

ORNITHOLIDAYS' TOUR TO ETHIOPIA
Undiscovered Africa

08 - 22 October 2005



Leader: Mike Witherick

ORNITHOLIDAYS TOUR TO ETHIOPIA

Undiscovered Africa

08 – 22 October 2005

A Personal Diary

Saturday, 8 October

It was a damp and murky autumnal evening - just the time to be heading for some African sunshine. Such was the keenness of the group that all were checked in at least three hours before the scheduled departure. The group met up in the gate lounge and the flight left more or less on schedule. After just over two hours, we touched down at Rome where the plane became filled to the brim, not by Italians, but by Ethiopian workers and their families returning home.

Sunday, 9 October

As we descended towards Addis Ababa, the green landscape attested to the adequacy of the summer rains. On approaching the runway we saw our first birds - White-backed Vultures - and as we taxied to the fine new terminal building, those on the port side of the aircraft saw a male Montagu's Harrier. The skies were patrolled by impressive numbers of Yellow-billed Kites.

Immigration and baggage delivery were impressively efficient. Most of us even found time to change some currency. Vilma was there to meet us and within a matter of minutes our baggage had been loaded onto the roof rack and Andreas was driving us to our hotel along roads, which were relatively free of traffic. Once checked in, we were able to enjoy an hour or so of leisure before meeting up for lunch. Some bird-watched in the avian-rich grounds; others just sorted themselves out and took a refreshing shower. The former's haul of birds included four endemics - Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher, Black-headed Siskin, Swainson's Sparrow and, best of all, White-backed Black Tit.

At 3pm we boarded the bus and drove for about an hour in a westerly direction to Gefarsa Reservoir. Here we enjoyed a couple of hours of bird-watching during which we added five more endemics - Blue-winged Goose, Wattled Ibis, White-collared Pigeon, Thick-billed Raven and Botta's Wheatear. Our list of wetland species included Yellow-billed Duck, Egyptian Goose, White-winged Black Tern, Spur-winged Plover, Greenshank and Green Sandpiper. Passerines of note were Hill Chat, Groundscraper Thrush, Thekla Lark and Yellow and Yellow-crowned Bishops. A large, dark falcon flew low and purposefully over our heads - what was it? We later agreed that it must have been an Eleonora's Falcon making its way overland to Madagascar.

We arrived back at the hotel a little before 6.30pm and 45 minutes later met up for dinner. The log was called whilst our orders were being prepared. As soon as the meal was finished, most of the group hurried off to bed in a determined attempt to catch up on lost sleep. Charles and I were brave enough to try a bottle of Ethiopian red wine - the look on his face said it all!

Monday, 10 October

Most of us breakfasted around 6.30am. The buffet offered a good range of choice. We had intended to leave the hotel at 7.15am, but the bus was delayed by traffic. The time in hand was put to good use with the spotting of two endemics in the grounds - Wattled Ibis and White-backed Black Tit. Two other sightings of note were Abyssinian White-eye and Speke's Weaver.

We were soon climbing north out of Addis. Having reached 2,600 metres, we then dropped down onto the expansive Sululta Plateau with its open grasslands. New birds came thick and fast from Fan-tailed Widowbird and Ethiopian Cisticola to Somali Rook and Eurasian Bee-eater. We also saw the first of several Oortolan Buntings. We did quite well for swallows, with sightings of Barn, Ethiopian, Red-rumped and

Grey-rumped. Christina was delighted to see her first Hammerkop. We were impressed by Augur Buzzard and saw several Lesser Spotted Eagles.

Our major stop of the morning, and it turned out to be our lunch stop as well, was at the so-called Portugese Bridge overlooking the awesome Jemma Gorge (a tributary of the Blue Nile). Our early successes here included the endemic White-billed Starling and Rüppell's Chat. Two species of wheatear were seen in close proximity - Isabelline and Pied. But stealing the show for many was the pair of amazingly tame Cinnamon-breasted Bunting, which gave the photographers amazingly good value. An Imperial Eagle was seen well as it circled above our heads. A large troop of Gelada Baboons moved along the edge of the escarpment.

As we ate our boxed lunches, the word got around amongst the Yellow-billed Kites and before long they were swooping down to pick up scraps but a few metres from us. Then to our utter amazement a Tawny Eagle dropped in and was content to pick away at the discarded sandwiches almost within touching distance. At one stage, a Steppe Eagle tried to join the party, but was quickly seen off by the Tawny. Here was a wonderful opportunity to use the 'gape test' to differentiate these two species. Other birds loitering in the vicinity included Fan-tailed Raven and Steppe Buzzard. We were all agreed that the picnic lunches had served us well.

After lunch, we drove down to Debre Libanos. We resisted the temptation to visit the monastery, but instead chose to explore the adjacent area of woodland nestling beneath the impressive basalt cliffs. Here we spent a very enjoyable and profitable three hours. We were fortunate to gain very good views of a number of endemics. For me, pride of place had to go to the Golden-backed Woodpecker. But also in the frame were Banded Barbet, Black-headed Forest Oriole and Black-winged Lovebird. Thanks to Steve, we had wonderful views of a pair of White-cheeked Turaco, now regarded by some as an endemic, and the Grey-headed Woodpecker recently split from Grey Woodpecker. A particularly interesting sighting was of a Gambaga Flycatcher, apparently in the wrong habitat. Rüppell's Robin-Chat showed well as did, eventually, Brown Woodland Warbler. Down at the bridge, as returned to the minibus, we admired Mountain Wagtail and spotted our first Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu.

We left Debre Libanos just after 4pm and two hours later arrived back at the Ghion Hotel. Our good progress was thanks to the fine relatively new road. The only sighting of note on the return leg was of a Hadada. We met up for dinner at 7.15pm and had an enjoyable and promptly served meal. Ever ready to confront a new challenge, Charles and I tried the Crystal White. It has to be said that we were more favourably impressed than by last night's Gouder. Once the meal had finished and the log call completed, most hurried off for another early night.

Tuesday, 11 October

We were all ready to go by 7.15am - breakfasted and packed - but the bus was working on Ethiopian time and it was not until 8am that we eventually got under way. Making our way through busy rush-hour traffic we began our descent into the rift valley. Our first stop was at the volcanic crater lake at Debre Zeit - Lake Hora. The wooded edge of this attractive caldera provided us with a feast of new birds. We first admired the mis-named Blue-breasted Bee-eater and were soon enjoying good views of Black-billed Barbet and Bruce's Green Pigeon. Three species of kingfisher were seen - Malachite, Woodland and Pied. Other interesting sightings were of Tropical Boubou and Grey-capped Batis. We saw our first Rüppell's Long-tailed Starlings and Rüppell's Weaver. A number of Western Palearctic migrants were spotted. These included Common Redstart, Spotted Flycatcher, Garden Warbler, Whitethroat and Lesser Whitethroat. Out on the water, we saw Common and Southern Pochards, Northern Shoveler, Moorhen, Red-knobbed Coot and Little Grebe. We saw our first African Fish-Eagle. The far-carrying call is, I always think, one of the sounds of Africa. But the star bird of the visit was perhaps one of the least impressive visually - it was a Reichenow's Serin seen at close hand, thanks to some sharp spotting by Yilma.

It was after 11am when we tore ourselves way from this delightful spot. A stop to take on board bottled water provided Sue with the opportunity to buy us all a flavourful banana. We then headed further down into the rift valley to the bustling town of Nazret where we enjoyed a fairly relaxed three-course lunch. After the meal, Roy found a Grey-headed Kingfisher and African Harrier Hawk posed well in nearby trees.

Our route from Nazret took us through some spectacular volcanic scenery - with ash and lava cones, as well as huge, partially vegetated lava flows. An Eastern Paradise Whydah occasioned one stop. This led us to see White-browed Sparrow-Weavers and, best of all, a rarity in the form of a Blackstart. At Lake Metehara we saw Saddle-billed and Yellow-billed Storks, Pink-backed Pelicans and Purple Heron. An interesting find in these parts was a lone Sanderling. Other waders were Little Stint and Wood Sandpiper. Along the afternoon route we also spotted two very different falcons - Lesser Kestrel and Saker.

