

ORNITHOLIDAYS' TOUR TO GHANA
Birding the Gold Coast

13 – 28 March 2010



Leaders: Robert Ntakor and Simon Boyes

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A Personal Diary

Saturday, 13 March

The group that meets up in Heathrow's Terminal Five for the Ghana tour has a phenomenal total of 288 Ornitholidays tours already completed between them: this sets a new record! The British Airways early afternoon flight to Accra in a Boeing 777 takes just over six hours. We land at 2130, on the same time zone as we are used to, GMT. Immigration, luggage retrieval and changing money into *ceedies* (at a rate of 2.1 to £1) are all painless, and soon we are being welcomed by our local team: birding brothers Robert and Francis, assistant Emmanuel, and driver Solomon. Luggage is hoisted up onto the roof of the coach and sheeted with a tarpaulin for the 40 minute journey through Accra suburbs to the African Royal Beach Hotel. Rooms are quickly allocated, and most of us meet up for sandwiches and a drink in the dining room before heading to bed, at midnight.

Sunday, 14 March

A leisurely breakfast is scheduled at 0730. Before that, many of us meet up to see what's about in the seaside garden: Double-toothed Barbet, African Thrush, Splendid Sunbird and Ethiopian Swallow to name a few. Two Collared Pratincoles fly along the shore, and a few Royal Terns further out. After the excellent buffet breakfast, we load up and head west. We have to cross the city, but being Sunday morning is a great help, and we are not delayed by heavy traffic. Yellow-billed Kites are abundant, with a few Hooded Vultures and Shikras as we pass through the western suburbs. Yellow-billed Shrikes appear on the wires. After two hours, we stop for a walk at the Winneba grasslands, where Grey Kestrel and African Hobby start us off well. Next come obliging Western Grey Plantain-eater, Yellow-crowned Gonolek and a heavy-billed Croaking Cisticola. Clucking might describe the song more accurately. Common Wattle-eye and Copper Sunbird eventually show well too. The heat is tempered by a pleasant breeze off the sea, just out of sight to the south.

Lunch is nearby, a fine buffet with fresh fish at Hut d'Eric. We continue west along the coast, though it is only occasionally visible. African Pied Hornbills and Blue-bellied Rollers cause to stop and watch. At 1500 we reach our accommodation for the next five nights, Hans Cottage Botel, an eccentric complex of chalets grouped around a lake (which has both real and statue crocodiles) and a swimming pool. ('Botel' is so called as the dining room is built over the lake, like a boat). During an hour's rest time, some of us enjoy the colonies of three weaver species by the lake, and a Malachite Kingfisher. I also find time for a cooling dip in the pool (not the lake...)

The afternoon trip is a short drive to Brimsu Reservoir, built by the British colonial administration in 1928. Grosbeak Weaver, Olive-bellied Sunbird, Simple Leaflove and an elusive Green Crombec keep us busy as we walk to the shore. Here we have plenty to watch, from African Jacana, African Pygmy Goose and Long-tailed Cormorant to Giant and Woodland Kingfishers, Black Sparrowhawk and a variety of our familiar waders. Only the hoped-for African Finfoot fails to turn up on cue. Fishermen in boats don't mix well with finfoot spotting. We are back at base just after 1800, as the light fades.

Monday, 15 March

We opt for a 0500 breakfast and a departure half an hour later, so as to be at the Kakum National Park Canopy Walkway at first light. This is the only such structure in Africa, and was built in 1994, funded by US Aid, the EU and UN, but now maintained by visitor fees. We begin with a climb up 96 steps to reach the walkway, and spend two hours on the first platform. White-headed and Forest Wood-hoopoes make a good start, followed by various barbets and woodpeckers: Bristle-nosed and Naked-faced Barbets visit a tree with tiny black fruits; and Little Green and Fire-bellied Woodpeckers turn up too. I can only mention a small selection of our sightings, but we especially enjoy the Blue Cuckooshrike, Sabine's Puffback, and displaying Blue-throated Roller. Iain puts us onto a Cassin's Spinetail flying over the forest. Violet-backed Hyliotas,

recently removed from the warbler family and given one of their own, perch up well. There are Speckled and Yellow-throated Tinkerbirds, and much else.

The third platform produces a fine White-crested Hornbill, perched below us with bright sun on its crown. Here are also a confusing variety of much smaller species: Sharpe's Apalis, Tit-hylia and both Grey-headed and Chestnut-breasted Negrofinch to name a few. From the fifth platform, Chestnut Wattle-eye, Cassin's Honeybird and Green Hylia are the specialities, all below us. We head back for lunch and siesta, during which Sue, Liz, Roger and I swim.

Returning to the walkway in the afternoon, we make straight for platform 3. Here the tree above us, which supports the structure, has a succession of beauties at close range: Buff-throated and Green Sunbirds are both much more attractive than the names suggest, and a party of Rufous-crowned Eremomelas too. Chestnut-capped Flycatcher and Finsch's Flycatcher Thrush give us good views; but there are larger attractions too: Palm-nut Vulture, Brown-cheeked Hornbill and Yellow-billed Turaco. A perched raptor needs careful examination – is it a Black Sparrowhawk or a Cassin's Hawk Eagle? After a while the feathered tarsi – visible in the scope – confirm Cassin's. We descend at dusk, after two wonderful sessions on one of Ghana's main wildlife attractions. We wait for darkness to fall in the hope of Fraser's Eagle Owl in the trees around the car-park, but this once reliable bird has proved elusive recently for Robert. The flying fireflies help to entertain us before we head back for an excellent buffet dinner. Robert, Francis and Emmanuel are also busy working for us at meals, as waiters and (at breakfast) as chefs too, to make sure service is fast.

Tuesday, 16 March

A six o'clock breakfast enables us to watch the hundreds of Cattle Egrets dispersing from their roost outside the dining room, which is built out over the lake. The three weaver species are all busy nest-building: Orange on one side of us, and a large colony of Village on the other. Among the Village Weavers are a few Vieillot's Black. The industrious males hang from their half-built structures, wing-flapping and making their swizzling calls.

We set off for a forest trail just beyond the Kakum National Park headquarters. Heavy cloud cover reduces visibility and bird activity. After half an hour, a Rufous-sided Broadbill gives a brief view to a few of us, before disappearing. Peering high above us, Liz finds a female Black-casqued Hornbill, with rufous head, but it too flies off. A Green Tree Viper twines round a sapling by the path. Now bad light and impending rain cause us to retreat to the coach. We spend the next hour at the park headquarters, watching a light rain fall, drinking coffee and listening to Robert explaining something of the history and ecology of the park. Not only did he work here for 15 years, but he also helped to design and lay out the well presented information centre. A few species such as Red-necked Buzzard, Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher, Speckled Tinkerbird, and African Green Pigeon come into view as we wait for the drizzle to dry up.

Robert suggests a walk along a quiet road east of Abrafo village, where we soon make up for our earlier disappointment with the forest trail. Black Bee-eater and Pygmy Kingfisher are the stars, but with a good supporting cast: for example Sabine's Spinetail, Little Grey Greenbul, Cassin's Honeybird, and Green Crombec. A pair of Grey Parrots fly over, looking so much better than they do in captivity. Dusky-blue Flycatcher, Black-and-White Mannikin and Black-necked Weaver are also new. Lunch and siesta follow back at Hans Cottage.

In the afternoon, we return to Brimsu Reservoir, but the finfoot is no more obliging than on Sunday – there are fishermen on the banks and in boats again. However, Green Crombec, Little Greenbul, Senegal Coucal, Red-faced Cisticola and Pale Flycatcher are all well seen. There is a distant pair of Green Turacos, and (for some) a Western Bluebill too. On our return to the hotel, we walk uphill at dusk, for nightjars. Long-tailed gives us a grand fly-past in reasonable light; but the briefer view of Black-shouldered Nightjar is in darkness, illuminated by Robert's powerful torch.

