress. In the mountain section beyond Dinsho, we pass Mountain Nyala, Warthogs, Rouget's Rail, Blue-winged Geese and Ethiopian Siskins. A flock of 25 Red-billed Chough feed on the short vegetation close to the road and occasionally call *chow* – surely the original intended pronunciation.

On our arrival in Wondo Genet, at 1800 m, we enjoy a late lunch and find our spacious rooms. Wondo Genet is an area of thermal springs which was a regular retreat of the late emperor Haile Selassie. In fact the hotel is in the grounds of his imperial cottage. Unfortunately, the forest here has disappeared alarmingly quickly, and we see the villagers carrying hundreds of bundles of firewood off the hillside. Next to the restaurant is a huge fig tree that attracts Silvery-cheeked Hornbills and White-cheeked Turacos. Sunbirds are also often in the flowering flame trees (*Spathodea campanulata*). The hornbills are especially photogenic, and there are black and white Guereza Colobus Monkeys too. Our afternoon walk is up the track to where the best accessible forest used to stand. We watch an African Paradise Flycatcher catching insects above the cattle right next to us, Blue-spotted Wood-Dove, Scarlet-chested and Variable Sunbirds, and a few endemic Yellow-fronted Parrots flying around looking for trees! Rain stops play all too soon, and we return to our rooms for a pleasant surprise – the single taps in shower and basin flow hot from the thermal stream running off the hillside.

Sunday, 6 October

As we meet in the grounds of the lodge, an immature Little Sparrowhawk perches on a branch above us. Abebe, a local lad who knows his birds, leads us on a pre-breakfast walk that features Northern Puffback, Ethiopian Boubou, Banded Barbet, Black-winged Lovebird and a quick look at a Lemon Dove (among much else). In this direction there is less human pressure and more chance for birdlife to flourish than on yesterday's route. The superb Guereza Colobus are again visible at a distance.

After an excellent buffet breakfast, we are ready to head south: happily good health is restored throughout. We pass through the Rastafarian stronghold of Shashamene, and soon afterwards Awassa (or Hawassa), where we will stay on Tuesday. A Saddle-billed Stork flies monumentally across the road. It's a long road to Yabello, with several instances of 'creative parking' visible: lorries lying on their sides. At one of higher

spots at around 2,400 m, Rouget's Rails appear again. There is a coffee stop in Dilla and a late lunch in Hagera Maryam. African Harrier Hawk appears between the two. After lunch we pass through a fine podocarp forest which has miraculously been spared. We decide to investigate further on our return on Tuesday, but we do pause to enjoy a Broad-billed Roller on a treetop.

As we approach Yabello the land becomes lower and drier. White-crowned Starlings appear by the road. They are almost an endemic, but just sneak into Northern Kenya. Here we are close to Lake Turkana. Both species of go-away-birds appear close to each other, with Bearded Woodpecker, Purple Grenadier and Black-headed Oriole. At our final stop, a purple patch starts with a Northern Red-billed Hornbill threatening the nest of an alarmed pair of Black-billed Wood-hoopoe. In the same tree Roger notices our first Stresemann's Bush-Crows! Closer inspection reveals three birds and an active nest. Across the road is another large stick nest and two more of these unique corvids, which are believed to be most closely related to choughs. Listed as endangered, they are ecologically 'trapped' in the small area around Yabello as they seem unable to ascend the surrounding hills. Research has shown that this is climate-related: the Yabello Basin is (surprisingly) cooler than anywhere else for hundreds of miles around, averaging less than 20°C. White-browed Coucal and African Orange-bellied Parrot are also here, but by now the light is fading.

We head on to our remote lodge where we stay in chalets. We enjoy beers and an excellent meal served without delay. It will be a rewarding place to wake up.

Monday, 7 October

At 0615 a Grey Kestrel is perched outside our chalets. Stresemann's Bush-Crows are nesting nearby: three birds are attending the stick nest, and two perch on the roof of chalet no. 8. Rufous Chatterers, a pair of Pygmy Falcons, and several Orange-bellied Parrots come next. A Greater Honeyguide chases a Lesser Honeyguide out of an acacia. D'Arnaud's Barbets, heavily spotted all over, duet with each other, wagging tails comically. Another acacia has Brubru and Banded Parisoma. There are Red-billed Buffalo-Weavers, Reichenow's Seedeaters, and much else. A White-tailed Swallow flies past once, but we hope for better views.

The lady chef soon has fried eggs and omelettes ready for us. Since the chalets are widely scattered, everyone has a different species to report when we meet up: Spotted Palm-Thrush, White-browed Scrub Robin, and Grey Wren-Warbler. Luckily we all catch up with them later in the day.

Along the Arero Road, new road construction has damaged the habitat. All the same, we soon find six Temminck's Coursers in a dry field. The first pool has many Grey-capped Social-Weavers, a few Cut-throat Finches, and Purple Grenadiers coming to drink. The social-weavers have a large colony where Abeyna parks. An unsocial Vitelline Masked Weaver builds a solitary nest from fresh grasses nearby. Two pairs of batis cause long debate. We hear no song: the best feature. The crown looks variously black or grey in different lights. At a second stop, White-bellied Canary, Dodson's Bulbul, and Cardinal Woodpecker show up. The bulbuls are traditionally lumped, but increasingly split (see the taxonomic note below the checklist). A Black-winged Kite hovers and perches; and an Eastern Chanting Goshawk stands upright with clearly seen yellow bill. Buff-crested Bustards fly across the road, and a Eurasian Hobby catches dragonflies in a familiar manner.