Our final stop of the day, close to Awash, involved a walk out into the acacia scrub. Two birds provided us with something of a challenge and were eventually identified as Desert Cisticola and Pale Petronia. A Southern Grey Shrike showed well and a Cardinal Woodpecker was seen in flight. A Black-chested Snake-Eagle did not seem too bothered by our presence, nor a Dark Chanting Goshawk on the other side of the road. Flocks of Helmeted Guinea-fowl were seen on the roadside; a little more distant were Beisa Oryx and Soemmerring's Gazelle.

We reached the small town of Awash around 6pm and encountered a little local difficulty with accommodation. Some Russian military advisors were refusing to vacate our rooms. In the end, we all found rooms (maybe not of the best) in a nearby hotel. We met up at 7.30pm to be transported back to the hotel where we should have been staying for a very acceptable evening meal.

Wednesday, 12 October

We were all aboard the bus by 6.15am and drove up the road a little way for breakfast at the other hotel. It was very efficiently served, with papaya juice, porridge, omelette or scrambled egg as popular items. The meal was finished a little before 7am and we headed in the direction of Metehara. Not far along the road, we walked out into the savanna following a track that led us to the camp where our guard for the morning lived. On the way, we had a wonderful rush of new birds from Buff-crested Bustard to Cut-throat, from d'Arnaud's Barbet to Striped Kingfisher. We also opened what was to be a very good shrike list of the day with sightings of Southern Great Grey, Woodchat and Red-tailed. White-headed Buffalo-Weaver impressed us with their red rumps. We saw our first hornbills - Yellow-billed, Red-billed and Grey. Once back on the bus, and a little further on, we had a superb view of a Kori Bustard as it strutted close to the road. On the opposite side, there was a small party of White-bellied Bustards.

We stopped at the gate to the Awash National Park for Yilma to pay our entrance fees. As we waited, a Lappet-faced Vulture flew over. Much to our delight, Yilma returned with the good news that we had been given permission to drive in the western part of the park. We duly drove along a rough track for some 20 plus km. During our outward and return journeys, we saw Dark Chanting and Eastern Chanting Goshawks. The shrike list grew with the addition of Red-backed, Lesser Grey, White-crowned and Rosy-patched Bush-shrike. The sight and sound of a dueting pair of the last species are surely something that will stick in the memory. There was some debate about distinguishing Olivaceous and Upcher's Warblers. Von der Decken's was an addition to our hornbill list. A Pygmy Kingfisher posed well. Other sightings included Black-billed Wood-Hoopoe, lots of European Hoopoe, White-browed Sparrow-Weavers and Little Bee-eater

It was a little after midday when we left the park and said goodbye to our friendly guard. We then made all speed to Metehara where, as part of the Ethiopian experience we ate at a well-patronised restaurant. Curried fish, roast chicken and a local fasting dish were patronised, the last one by Mike and myself. This may have been the cause of my sickness a few hours later, but Mike and Roy (who tucked into mine) were unaffected. For me, the dish lived up to its name and a two-day fast ensued!

In the afternoon, we drove to the National Park HQ. On the way there, an immature Bateleur sailed past us; we spotted our first Madagascar Bee-eater. At the HQ we first walked a little way up the Awash River and found some Senegal Thick-knees. Then we walked down to the spectacular waterfalls where we watched an African Pied Wagtail. Olive Baboons hung around in hope of some food. We then drove slowly to the Kereyou Camp. Birdlife was fairly quiet due to the heat. At the camp, all admired the terrace view as we enjoyed a refreshing drink. There was a chance to inspect the famous caravans. There was a unanimous feeling that, for all its deprivations, our hotel in Awash was a better bet.

On the way back out of the park, we added two more species to the tour list - Pallid Harrier and Somali Fiscal (to end a day full of shrikes). We watched a large herd of Beisa Oryx apparently being moved on by an approaching herd of camels. We arrived back at the hotel at 6pm and met up at 7.15pm for transport to our evening meal. Most opted for the traditional meal of *wat*. Afterwards most walked back to our overnight hotel, led by Roy.

Thursday, 13 October

Cases were out in the yard just after 6am and so Andreas was able to load them on the roof rack. We then walked up to the other hotel for our breakfast - again efficiently served and involving very acceptable fare - the papaya juice was excellent and the porridge went down a treat. I note a growing number of converts to this early morning diet!

Just before 7am we said farewell to the friendly staff and headed back up the rift valley. Even with the best part of 300km to cover today, we allowed ourselves an hour of bird-watching in the park just off the road. This proved very productive in terms of new birds. They included colourful birds such as Purple Grenadier and Somali Golden-breasted Bunting to less distinguished and appealing Ashy Cisticola, Mouse-coloured Penduline Tit and Pale Flycatcher. A Black-bellied Bustard was seen towards the end of our walk. We again saw the White-winged Scrub-Robin. As we left town, Marie spotted three Common Jackals. Other mammals seen early in the day were Beisa Oryx, Soemmerrings Gazelle, Olive Baboon and African Hare.

Once back on the bus, we made all speed for Nazret and made a comfort stop at the hotel where we had had lunch on the outward leg. There was also a little time for bird-watching and most managed to catch up with the Grey-headed Kingfisher seen during our previous visit. Our journey continued up the rift valley to Zwai where we stopped for lunch at a hotel set in a very pleasant garden. During the transit to Zwai we spotted a number of the grotesque Abyssinian Hornbill. We sat out on the terrace and greatly enjoyed the vegetable and bean soup. Fish was a popular choice and met with all-round approval. In the garden, both before and after the meal, we saw Icterine Warbler, Black-headed Oriole, Red-faced Crombec, Beautiful Sunbird, Black-winged Lovebird and Black-headed Batis.

Once on board the bus, we drove the short distance to the jetty on the shores of Lake Zwai. The fresh northerly wind was whipping up the surface of the lake. In the more sheltered vegetated fringe we found new species such as African Jacana, Squacco Heron, Grey-headed and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Ruff and best of all, so far as Charles was concerned, Carmine Bee-eater. We had hoped to find Lesser Jacana but luck was not on our side today.

We then continued our journey southwards to Langanjo and reached our shore-sided base for the next two nights around 4pm. Soon we were being shown to our chalets, which offered a higher level of comfort than our last base. It was some 45 minutes later when most of us gradually got together for an exploration of the hotel grounds. They proved to be highly productive. The star bird was undoubtedly the Greyish Eagle-Owl spotted by an eagle-eyed Marie cryptically roosting in one of the larger trees. Other sightings included Cardinal Woodpecker, Steel-blue Whydah, White-winged Black Tit, Scarlet-chested Sunbird and a Cuckoo (was it African or Eurasian)? But perhaps the most memorable sighting was of thousands of Yellow Wagtails moving on a very broad front across the lake. But what were they doing heading northwards?

As the light began to fail, we made our way back to our chalets for a shower before meeting in the bar in advance of dinner at 7.30pm. The log was called during the meal.

Friday, 14 October

Much of the day was spent bird-watching around the campus of the hotel. In fact, we completed three such spells there - one before breakfast, one around lunch time and one late afternoon to dusk. Basically we were amazed by the diversity of birds to be found in this one small area, essentially a mix of Western Palaearctic and Neotropical species. Of the former, notable sightings included Rufous and Thrush Nightingales, Redstart and a range of warblers which significantly included Spectacled and Subalpine, neither of which Yilma had seen before. Of the Neotropical species, our varied haul included Bearded Woodpecker, Red-fronted Barbet, Little Rock Thrush, Lesser Masked and Red-headed Weavers. We admired, in particular, the Marico Sunbird, the Black-cheeked Waxbill and the Grey-backed Fiscal.