Wednesday, 17 March

We arrive at Antwikwa, on the west side of Kakum National Park, at 0715, just over an hour after leaving Hans Cottage. The only bird we stop for on the way is a group of Piping Hornbill, which show off their white secondaries in flight, and can be seen perched too. They make a change from the African Pied

Hornbills, which are a common sight each day. Antwikwa is the former park headquarters, but the access road has deteriorated badly. Once we arrive, we walk 600m or so along a track: but the avian activity is such that it takes us three hours. Superb and Blue-throated Brown Sunbirds make a good start, followed by a smart Red-rumped Tinkerbird. Narrow-tailed and Copper-tailed Glossy Starlings frequently fly over. Robert is excited to find a rare Yellow-footed Honeyguide, which leads on to a purple patch of new birds. Golden Greenbul, Purple-throated Cuckooshrike, White-breasted Negrofinch and an overflying Rosy Bee-eater follow in quick succession. A kapok tree has various sunbirds (and a Green Hylia) collecting the fluffy seeds as nesting material: two parasitic Klaas's Cuckoos may appear to be innocently feeding, but they will watch carefully to see where the nests are being built. Standing in a shady spot, we also find Red-vented Malimbe, Swamp Palm Bulbul, and Preuss's Golden-backed Weavers. A Yellow-browed Camaroptera responds instantly to Robert's playback, perching for minutes in the scopes. As it sings, it exposes two patches of bluish skin on its neck. A great variety of butterflies are much admired, and we also see Gambian Sun Squirrel and Striped Ground Squirrel. The only discordant note is the sound of a chainsaw. Palm-oil and cassava plantations continue to replace the remnants of the West African rainforests. We are re-invigorated by plenty of water to drink, as well as mid-morning bananas, peanuts, and biscuits, thoughtfully brought along by our excellent team.

Heading further north, we spend a few minutes on a road bridge at Twifo Praso, where the river below flows a milk-coffee colour. On the rocks, appropriately, stands a Rock Pratincole, which walks sensibly from sun to shade as we watch. White-throated Blue Swallows are nesting under the bridge; while upstream stands a White-headed Lapwing on a sandbank. One last stop along the road is at a culvert where Little Swifts and Preuss's Cliff Swallows are nesting together.

After lunch and siesta, we meet Oscar, who takes over as historical guide for the afternoon: Robert takes a well earned break. Our destination is the Castle at Cape Coast, a few miles south. Here we see the dungeons where thousands of slaves were kept before their transportation to America: a brutal trade that lasted here for 400 years. The castle was also the first seat of government of the British administration. Out to sea we watch fishermen bringing their small wooden boats back onto the beach, and a few terns passing by: mostly Royal but one Sandwich. In the courtyard of the castle, Ethiopian Swallows are nesting, and wintering Barn Swallows passing by: they make a useful comparison. One Ethiopian Swallow poses for photos at point-blank range on a wire. We are back with plenty of time to relax before another buffet dinner served by our unique team.

Thursday, 18 March

We leave at 0630 after a fine breakfast of eggs, toast, freshly squeezed orange juice, tea, coffee and fresh pineapple. At Abrafo we turn left onto a dirt road, which gradually becomes more forest and less cultivation of cocoa, cassava and palm oil. Stops along the road turn up Red-fronted Parrot, Narrow-tailed Starling and a colony of Maxwell's Black Weavers. As we step out of the bus, perched Piping Hornbills and Whistling Cisticola can be seen by all, but only a few manage views of a Yellow-spotted Barbet. A Black-winged Oriole chases a juvenile Western Black-headed Oriole (without black head) out of its tree. The track we take has many greenbul species, but they don't give themselves up easily. Icterine shows well, but the other two new ones for us are more elusive: Western Bearded with yellow throat, and Red-tailed with white throat. This subspecies of Red-tailed has an olive-green tail! Among a few Red-headed Malimbe sightings is one Crested Malimbe. Next comes a spectacular performance from a pair of Red-billed Dwarf Hornbills, which (after some persuasion) perch in full view above us. The next Ghana speciality is equally impressive: a Rufous-sided Broadbill perched close by, in the scopes. Other birds of note are a displaying Cuckoo Hawk, a Blue-throated Roller with visibly blue throat, overflying Rosy Bee-eaters, and a Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher, which fans its tail and darts about to disturb insects.

After lunching, resting and (for some of us) swimming, we set off again at 1530 for Brenu, an area of scrub and an estuary west of Elmina. It is a good spot for swallows, with Rufous-chested, Lesser Striped and Ethiopian side-by-side on the wires, while Preuss's Cliff Swallows fly endlessly past us all afternoon. Among the Little Swifts are a few very similar Mottled Spinetails, but the pinched-in wings and weaker flight are good clues. In the low scrub is a fine male Bar-breasted Firefinch, with both Black-rumped and Orange-cheeked Waxbills nearby. Vieillot's Barbet shares a tree with a Didric Cuckoo, but we have to make do with briefer views of Short-winged Cisticola and Black-crowned Tchagra. By the estuary Water Thick-knees need careful scrutiny to rule out the similar Senegal. A Western Reef Egret is a particularly dark bird;

but waders are more familiar to us in Europe, as they comprise Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew, Ringed Plover and Greenshank. Two flying Shikras round off an easy and pleasant walk, and by 1900 we are back at Hans Cottage. After dinner, Robert prepares us for a special day tomorrow, as it includes a visit to the Picathartes site.

Friday, 19 March

Today's drive takes us from Hans Cottage to Kumasi, with the important sites of Aboabo and the Picathartes on the way. After an early start, we reach Aboabo at 0715: this is a forest area at the north end of Kakum National Park. Our morning walk here turns up a variety of new species, such as Fraser's Forest and Little Grey Flycatchers, Levaillant's Cuckoo, Gabon Woodpecker, Red-billed Helmet-shrike, and African Piculet. It's a pleasant ramble along a little used road, with good open forest on each side. We also have repeat views of Superb and Johanna's Sunbird, Splendid Glossy Starling and Golden Greenbul.

We continue along dirt roads made slippery by recent rain, and make a picnic stop en route. Eventually we arrive at the site near Assin Fossu where a long forest walk takes us to the rock ledge inhabited for nesting and roosting by a colony of Yellow-headed Picathartes. Here we sit and wait, as our targets are unpredictable about their roosting times. During the afternoon, we hear Emerald Cuckoo, Cameroon Sombre Greenbul, Western Nicator and White-tailed Alethe. At 1640 the first Rockfowl (the alternative name for Picathartes) bounces along vines in front of us and into view. During next half hour, we see two more, one feeding like a chicken in the leaf litter below. Taxonomists are still unsure whether Picathartes is related more to babblers or to crows: they have diverged far from either. The name was given by Lesson in 1828: he called them *Pica* (magpie) *Cathartes* (turkey vulture): clearly he had no idea what their origins are! They feed on a wide range of insects and small reptiles on the forest floor, and attend swarms of army-ants. Here they feed not on the ants themselves, but on insects disturbed by the ants. In the rainy season they lay two eggs in mud nests attached to the roofs of caves or rock overhangs. They are rarely seen away from their nests, as they depart silently at the slightest sound of disturbance. There is one other species of Picathartes, found further east in Cameroon and Congo. To see these rare and extraordinary birds (especially after our exertions to reach the roost) is a major highlight of the tour. Meanwhile Anne waits for us in the village with Emmanuel as her leg won't permit a long walk: she watches four Grey Parrots fly over.

Leaving the village where the coach parks, we head north for Kumasi, where we find excellent food and lodging at Rexmar Hotel. It has been a long day, but memories of the Picathartes will stay with us long after we have forgotten the bumpy roads and the long, humid walk that has helped us achieve our aim.

Saturday, 20 March

Vieillot's Barbet, Splendid Glossy Starling, Splendid Sunbird and Shikra are in or above the hotel grounds before breakfast. After a late night, we enjoy a late 0730 breakfast and leave soon afterwards, for the 420 km drive to Mole National Park. The ring road traffic is slow at first, but once we are clear of the city, Solomon puts his foot down. We pass a Giant Pouched Rat being offered for sale as bushmeat, and observe the landscape looking drier as we head north. Lunch is at a café in Kintampo, where spaghetti *Bolognese* and shredded chicken and rice prove popular options. I try a cassava-based Ghanaian dish recommended by Emmanuel and Francis, but I have to conclude it's an acquired taste.