We eat a very acceptable picnic at the first pool, watching the constant activity of the social-weavers. In fact the whole acacia savannah remains active throughout the day, with no midday lull. A Rosy-patched Bush-Shrike runs along the ground, and Paul finds its nest with one egg. Now we have a photographic session with a superb trio of Golden-breasted Starlings, surely a candidate (with Resplendent Quetzal) for the world's most beautiful bird. Acacia Tits oblige, but a Yellow-bellied Eremomela departs all too soon. A mid-afternoon break at the Yabello Hotel allows Abeyna to re-fuel. The next walk offers Shelley's Starlings and a magnificent Heuglin's Courser, observed and photographed as it crouches close by. A male Pallid Harrier drifts by on migration. But still we would like good views of the endemic and very local White-tailed Swallows. Returning to base as rain threatens, we stop by the camp gate. Immediately we find two adults and two groups of juveniles, recently fledged from their termite mound nests. The white on the tail is easy for all to see. We return to camp (with hot showers) delighted by our day amid the abundant Yabello birdlife.

Tuesday, 8 October

Early birds are White-tailed and Lesser Striped Swallows, Crested Francolins, but strangely no bush-crows. The camp staff provide an excellent breakfast, and we leave for Awassa. An Eastern Chanting Goshawk appears soon after we leave Yabello. Much of the fine new asphalt road has been completed, and makes for an easy passage, but at one muddy bridge area we come face-to-face with an overloaded bus that quickly gets itself mired in thick red mud as it reverses. Our onward way is blocked, but after a tense half an hour (with much shouting and gesticulating) we manage to skirt round it and continue.

A leg-stretch in the well-preserved podocarp forest produces Silvery-cheeked Hornbills, Abyssinian Orioles, an Ethiopian Boubou, a fine perched Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk, and our first (and only) perched Yellow-fronted Parrots. Rain has been heavy in this area, and some of the Wattled Ibis we pass on the football fields are paddling in puddles. A good lunch at Yerga Chefie includes a choice of various dishes: vegetable soup, goulash, spaghetti, and the local speciality of *wot* and *injera*. (The latter, rolled up flat-bread of the local grain *tef*, has become known among the group as dishcloths, but Roger and I enjoy it anyway).

In due course we arrive in the bustling city of Awassa (or Hawassa), where our accommodation is set in spacious grounds by the lake. After finding our rooms, we discover Woodland Kingfishers, African Thrush and Guereza Colobus in the gardens. Along the shore are many Malachite and Pied Kingfishers, Lesser Swamp Warbler, a Grosbeak Weaver constructing a nest, Black Crakes with a half-grown downy chick, and a Blue-headed Coucal. Liz finds a Double-toothed Barbet, and among the strong southbound passage of migrant hirundines are six large Banded Martins. As we get ready for dinner, a power-cut comes at the wrong moment when some are enjoying a hot shower.

Wednesday, 9 October

The dawn chorus is a strange combination of Woodland Kingfisher, Red-eyed Dove and African Fish Eagle. Around the garden we find Buff-bellied Warblers feeding young, Eastern Grey Woodpecker, White-browed Robin-Chats and Guereza Colobus. The White-browed occurs at lower altitudes than the Rüppell's Robin-Chats we have seen elsewhere, and we carefully check all the features.

After an excellent breakfast we visit the Awassa Fish Market, where there is a great symbiosis of men with Marabou and Hamerkop. There are also Marsh Sandpiper and Greenshank together for comparison, Abyssinian and Common Waxbills, and White-rumped Babbler. We spend time trying to turn a black-billed juvenile Malachite Kingfisher into a vagrant Common Kingfisher – but whitish belly feathers and black spots on the crown are diagnostic.

Heading north through the Rift Valley, we hurry past old friends such as Purple Roller, Long-crested Eagle, White-headed Buffalo Weavers and Abyssinian Ground Hornbill. A coffee stop in Ziway has confiding Dusky and Paradise Flycatchers just above our heads in a leafy courtyard. Overhead is a mixed thermal of many Great White Pelicans, Fan-tailed Ravens, two Fish Eagles and a few Marabous. Passing Dark Chanting Goshawk as we continue north, we turn right in Mojo and join the main road towards Djibouti. In Nazret we stop at a hotel for lunch, where Wire-tailed Swallows are perched in the courtyard. Now the landscape becomes more volcanic and arid, with black lava taking the place of soil in many areas. We pass through the town of Awash, and eventually turn left to Bilen Lodge. Abyssinian Rollers appear by the track, and a pair of Senegal Thick-knees. Silver-backed Jackals, Warthogs and a Cape Hare are here too. We arrive at this quiet settlement among the acacias, run by the local Afar tribesmen. Our rooms are round, thatched huts with all mod cons.

There's time for a short walk before the light fades. Nubian Woodpecker, Yellow-breasted Barbets (five singing in chorus), and Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill all turn up. The highlight is the display and mechanical calling of several Slender-tailed Nightjars, which fly all round us at dusk. We watch one in the scopes as it sings on the ground. The last birds of the day are a pair of sandgrouse, coming to drink as the light has almost gone. They are certain to be Lichtenstein's, but they don't make it onto the list as the views we have are almost non-existent.

We've come a long way from Awassa, but we are already enjoying the peace and quiet of this remote spot. Dinner is superb (salad, soup, tilapia, steak and fruit salad), and the light stays on till 2230.

Thursday, 10 October

The Slender-tailed Nightjars are all around us calling as dawn breaks. An endless stream of Cattle Egrets fly out of the marshes around the hot springs below us: several thousand, with hundreds of Sacred Ibis with them. The morning walk is to a viewpoint over the marshes below. Here we watch an impressive southbound migration of Barn Swallows, with a few Sand Martins mixed in. Ringtail harriers are on the move too, but too distant to claim Pallid or Montagu's. Also here are Grey-headed Bush-shrike and Isabelline Shrike (with similar colour to Isabelline Wheatear – the word means dirty-white). A Black Scrub Robin is a delightful surprise, as it perches up and sings. It is clearly on territory and not a winter visitor as the field guide suggests.

At 0830, after a substantial breakfast (porridge is again popular), we leave the lodge with its colourfully-dressed Afar staff. We don't get far: after two minutes we pile out for Northern Carmine Bee-eaters all around us. Six share an acacia with European Bee-eaters and a Eurasian Hoopoe. Here are also a few White-throated Bee-eaters, a Southern Grey Shrike, and a Turkestan Shrike, similar to the Isabelline we saw earlier but with chestnut crown and white breast. Both species (recently split from each other) are winter visitors from the middle east. We reach the main road and head west towards Addis. At a river crossing, a pair of Bristle-crowned Starlings perch on the wires. A pair of migrating Black Storks soar over the dusty town of Awash.