After breakfast, we entered the Shala-Abijata National Park. First, we went to a vantage point that gave us a superb panoramic view of the two lakes. How different, they were: Shala - a deep crater lake; Abijata - a shallow and fast receding soda lake. Both contrasted with Lake Langano with its red, silt-laden water. We were not too optimistic about being able to get to the edge of Lake Abijata, but with one of the park rangers as our guide and with skilled driving on the part of Andreas, we eventually got to within a short walk of the lake shore. Greater and Lesser Flamingos were very much in evidence, but we also did quite well for waders with good views of Kittlitz's Plover, Temminck's Stint, Ruff and Sanderling.

Water birds were not all that we saw whilst in the national park. Other notable sightings included a pair of Pygmy Falcons, Black Wood-Hoopoe and Orange-bellied Parrot. On our way to the park, we had seen Booted and Tawny Eagles.

Lunch was taken back at the hotel and after a short break; we explored a short stretch of the lake shore to the north. Once we had shaken off the village children, we added three new species of wader - Marsh Sandpiper, Ringed Plover and Little Stint. We were happy to come across another Kittlitz's Plover. A pair of African Golden Oriole showed well.

We met in the bar before going through to the restaurant at 7.30pm. The log was called during the meal and at around 8.45pm we left for an hour-long night drive. This yielded superb views of a pair of Three-banded Coursers, two species of owl (Greyish Eagle-Owl and one other smaller and not identified) and one of nightjar.

Saturday, 15 October

Given the avian abundance of the hotel grounds, we allowed ourselves the luxury of a two-hour bird-watch before breakfast. In the event, birdlife was altogether quieter and in fact we only added one new species - Nubian Woodpecker. Other interesting sightings included a dark morph Gabar Goshawk (very much in hunting mode) and a pair of Red-headed Weavers.

We breakfasted at 7.45am and an hour later were all fed, watered, loaded up on the bus and ready for the off. Our journey today was only a matter of 70km up the Rift Valley to yet another lake - Awassa. On the way there, we made four stops. The first was for bananas; the second was at a fig tree, which had attracted a small flock of Silvery-cheeked Hornbills. On the way, the most colourful sighting was of Carmine Bee-eaters perched on the roadside telegraph wires. The third stop was on the outskirts of Awassa where we walked by the side of a small creek leading down to the lake. African Fish-Eagles were in abundance along the shores of this reed-fringed lake. A new bird here was Spur-winged Goose. The final stop was on a bluff commanding a good view over the lake, and from where we spotted a number of Hippopotamus. Birdwise, perhaps the most interesting observation was of the large number of White-winged Black Tern.

We arrived at what we thought was to be our hotel for the next two nights, checked in and were then delivered to our rooms. Soon, as can only possibly happen in this part of the world, it was discovered that we were at the wrong hotel. During a very slowly delivered lunch, Yilma and Andreas went off to the other hotel with our baggage. It was some time before they returned, and in that time most had the good sense either to relax in a chair by the lake or to go off bird-watching. The latter group did well along the shore embankment. Their sightings included Little Bittern, Green-backed Heron, Black Crake and Bronze Mannikin.

It was around 3pm when we eventually boarded the bus and made the short journey to our real base for the next two nights. Everyone was agreed that the accommodation here was superior to that which we had just left. We had some 30 minutes to settle in our rooms before meeting up for a spell of bird-watching in the hotel grounds. This yielded a number of new species, such as Black and Grey Flycatchers, Northern Puffback, Hunter's Sunbird and Spectacled Weaver. Other sightings included three endemics - Banded Barbet, Black-winged Lovebird and Thick-billed Raven - as well as Nubian Woodpecker, Eurasian and Blue-breasted Bee-eaters.

We met in the bar a little in advance of 7.30pm and then went through to our private dining room where we enjoyed a relaxed meal followed by the log-call. The fact that wine was 4 birr more expensive here did not deter the wine-drinkers in their relentless search for a decent local bottle.

Sunday, 16 October

Those of us opting for some pre-breakfast birding met outside Reception at 6.15am - there was almost a nip in the air. We chose to walk a little way along the lake shore. One of our first birds was a Thrush Nightingale. We could hear the song of the White-browed Robin-Chat, but the songster remained under cover. A little showier was our first African Reed-Warbler followed by a Sedge Warbler. Then came our first new bird for the tour, a rather skulking Blue-headed Coucal that eventually, with a little judicious field-craft, showed well. With breakfast calling, we made our way back to the hotel, and suddenly a pair of White-browed Robin-Chats gave a good brief view. At that moment, too, a flock of White-faced Whistling Duck flew over. The breakfast had two welcome ingredients - papaya juice and porridge that, according to the leader, 'do you good.'

We left the hotel at 7.45am and made our way to the fish cooperative a little further along the lacustrine shore. It was bustling with people and they were too interested in the catches being landed to take much notice of us. From a bluff we spotted our first Violet-backed Starlings. It has to be said that we struggled a little to find mature trees with their fig-like fruits at the right stage of ripeness. The Silvery-cheeked Hornbills seem to eat the fruit quite indiscriminately, but we did find some new birds, such as Little Weaver, Orange-breasted Bushshrike, Brown Parisoma and Red-chested Cuckoo (an immature that had us thinking at first that it was a Black Cuckoo). It was strange to hear the half-hearted song of Willow Warbler coming from the tree tops. We finished the morning back on top of the bluff from which we had seen the Violet-backed Starlings. They were still there, but attention focused a little more on a small party of European Golden Orioles.

A little before midday, we all began to feel the earliness of our breakfast. We were then driven into the town of Awassa to a restaurant apparently popular with UN staff. The meal we consumed confirmed the soundness of the choice. The plates of fresh chips that turned up after our main course disappeared in a matter of minutes. To cap a good lunch, some bought cakes as we left and passed through the bakery downstairs. Chilled Mars bars also proved an irresistible temptation. We returned to the hotel and allowed ourselves the luxury of a siesta.

During the break, Allan, Mike and Roy added three new species to the tour list in the grounds of the hotel, namely Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Red-necked Wryneck and Tamborine Dove. In resumption of play, we made a short trip to the other hotel on the lake shore. Here we saw our first Purple Gallinule and what we were confident was a Basra Reed-Warbler. John and Linda were able to catch up with the Little Bittern, Green-backed Heron and Black Crake that they missed yesterday.

The final spell of bird-watching back at our hotel was very much about woodpeckers with sightings of Nubian, a family of Grey-headed and a pair of Rufous-necked Wryneck. By way of a change, rather than eat at the hotel, we opted to return to the restaurant that had proved so popular at lunch time. A wise choice!

Monday, 17 October

What a group - cases out by the bus by 6.15am, breakfasted by 6.45am and all aboard the bus some minutes before 7am. We made all speed for Shashamene where we filled up with fuel and bought bottled water and bananas. And so began the 195km drive to Goba along dirt roads already in a very dusty condition. We had not climbed very far when Yilma heard the call of the Yellow-fronted Parrot. We stopped the vehicle and quickly disembarked to see two birds in a large tree. One of the birds was seen well through the scopes. A little later on we saw the first of a number of the Ethiopian version of the Stonechat - the male is an impressively black and white bird and must surely be a candidate for splitting from the African Stonechat.

Soon we had climbed out of the rift valley and onto the extensive plateau that runs to the base of the Bale Mountains. This is fertile land and well cultivated. It presented a bit of a challenge when it came to finding a loo stop. In the end, some prickly pear boundaries provided minimal cover. The stop had an additional

bonus in the form of a new endemic - Erlanger's Lark. Three were well seen. Two male Pallid Harriers were also spotted as we sped along the dirt road.

We made a stop in the small town of Dodola so that Yilma and I could check out a restaurant for possible use as a lunch stop in two days time. We emerged content, and the necessary arrangements were made. Our next stop was for a picnic lunch at a spot patronised by past Ornitholidays groups. In a matter of minutes, we were being watched by a group of children. When we had finished, Yilma distributed among the assembled through the leftovers and empty bottles in a very orderly manner. Some of the group found Yellow-bellied Waxbill during the break.