Continuing north, we notice huge quantities of charcoal for sale by the road: a slow-fire method of creating quick-fire degradation of habitat. Crossing the Black Volta River, we turn left onto a dirt road which avoids the bone-shaking corrugations of the main road to Mole. Now we pass through very sparsely populated stretches of landscape as yet unravaged by slash and burn. Grey Hornbills, Rufous-crowned Rollers, and Grasshopper Buzzard become a regular sight. We also stop for Abyssinian Roller, Violet Turaco, Purple Glossy Starling and Black Crane, but the bird of the day is a rarely seen White-throated Francolin, which crouches in the road and on the verge. At 1730 we enter the national park, and soon arrive at our home for the next four nights. The park protects over 4,000 square km of wooded savanna. The view down the escarpment to the water-hole below is a little obscured by sand and dust in the air as the *Harmattan* blows from the north: we hope it will clear by morning. Dinner is on the terrace outside as an Arsenal match is screened on the TV in the bar – Ghana is a football-mad country.

Sunday, 21 March

After breakfast at dawn on the terrace, we leave just before 0630 in the bus, to drive a short circuit called the Samole Loop. However, most of the morning is spent on a walking safari in the area of the waterhole visible from the lodge. Conditions are still hazy, although at ground level there is no sign of north wind. We have an armed guard with us, in the unlikely event of meeting a rogue Elephant. Some of our highlights are the Red-throated Bee-eaters which are often to be seen on treetops (and one close-up on the ground), a Red-winged Warbler static in the scope, a few Beautiful and Scarlet-chested Sunbirds, and an African Cuckoo which sings as it perches on a dead tree. We spend some time sorting out non-breeding plumage bishops, queleas, indigobirds and whydahs, although one Yellow-crowned Bishop is starting to show its true colours. Bar-breasted and Red-billed Firefinches make a good comparison, side by side. There are many Double-spurred Francolins and Helmeted Guineafowl, which both take off and fly high at regular intervals. Our first Grey-headed and Blue-breasted Kingfishers turn up, as do White-shouldered Black Tit, Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike, Yellow-breasted Apalis and a beautiful white male African Paradise Flycatcher with long tail. Senegal Batis and Senegal Eremomela appear as we approach the waterhole. A Greater Painted-snipe crouches for a while, then flies off as we approach.

For the last hour of our walk, we climb the viewing platform and enjoy sitting to watch the activity of the waterhole. Four Elephants are here, two of them huge bulls fully submerged. Senegal Thick-knee, African Wattled Lapwing and Purple Heron add to the bird list, while the Impala-like Kob, Bushbuck and Warthog are new mammals. We return with an hour to spare before lunch, as the temperature has risen steadily through the morning. Water in the taps in our bathrooms is unavailable as the bore-hole level is low. However, we have large buckets and jugs for showering, and an alternative is the refreshing swimming pool by the restaurant. Lunch is a buffet, served especially for us, although there are other guests.

We head out again at 1530, passing Lizard and Grasshopper Buzzards on our way to Brugbani North. Here we turn round and start walking the track we just drove along. The savanna woodland is fairly dense here, much more woodland than savanna. Our best birds are African Golden Oriole, White-fronted Black Chat, and Pygmy Sunbird. A juvenile Greater Honeyguide is interested in Robert's playback, but does not reply since presumably it hasn't learnt the song yet. Green Wood-hoopoes give several views, but the smaller Black Wood-hoopoe offers only one short chance. Anne finds us two Stone Partridges to the left of the track, while on the right a female Black-bellied Bustard surprises us in such wooded habitat. More familiar as European breeders are Whinchat, Melodious Warbler and Pied Flycatcher, all of which will be returning north soon. Red-flanked Duiker and Waterbuck appear on the road as dusk approaches, and before we reach the lodge, we see several flying Long-tailed Nightjars and a Greyish Eagle Owl perched on the track ahead.

Monday, 22 March

We have a wonderful morning along the Mole River at Mognori, on the park boundary. From our first Bruce's Green Pigeons and African Blue Flycatchers, to our final Violet Turacos and Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird singing, we have a profusion of birdlife. Most of it can be seen from the bridge over the river. Red-headed Lovebirds and Senegal Parrots are good scope material, while Rose-ringed Parakeets fly over. Oriole Warbler, Wilson's Indigobird (a female identified by pale legs) and Green-headed Sunbird all show well; however, Yellow-throated Leaflove, African Moustached Warbler and White-crowned Robin Chat are less obliging. From the bridge or close by we see six species of kingfishers: Pygmy, Malachite, Grey-headed, Blue-breasted, Giant and the spectacular Shining-blue, which circles over us and flies downstream. A Thick-billed Cuckoo gives a star performance, flying over with slow wingbeats and calling, before perching for all four scopes. We have time to enjoy watching six Bar-breasted Firefinches drinking in a line at the water's edge; we think Spot-breasted would be a more accurate name.

Stopping for Yellow-billed Shrike on the way back, we spend the next hour, drink in hand, on the viewing terrace below the swimming pool. From here, we can look down on one White-headed, several Hooded and White-backed Vultures, a Booted Eagle of the dark morph, several White-faced Whistling Duck by the waterhole, Broad-billed Roller and Red-throated Bee-eaters courtship feeding. Phil puts us onto a Chestnut-crowned Sparrow Weaver in the nearest bushes. Before lunch a European Honey-buzzard flies over the pool, perhaps already on its migration; and a Patas Monkey clambers through the bushes by the swimming pool as we eat.

We set out again at 1530. Raptors are more visible than usual, with four Bateleurs, an immature Martial Eagle, and a Short-toed Eagle. (The resident Beaudouin's Snake Eagle is similar, but would have fewer bars on the underwing than the bird seen). Other new birds are a wintering Black Stork, a Striped Kingfisher, and several Sun Larks on some of the open areas that we investigate on foot. A Four-banded Sandgrouse is on the verge with a week-old chick, which we watch twice, as we pass them again on the return journey. There are also many coveys of Stone Partridge on or by the track. At 1830 we are in position on the airstrip for any nightjars that may be about: we are rewarded with a wonderful performance both on the ground and in the air by a male Standard-winged Nightjar that appears to fly with two small birds behind it. These are the vanes of their elongated, bare-shafted second primaries. At dinner much of the conversation is about our especially enjoyable day.

Tuesday, 23 March

David points out a Greyish Eagle Owl on top of a telegraph pole as we sit out on the terrace at dawn, eating breakfast. The morning safari is back to the waterhole where we walked on Sunday morning. There are many different birds here today: Woolly-necked Stork, Spotted Creeper, Fine-spotted Woodpecker, Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike and Western Banded Snake Eagle to name a few. One flowering tree has at least five sunbird species: Variable, Beautiful, Scarlet-chested, Copper and Pygmy. Among the flocks of non-breeding plumage seedeaters, we come across a Yellow-mantled Widowbird and a Wilson's Indigobird. One small pond with overhanging trees has Swamp Flycatcher, Snowy-crowned Robin Chat and many Orange-cheeked Waxbills all together. Melodious, Western Olivaceous and Willow is our selection of wintering warblers. All this time our team of Francis, Emmanuel and Yeboah, the park armed guard, are busy searching the dense bushes for a Pel's Fishing Owl, just as they did on Sunday. Their hard work is appreciated but the owl is AWOL.

As the heat rises, we try another option: the tree-hide where we can sit as further searches are made. On the drive round, a shout from Robert alerts us to a pair of Abyssinian Ground Hornbills walking in slow, stately fashion through the woodland. At the hide we watch a Pied Flycatcher (moulting into summer plumage), Bruce's Green Pigeon, Black-billed Wood Doves, and a fantastic colour combination on a branch: a Grey-headed Kingfisher with a Red-throated Bee-eater. Phil and Roger have views of a Red-winged Pytilia. Robert finds a Northern White-faced Owl, which soon disappears. Next, a large owl flies past us, cruelly raising hopes of Pel's: but its ear tufts rule it out. And so the morning ends as it began, with a Greyish Eagle Owl.

Lunch is followed by a siesta as usual. The afternoon safari takes us round the Office Loop, with a walk at the junction. Here, despite the heat, we come across bird activity from Cinnamon-breasted Rock Bunting, Bush Petronia, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow Weaver, Yellow-billed Shrike, Black-faced Firefinch and Lead-coloured Flycatcher. White-rumped Swifts are nesting in a culvert under the road: this species builds inside old swallows' nests. Driving on, we meet several impressive Roan Antelope, which make a welcome change from Kob and Bushbuck. Fifteen of these sturdy antelope cross the track in front of us. This section also has about 25 Four-banded Sandgrouse, feeding on the sandy floor of the woodland. It is unusual to see sandgrouse feeding among trees. A Brown Snake Eagle perches in a tree as dusk approaches; and soon afterwards we are watching an African Scops Owl, enticed by Robert's playback and illuminated by his powerful torch. Dinner is enjoyed outside on the pool terrace, even though the temperature remains at 32°C.