We detour for a while into the Awash National Park, passing a colony of Red-billed Buffalo Weavers by the main gate. A male Buff-crested Bustard stands by the track that leads to the Awash Falls, while many Olive Bee-eaters perch on the wires, at one spot with a Rosy-patched Bush-shrike. The river is in spate after so much recent rain, and the falls are an impressive sight. At the nearby campsite, large trees give shade from the hottest sun of the tour. Black-billed Barbets, Bruce's Green Pigeons, Grey Hornbill and a flock of White-crested Helmetshrikes also appreciate the canopy. The picnic tables under the trees make the obvious site for our packed lunches. Returning by a different track through more open landscapes, we continue to find new and interesting species. A Long-tailed Paradise Whydah in full plumage displays between the tops of the acacias. A pair of Secretarybirds strut around in the long grass, obligingly close to our lenses. With them is a pair of Kori Bustards. Somali Fiscals come next, then a brilliant male Hartlaub's Bustard. There's a resident Eastern Chanting Goshawk and a migrant Pallid Harrier. Helmeted Guineafowl huddle together, close to a pair of talon-grappling Tawny Eagles. To the relief of some folk, and to the regret of others, we have no time left to seek the larks and cisticolas which are surely lurking here too. Unfortunately, cattle have replaced the Soemmering's Gazelles we used to see here 20 years ago. At 1315 we leave the park, and begin to think about returning home.

As the journey continues up towards Addis, we overtake a convoy of huge trucks carrying the shafts of wind turbines, all with Chinese drivers. The ensuing debate within the group about the pros and cons of wind power enlivens a few minutes of the journey! After a drinks break and a leg-stretch in Mojo, the traffic becomes even more horrendous; but somehow, with great work from Abeyna, we arrive at our airport hotel at 1830. There are two rooms available for showering and re-packing. At our final dinner, presentations are made to Abeyna and to T.T. for all their help during the tour. Gabor and Andrea also leave us a little early, as they are flying on to Uganda. So, after several rounds of farewells, we go to the airport ourselves, where the Ethiopian Airlines check-in is easy and quick.

Friday, 11 October

Take-off is soon after midnight, and we arrive on time at Heathrow before seven in the morning. At the carousels we collect our luggage, say our farewells, and go our separate ways, reflecting on our amazing Ethiopian experiences. We sub-title our tour Undiscovered Africa: of course no tour of this type breaks entirely new ground, but it is noteworthy that during the whole 13 days in the field, we have met not one other birder, and very few other tourists.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to you all for participating in the tour with such enthusiasm, patience and good humour. I hope we may meet up on another Ornitholiday soon. Thanks also to Abeyna for very skilful driving in often difficult conditions, and to T.T. for his help in the hotels and in the field. Thanks are also due to our agents in Addis for logistical support. Thanks are also due to Roger, Howard and Gabor who have allow me to use their photos in this report.

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November 2013



Abiata – Waterbird Bonanza!

Itinerary and Weather (Some altitudes are mentioned.)

- 28 Sep Arrive Addis Ababa 0645. P.m. to Gefarsa Reservoir (2600 m).
Dry, mostly sunny, 13-22°C (55-72°F)
- 29 Sep Addis Ababa. Solulta Plains (2600 m). Debre Libanos and Jemmu Gorge.
Sunny, dry, 12-23°C (54-73°F)
- 30 Sep Addis Ababa to Langano (1650 m) via Debre Zeit Lakes (Chelekleka, Bishoftu, & Hora), and
Lake Ziway. Sunny, 13-28°C (55-82°F)
- 1 Oct Langano. Abiata-Shalla National Park. Mostly cloudy, 18-27°C (64-81°F)
- 2 Oct Langano to Goba (2500 m) via Dinsho (Bale National Park HQ).
Sunny, 17°C (63°F) at dawn; showers, 14 °C (57°F) at midday.
- 3 Oct Goba. Bale NP: Sanetti Plateau (4100 m).
Sunny, 13°C (55°F) at dawn; showers, 8°C (46°F) at midday.
- 4 Oct Goba. Sof Omar (1600 m). Sunny a.m., clouding. 13-27°C (55-81°F)
- 5 Oct Goba to Wondo Genet (1800 m). Showers, 14-23°C (57-73°F)
- 6 Oct Wondo Genet to Yabello (1700 m). Dry, mostly sunny, 16-23°C (61-73°F)
- 7 Oct Yabello. Dry, partly sunny, 14-27°C (57-81°F)
- 8 Oct Yabello to Awassa (1630 m). Showers, 14-20°C (57-68°F)
- 9 Oct Awassa to Bilen Lodge (750 m). Sunny, 16-24°C (61-75°F)
- 10 Oct Bilen Lodge to Addis Ababa via Awash NP. Depart soon after midnight.
Dry, partly sunny, 20-29°C (68-84°F), but cooler in Addis.



Lanner Falcons

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING THE TOUR

Max no of days seen	Location	Abundance scale
h = heard only.	A = Addis Ababa (incl Gefarsa Reservoir, Sululta Plateau & Debre Libanos)	1 = 1-5
2 1h means seen on 2 days and heard on 1.	R = Rift Valley (Debre Zeit, Ziwai, Langano, Abiata & Awassa.	2 = 5-9
	G = Goba, Bale NP. Sanetti (G'), Sof Omar (G.)	3 = 10-99
	W = Wondo Genet	4 = 100-999
	Y = Yabello	5 = 1,000+
	B = Bilen Lodge & Awash NP (B')	

The sequence & nomenclature follows *Birds of the Horn of Africa* by Redman, Stevenson & Fanshawe.

Bold = Horn of Africa Endemic. Location letters are not given for widely distributed species.

A few notes ^{1,2} etc follow the list.