After lunch, we climbed steadily to a height of 3,450 metres and enjoyed the panoramic views. We then descended towards Dinsho but made a few stops before reaching the town. The first was at a small pond where we saw our first Rouget's Rail. The next stop gave us views of a small party of Chestnut-naped Francolins. The third stop was even more productive with our first sighting of yet another endemic, the eminently smart Abyssinian Longclaw. At the same spot, we also saw Yellow-crowned Canary and enjoyed superb views of an immature Golden Eagle. As we continued across the plain, we were also able to distinguish between Pallid and Montagu's 'ringtail' harriers. There were mammals too - Mountain Nyala, Menelik's Reedbuck and Warthog.

Andreas then drove us swiftly down the mountainside to the town of Goba. We arrived at our hotel a little before 5pm. We were quickly checked in and before long most of the group were doing a circuit of the hotel grounds. Three endemics were spotted - Wattled Ibis, Rouget's Rail and Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher. We met in the bar and sat down to dinner at 7.30pm. The log was called afterwards and we then all hurried off to our rooms

Tuesday, 18 October

We awoke to the sound of rain on the roof and things did not seem too good for our day in the Bale Mountains. However, during breakfast the rain stopped and the cloud cover became less continuous and menacing. We left just before 8am and passed through Goba, the roads busy with students of all ages walking to their places of learning. We started our climb and made our first stop in the eucalyptus forest. We walked along a track to an opening with bushes where some of the group briefly saw an Abyssinian Catbird. All were able to admire its loud and melodic song.

We then made the decision to drive straight to the summit plateau and to leave our woodland bird-watching until the afternoon. In the event, this proved the right decision, not only because of the weather (particularly the slowly lowering cloud base) and the birds. It was with great skill that Andreas got us safely to the top up an unmade road made greasy by the overnight rain. As we neared the top of the escarpment, an immature Lammergeier loitered at a low level above our heads. An adult bird was seen a little later. Virtually the first pond we came to on the plateau had a small flock of Spot-breasted Plovers around its margins. Not much further on, we found a pair of Wattled Cranes and enjoyed good views of this endangered species.

With the feeling that we were on something of a winning streak, we then focused our attention on the Ethiopian Wolf. It was Roy who spotted the first of some 10 that we were to see during our time on the top of Africa - at an altitude of 3,900 metres. Eventually, we discovered that some individuals were indifferent to our presence and the two Johns and Marie obtained some wonderful frame-filling photo shots. Other birds seen during the morning were Red-billed Chough, Tawny and Golden Eagles, Lanner and Pallid Harrier.

Rather than eat our picnic lunches at altitude, it was decided that we drop back down to the tree-limit. This took some time and resulted in a late lunch. Once out of the bus, it was not long before we had attracted a small group of young children and they soon became the beneficiaries of our leftovers.

As for the afternoon, it was thought that we might benefit from some exercise in the form of walking. So it was that we walked some two different stretches of woodland with the bus following us. The first produced a bird that we had just hoped we might find - a recently defined endemic - the Bale Parisoma. At the same

spot, everyone was able to catch up with Abyssinian Catbird. The second stretch provided us with glimpses of the skulking Cinnamon Bracken Warbler and good views of the attractive Yellow-bellied Waxbill.

With the time at around 4pm, we felt that a cup of tea or coffee at the hotel was an irresistible attraction. Having satisfied that need, some of us did some gentle bird-watching around the hotel grounds and encountered the same three endemics as yesterday evening.

Dinner was taken at 7pm tonight in the hope of being served hotter vegetables than last night. We met the chef and politely made the suggestion. Alas, the outcome tonight was no better than yesterday! Steve and Marie ordered a bottle of Crystal, which turned out to be unbelievably wretched!

Wednesday, 19 October

With commendable discipline, we breakfasted at 8am and left the hotel 30 minutes later. As we left town, a Little Sparrowhawk flew alongside. Our first stop was at the HQ of Dinsho National Park where, apart from close encounters with Mountain Nyala, Menelik's Bushbuck and Warhog, we had hoped to see African Wood Owl and Abyssinian Ground Thrush. On arrival we were informed that the former was no longer in the vicinity. We then did a mildly energetic walk in search of the latter, checking out patches of its favoured habitat. We had no success, but before re-boarding the bus, most of the group took advantage of the local facilities. Steve, loitering outside the loo block, spotted an Abyssinian Ground Thrush preening in a nearby tree. Within a few minutes, we were all enjoying wonderfully close views of this secretive species.

Our next stop was at a small rocky wadi a little beyond Dinsho and this yielded us views of the Abyssinian Rock Hyrax. Just before it, we had spotted a pair of Golden Eagle. We then made all speed for our lunch stop at Dodola. At a modest motel we enjoyed a superb two-course lunch - an excellent vegetable soup followed by either spaghetti or omelette. Dark-capped Bulbul was seen in the grounds and just as we were about to get under way again, an adult Lammergeier flew low over our heads. On the next leg of the journey, Roy spotted a small flock of Black-winged Plover.

We stopped in Shashamene in order to refuel the vehicle. Having turned off the main road, we eventually reached our hotel at Wendo Genet at 4.30pm. Most met up a little later for a bird-watch in the grounds. White-rumped Babbler was new for the tour. We all enjoyed the hot showers in our rooms, thanks to the nearby hot springs. Later we met in the bar in advance of our 7pm dinner. It was good to get back to the fried fish after a few days break - no one was more delighted than Allan.

Thursday, 20 October

Most of us met at 6am for an hour's bird-watching before breakfast. We were led by a local guide, Mekonnen. Our target species was Half-collared Kingfisher. In this regard, we were successful and enjoyed good views of a bird as it waited patiently for a fish to swim past it. There was a bonus in our sighting of yet another Abyssinian Ground-thrush - again off the ground rather than on it.

After breakfast, we spent the rest of the morning making a leisurely walk up a valley side, following a well-established track. It was to prove a highly productive walk with good sightings of still more species. The first was of a Narina Trogon; the species seems to have taken a liking to life in the conifer plantations. On the raptor front, we watched both Verreaux's Eagle and a pair of Crowned Eagles as they took advantage of the early thermals in the valley. An adult Lammergeier was a surprise sighting for this locality.

As for woodland species, it was perhaps the African Emerald Cuckoo (spotted by Allan) that stole the show as it preened in the early morning sunshine. This was perhaps challenged by the eminently dapper Black-and-white Mannikins. We also encountered a remarkable number of the endemic Black-headed Forest Oriole - with males showing and singing well. The local race of the Green-backed Honeybird, with its brown back, had us flummoxed for a while. We saw Brown Saw-wings well and a number of White-cheeked Turacos.

We returned to the hotel for a relaxed lunch and then met up again at 3pm for a walk up another valley side. This one took us to the site of an incomplete bottling factory set in a disused quarry. We had hoped to find our one outstanding endemic, the White-winged Cliff Chat, but were out of luck. Instead we found a Broad-

billed Roller, saw the nests of Rock Martins and in a nearby wood found Hemprich's Hornbills. With the threat of a possible thunderstorm we returned to the hotel around 5pm and most of us made for the roof-top for a reviving beet (with thanks to Sue). The rest of the day followed its now established pattern except that tonight no less than three bottles of Crystal wine were consumed. We were united in our thankfulness that the wine was not available by the case!

Friday, 21 October

We breakfasted at 6.30am and left Wendo Genet promptly at 7am. Happily, John M was feeling better and used the back seat as a sort of mobile bed. Our first scheduled stop was at Lake Zwai, but before reaching there we made a stop at a deep wadi in the hope that the rock sides might hold Cliff Chats – our one remaining unspotted endemic. Our hopes were not realised, but we did see our first Little Swifts and a Little Rock Thrush was much admired.

We visited the shores of Lake Zwai at two points and additions to the tour list continued to come at a steady pace. Black and Intermediate Egrets, Goliath Heron, Black Crowned-Crane, Three-collared Plover (thanks, Charles), Black-tailed Godwit and Olive-tree Warbler were all seen before taking an early lunch at the same restaurant we patronised on the outward leg. Again, the vegetable and bean soup was excellent. During the break we also saw Olivaceous and Icterine Warblers, Northern Crombec and Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu.