Wednesday, 24 March

Roger hears strange noises at 0430, and is able to photograph a Warthog suckling her young in the passage outside his front door. At six, we have a few minutes to watch the dawn from the viewpoint overlooking the waterholes. Senegal Eremomela, Willow Warbler, and Yellow-fronted Canary are all up early feeding in the same tree. A Singing Cisticola works its way round the viewing platform at ground level, as a wren does. By 0700 we are packed up and ready to leave Mole. Liz spots a Lavender Waxbill feeding on the ground with mannikins and cordon-bleus as Robert finishes settling our bill. We re-fuel in Damongo, where schoolchildren are busy picking up plastic litter. Red-chested Swallows perch on the wires, presumably nesting in the town. They replace Ethiopian Swallows in the northern half of Ghana. Taking the same route as on Saturday, we come across one or two African Golden Orioles, an African Cuckoo and a pair of Blue-bellied Rollers in rolling display-flight.

At Kintampo we order lunch, visit the waterfall, and return to eat. A Giant Kingfisher gives a brief view to those who descend the many steps to the bottom of the falls. Four more hours' driving brings us through Kumasi city and out onto the Accra Road, where the brand new Silicon Hotel and Conference Centre make us welcome. Their choice of music in the restaurant, *Walking in a Winter Wonderland*, seems a little inappropriate here. The drive south has seemed painless – there is always so much to watch in the towns and villages.

Thursday, 25 March

Solomon loads the cases on the roof and covers them, as we eat an early breakfast. At 0630 we arrive at Bobiri, a forest reserve used for research and famous for its diverse and beautiful butterflies. It's a good birding spot too, though today not at its best. Robert explains that bird activity comes with sun and rain; but this persisting *Harmattan*, giving misty, dull conditions, keeps bird movement low. We enjoy watching Emerald Cuckoo, Black Cuckoo and Yellowbill, and a dead tree-trunk full of active nests of Bristle-nosed Barbets. We all see Red-fronted Parrot, Black-winged Oriole and Blue Cuckooshrike well, but only a lucky few have views of Narina's Trogon, Western Olive Sunbird and African Piculet. As for Western Nicator, Grey Longbill and Afep Pigeon, they remain in the 'heard only' category. However, the butterflies are spectacular, especially a large group of blue swallowtails, all shimmering exquisite wings as they probe soft mud for minerals. There are thousands of blues and many other colourful species: a photographic treat for John in particular.

Continuing along the main Accra road, we stop for lunch at the Linda Dor in Bunso, which serves a fine pizza. From here it's 50 minutes to our new hotel in Koforidua, the Capital View. The guide book had promised us a pink hotel; but this huge structure has now been painted pale blue. Here we rest or swim for an hour, then head out again for the Atewa foothills, passing a Black-winged Kite on the way. We walk along a track with citrus, palm-oil and bananas growing on each side: what Robert calls farmbush. Here our rewards are African Hobby, both at rest and chasing Pied Crows, Whistling Cisticola (with a song reminiscent of a South American peppershrike), and a pair of Buff-spotted Woodpeckers. Crossing a field of chili peppers, we try to lure a White-spotted Flufftail into view, but our target is not at home. Phil, in fine spotting form as usual, finds us a group of Compact Weavers feeding on grass seeds. This bird has a genus all to itself, *Pachyphantes*, meaning weaver with a thick bill. In the same area are other seedeaters such as Black-winged Bishop, Black-and-White Mannikin, and Vieillot's Black Weavers. A pair of Blue-headed Coucals call, but remain hidden. As the light fades, we return to our comfortable rooms in the Capital View, and enjoy a tasty buffet dinner.

Friday, 26 March

We spend a wonderful, relatively cool morning up in the Atewa Mountains. Leaving the hotel at six after breakfast, we transfer an hour later to three 4-by-4s to negotiate the rough track to the mountain ridge. Here, at 800m, the air is clearer and much cooler, and we keep comfortable until our departure in late morning. The highlight of Atewa is definitely the beautiful Blue-headed Bee-eaters, which make life easy for us with a number of scope views. The first is at perched for some minutes, trying to swallow a large dragonfly. Other highlights are Forest Robin, West African Batis, Fraser's Sunbird and Sharpe's Apalis. A Blue-headed Wood Dove hurtles past, giving brief views to a few of us. Icterine Greenbuls cross the road in a gang, and a Chestnut Wattle-eye turns up too. But the forest keeps some of its secrets hidden: we only hear White-tailed Alethe (on the forest floor), Shining Drongo (at mid-level) and Long-tailed Hawk (in the canopy). Roger and Phil have brief looks at a White-tailed Ant Thrush. Raptors feature Africa's largest eagle, the monkey-eating Crowned, as well as Harrier Hawk and Palm-nut Vulture.

We head back to the Capital View, for lunch and to pack up our luggage. We leave at three, and arrive within two and a half hours at the African Royal, on the beach just east of Accra. Another fine buffet finishes off another good day of Ghana birding.

Saturday, 27 March

Our last day in Ghana begins with a morning to the Shai Hills and Sakumona Lagoon. We leave the hotel at 0600 and arrive at Shai an hour later, having driven past the lagoon and the busy container port of Tema. Two Piapiacs fly over the bus on the way, like small black magpies. A two hour walk at Shai passes through savanna more open than at Mole, to the base of a huge cliff. We see old friends such as Lizard Buzzard, Splendid Sunbird, and Senegal Parrot, but also better views of White-shouldered Black Tit and Lead-

coloured Flycatcher. Entirely new are Yellow-bellied Hylia, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Rock Martin and Cliff Chat. A Shikra repeatedly mobs an immature Harrier Hawk.

Retracing our steps to the lagoon, we have a fine selection of waterbirds alongside us. First to catch our attention are Black Heron and the similar but white-throated Western Reef Egrets. The two are close relatives, in the same genus, but only the Black Heron performs the umbrella feeding strategy with its wings to shade its fishing grounds. Spur-winged Lapwing, Black-winged Stilt, Marsh and Curlew Sandpipers, Greenshank, many Spotted Redshank swim-feeding, Little Stints and Grey Plover are the pick of the waders. Many of the redshank and stints are coming into breeding plumage. Terns are mostly a large flock of Common Terns, with a few Sandwich, one Royal and one Roseate among them. The Roseate is already in breeding plumage, and stands out from the winter plumage Common. Andrew point out a single Gull-billed Tern passing by; while out to sea, Phil puts us onto several distant Arctic Skuas, waiting to harry feeding terns.

After an hour, we return to lunch at the hotel, stopping for a few minutes at Pa Willy's Coffin Craft. It has become a recent fashion in Accra to choose huge, outrageously designed coffins in the form of eagles, boats, elephants, or whatever the deceased may have been interested in. We have the afternoon to relax, swim, and pack; and we can keep our rooms until four o'clock. We have a final celebration dinner at six, featuring gifts of T-shirts from Robert and bottles of wine from Ornitholidays. Afterwards, we set off to the airport, where Solomon passes down our bags from the roof for the last time. Our safari of 2,800 km has ended. British Airways are two and a half hours late arriving from London, but eventually we board the 777. When we land at Heathrow at 0900 on Sunday morning, we have made up an hour of that time. Colin leaves us for the Edinburgh flight, but the rest of us say our farewells by the carousels, and make our own separate ways home.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Robert and his team for looking after us in so many ways in Ghana. Robert is an excellent ornithologist, with a superb grasp of Ghana bird songs. Francis and Emmanuel assisted him in the field constantly, carrying scopes and heavy bottles of water to keep us hydrated. All three of them were also great waiters, ensuring we had quick meals. Many thanks to Solomon for safe driving and luggage-loading on the roof. Thanks are also due to our ground agents in Ghana for ensuring efficient logistics before and during the tour. Most of all, many thanks to you all for participating in this tour, always with patience and good humour in a hot and humid climate. I hope we may meet up on another Ornitholiday again soon. Thanks also to John Dodd and Roger Ackroyd for the photographs that illustrate this report.

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April 2010

Itinerary and Weather

Wherever possible, **shade** temperatures at dawn and midday are given.