SPECIES	No of days recorded	Locations	Abundance scale	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Somali Ostrich	1	R	1	<i>Struthio molybdophanes</i>
White Pelican	4	A R	3	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>
Pink-backed Pelican	1	R	1	<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>
Little Grebe	5	A R G	3	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Great Crested Grebe	3	A R	1	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
Great Cormorant	4	A R	3	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Long-tailed Cormorant	4	A R >Y B	3	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>
Squacco Heron	3	R	2	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>
Cattle Egret	11		5	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Little Egret	2	R	>B	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Black Heron	1	R	1	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>
Great Egret	3	R	2	<i>Egretta alba</i>
Intermediate (Yellow-billed) Egret	1	R	1	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>
Goliath Heron	2	R	1	<i>Ardea goliath</i>
Purple Heron	3	G	B	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Grey Heron	5	A R	>B	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Black-headed Heron	3	A Y	B	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>
Hamerkop	9		3	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>
Black Stork	1		B	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
Woolly-necked Stork	3	R	>Y	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
Yellow-billed Stork	3	R	3	<i>Mycteria ibis</i>
Saddle-billed Stork	3	R	B	<i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i>
Marabou Stork	5	R	>B	<i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>
Sacred Ibis	8		4	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>
Wattled Ibis	10		4	<i>Bostrychia carunculata</i>
Hadada Ibis	8		2	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>
Glossy Ibis	1	A	4	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
African Spoonbill	2	R	2	<i>Platalea alba</i>
Greater Flamingo	1	R	4	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>
Lesser Flamingo	1	R	5	<i>Phoenicopterus minor</i>
Blue-winged Goose	5	A G'	3	<i>Cyanochen cyanoptera</i>
Egyptian Goose	11		3	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>
Spur-winged Goose	3	R	1	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>
White-faced Whistling Duck	2	R	1	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>
Ruddy Shelduck	1	G'	1	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>
Yellow-billed Duck	5	A R G	2	<i>Anas undulata</i>
Northern Shoveler	3	A R	3	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
Garganey	2	A R	4	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
Secretarybird	1		B'	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>
Black-winged (shouldered) Kite	4	R Y	B	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
Yellow-billed Kite	12		4	<i>Milvus parasiticus</i>

African Fish-Eagle	5	1h	A	R				2	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>
Lammergeier	4		A		G			1	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>
Egyptian Vulture	3		A		G		B	1	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>
Hooded Vulture	12							4	<i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>
White-headed Vulture	1				>G			1	<i>Trigonoceps occipitalis</i>
Lappet-faced Vulture	1				>G,			1	<i>Torgos tracheliotus</i>
White-backed Vulture	7							3	<i>Gyps africanus</i>
Rüppell's Vulture	5		A	R	G			3	<i>Gyps rueppellii</i>
Black-chested Snake-Eagle	1					Y		1	<i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>
Beaudouin's Snake-Eagle	1				>G,			1	<i>Circaetus beaudouini</i>
Western Marsh-Harrier	4		A	R			B	1	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Pallid Harrier	3		A			Y	B	1	<i>Circus macrourus</i>
Eastern Chanting-Goshawk	3					Y	B	1	<i>Melierax poliopterus</i>
Dark Chanting-Goshawk	5			R	G,			2	<i>Melierax metabates</i>
Shikra	1						B'	1	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk	2				G'	>Y		1	<i>Accipiter rufiventris</i>
Little Sparrowhawk	4				G	W		1	<i>Accipiter minullus</i>
African Harrier Hawk	1					>Y		1	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>
Augur Buzzard	11							3	<i>Buteo augur</i>
Mountain Buzzard	1				G			1	<i>Buteo oreophilus</i>
Common (Steppe) Buzzard	3		A	R			B	1	<i>Buteo buteo vulpinus</i>
Long-legged Buzzard	1				G'			1	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>
Greater Spotted Eagle	1				G'			1	<i>Aquila clanga</i>
Tawny Eagle	13							3	<i>Aquila rapax</i>
Steppe Eagle	1				G'			1	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>
Wahlberg's Eagle	1				>G			1	<i>Aquila wahlbergi</i>
Verreaux's Eagle	2		A		G			1	<i>Aquila verreauxi</i>
African Hawk-Eagle	1		A		G			1	<i>Hieraaetus spilogaster</i>
Long-crested Eagle	4			R				1	<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>
Pygmy Falcon	5			R		Y		1	<i>Polihierax semitorquatus</i>
Common Kestrel	4			R				1	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Grey Kestrel	1					Y		1	<i>Falco ardosiaceus</i>
Eurasian Hobby	1					Y		1	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>
Lanner Falcon	8							1	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>
Peregrine Falcon	1		A					1	<i>Falco peregrines</i>
Helmeted Guineafowl	1						B'	3	<i>Numida meleagris</i>
Crested Francolin	1	1h				Y	B	1	<i>Dendroperdix sephaena</i>
Scaly Francolin	-	1h				W		1	<i>Pternistis squamatus</i>
Erckel's Francolin	-	1h	A					1	<i>Pternistis erckelii</i>
Chestnut-naped Francolin	2				G			3	<i>Pternistis castaneicollis</i>
Common Quail	-	2h			G			1	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>
Black Crake	2			R				1	<i>Amaurornis flavirostra</i>
Rouget's Rail	5				G	>Y		2	<i>Rougetius rougetii</i>
Red-knobbed Coot	4		A	R	G			2	<i>Fulica cristata</i>
Common Moorhen	1	1h		R				1	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
Black Crowned Crane	1		A					1	<i>Balearica pavonina</i>
Kori Bustard	2				>G,		B'	1	<i>Ardeotis kori</i>
Buff-crested Bustard	2					Y	B'	1	<i>Eupodotis gindiana</i>
Hartlaub's Bustard	1						B'	1	<i>Eupodotis hartlaubii</i>
African Jacana	3			R				3	<i>Actophilornis africana</i>
Black-winged Stilt	4		A	R				3	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Pied Avocet	1			R				5	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>
Senegal Thick-knee	1	1h					B	1	<i>Burhinus senegalensis</i>
Temminck's Courser	2			R		Y		2	<i>Cursorius temminckii</i>
Heuglin's Courser	1					Y		1	<i>Rhinoptilus cinctus</i>
Kittlitz's Plover	1			R				3	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>
Common Ringed Plover	2			R				1	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Spur-winged Lapwing (Plover)	7							3	<i>Vanellus spinosus</i>
Spot-breasted Lapwing (Plover)	1				G'			3	<i>Vanellus melanocephalus</i>
Crowned Lapwing (Plover)	6			R		Y		3	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>
Black-winged Lapwing (Plover)	1		A					3	<i>Vanellus melanopterus</i>
Ruff	3		A	R				4	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>
Common Sandpiper	10							1	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>