After lunch, we were permitted a sort of siesta on the bus whilst we made all speed for our next stop, Lake Chekleka. Slumbers were interrupted when a Woolly-necked Stork was spotted thermalling with some vultures. At the lake, further new sightings came thick and fast with Cape and Hottentot Teal, Red-billed and Knob-billed Ducks, Garganey, Common Crane and African Spoonbill. We left the lakeside at about 4pm and an hour later were making our way to the hotel in the centre of Addis Ababa.

We met up around 7pm for our last dinner together. We were joined by Yilma and his wife. Sadly, the table service was slow and it was not until well after 9 pm that we completed the formalities of log-call and instructions for tomorrow's homeward journey.

Saturday, 22 October

The imams were at full blast before dawn and continued that way until we left the hotel at 9am. Some of the group bird-watched in the grounds before meeting up with the rest for a buffet breakfast at 7.30am.

We were already to load up and head for the airport at 9.15am. However, the vehicle was slightly delayed. Nonetheless, we arrived in good time for an easy check-in and all were able to obtain a seat of their choosing. It has to be said that the fine new terminal building offered a pleasant waiting environment, with plenty of seats, good opportunities for some retail therapy and several coffee bars.

Our flight left on time and the six hours of flying-time to Rome passed quite quickly. We left Rome ahead of schedule, but our hopes of touching down early were dashed by air traffic control. Soon we were picking up our baggage and saying our farewells.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Yilma for leading us through this Ethiopian experience and to Andreas for his safe driving. Thanks to all of you for your company, your punctuality, your sharpness in the field and your understanding that, sadly, Ethiopia is one of the world's poorest nations. I hope that your enjoyment of the tour was as great as mine.

Mike Witherick
Ornitholidays
29 Straight Mile
Romsey
Hampshire SO51 9BB
Tel: 01794 519445
E-mail: info@ornitholidays.co.uk
November, 2005

Itinerary and Weather

Sunday, 09 October	am > Addis Ababa pm Gefarsa Reservoir Cloudy; some light showers. 20° C
Monday, 10 October	Sululta Plateau & Debre Libanos Mainly sunny. 22° C
Tuesday, 11 October	Addis Ababa > Awash via Lake Hora, Nazret & Lake Metehara Mainly sunny. 26° C
Wednesday, 12 October	Awash National Park Mainly sunny. 26°C
Thursday, 13 October	Awash > Langano via Zwai Mainly sunny. 25°C
Friday, 14 October	Lakes Langano and Abijata Sunny all day. 28°C
Saturday, 15 October	Langano > Awassa Sunny all day. 27°C
Sunday, 16 October	Awassa Hot and sunny. 29°C
Monday, 17 October	Awassa > Goba Fine and sunny. 20°C
Tuesday, 18 October	Bale Mountains (3,910 metres) Rain early becoming dry. Low cloud. 20°C
Wednesday, 19 October	Goba > Wendo Genet via Dinsho NP Fine. 22°C
Thursday, 20 October	Wendo Genet Cloudy with sunny intervals. 22°C
Friday, 21 October	Wendo Genet > Addis Ababa via Lakes Zwai and Chelekleka Hot and sunny. 30°C
Saturday, 22 October	Addis Ababa > Rome > London Heathrow

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING THE TOUR

Max no of days seen	Location	Abundance scale
	(for species seen at no more than 2 locations)	
h = heard only	A = Addis Ababa (incl Gefarsa Reservoir, Sululta	1 = <5
Maximum seen on one day	Plateau & Debre Libanos)	2 = 5 - 9
	B = Debre Zeit	3 = 10 - 99
	C = Awash National Park	4 = 100-999
	D = Zwai	5 = > 1,000
	E = Langano	
	F = Awassa	
	G = Bale Mountains	
	H = Wondo Genet	

SPECIES	No of days recorded	Location	Abundance scale	SCIENTIFIC NAME	
Little Grebe	7		2	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	
Great Crested Grebe	3		1	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	
White Pelican	5		3	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	
Pink-backed Pelican	3		2	<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>	
White-breasted Cormorant	5		3	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	
Long-tailed Cormorant	4		3	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>	
African Darter	2	D	1	<i>Anhinga rufa</i>	
Squacco Heron	5	D	2	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	
Cattle Egret	10		3	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	
Green-backed Heron	2		F	<i>Butorides striatus</i>	
Little Bittern	2		F	<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>	
Great Egret	3	A	D	2	<i>Egretta alba</i>
Intermediate Egret	1		D	1	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>
Little Egret	6			3	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Black Heron	1		D	1	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>
Grey Heron	3			2	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Black-headed Heron	4			1	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>
Goliath Heron	1		D	1	<i>Ardea goliath</i>
Purple Heron	1	C		1	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Hamerkop	8			3	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>
Abdim's Stork	1		D	3	<i>Ciconia abdimii</i>
White Stork	2		F	1	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>
Woolly-necked Stork	1		D	1	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
Saddle-billed Stork	3	C	F	1	<i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i>
Marabou	8			4	<i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>
Yellow-billed Stork	5	C	F	1	<i>Mycteria ibis</i>
Sacred Ibis	9			4	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>
Wattled Ibis	8			3	<i>Bostrychia carunculata</i>
Hadada	9			2	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>
Glossy Ibis	2	B		1	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
African Spoonbill	1	B		3	<i>Platalea alba</i>
Greater Flamingo	2		E	5	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>
Lesser Flamingo	2		E	5	<i>Phoenicopterus minor</i>
Fulvous Whistling Duck	2	B		3	<i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>
White-faced Whistling Duck	5	B	F	3	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>
Blue-winged Goose	3	A		G	<i>Cyanochen cyanoptera</i>
Egyptian Goose	11			4	<i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>
Ruddy Shelduck	1		G	1	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>

Spur-winged Goose	2			D	F	1	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>		
Knob-billed Duck	1		B			2	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>		
African Pygmy Goose	2			D	F	1	<i>Nettapus auritus</i>		
Cape Teal	1		B			1	<i>Anas capensis</i>		
Yellow-billed Duck	5					2	<i>Anas undulata</i>		
Red-billed Duck	1		B			2	<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>		
Hottentot Teal	1		B			1	<i>Anas hottentota</i>		
Garganey	1		B			3	<i>Anas querquedula</i>		
Northern Shoveler	3					3	<i>Anas clypeata</i>		
Southern Pochard	2		B	D		2	<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>		
Common Pochard	1		B			1	<i>Aythya ferina</i>		
Black-shouldered Kite	6					1	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>		
Yellow-billed Kite	13					5	<i>Milvus parasiticus</i>		
Black Kite	1	A		D		1	<i>Milvus migrans</i>		
Osprey	1			D		1	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>		
African Fish-Eagle	6					3	<i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>		
Egyptian Vulture	3	A		C		1	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>		
Lammergeier	4					1	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>		
Hooded Vulture	11					4	<i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>		
African White-backed Vulture	7					3	<i>Gyps africanus</i>		
Rüppell's Vulture	6					3	<i>Gyps rueppellii</i>		
Lappet-faced Vulture	1			C		1	<i>Torgos tracheliotus</i>		
Black-chested Snake-Eagle	1			C		1	<i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>		
Bateleur	1			C		1	<i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>		
African Harrier Hawk	2			C		H	1	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>	
European Marsh Harrier	4					1	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>		
Pallid Harrier	4					1	<i>Circus macrourus</i>		
Montagu's Harrier	4					1	<i>Circus pygargus</i>		
Dark Chanting-Goshawk	5					1	<i>Melierax metabates</i>		
Eastern (Pale) Chanting-Goshawk	1			C		1	<i>Melierax poliopterus</i>		
Gabar Goshawk	2			C	E	1	<i>Melierax gabar</i>		
Little Sparrowhawk	1					G	1	<i>Accipiter minullus</i>	
Steppe Buzzard	6					1	<i>Buteo vulpinus</i>		
Augur Buzzard	8					2	<i>Buteo augur</i>		
Golden Eagle	3					G	1	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	
Lesser Spotted Eagle	1	A				1	<i>Aquila pomarina</i>		
Tawny Eagle	6					1	<i>Aquila rapax</i>		
Steppe Eagle	4					1	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>		
Imperial Eagle	1	A				1	<i>Aquila heliaca</i>		
Wahlberg's Eagle	1					G	1	<i>Aquila Wahlbergi</i>	
Verreaux's Eagle	2	A				H	1	<i>Aquila verreauxi</i>	
Booted Eagle	2	A		D		1	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>		
Long-crested Eagle	1		B			1	<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>		
Lesser Kestrel	1			C		1	<i>Falco naumanni</i>		
Common Kestrel	6					1	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		
Lanner Falcon	2					G	H	1	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>
Saker Falcon	2			C		G	1	<i>Falco cherrug</i>	
Eleonora's Falcon	1	A				1	<i>Falco eleonorae</i>		
Yellow-necked Spurfowl	1			C		1	<i>Francolinus leucoscepus</i>		
Chestnut-naped Spurfowl (Francolin)	3					F	G	3	<i>Francolinus castaneicollis</i>
Erckel's Spurfowl (Francolin)	1	A				1	<i>Francolinus erckelii</i>		
Clapperton's Spurfowl (Francolin)	1				E	1	<i>Francolinus clappertoni</i>		
Helmeted Guineafowl	4					3	<i>Numida meleagris</i>		
Common Crane	1		B			3	<i>Grus grus</i>		
Wattled Crane	1					G	1	<i>Grus carunculatus</i>	
Black Crowned-Crane	1			D		1	<i>Balearica pavonina</i>		
Rouget's Rail	3					G	2	<i>Rougetius rougetii</i>	
Black Crake	2					F	1	<i>Amaurornis flavirostra</i>	
Common Moorhen	2					F	1	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	
Purple Gallinule	1					F	1	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	
Red-knobbed Coot	4					3	<i>Fulica cristata</i>		