- 13 Mar Arrive Accra 2130. 28°C (82°F)
- 14 Mar Accra to Hans Cottage, via Winneba. Brimsu Reservoir.
Mostly cloudy, dry, 27-34°C (81-94°F)
- 15 Mar Hans Cottage. Kakum National Park Canopy Walkway. Dry, mostly sunny, 25-35°C (77-95°F)
- 16 Mar Hans Cottage. Kakum forest trail. Abrafo (walk to east of village). Brimsu Reservoir.
Cloudy, some light rain a.m. 26-30°C (79-86°F)
- 17 Mar Hans Cottage. Antwikwa. Twifo Praso Bridge. Cape Coast Castle.
Sunny, 24-34°C (75-94°F)
- 18 Mar Hans Cottage. Abrafo (walk to west of village). Brenu Akyinime scrub and estuary.
Sunny, 26-34°C (79-94°F)
- 19 Mar Hans Cottage. Aboabo. Assin Fossu. Picathartes site. Kumasi.
Dry, mostly sunny, 27-34°C (81-94°F)
- 20 Mar Kumasi to Mole National Park.
Dry, mostly sunny, 27-34°C (81-94°F)
- 21 Mar Mole NP. Samole Loop, incl. Waterhole. Brugbani North woodland.
Dry, hazy, 28-37°C (82-98°F)
- 22 Mar Mole NP. Mole River at Mognori. Brugbani South and airstrip.
Dry, hazy, 27-37°C (81-98°F)
- 23 Mar Mole NP. Waterholes and tree-hide. Office Loop. Dry, hazy, 24-37°C (75-98°F)
- 24 Mar Mole NP to Kumasi via Kintampo Falls.
Dry, hazy, 24-36°C (75-97°F)
- 25 Mar Kumasi to Koforidua via Bobiri and Atewa Farm Bush.
Dry, hazy, 27-36°C (81-97°F)
- 26 Mar Koforidua to Atewa Hills. Accra.
Dry, hazy, 27-35°C (81-95°F) except Atewa: clear, 25°C (77°F)
- 27 Mar Accra. Shai Hills. Sakumona Lagoon.
Dry, hazy, 28-35°C (82-95°F)
- 28 Mar Depart Accra 0145

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING TOUR

No of days recorded	Locations	Abundance Scale
	(given for less widely distributed species)	(max. seen on 1 day)
1 2h means seen on	K = Kakum, Antwikwa, Aboabo, Hans Cottage & Brimsu	1 = 1 - 4
1 day and heard on 2	M = Mole N.P.	2 = 5 - 9
other days	>M = On journey to or from Mole	3 = 10 - 99
	O = Other forest areas, viz. Picathartes site & Bobiri; also Kumasi	4 = 100 - 999
	A = Atewa	
	C = Coastal sites, incl. Accra and Shai Hills	

SPECIES	No of days recorded	Locations	Abundance Scale	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Little Grebe	1	K	1	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Long-tailed Cormorant	6		3	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>
Grey Heron	4	M	C 1	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Purple Heron	1	M	1	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Black-crowned Night-Heron	3	M	C 2	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Squacco Heron	4	K	C 2	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>
Western Reef Egret	2		C 1	<i>Egretta gularis</i>
Black Heron	1		C 1	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>
Little Egret	5		3	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Intermediate Egret	3		C 3	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>
Great Egret	3		C 3	<i>Egretta alba</i>
Cattle Egret	14		4	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Striated (Green-backed) Heron	5		1	<i>Butorides striata</i>
Hamerkop	2	M	1	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>
Black Stork	1	M	1	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
Woolly-necked Stork	2	M	1	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
Hadada Ibis	3	M	1	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>
White-faced Whistling-Duck	3	M	C 4	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>
African Pygmy Goose	2	K	1	<i>Nettapus auritus</i>
Black-winged Kite	2		A C 1	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
Black (Yellow-billed) Kite ¹	14		4	<i>Milvus (migrans) aegyptius</i>
African Cuckoo-Hawk	2	1h K M	A 1	<i>Aviceda cuculoides</i>
Palm-nut Vulture	2	K	A 2	<i>Gypohierax angolensis</i>
Hooded Vulture	13		3	<i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>
White-headed Vulture	1	M	1	<i>Trigonoceps occipitalis</i>
African White-backed Vulture	3	M	2	<i>Gyps africanus</i>
Short-toed Eagle	1	M	1	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>
Brown Snake-Eagle	1	M	1	<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>
Western Banded Snake-Eagle	1	M	1	<i>Circaetus cinerascens</i>
Western Marsh-Harrier	2		C 1	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
African Harrier-Hawk	5		1	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>
Bateleur	2	M	1	<i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>
Long-tailed Hawk	-	1h	A 1	<i>Urotriorchis macrourus</i>
Gabar Goshawk	1	M	1	<i>Melierax gabar</i>
Shikra	5		2	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
Black (Great) Sparrowhawk	1	K	1	<i>Accipiter melanoleucus</i>
Lizard Buzzard	2	M	C 1	<i>Kaupifalco monogrammicus</i>
European Honey-buzzard	3	K M	1	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>
Grasshopper Buzzard	4	M	1	<i>Butastur rufipennis</i>
Red-necked Buzzard	8		1	<i>Buteo auguralis</i>
Crowned Eagle	1		A 1	<i>Stephanoaetus coronatus</i>
Martial Eagle	1	M	1	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>
Booted Eagle	2	M	1	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>
Cassin's Hawk Eagle	1	K	1	<i>Spizaetus africanus</i>
Common (Eurasian) Kestrel	7		2	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Lanner Falcon	1	K	1	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>
Grey Kestrel	5		1	<i>Falco ardosiaceus</i>
African Hobby	2		A C 1	<i>Falco cuvierii</i>
Helmeted Guineafowl	5	M	3	<i>Numida meleagris</i>

White-throated Francolin	1			>M		1	<i>Francolinus albigularis</i>
Double-spurred Francolin	5			M		C 3	<i>Francolinus bicalcaratus</i>
Stone Partridge	4			M		3	<i>Ptilopachus petrosus</i>
White-spotted Flufftail	-	2h	K			1	<i>Sarothrura pulehra</i>
Black Crake	1			>M		1	<i>Amaurornis flavirostra</i>
Common Moorhen	3		K		A	1	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
African Jacana	9					3	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>
Black-bellied Bustard	1			M		1	<i>Eupodotis melanogaster</i>
Senegal Thick-knee	1	1h		M		1	<i>Burhinus senegalensis</i>
Water Thick-knee	2			M		C 1	<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>
Black-winged Stilt	2					C 3	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
Greater Painted-snipe	1			M		1	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>
Collared Pratincole	1					C 1	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>
Rock Pratincole	1		K			1	<i>Glareola nuchalis</i>
Spur-winged Lapwing	1					C 1	<i>Vanellus spinosus</i>
White-headed Lapwing	1		K			1	<i>Vanellus albiceps</i>
African Wattled Lapwing	5			M		C 2	<i>Vanellus senegallus</i>
Common Ringed Plover	2					C 4	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Grey Plover	1					C 2	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>
Ruddy Turnstone	1					C 1	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Whimbrel	3					C 1	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>
Eurasian Curlew	1					C 1	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
Little Stint	1					C 3	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
Curlew Sandpiper	1					C 1	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>
Common Sandpiper	8					2	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Wood Sandpiper	5					1	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
Spotted Redshank	1					C 3	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>
Common Greenshank	5					C 2	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>
Marsh Sandpiper	1					C 1	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
Arctic Skua	1					C 2	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>
Common Tern	1					C 4	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Roseate Tern	1					C 1	<i>Sterna dougallii</i>
Sandwich Tern	2					C 3	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>
Royal Tern	3					C 2	<i>Sterna maxima</i>
Gull-billed Tern	1					C 1	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
Four-banded Sandgrouse	2			M		3	<i>Pterocles quadricinctus</i>
Bruce's Green Pigeon	2			M		2	<i>Treron waalia</i>
African Green Pigeon	9					3	<i>Treron calvus</i>
Afep Pigeon	-	1h			O	1	<i>Columba unicincta</i>
Rock (Feral) Pigeon	8					3	<i>Columba livia</i>
Red-eyed Dove	9					2	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>
Vinaceous Dove	6			M		C 3	<i>Streptopelia vinacea</i>
Laughing Dove	14					4	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>
Blue-spotted Wood Dove	6	1h				1	<i>Turtur afer</i>
Black-billed Wood Dove	3	1h		M		C 1	<i>Turtur abyssinicus</i>
Tambourine Dove	6					1	<i>Turtur tympanistria</i>
Blue-headed Wood Dove	2	1h	K		A	1	<i>Turtur brehmeri</i>
Red-headed Lovebird	1			M		1	<i>Agapornis pullarius</i>
Rose-ringed Parakeet	1			M		2	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
Senegal Parrot	3			M		C 3	<i>Poicephalus senegalensis</i>
Red-fronted Parrot	2		K		O	1	<i>Poicephalus gulielmi</i>
Grey Parrot	2		K		O	1	<i>Psittacus erithacus</i>
Yellow-billed Turaco	1	2h	K		A	1	<i>Tauraco macrorhynchus</i>
Green Turaco	1	1h	K			1	<i>Tauraco persa</i>
Violet Turaco	5			M		C 1	<i>Musophaga violacea</i>
Western Grey Plantain-eater	10					3	<i>Crinifer piscator</i>
Klaas' Cuckoo	2		K	M		1	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>
Didric Cuckoo	3		K	>M		1	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>
African Emerald Cuckoo	1	1h			O	1	<i>Chrysococcyx cupreus</i>
Levaillant's Cuckoo	4		K	M		1	<i>Oxylophus levaillantii</i>
African Cuckoo	2	2h		M		1	<i>Cuculus gularis</i>
Red-chested Cuckoo	-	1h			O	1	<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>
Black Cuckoo	2			M	O	1	<i>Cuculus clamosus</i>