Wood Sandpiper	6	A	R			B	3	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	
Green Sandpiper	5	A		G		B	1	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	
Common Greenshank	3	A	R				1	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	
Marsh Sandpiper	2		R				3	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	
Common Redshank	1	A					1	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	
Little Stint	1		R				2	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	
Temminck's Stint	1		R				1	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	
Curlew Sandpiper	1		R				3	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	
Black-tailed Godwit	2	A	R				3	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	
Grey-headed Gull	4		R				2	<i>Larus cirrocephalus</i>	
Gull-billed Tern	3		R				4	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>	
White-winged Tern	5	A	R				5	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	
Whiskered Tern	1		R				1	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	
Bruce's Green Pigeon	1					B'	1	<i>Treron waalia</i>	
Speckled Pigeon	12						4	<i>Columba guinea</i>	
White-collared Pigeon	6	A		G			4	<i>Columba albitorques</i>	
Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)	1	A					1	<i>Columba livia</i>	
Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove	1					Y	1	<i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>	
Blue-spotted Wood-Dove	2				W		1	<i>Turtur afer</i>	
Namaqua Dove	5		R	G		Y	B	3	<i>Oena capensis</i>
Ring-necked Dove	5		R			Y	B	3	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>
Red-eyed Dove	11							3	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>
African Mourning Dove	6		R			Y	B	4	<i>Streptopelia decipiens</i>
Laughing Dove	7							3	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>
Dusky Turtle Dove	8	A		G				4	<i>Streptopelia lugens</i>
Lemon Dove	1				W			1	<i>Aplopelia larvata</i>
African Orange-bellied Parrot	3					Y		3	<i>Poicephalus rufiventris</i>
Yellow-fronted Parrot	3				W	>Y		2	<i>Poicephalus flavifrons</i>
Black-winged Lovebird	5	A	R	G	W			1	<i>Agapornis taranta</i>
White-cheeked Turaco	3	A	R					1	<i>Tauraco leucotis</i>
White-bellied Go-away-bird	8							3	<i>Corythaixoides leucogaster</i>
Bare-faced Go-away-bird	1					Y		1	<i>Corythaixoides personata</i>
White-browed Coucal	3					Y	B	1	<i>Centropus superciliosus</i>
Blue-headed Coucal	1		R					1	<i>Centropus monachus</i>
Abyssinian (Long-eared) Owl	1			G				1	<i>Asio abyssinicus</i>
African Wood Owl	1			G				1	<i>Strix woodfordii</i>
African Scops Owl	-	2h				Y		1	<i>Otus senegalensis</i>
Pearl-spotted Owlet	-	1h		G,				1	<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>
Greyish Eagle-Owl	2		R	G				1	<i>Bubo cinerascens</i>
Cape Eagle-Owl	1			G				1	<i>Bubo capensis</i>
Slender-tailed Nightjar	1	1h					B	2	<i>Caprimulgus clarus</i>
Little Swift	1						B	2	<i>Apus affinis</i>
Horus Swift	2		R					1	<i>Apus horus</i>
Nyanza Swift	5		A		G,	W		3	<i>Apus niansae</i>
Mottled Swift	1				G,			2	<i>Tachymarptis aequatorialis</i>
African Palm Swift	1						>B	1	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>
Speckled Mousebird	11							3	<i>Colius striatus</i>
Blue-naped Mousebird	2		R	G,				2	<i>Colius macrourus</i>
Narina Trogon	1			G,				1	<i>Apaloderma narina</i>
Pied Kingfisher	4		R					2	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
Grey-headed Kingfisher	1						B	1	<i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>
Woodland Kingfisher	2		R					2	<i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>
Striped Kingfisher	2		R					1	<i>Halcyon helicuti</i>
Half-collared Kingfisher	1		A					1	<i>Alcedo semitorquata</i>
Malachite Kingfisher	5		A	R	G			3	<i>Alcedo cristata</i>
Blue-breasted Bee-eater	6		A	R		W		2	<i>Merops variegatus</i>
Little Bee-eater	2			R			B	1	<i>Merops pusillus</i>
White-throated Bee-eater	1						B	1	<i>Merops albicollis</i>
European Bee-eater	7	2h						3	<i>Merops apiaster</i>
Olive (Madagascar) Bee-eater	1						B'	3	<i>Merops superciliosus</i>
Northern Carmine Bee-eater	1						B	3	<i>Merops nubicus</i>
Purple (Rufous-crowned) Roller	4		R	G		Y		2	<i>Coracias naevia</i>
Abyssinian Roller	2						B	1	<i>Coracias abyssinica</i>