Kori Bustard	1		C				1	<i>Ardeotis kori</i>		
Buff-crested Bustard	2		C				1	<i>Eupodotis gindiana</i>		
Black-bellied Bustard	1		C				1	<i>Eupodotis melanogaster</i>		
White-bellied Bustard	1		C				1	<i>Eupodotis senegalensis</i>		
African Jacana	4						2	<i>Actophilornis africana</i>		
Spur-winged Plover	8						3	<i>Vanellus spinosus</i>		
Black-winged Plover	1					G	1	<i>Vanellus melanopterus</i>		
Crowned Plover	3				E		2	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>		
Spot-breasted Plover	1						3	<i>Vanellus melanocephalus</i>		
Ringed Plover	1				E		1	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		
Kittlitz's Plover	1				E		1	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>		
Three-banded Plover	1			D			1	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>		
Black-tailed Godwit	1			D			1	<i>Limosa limosa</i>		
Greenshank	7						1	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>		
Marsh Sandpiper	2		B		E		1	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>		
Wood Sandpiper	6						2	<i>Tringa glareola</i>		
Green Sandpiper	8						1	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		
Common Sandpiper	8						2	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		
African Snipe	1						G	1	<i>Gallinago nigripennis</i>	
Curlew Sandpiper	2				E		1	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>		
Little Stint	3						1	<i>Calidris minuta</i>		
Temminck's Stint	2				E		1	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>		
Sanderling	2		C		E		1	<i>Calidris alba</i>		
Ruff	4						4	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>		
Black-winged Stilt	6						2	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>		
Avocet	1				E		2	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>		
Senegal Thick-knee	2		C			F	1	<i>Burhinus senegalensis</i>		
Three-banded Courser	1				E		1	<i>Rhinoptilus cinctus</i>		
Black-headed Gull	5						2	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>		
Grey-headed Gull	5						3	<i>Larus cirrocephalus</i>		
Lesser Black-backed Gull	2			D	E		1	<i>Larus fuscus</i>		
Herring Gull	1				E		1	<i>Larus argentatus</i>		
Gull-billed Tern	5						1	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>		
Whiskered Tern	4						2	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>		
White-winged Black Tern	7						4	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>		
Black Tern	2		B		E		1	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>		
White-collared Pigeon	4	A					G	4	<i>Columba albitorques</i>	
Speckled Pigeon	13							4	<i>Columba guinea</i>	
Feral Pigeon	7							3	<i>Columba livia</i>	
Dusky Turtle-Dove	7							3	<i>Streptopelia lugens</i>	
Red-eyed Dove	12							3	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>	
Mourning Dove	7							2	<i>Streptopelia decipiens</i>	
Ring-necked Dove	1						G	1	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	
Laughing Dove	10							2	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	
Namaqua Dove	6							2	<i>Oena capensis</i>	
Blue-spotted Wood-Dove	1						H	1	<i>Turtur afer</i>	
Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove	1		C					1	<i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>	
Black-billed Wood-Dove	-	1h				F		1	<i>Turtur abyssinicus</i>	
Bruce's Green Pigeon	5							1	<i>Treron waalia</i>	
Yellow-fronted Parrot	3						G	H	2	<i>Poicephalus flavifrons</i>
Orange-bellied Parrot	2	1h		D	E				1	<i>Poicephalus rufiventris</i>
Black-winged Lovebird	6								3	<i>Agapornis taranta</i>
White-cheeked Turaco	4								1	<i>Tauraco leucotis</i>
White-bellied Go-away Bird	5								2	<i>Corythaixoides leucogaster</i>
African Cuckoo	3				E	F			1	<i>Cuculus gularis</i>
Eurasian Cuckoo	3				E	F			1	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
Red-chested Cuckoo	1					F			1	<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>
African Emerald Cuckoo	1						H		1	<i>Chrysococcyx cupreus</i>
Blue-headed Coucal	1					F			1	<i>Centropus monachus</i>
White-browed Coucal	2		C						1	<i>Centropus superciliosus</i>
Greyish Eagle-Owl	2				E				1	<i>Bubo cinerascens</i>