Thick-billed Cuckoo	1		M		1	<i>Pachycoocyx audeberti</i>	
Yellowbill	4		K	O	1	<i>Ceuthmochares aereus</i>	
Senegal Coucal	7				2	<i>Centropus senegalensis</i>	
Blue-headed Coucal	-	1h		A	1	<i>Centropus monachus</i>	
Black-throated Coucal	-	1h	K		1	<i>Centropus leucogaster</i>	
Pearl-spotted Owlet	1	1h		M	1	<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>	
African Scops Owl	1			M	1	<i>Otus senegalensis</i>	
Northern White-faced Owl	1			M	1	<i>Ptilopsis leucotis</i>	
Greyish Eagle-Owl	2			M	1	<i>Bubo cinerascens</i>	
Black-shouldered Nightjar	1		K		1	<i>Caprimulgus nigriscapularis</i>	
Long-tailed Nightjar	2		K	M	1	<i>Caprimulgus climacurus</i>	
Standard-winged Nightjar	1			M	1	<i>Macrodipteryx longipennis</i>	
Mottled Spinetail	1				C	1	<i>Telacanthura ussheri</i>
Sabine's Spinetail	3		K		1	<i>Rhaphidura sabini</i>	
Cassin's Spinetail	2		K		1	<i>Neafrapus cassini</i>	
Common Swift	6				3	<i>Apus apus</i>	
Little Swift	12				4	<i>Apus affinis</i>	
White-rumped Swift	1			M	1	<i>Apus caffer</i>	
African Palm-Swift	12				3	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	
Narina's Trogon	1			O	1	<i>Apaloderma narina</i>	
African Pygmy-Kingfisher	5		K	M	1	<i>Ceyx pictus</i>	
Malachite Kingfisher	4		K	M	1	<i>Alcedo cristata</i>	
Shining-blue Kingfisher	1			M	1	<i>Alcedo quadibrachys</i>	
Pied Kingfisher	6				2	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	
Woodland Kingfisher	12				2	<i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>	
Grey-headed Kingfisher	3			M	2	<i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>	
Blue-breasted Kingfisher	3			M	1	<i>Halcyon malimbica</i>	
Striped Kingfisher	2			M	1	<i>Halcyon chelicuti</i>	
Giant Kingfisher	4		K	M	1	<i>Megaceryle maxima</i>	
Black Bee-eater	2		K		1	<i>Merops gularis</i>	
Blue-headed Bee-eater	1				A	1	<i>Merops mullerii</i>
European Bee-eater	1			>M	2	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	
Rosy Bee-eater	2		K		2	<i>Merops malimbicus</i>	
Little Bee-eater	4		K		A	1	<i>Merops pusillus</i>
Red-throated Bee-eater	3			M	3	<i>Merops bulocki</i>	
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater	1				C	1	<i>Merops hirundineus</i>
White-throated Bee-eater	8				3	<i>Merops albicollis</i>	
Broad-billed Roller	4			M	1	<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>	
Blue-throated Roller	5		K		A	1	<i>Eurystomus gularis</i>
Rufous-crowned Roller	1			>M	2	<i>Coracias naevius</i>	
Blue-bellied Roller	3			>M	C	2	<i>Coracias cyanogaster</i>
Abyssinian Roller	5			M	1	<i>Coracias abyssinicus</i>	
Green Wood-hoopoe	3			M	C	2	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>
White-headed Wood-hoopoe	1		K		1	<i>Phoeniculus bollei</i>	
Forest Wood-hoopoe	2		K		1	<i>Phoeniculus castaneiceps</i>	
Black Wood-hoopoe	2			M	1	<i>Rhinopomastus aterrimus</i>	
Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill	1		K		1	<i>Tockus camurus</i>	
African Pied Hornbill	8				3	<i>Tockus fasciatus</i>	
African Grey Hornbill	6			M	3	<i>Tockus nasutus</i>	
Red-billed Hornbill	2			M	2	<i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>	
Piping Hornbill	2		K		2	<i>Bycanistes fistulator</i>	
Brown-cheeked Hornbill	1	1h	K		1	<i>Bycanistes cylindricus</i>	
Black-casqued Hornbill	1		K		1	<i>Ceratogymna atrata</i>	
White-crested Hornbill	2		K		1	<i>Tropicranus albocristatus</i>	
Abyssinian Ground Hornbill	1			M	1	<i>Bucorvus abyssinicus</i>	
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird	2			M	C	1	<i>Pogoniulus chrysoconus</i>
Speckled Tinkerbird	4		K		1	<i>Pogoniulus scolopaceus</i>	
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird	1		K		1	<i>Pogoniulus bilineatus</i>	
Yellow-throated Tinkerbird	2	2h	K		A	1	<i>Pogoniulus subsulphureus</i>
Red-rumped Tinkerbird	1		K		1	<i>Pogoniulus atroflavus</i>	
Yellow-spotted Barbet	1		K		1	<i>Buccanodon duchaillui</i>	
Hairy-breasted Barbet	4		K		A	1	<i>Tricholaema hirsuta</i>
Naked-faced Barbet	4		K		3	<i>Gymnobucco calvus</i>	