Lilac-breasted Roller	8					2	<i>Coracias caudata</i>	
Broad-billed Roller	1				>Y	1	<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>	
Black-billed Wood-hoopoe	4		R		Y	1	<i>Phoeniculus somaliensis</i>	
Eurasian Hoopoe	5	1h	R		Y	B	2	<i>Upupa (epops) africana</i>
Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill	2					B	1	<i>Tockus flavirostris</i>
Northern Red-billed Hornbill	8						3	<i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>
Von der Decken's Hornbill	2		R	>G,			1	<i>Tockus deckeni</i>
Hemprich's Hornbill	3		A R				1	<i>Tockus hemprichii</i>
African Grey Hornbill	1					B'	1	<i>Tockus nasutus</i>
Silvery-cheeked Hornbill	5		R		W >Y		3	<i>Ceratogymna brevis</i>
Abyssinian Ground Hornbill	7		R	G	Y		2	<i>Bucorvus abyssinicus</i>
Red-fronted Tinkerbird	-	1h				B	1	<i>Pogoniulus pusillus</i>
Red-fronted Barbet	1		R				1	<i>Tricholaema diademata</i>
Black-billed Barbet	2	1h	R			B'	1	<i>Lybius guifsobalito</i>
Double-toothed Barbet	1		R				1	<i>Lybius bidentatus</i>
Banded Barbet	2		A		W		1	<i>Lybius undatus</i>
D'Arnaud's Barbet	1				Y		3	<i>Trachyphonus darnaudii</i>
Yellow-breasted Barbet	2					B	2	<i>Trachyphonus margaritatus</i>
Greater Honeyguide	1				Y		1	<i>Indicator indicator</i>
Lesser Honeyguide	1				Y		1	<i>Indicator minor</i>
Red-throated Wryneck	1		R				1	<i>Jynx ruficollis</i>
Eurasian Wryneck	-	1h	R				1	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>
Nubian Woodpecker	1					B	1	<i>Campethera nubica</i>
Bearded Woodpecker	3		R		Y		1	<i>Dendropicos namaquus</i>
Cardinal Woodpecker	1				Y		1	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>
Abyssinian Woodpecker	1		A				1	<i>Dendropicos abyssinicus</i>
Eastern Grey (Grey-headed) Woodpecker	2		R				1	<i>Dendropicos spodocephalus</i>
Red-winged Lark	2		R	G,			1	<i>Mirafra hypermetra</i>
Foxy Lark	1			G'			1	<i>Mirafra alopex</i>
Erlanger's Lark	2		A	G			1	<i>Calandrella erlangeri</i>
Thekla Lark	3		A	G			2	<i>Galerida malabarica</i>
Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark	1		R				1	<i>Eremopterix leucotis</i>
Rock Martin	7						3	<i>Ptyonoprogne fuligula</i>
Sand Martin	5		R	G		B	3	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
Brown-throated (Plain) Martin	7						3	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>
Banded Martin	1		R				2	<i>Riparia cincta</i>
Red-rumped Swallow	6		A	G	Y		2	<i>Crecopsis daurica</i>
Mosque Swallow	1		R				1	<i>Crecopsis senegalensis</i>
Lesser Striped Swallow	1				Y		1	<i>Crecopsis abyssinica</i>
White-tailed Swallow	2				Y		2	<i>Hirundo megaensis</i>
Barn Swallow	11						5	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Wire-tailed Swallow	3				Y	B	1	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>
Black Saw-wing	4		A R		W		3	<i>Psalidoprocne pristoptera</i>
Yellow Wagtail	12						4	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
African Pied Wagtail	1		A				1	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>
Mountain Wagtail	4		A	G	W		1	<i>Motacilla clara</i>
Grey Wagtail	3		A	G			1	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
Grassland Pipit	1		R				1	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>
Tree Pipit	2			G			1	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>
Common Bulbul ¹	8						3	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>
Dark-capped (Common) Bulbul ¹	2			G			2	<i>Pycnonotus tricolor spurius</i>
Dodson's Bulbul ¹	1				Y		2	<i>Pycnonotus dodsoni</i>
Northern Brownbul	1			G,			1	<i>Phyllastrephus strepitans</i>
Rüppell's Robin-Chat	4	1h	A	G	W		2	<i>Cossypha semirufa</i>
White-browed Robin-Chat	1	1h	R				1	<i>Cossypha heuglini</i>
Common Redstart	2		A R				1	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>
Black Scrub Robin	1					B	1	<i>Cercotrichas podobe</i>
White-browed Scrub Robin	1				Y		1	<i>Cercotrichas leucophrys</i>
Spotted Palm-Thrush	1	1h			Y		1	<i>Cichladusa guttata</i>
African Stonechat	4		A R	G			1	<i>Saxicola (torquatus) torquatus</i>
Red-breasted Wheatear	5		A	G			2	<i>Oenanthe bottae</i>
Isabelline Wheatear	5		A R			B	1	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>
Northern Wheatear	2		A R				1	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>