Common Swift	5					3	<i>Apus apus</i>		
Nyanza Swift	2	A				2	<i>Apus niansae</i>		
Horus Swift	4					2	<i>Apus horus</i>		
White-rumped Swift	2		B	C		1	<i>Apus caffer</i>		
Little Swift	1				D	1	<i>Apus affinis</i>		
African Palm Swift	2			C		1	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>		
Speckled Mousebird	12					3	<i>Colius striatus</i>		
Blue-naped Mousebird	1			C		1	<i>Colius macrourus</i>		
Pied Kingfisher	7					2	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>		
African Pygmy-Kingfisher	1			C		1	<i>Ispidina picta</i>		
Malachite Kingfisher	6					3	<i>Alcedo cristata</i>		
Half-collared Kingfisher	1					H	1	<i>Alcedo semitorquata</i>	
Woodland Kingfisher	9					1	<i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>		
Striped Kingfisher	4					1	<i>Halcyon chelicuti</i>		
Grey-headed Kingfisher	4					1	<i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>		
Narina Trogon	1					H	1	<i>Apaloderma narina</i>	
Little Bee-eater	5					2	<i>Merops pusillus</i>		
Blue-breasted Bee-eater	7					2	<i>Merops variegatus</i>		
Madagascar Bee-eater	1			C		2	<i>Merops superciliosus</i>		
European Bee-eater	5	1h				3	<i>Merops apiaster</i>		
Northern Carmine Bee-eater	5					4	<i>Merops nubicus</i>		
European Roller	2			C		1	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>		
Abyssinian Roller	5					2	<i>Coracias abyssinica</i>		
Lilac-breasted Roller	4					1	<i>Coracias caudata</i>		
Rufous-crowned Roller	5					2	<i>Coracias naevia</i>		
Broad-billed Roller	1					H	1	<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>	
Hoopoe	7					3	<i>Upupa epops</i>		
Black-billed Wood-Hoopoe	6					2	<i>Phoeniculus somaliensis</i>		
Black Wood-Hoopoe	1			C		1	<i>Phoeniculus aterrimus</i>		
African Grey Hornbill	4					1	<i>Tockus nasutus</i>		
Red-billed Hornbill	5					2	<i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>		
Von der Decken's Hornbill	3			C	E	1	<i>Tockus deckeni</i>		
Yellow-billed Hornbill	1			C		1	<i>Tockus flavirostris</i>		
Hemprich's Hornbill	1					H	2	<i>Tockus hemprichii</i>	
Silvery-cheeked Hornbill	5					3	<i>Ceratogymna brevis</i>		
Abyssinian Ground Hornbill	1			C		2	<i>Bucorvus abyssinicus</i>		
Double-toothed Barbet	3					F	H	1	<i>Lybius bidentatus</i>
Black-billed Barbet	2		B			F		2	<i>Lybius guifsobalito</i>
Banded Barbet	3	A				F		1	<i>Lybius undatus</i>
d'Arnaud's Barbet	1			C				1	<i>Trachyphonus darnaudii</i>
Red-fronted Barbet	1				E			1	<i>Tricholaema diademata</i>
Red-fronted Tinkerbird	2		B		D			1	<i>Pogoniulus pusillus</i>
Lesser Honeyguide	3							1	<i>Indicator minor</i>
Green-backed (Eastern) Honeybird	1						H	1	<i>Prodotiscus zambesiae</i>
Rufous-necked Wryneck	2				D	F		1	<i>Jynx ruficollis</i>
Nubian Woodpecker	2					F		1	<i>Campethera nubica</i>
Cardinal Woodpecker	3			C	E			1	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>
Golden-backed Woodpecker	1	A						1	<i>Dendropicos abyssinicus</i>
Grey-headed Woodpecker	5							1	<i>Dendropicos goertae</i>
Bearded Woodpecker	1				E			1	<i>Dendropicos namaquus</i>
Erlanger's Lark	1						G	1	<i>Calandrella erlangeri</i>
Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark	3			C				1	<i>Eremopterix leucotis</i>
Thekla Lark	5							3	<i>Galerida malabarica</i>
Eurasian Sand Martin	7							3	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
African Sand Martin	4							3	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>
Barn Swallow	13							4	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Wire-tailed Swallow	4							1	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>
Ethiopian Swallow	1	A						1	<i>Hirundo aethiopica</i>
Red-rumped Swallow	3							2	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>
Rock Martin	7							3	<i>Hirundo fuligula</i>
Grey-rumped Swallow	1	A						1	<i>Hirundo griseopyga</i>

House Martin	5						2	<i>Delichon urbica</i>
Ethiopian Sawwing	3						2	<i>Psalidoprocne oleaginea</i>
Brown Sawwing	1					H	2	<i>Psalidoprocne antinorii</i>
Yellow Wagtail	8						5	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Grey Wagtail	5						1	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
Mountain Wagtail	4	A				H	1	<i>Motacilla clara</i>
African Pied Wagtail	1		C				1	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>
African Pipit	4						1	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>
Tawny Pipit	1		C				1	<i>Anthus campestris</i>
Abyssinian Longclaw	3					G	1	<i>Macronyx flavicollis</i>
Grey Cuckoo-shrike	2		C			H	1	<i>Campephaga phoenicea</i>
Dark-capped Bulbul	2					G	1	<i>Pycnonotus tricolor</i>
Common Bulbul	8						2	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>
(Rüppell's) White-crowned Shrike	3		C	E			2	<i>Eurocephalus rueppelli</i>
Northern Brubru	2	B			F		1	<i>Nilaus afer</i>
Northern Puff-back	3				F	H	1	<i>Dryoscopus gambensis</i>
Tropical Boubou	4						1	<i>Laniarius aethiopicus</i>
Rosy-patched Bushshrike	1		C				1	<i>Rhodophoneus cruentus</i>
Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike	1				F		1	<i>Malaconotus sulfureopectus</i>
Red-backed Shrike	3						1	<i>Lanius collurio</i>
Red-tailed Shrike	1		C				1	<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>
Southern Grey Shrike	2		C				1	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>
Lesser Grey Shrike	1		C				1	<i>Lanius minor</i>
Grey-backed Fiscal	6						2	<i>Lanius excubitoroides</i>
Somali Fiscal	1		C				1	<i>Lanius somalicus</i>
Fiscal	8						2	<i>Lanius collaris</i>
Woodchat Shrike	2		C				1	<i>Lanius senator</i>
African Stonechat	2					G	2	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>
Whinchat	1					F	1	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
Northern Wheatear	2	A		E			1	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
Pied Wheatear	2	A				G	1	<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>
Cyprus Pied Wheatear	2		C				1	<i>Oenanthe cypriaca</i>
Isabelline Wheatear	9						3	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>
Botta's Wheatear	4						3	<i>Oenanthe bottae</i>
Hill (Alpine) Chat	4						3	<i>Cercomela sordida</i>
Rüppell's Chat	1	A					1	<i>Myrmecocichla melaena</i>
Blackstart	1		C				1	<i>Cercomela melanura</i>
Little Rock Thrush	2			D	E		1	<i>Monticola rufocinerea</i>
Common Redstart	6						1	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>
Black Redstart	2				E		1	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
Rufous-tailed Scrub-Robin	1		C				1	<i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>
White-browed Scrub-Robin	1					F	1	<i>Cercotrichas leucophrys</i>
Rüppell's Robin-Chat	4						1	<i>Cossypha semirufa</i>
Thrush Nightingale	2				E	F	1	<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>
Common Nightingale	1				E		1	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>
African Thrush	7						1	<i>Turdus pelios</i>
Olive Thrush	9						2	<i>Turdus olivaceus</i>
Groundscraper Thrush	5	A				G	3	<i>Psophocichla litsipsirupa</i>
Abyssinian Catbird	1					G	2	<i>Parophasma galinieri</i>
White-rumped Babbler	3			D		H	3	<i>Turdoides leucopygius</i>
Rufous Chatterer	2		C			F	1	<i>Turdoides rubiginosus</i>
Cinnamon Bracken Warbler	1	lh				G	1	<i>Bradypterus cinnamomeus</i>
Sedge Warbler	3			D	E		1	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>
Eurasian Reed-Warbler	1					F	1	<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>
Basra Reed-Warbler	1					F	1	<i>Acrocephalus griseldis</i>
Great Reed-Warbler	1					F	1	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>
African Reed-Warbler	1					F	1	<i>Acrocephalus baeticatus</i>
Icterine Warbler	2		C	D			1	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>
Upcher's Warbler	2		C		E		1	<i>Hippolais languida</i>
Olivaceous Warbler	4						1	<i>Hippolais pallida</i>
Olive-tree Warbler	1			D			1	<i>Hippolais olivetorum</i>