Bristle-nosed Barbet	3		K		O		3	<i>Gymnobucco peli</i>
Vieillot's Barbet	2				O	C	1	<i>Lybius vieilloti</i>
Bearded Barbet	4			M			1	<i>Lybius dubius</i>
Double-toothed Barbet	2					A C	1	<i>Lybius bidentatus</i>
Greater Honeyguide	2			M			1	<i>Indicator indicator</i>
Yellow-footed Honeyguide	1		K				1	<i>Melignomon eisentrauti</i>
Cassin's Honeybird	3		K				1	<i>Prodotiscus insignis</i>
Fine-spotted Woodpecker	1			M			1	<i>Campethera punctuligera</i>
Little Green Woodpecker	1		K				1	<i>Campethera maculosa</i>
Buff-spotted Woodpecker	2					A	1	<i>Campethera nivosa</i>
Gabon (Melancholy) Woodpecker ²	1		K				1	<i>Dendropicus gabonensis</i>
Grey Woodpecker	3			M			1	<i>Dendropicus goertae</i>
Fire-bellied Woodpecker	3		K				1	<i>Dendropicus pyrrhogaster</i>
African Piculet	2	1h	K		O	A	1	<i>Sasia africana</i>
Rufous-sided Broadbill	2	1h	K		O		1	<i>Smithornis rufolateralis</i>
Sun Lark	1			M			3	<i>Galerida modesta</i>
Rock Martin	1					C	1	<i>Hirundo fuligula</i>
White-throated Blue Swallow	1		K				1	<i>Hirundo nigrita</i>
Barn Swallow	13						4	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Red-chested Swallow	1			>M			1	<i>Hirundo lucida</i>
Ethiopian Swallow	5		K			C	2	<i>Hirundo aethiopica</i>
Wire-tailed Swallow	4			M			2	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>
Lesser Striped Swallow	6						2	<i>Hirundo abyssinica</i>
Mosque Swallow	2		K				1	<i>Hirundo senegalensis</i>
Rufous-chested Swallow	2		K			C	1	<i>Hirundo semirufa</i>
Preuss's Cliff Swallow	3		K			C	3	<i>Hirundo preussi</i>
Fanti Saw-wing	4		K	M			1	<i>Psalidoprocne obscura</i>
Tree Pipit	1	1h		M		C	1	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>
African Pied Wagtail	11						1	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>
Yellow Wagtail	2		K			C	1	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Blue Cuckoo-shrike	2		K		O		1	<i>Coracina azurea</i>
Red-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike	1			M			1	<i>Campephaga phoenicea</i>
Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike	1		K				1	<i>Campephaga quiscalina</i>
Common Bulbul	14						3	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>
Simple Leaflove	2		K				1	<i>Chlorocichla simplex</i>
Yellow-throated Leaflove	1			M			1	<i>Chlorocichla flavicollis</i>
Swamp Palm Greenbul	3		K				1	<i>Thescelocichla leucopleura</i>
Golden Greenbul	2		K				1	<i>Calyptocichla serina</i>
Slender-billed Greenbul	5		K				2	<i>Andropadus gracilirostris</i>
Little Grey Greenbul	2		K				1	<i>Andropadus gracilis</i>
Little Greenbul	4		K			A	1	<i>Andropadus virens</i>
Cameroon Sombre Greenbul	-	1h			O		1	<i>Andropadus curvirostris</i>
Yellow-whiskered Greenbul	-	1h	K				1	<i>Andropadus latirostris</i>
Red-tailed Greenbul	2		K			A	1	<i>Criniger calurus</i>
Western Bearded Greenbul	1		K				1	<i>Criniger barbatus</i>
Grey-headed Bristlebill	-	1h				A	1	<i>Bleda canicapillus</i>
Icterine Greenbul	2		K			A	2	<i>Phyllastrephus icterinus</i>
Western Nicator	-	3h			O	A	1	<i>Nicator chloris</i>
African Thrush	5	1h					1	<i>Turdus pelios</i>
Forest Robin	1					A	1	<i>Stiphornis erythrothorax</i>
White-tailed Alethe	-	2h			O	A	1	<i>Alethe diademata</i>
White-tailed Ant Thrush	1					A	1	<i>Neocossyphus poensis</i>
Finsch's Flycatcher-Thrush	1		K				1	<i>Stizorhina finschi</i>
Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat	2	1h		M			1	<i>Cossypha niveicapilla</i>
White-crowned Robin-Chat	1			M			1	<i>Cossypha albicapilla</i>
Whinchat	1			M			1	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>
White-fronted Black Chat	1			M			1	<i>Myrmecocichla albifrons</i>
Cliff-Chat	1					C	1	<i>Myrmecocichla cinnamomeiventris</i>
African Moustached Warbler	2			M			1	<i>Melocichla mentalis</i>
Western Olivaceous Warbler	1			M			1	<i>Hippolais opaca</i>
Melodious Warbler	2			M			1	<i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>
Wood Warbler	4		K			A C	1	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>
Willow Warbler	3			M		C	1	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>

Green Hylia	5		K			A	1	<i>Hylia prasina</i>	
Rufous-crowned Eremomela	1		K				2	<i>Eremomela badiceps</i>	
Senegal Eremomela	4			M			C	1	<i>Eremomela pusilla</i>
Green Crombec	4		K			O	1	<i>Sylvietta virens</i>	
Northern Crombec	2			M			C	1	<i>Sylvietta brachyura</i>
Lemon-bellied Crombec	1		K				2	<i>Sylvietta denti</i>	
Oriole Warbler	2	1h		M			C	1	<i>Hypergerus atriceps</i>
Violet-backed Hyliota	2		K				1	<i>Hyliota violacea</i>	
Yellow-bellied Hyliota	1						C	1	<i>Hyliota flavigaster</i>
Yellow-browed Camaroptera	3	1h	K			O	1	<i>Camaroptera superciliaris</i>	
Grey-backed Camaroptera	2	2h	K	M			C	1	<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>
Kemp's Longbill	-	1h					A	1	<i>Macrosphenus kempi</i>
Grey Longbill	-	4h	K			O	A	1	<i>Macrosphenus concolor</i>
Tawny-flanked Prinia	3		K	>M			1	<i>Prinia subflava</i>	
Red-winged Warbler	1	1h		M			C	1	<i>Heliolais erythropterus</i>
Yellow-breasted Apalis	3			M			1	<i>Apalis flavida</i>	
Black-capped Apalis	-	1h					A	1	<i>Apalis nigriceps</i>
Sharpe's Apalis	2		K				A	1	<i>Apalis sharpii</i>
Zitting Cisticola	1						C	1	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
Short-winged Cisticola	2						C	1	<i>Cisticola brachypterus</i>
Whistling Cisticola	2	1h	K				A	1	<i>Cisticola lateralis</i>
Red-faced Cisticola	1	1h	K	M			1	<i>Cisticola erythroptus</i>	
Singing Cisticola	2			M			1	<i>Cisticola cantans</i>	
Croaking Cisticola	2						C	1	<i>Cisticola natalensis</i>
Northern Black Flycatcher	5			M			C	1	<i>Melaenornis edolioides</i>
Pale Flycatcher	1		K				1	<i>Melaenornis pallidus</i>	
Pied Flycatcher	3			M			1	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	
Swamp Flycatcher	1			M			1	<i>Muscicapa aquatica</i>	
Little Grey Flycatcher	1		K				1	<i>Muscicapa epulata</i>	
Dusky-blue Flycatcher	3		K				1	<i>Muscicapa comitata</i>	
Ussher's Flycatcher	2		K				1	<i>Muscicapa ussheri</i>	
Lead-coloured Flycatcher	2			M			C	1	<i>Myioparus plumbeus</i>
Fraser's Forest Flycatcher	1		K				1	<i>Fraseria ocreata</i>	
African Paradise Flycatcher	3			M			1	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	
Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher	1	5h	K			O	1	<i>Terpsiphone rufiventris</i>	
Chestnut-capped Flycatcher	1		K				1	<i>Erythrocerus mccallii</i>	
African Blue Flycatcher	1			M			1	<i>Elminia longicauda</i>	
Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher	1	1h	K			O	1	<i>Trochocercus nitens</i>	
Shrike-Flycatcher	1		K				1	<i>Megabyas flammulatus</i>	
Senegal Batis	3			M			C	1	<i>Batis senegalensis</i>
Bioko (West African) Batis ³	1						A	1	<i>Batis (poensis) occulta</i>
Common Wattle-eye	5		K	M			C	1	<i>Platysteira cyanea</i>
Chestnut Wattle-eye	3		K				A	1	<i>Platysteira castanea</i>
Blackcap Babbler	2			M			1	<i>Turdoides reinwardtii</i>	
Brown Babbler	2			M			1	<i>Turdoides plebejus</i>	
Yellow-headed Picathartes	1					O	1	<i>Picathartes gymnocephalus</i>	
White-shouldered Black Tit	3			M			C	1	<i>Parus guineensis</i>
Spotted Creeper	1			M			1	<i>Salpornis spilonotus</i>	
Tit-hylia	3		K				2	<i>Pholidornis rushiae</i>	
Yellow White-eye	1	1h	K	M			2	<i>Zosterops senegalensis</i>	
Green Sunbird	2		K				1	<i>Anthreptes rectirostris</i>	
Little Green Sunbird	1		K				1	<i>Anthreptes seimundi</i>	
Pygmy Sunbird	3			M			1	<i>Hedydipna platyura</i>	
Collared Sunbird	7						3	<i>Hedydipna collaris</i>	
Fraser's Sunbird	1					A	1	<i>Deleornis fraseri</i>	
Buff-throated Sunbird	2		K				1	<i>Chalcomitra adelberti</i>	
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	3			M			2	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>	
Olive-bellied Sunbird	2		K				1	<i>Cinnyris chloropygius</i>	
Variable Sunbird	1			M			1	<i>Cinnyris venustus</i>	
Tiny Sunbird	2		K				1	<i>Cinnyris minullus</i>	
Copper Sunbird	7						2	<i>Cinnyris cupreus</i>	
Splendid Sunbird	5			M			C	2	<i>Cinnyris coccinigastrus</i>
Beautiful Sunbird	3			M			2	<i>Cinnyris pulchellus</i>	