Abyssinian (Black) Wheatear	4	A	R					1	<i>Oenanthe lugubris</i>
Moorland Chat	5	A		G				3	<i>Cercomela sordid</i>
Familiar Chat	1			G,				1	<i>Cercomela familiaris</i>
Mocking Cliff Chat	2		R					1	<i>Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris</i>
Rüppell's Black Chat	1	A						1	<i>Myrmecocichla melaena</i>
Groundscraper Thrush	7							3	<i>Psophocichla litsipsirupa</i>
Common Rock Thrush	1		R					1	<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>
Little Rock Thrush	3	A	R					1	<i>Monticola rufocinerea</i>
Mountain Thrush	9							2	<i>Turdus (olivaceus) abyssinicus</i>
African Thrush	1		R					1	<i>Turdus pelios</i>
Lesser Swamp Warbler	1		R					2	<i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>
Sedge Warbler	1		R					1	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>
Grey-backed Camaroptera	6	2h						1	<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>
Grey Wren-Warbler	1					Y		1	<i>Calamonastes simplex</i>
Yellow-bellied Eremomela	2					Y	B	1	<i>Eremomela icteropygialis</i>
Red-faced Crombec	3		R			Y		1	<i>Sylvietta whytii</i>
Buff-bellied Warbler	1		R					2	<i>Phyllolais pulchella</i>
Willow Warbler	1		R					1	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Brown Woodland Warbler	3	A		G				1	<i>Phylloscopus umbrovirens</i>
Blackcap	1	A						1	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
Garden Warbler	1		R					1	<i>Sylvia borin</i>
Banded Parisoma	1					Y		1	<i>Parisoma boehmi</i>
Brown Parisoma	1	A						1	<i>Parisoma lugens</i>
Pectoral-patch Cisticola	1	A						1	<i>Cisticola brunnescens</i>
Stout Cisticola	1			G				1	<i>Cisticola robusta</i>
Ethiopian Cisticola	2			G				2	<i>Cisticola (galactotes) lugubris</i>
Rattling Cisticola	5	A	R	G		Y		2	<i>Cisticola chiniana</i>
Tawny-flanked Prinia	6	A	R	G				1	<i>Prinia subflava</i>
Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher	6	A	R	G				3	<i>Melaenornis chocolatinus</i>
Northern Black Flycatcher	2		R			Y		2	<i>Melaenornis edolioides</i>
African Grey Flycatcher	1					Y		1	<i>Bradornis microrhynchus</i>
Pale Flycatcher	3		R			Y		2	<i>Bradornis pallidus</i>
African Dusky Flycatcher	9							2	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>
Spotted Flycatcher	5	A	R	G		Y		1	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
African Paradise Flycatcher	8							1	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>
Grey-headed Batis	1			G,				1	<i>Batis orientalis</i>
Black-headed Batis	2		R			Y		1	<i>Batis minor</i>
White-rumped Babbler	2		R			W		1	<i>Turdoides leucopygius</i>
Rufous Chatterer	2		R			W		1	<i>Turdoides rubiginosus</i>
Abyssinian Catbird	1	2h		G				1	<i>Parophasma galinieri</i>
Acacia (Northern Grey) Tit	1					Y		1	<i>Parus thruppi</i>
White-winged Black Tit	1		R					2	<i>Parus leucomelas</i>
Montane White-eye	8							3	<i>Zosterops poliogaster</i>
Abyssinian White-eye	2		R					1	<i>Zosterops abyssinica</i>
Tacazze Sunbird	8							3	<i>Nectarinia tacazze</i>
Malachite Sunbird	1			G				1	<i>Nectarinia famosa</i>
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	2		R			W		1	<i>Nectarinia senegalensis</i>
Beautiful Sunbird	6		R				B	2	<i>Nectarinia pulchella</i>
Shining Sunbird	1			G,				1	<i>Nectarinia habessinica</i>
Marico Sunbird	4		R	G		Y		2	<i>Nectarinia mariquensis</i>
Variable Sunbird	3	A				W		2	<i>Nectarinia venusta</i>
Common Fiscal	8							3	<i>Lanius collaris</i>
Somali Fiscal	1						B'	1	<i>Lanius somalicus</i>
Grey-backed Fiscal	3		R					1	<i>Lanius excubitorius</i>
Southern Grey Shrike	2		R				B	1	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>
Turkestan Shrike ²	1						B	1	<i>Lanius phoenicuroides</i>
Isabelline Shrike	1						B	1	<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>
Brubru	1					Y		1	<i>Nilaus afer</i>
Slate-coloured Boubou	3	1h	R	G		Y	B	3	<i>Laniarius funebris</i>
Ethiopian Boubou	4	2h	A	R	G	>Y		1	<i>Laniarius aethiopicus</i>
Northern Puffback	1					W		1	<i>Dryoscopus gambensis</i>
Black-crowned Tchagra	4	A	R	G			B	1	<i>Tchagra senegalus</i>
Rosy-patched Bush-shrike	3			G		Y	B	1	<i>Rhodophoneus cruentus</i>

Orange(Sulphur)-breasted Bush-shrike	2			G		Y		1	<i>Telephorus sulfureopectus</i>
Grey-headed Bush-shrike	1							B	1 <i>Malaconotus blanchoti</i>
Northern White-crowned Shrike	4		R	G				B	2 <i>Eurocephalus rueppelli</i>
White-crested Helmetshrike	1							B'	2 <i>Eurocephalus plumatus</i>
Eurasian Golden Oriole	2			G				B	1 <i>Oriolus oriolus</i>
Black-headed Oriole	2		R			Y			1 <i>Oriolus larvatus</i>
Abyssinian Oriole	2	A				>Y			1 <i>Oriolus monacha</i>
Fork-tailed Drongo	5		R	G		Y			2 <i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>
Stresemann's Bush-crow	2					Y			3 <i>Zavattariornis stresemanni</i>
Red-billed Chough	1			G					3 <i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>
Pied Crow	8								3 <i>Corvus albus</i>
Somali Crow (Dwarf Raven)	3			G		>Y			2 <i>Corvus edithae</i>
Cape Crow (Rook)	8								3 <i>Corvus capensis</i>
Fan-tailed Raven	9								3 <i>Corvus rhipidurus</i>
Thick-billed Raven	10								2 <i>Corvus crassirostris</i>
Red-billed Oxpecker	4		R	G				B	2 <i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>
Red-winged Starling	4	A	R	G					3 <i>Onychognathus morio</i>
Slender-billed Starling	2			G		W			3 <i>Onychognathus tenuirostris</i>
White-billed Starling	2	A	R						2 <i>Onychognathus albirostris</i>
Bristle-crowned Starling	2			G,				B	2 <i>Onychognathus salvadorii</i>
Golden-breasted Starling	1					Y			2 <i>Lamprotornis regius</i>
Greater Blue-eared Starling	10								3 <i>Lamprotornis chalybaeus</i>
Rüppell's Starling	8								3 <i>Lamprotornis purpuropterus</i>
Superb Starling	9								3 <i>Lamprotornis superbus</i>
Shelley's Starling	1					Y			1 <i>Lamprotornis shelleyi</i>
Wattled Starling	4		R	G				B	3 <i>Creatophora cinerea</i>
White-crowned Starling	3					Y			3 <i>Spreo albicapillus</i>
Swainson's Sparrow	11								3 <i>Passer swainsonii</i>
Yellow-spotted Petronia	1					Y			2 <i>Petronia pyrgita</i>
White-browed Sparrow-Weaver	8								4 <i>Plocepasser mahali</i>
Grey-capped Social Weaver	1					Y			4 <i>Pseudonigrita arnaudi</i>
White-headed Buffalo-Weaver	7		R	G		Y		B	3 <i>Dinemellia dinemelli</i>
Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver	2					Y		B	3 <i>Bubalornis niger</i>
Village Weaver	3	A	R	G					2 <i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>
Vitelline Masked Weaver	1					Y			1 <i>Ploceus velatus</i>
Spectacled Weaver	2		R			W			1 <i>Ploceus ocularis</i>
Rüppell's Weaver	3		R						3 <i>Ploceus galbula</i>
Baglafaecht Weaver	9								3 <i>Ploceus baglafaecht</i>
Chestnut Weaver	2		R						2 <i>Ploceus rubiginosus</i>
Grosbeak Weaver	1		R						1 <i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>
Red-billed Quelea	2		R					B	2 <i>Quelea quelea</i>
Northern Red Bishop	5		R					B	3 <i>Euplectes franciscanus</i>
Yellow Bishop	3	A		G					3 <i>Euplectes capensis</i>
Fan-tailed Widowbird	1	A							3 <i>Euplectes axillaris</i>
Red-collared Widowbird	4	A		G					2 <i>Euplectes ardens</i>
Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu	7	A	R	G		Y			2 <i>Uraeginthus bengalus</i>
Purple Grenadier	2					Y			1 <i>Uraeginthus ianthinogaster</i>
Red-billed Firefinch	8								2 <i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>
Yellow-bellied Waxbill	5	A		G		>Y			2 <i>Estrilda melanotis</i>
Common Waxbill	4	A	R	G					2 <i>Estrilda astrild</i>
Abyssinian Waxbill	1		R						2 <i>Estrilda (paludicola) ochrogaster</i>
African Silverbill	1		R						1 <i>Euodice cantans</i>
Bronze Mannikin	3	A	R						2 <i>Lonchura cucullata</i>
Cut-throat Finch	2					Y		B	3 <i>Amadina fasciata</i>
Long-tailed (Eastern) Paradise Whydah	1							B'	1 <i>Vidua paradisaea</i>
Pin-tailed Whydah	6	A	R	G		>Y			2 <i>Vidua macroura</i>
Village Indigobird	4	A	R						1 <i>Vidua chalybeate</i>
White-bellied Canary	1					Y			1 <i>Serinus dorsostriatus</i>
Yellow-crowned Canary	6	A		G					3 <i>Serinus canicollis</i>
African Citril	8								2 <i>Serinus citrinelloides</i>
Ethiopian (Black-headed) Siskin	4	A		G					4 <i>Serinus nigriceps</i>
Reichenow's Seedeater	2					Y			3 <i>Serinus reichenowi</i>
Brown-rumped Seedeater	7	A		G					3 <i>Serinus tristriatus</i>