Subalpine Warbler	2					E	1	<i>Sylvia cantillans</i>
Spectacled Warbler	1					E	1	<i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>
Blackcap	7						1	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
Garden Warbler	3						1	<i>Sylvia borin</i>
Common Whitethroat	7						2	<i>Sylvia communis</i>
Lesser Whitethroat	6						1	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>
Willow Warbler	9						2	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Brown Woodland Warbler	4						1	<i>Phylloscopus umbrovirens</i>
Rattling Cisticola	1	2h					2	<i>Cisticola chiniana</i>
Ethiopian Cisticola	4	A					1	<i>Cisticola lugubris</i>
Desert Cisticola	1					C	1	<i>Cisticola aridulus</i>
Tawny-flanked Prinia	8						2	<i>Prinia subflava</i>
Pale Prinia	2					E	1	<i>Prinia somalica</i>
Buff-bellied Warbler	4						1	<i>Phyllolais pulchella</i>
Grey-backed Camaroptera	6						1	<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>
Yellow-bellied Eremomela	4						1	<i>Eremomela icteropygialis</i>
Green-backed Eremomela	1					C	1	<i>Eremomela canescens</i>
Northern Crombec	5						1	<i>Sylvietta brachyura</i>
Red-faced Crombec	2					D	1	<i>Sylvietta whytii</i>
Brown Parisoma	2					F	1	<i>Parisoma lugens</i>
Bale Parisoma	1						1	<i>Parisoma griseiventris</i>
Spotted Flycatcher	11						2	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
Dusky Flycatcher	6						1	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>
Gambaga Flycatcher	1	A					1	<i>Muscicapa gambagae</i>
Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher	5						1	<i>Melaenornis chocolatinus</i>
Northern Black Flycatcher	3						1	<i>Melaenornis edolioides</i>
Grey Flycatcher	1					F	1	<i>Bradornis microrhynchus</i>
Pale Flycatcher	1					E	1	<i>Bradornis pallidus</i>
Grey-headed Batis	4						1	<i>Batis orientalis</i>
Black-headed Batis	1					E	1	<i>Batis minor</i>
Brown-throated Wattle-eye	2					F	1	<i>Platysteira cyanea</i>
African Paradise Flycatcher	6						2	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>
White-winged Black Tit	2					E	1	<i>Parus leucomelas</i>
White-backed Black Tit	2	A					1	<i>Parus leuconotus</i>
Mouse-coloured Penduline Tit	1					C	1	<i>Anthoscopus musculus</i>
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	5						1	<i>Nectarinia senegalensis</i>
Hunter's Sunbird	2					F	1	<i>Nectarinia hunteri</i>
Variable Sunbird	6						2	<i>Nectarinia venusta</i>
Mariqua Sunbird	2					E	1	<i>Nectarinia mariquensis</i>
Tacazze Sunbird	7						3	<i>Nectarinia tacazze</i>
Beautiful Sunbird	5						2	<i>Nectarinia pulchella</i>
Abyssinian White-eye	2	A					1	<i>Zosterops abyssinica</i>
Montane White-eye	4	A					2	<i>Zosterops poliogaster</i>
Ortolan Bunting	2	A					1	<i>Emberiza hortulana</i>
Somali Golden-breasted Bunting	1					C	1	<i>Emberiza poliogaster</i>
Cinnamon-breasted Rock Bunting	1	A					1	<i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>
Reichenow's Seedeater	3					B	1	<i>Serinus reichenowi</i>
African Citril	8						2	<i>Serinus citrinelloides</i>
Black-headed Siskin	5						3	<i>Serinus nigriceps</i>
Streaky Seedeater	8						3	<i>Serinus striolatus</i>
Brown-rumped Seedeater	8						3	<i>Serinus tristriatus</i>
Village Indigobird	4						1	<i>Vidua chalybeata</i>
Steel-blue Whydah	1					E	1	<i>Vidua hypocherina</i>
Straw-tailed (Fischer's) Whydah	1					E	1	<i>Vidua fischeri</i>
Pin-tailed Whydah	3						2	<i>Vidua macroura</i>
Eastern Paradise Whydah	2					C	1	<i>Vidua paradisaea</i>
Purple Grenadier	1					C	1	<i>Uraeginthus ianthinogaster</i>
Cut-throat	2					C	1	<i>Amadina fasciata</i>
African Silverbill	1					C	1	<i>Euodice cantans</i>
Yellow-bellied Waxbill	4						2	<i>Estrilda melanotis</i>
Crimson-rumped Waxbill	1	A					1	<i>Estrilda rhodopyga</i>

Common Waxbill	4				1	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>	
Black-cheeked Waxbill	1		E		1	<i>Estrilda erythronotus</i>	
Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu	8				2	<i>Uraeginthus bengalus</i>	
Red-billed Firefinch	10				2	<i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>	
Bronze Mannikin	2			F	1	<i>Lonchura cucullata</i>	
Black-and-white Mannikin	1				H	1	<i>Lonchura bicolor</i>
Grosbeak Weaver	2			F	1	<i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>	
Baglafaecht Weaver	10				3	<i>Ploceus baglafaecht</i>	
Little Weaver	1			F	1	<i>Ploceus luteolus</i>	
Rüppell's Weaver	1	B			1	<i>Ploceus galbula</i>	
Lesser Masked Weaver	1			F	1	<i>Ploceus intermedius</i>	
Vitelline Masked Weaver	1		E		2	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>	
Speke's Weaver	1	A			1	<i>Ploceus spekei</i>	
Black-headed Weaver	2		E	F	1	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>	
Spectacled Weaver	2			F	1	<i>Ploceus ocularis</i>	
Red-headed Weaver	3		E	F	1	<i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>	
Red-billed Quelea	3				4	<i>Quelea quelea</i>	
Northern Red Bishop	3				1	<i>Euplectes franciscanus</i>	
Yellow-crowned Bishop	2	A			1	<i>Euplectes afer</i>	
Yellow Bishop	4				2	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>	
Fan-tailed Widowbird	1	A			1	<i>Euplectes axillaris</i>	
Red-collared Widowbird	2	A			2	<i>Euplectes ardens</i>	
Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver	1		C		2	<i>Bubalornis niger</i>	
White-headed Buffalo-Weaver	4				3	<i>Dinemellia dinemelli</i>	
White-browed Sparrow-Weaver	6				3	<i>Plocepasser mahali</i>	
Swainson's Sparrow	12				3	<i>Passer swainsonii</i>	
Pale Petronia (Rock Finch)	2		C		1	<i>Carospiza brachydactyla</i>	
Redwing Starling	3				H	3	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>
Slender-billed Redwing Starling	1			E	2	<i>Onychognathus tenuirostris</i>	
White-billed Starling	1	A			3	<i>Onychognathus albirostris</i>	
Greater Blue-eared Glossy Starling	10				3	<i>Lamprotornis chalybaeus</i>	
Rüppell's Long-tailed Starling	6				2	<i>Lamprotornis purpuropterus</i>	
Violet-backed Starling	1			F	1	<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>	
Superb Starling	5				3	<i>Spreo superbus</i>	
Wattled Starling	5				3	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>	
Red-billed Oxpecker	6				2	<i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>	
Eurasian Golden Oriole	2		C	F	1	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	
Black-headed Oriole	2			E	1	<i>Oriolus larvatus</i>	
Black-headed Forest Oriole	2	A			H	3	<i>Oriolus monacha</i>
Fork-tailed Drongo	6				2	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	
Red-billed Chough	2				G	1	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>
Pied Crow	11				3	<i>Corvus albus</i>	
Somali Crow	3				3	<i>Corvus edithae</i>	
Cape Rook	7				3	<i>Corvus capensis</i>	
Fan-tailed Raven	10				2	<i>Corvus rhipidurus</i>	
Thick-billed Raven	9				3	<i>Corvus crassirostris</i>	

Species **in bold** are regarded as endemic.

CHECKLIST OF MAMMALS SEEN DURING THE TOUR

Hippopotamus	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>
Beisa Oryx	<i>Oryx beisa</i>
Soemmerring's Gazelle	<i>Gazella soemmerringi</i>
Swayne's (Salt's) Dik-dik	<i>Madoqua saltiana</i>
Lesser Kudu	<i>Strepsiceros imberbis</i>
Mountain Nyala	<i>Tragelaphus buxtoni</i>
Menelik's Bushbuck	<i>Tragelophus scriptus meneliki</i>
African Wild Cat	<i>Felis lybica</i>
Simien Fox (Ethiopian Wolf)	<i>Canis simensis</i>
Common Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>
Wart Hog	<i>Phacochoerus aethiopicus</i>
Tree Hyrax	<i>Dendrohyrax arboreus</i>
Abyssinian Rock Hyrax	<i>Procavia habessinica</i>
Gelada Baboon	<i>Theropithecus gelada</i>
Olive Baboon	<i>Papio anubis</i>
Black & White Colobus Monkey	<i>Colobus guereza</i>
Vervet Monkey	<i>Cercopithecus aethiops</i>
African Hare	<i>Lepus capensis</i>
Blick's Grass Rat	<i>Arvicanthis blicki</i>
Giant Mole Rat	<i>Tachoryctes macrocephalus</i>
Ochre-bellied (or Huet's) Bush Squirrel	<i>Paraxerus ochraceus</i>

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



Simien Fox



Gelada Baboon



African Fish-Eagle



Dark Chantrelle Goshawk



Pygmy Falcons



Pied Kingfisher



Maribou Stork



Little Bee-eater



Northern Red Bishop