Superb Sunbird	2	K			1	<i>Cinnyris superbus</i>
Johanna's Sunbird	2	K			1	<i>Cinnyris johannae</i>
(Western) Olive Sunbird ⁴	2			O A	1	<i>Cyanomitra (olivacea) obscura</i>
Green-headed Sunbird	1		M		1	<i>Cyanomitra verticalis</i>
Blue-throated Brown Sunbird	3	K			1	<i>Cyanomitra cyanolaema</i>
Common Fiscal	10				3	<i>Lanius collaris</i>
Yellow-billed Shrike	8				1	<i>Corvinella corvina</i>
Red-billed Helmet-shrike	2	K		O	1	<i>Prionops caniceps</i>
Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike	2		M		1	<i>Malaconotus sulfureopectus</i>
Northern Puffback	4		M		C 1	<i>Dryoscopus gambensis</i>
Sabine's Puffback	2	K			1	<i>Dryoscopus sabinii</i>
Yellow-crowned (Common) Gonolek	6				1	<i>Laniarius barbarus</i>
Brubru	1		M		1	<i>Nilaus afer</i>
Black-crowned Tchagra	4		M		C 1	<i>Tchagra senegalus</i>
Western Black-headed Oriole	2	K		A	1	<i>Oriolus brachyrhynchus</i>
Black-winged Oriole	5	K		O	1	<i>Oriolus nigripennis</i>
African Golden Oriole	2		M		1	<i>Oriolus auratus</i>
Fork-tailed Drongo	5		M		C 1	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>
Velvet-mantled Drongo	5	K		O	1	<i>Dicrurus modestus</i>
Shining Drongo	-	1h		A	1	<i>Dicrurus atripennis</i>
Piapiac	1				C 1	<i>Ptilostomus afer</i>
Pied Crow	11				4	<i>Corvus albus</i>
Narrow-tailed Starling	2	K			3	<i>Poeoptera lugubris</i>
(Forest) Chestnut-winged Starling	1	K			1	<i>Onychognathus fulgidus</i>
Copper-tailed Glossy Starling	2	K			3	<i>Lamprotornis cupreocauda</i>
Splendid Glossy Starling	5				1	<i>Lamprotornis splendidus</i>
Purple Glossy Starling	3		M		1	<i>Lamprotornis purpureus</i>
Long-tailed Glossy Starling	1		M		1	<i>Lamprotornis caudatus</i>
Lesser Blue-eared Starling	2		M		1	<i>Lamprotornis chloropterus</i>
Violet-backed Starling	5	K	M		3	<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>
Northern Grey-headed Sparrow	13				3	<i>Passer griseus</i>
Bush Petronia	2		M		2	<i>Petronia dentata</i>
Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver	3		M		1	<i>Plocepasser superciliosus</i>
Compact Weaver	1			A	1	<i>Pachyphantes superciliosus</i>
Little Weaver	2		M		1	<i>Ploceus luteolus</i>
Orange Weaver	5	K			3	<i>Ploceus aurantius</i>
Village Weaver	11				4	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>
Black-necked Weaver	4	K	M	O	2	<i>Ploceus nigricollis</i>
Maxwell's Black Weaver	3	K		A	2	<i>Ploceus albinucha</i>
Vieillot's Black Weaver	4	K		O	2	<i>Ploceus nigerrimus</i>
Yellow-mantled Weaver	3	K		O	2	<i>Ploceus tricolor</i>
Preuss's (Golden-backed) Weaver	1	K			1	<i>Ploceus preussi</i>
Crested Malimbe	2	K		O	1	<i>Malimbus malimbicus</i>
Red-vented Malimbe	2	1h	K		1	<i>Malimbus scutatus</i>
Red-headed Malimbe	4	K			3	<i>Malimbus rubricollis</i>
Grosbeak Weaver	2	K		A	3	<i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>
Red-headed Quelea	2		M		3	<i>Quelea erythrops</i>
Black-winged Bishop	4		M	A	3	<i>Euplectes hordeaceus</i>
Yellow-crowned Bishop	1		M		1	<i>Euplectes afer</i>
Yellow-mantled Widowbird	2		M		2	<i>Euplectes macroura</i>
Red-winged Pytilia	1		M		1	<i>Pytilia phoenicoptera</i>
Grey-headed Negrofinch	7				2	<i>Nigrita canicapillus</i>
Chestnut-breasted Negrofinch	3	K			1	<i>Nigrita bicolor</i>
White-breasted Negrofinch	1	K			1	<i>Nigrita fusconotus</i>
Western Bluebill	1	K			1	<i>Spermophaga haematina</i>
Orange-cheeked Waxbill	6				3	<i>Estrilda melpoda</i>
Lavender Waxbill	1		M		1	<i>Estrilda caerulescens</i>
Black-rumped Waxbill	1				C 2	<i>Estrilda troglodytes</i>
Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu	3		M		3	<i>Uraeginthus bengalus</i>
Bar-breasted Firefinch	4		M		C 3	<i>Lagonosticta rufopicta</i>
Red-billed Firefinch	3	K	M		2	<i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>
Black-faced Firefinch	1		M		1	<i>Lagonosticta larvata</i>
Bronze Mannikin	11				3	<i>Spermestes cucullatus</i>

Black-and-White Mannikin	3	K	A	2	<i>Spermestes bicolor</i>
Pin-tailed Whydah	6			3	<i>Vidua macroura</i>
Wilson's Indigobird	2	M		2	<i>Vidua wilsoni</i>
Yellow-fronted Canary	3	M		2	<i>Serinus mozambicus</i>
Cinnamon-breasted Rock-bunting	2	M		2	<i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>

Taxonomic notes: A few updates (refs: *The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World*, 6th ed., plus updates; Ian Sinclair, Sasol Guide to *Birds of Southern Africa*, 3rd ed.) are listed below.

- 1 Yellow-billed Kites, resident in Africa, are now usually split from the migratory Black Kite (e.g. Sinclair).
- 2 Gabon Woodpecker is likely to be split into 2 species as follows: Gabon (*D. gabonensis*) east of the Dahomey Gap; and Melancholy (*D. lugubris*) west of the Gap and including Ghana. The two forms are distinct in appearance.
- 3 Clements splits West African Batis, *B. occulta*, from the form resident on Fernando Po Island, *B. poensis*.
- 4 According to Clements, Olive Sunbirds in Ghana are now split as Western Olive Sunbird, *C. obscura*.

MAMMALS

Striped Ground Squirrel	2	K	M		1	<i>Xerus erythropus</i>
Gambian Sun Squirrel	3	K		O	1	<i>Heliosciurus gambianus</i>
Kintampo Rope Squirrel	2		M		1	<i>Protoxerus stangeri</i>
Green Bush Squirrel	1	K			1	<i>Paraxerus poensis</i>
Greater (Marsh) Cane Rat	1		M		1	<i>Thryonomys swinderianus</i>
Yellow-winged Bat	1		M		2	<i>Lavia frons</i>
Olive Baboon	5		M		C 3	<i>Papio anubis</i>
Patas Monkey	3		M		1	<i>Cercopithecus patas</i>
Green (Callithrix) Monkey	2		M		C 1	<i>Chlorocebus sabaeus</i>
Warthog	5		M		2	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>
Bushbuck	4		M		2	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>
Kob	5		M		4	<i>Kobus kob</i>
Waterbuck	1		M		1	<i>Kobus ellipsyprimnus</i>
Roan Antelope	1		M		3	<i>Hippotragus equinus</i>
Red-flanked Duiker	1		M		1	<i>Cephalophus rufilatus</i>
African Savanna Elephant	1		M		2	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>
Tree Hyrax	-	1h	K		-	<i>Dendrohyrax dorsalis</i>

In addition, the following species were seen being sold for bushmeat: Giant Pouched Rat (*Cricetomys gambianus*), Greater Cane Rat (*see above*), Maxwell's Duiker (*Cephalophus maxwellii*), and Brush-tailed Porcupine (*Atherurus africanus*).

OTHER ANIMALS included Green Tree Viper and Agama Lizard

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



Four-banded Sandgrouse and chick



Orange Weaver



Woodland Kingfisher



Mole Waterhole



Widespread Forester



African Map



Kakum Walkway



Grasshopper

Front Cover: Yellow-headed Picathartes

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