Streaky Seedeater	9			3	<i>Serinus striolatus</i>
Cinnamon-breasted Bunting	1	R		1	<i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>

NOTES

RSF means the Helm Field Guide: *Birds of the Horn of Africa*, by Redman, Stevenson & Fanshawe, 2nd ed.

- 1 Bulbul classification in Ethiopia is confused. Traditionally all have been lumped as Common Bulbul, *P. barbatus*. However, the authors of RSF refer to races/species, and list Dark-capped as *P. tricolor*, and Dodson's as *P. dodsoni*.
- 2 Turkestan Shrike is a recent split from Isabelline Shrike. Formerly these two forms were lumped and often known as Red-tailed Shrike.

MAMMALS

Following the order of *Checklist of Mammals of the World* by Duff & Lawson

African Hare	1			B	1	<i>Lepus capensis</i>
Scrub Hare	1	R			1	<i>Lepus saxatilis</i>
Starck's Hare	1		G'		1	<i>Lepus starckii</i>
Unstriped Ground Squirrel	2			Y B	2	<i>Xerus rutilus</i>
Giant Mole Rat	1		G'		1	<i>Tachoryctes macrocephalus</i>
Common Genet	1			B	1	<i>Genetta genetta</i>
Large Grey Mongoose	1	R			1	<i>Herpestes ichneumon</i>
Ethiopian Wolf (Simien Fox)	1		G'		1	<i>Canis simensis</i>
Silver-backed Jackal	1			B	1	<i>Canis mesomelas</i>
Golden Jackal	1		>G,		1	<i>Canis aureus</i>
Yellow-winged Bat	1			Y	1	<i>Lavia frons</i>
Guereza (Black-and-white) Colobus Monkey	4	R		W	2	<i>Colobus guereza</i>
Gelada Baboon	1	A			3	<i>Theropithecus gelada</i>
Olive Baboon	4	R	G		B 3	<i>Papio anubis</i>
Vervet Monkey	5	R	G	W	B 3	<i>Cercopithecus aethiops</i>
Warthog	5	R	G		B 3	<i>Phacochoerus aethiopicus</i>
Grant's Gazelle	1	R			1	<i>Gazella granti</i>
Swayne's (Salt's) Dik-dik	3			Y B	2	<i>Madoqua saltiana</i>
Mountain Nyala	2		G		3	<i>Tragelaphus buxtoni</i>
Menelik's Bushbuck	1		G		1	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus meneliki</i>
Grey Duiker	1		G		1	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>
Abyssinian Rock Hyrax	2		G		3	<i>Procavia habessinica</i>

A few insectivorous bats were also noted. Other animals included Nile Crocodile and Nile Monitor.

This list represents those birds and other animals seen by party members of this tour.



Black Heron



Wattled Ibis



Blue-winged Geese



Chestnut-naped Francolins



White-collared Pigeon



Black-winged Lovebird



Banded Barbet



Abyssinian Wheatear



Stresemann's Bush-crow



Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher



African Citril



Ethiopian Siskin



Brown-rumped Seed eater



Spot-breasted Lapwing



Thick-billed Raven



Lammergeier



Secretarybird



Heuglin's Courser



Somali Crow



White-crowned Starling



Red-throated Wryneck



Abyssinian Owl



Golden-breasted Starling



Rosy-patched Bush-shrike



Gelada Baboon



Ethiopian Wolf

Front cover: Rouget's Rail

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