

ORNITHOLIDAYS TOUR TO GHANA
Birding the Gold Coast

09 – 23 March 2013



Leaders: Simon Boyes and Robert Ntakor

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A Personal Diary

Saturday, 9 March

Six of us meet up in Heathrow Terminal 5 for the midday British Airways flight to Accra, where in the evening we join up with Alec, Ann and Margaret, who have used the KLM flight. The two flights arrive within 40 minutes of each other. Immigration is slow, but money-changing (to cedis, at 2.85 to the £) is quick at the Forex office by the carousels. Eventually we are greeted by Andrew, our assistant guide-to-be, and Appiah our driver. Our main man Robert has just finished a tour and is taking a short rest before the next one starts. After 40 minutes' drive we arrive at our hotel, and are soon catching up on rest.

Sunday, 10 March

Robert joins us for breakfast at 0700, and we find a few interesting birds in the hotel garden before we set out: such as Brown Babbler, Broad-billed Roller, Copper Sunbird and a juvenile Levillant's Cuckoo. Our first stop is the coastal Sakumona Lagoon, where a great variety of wetland species has us looking in all directions. There are Black Egrets to compare with Western Reef Egrets, Little Stints and Curlew Sandpipers among the Black-winged Stilts and Common Greenshanks, and a united flock of White-faced Whistling Duck. Collared Pratincoles and Kittlitz's Plovers appear as we walk away from the main road, and along the western shore of the lagoon. Glossy Ibis and Purple Swamphen appear too, among a great gathering of African Jacanas and Squacco Herons. We finish with Senegal Thick-knee and Senegal Eremomela in a run-down holiday resort where Appiah has parked.

Now we drive west through the centre of Accra, stopping to admire a coffin shop where imaginative carpenters construct carved and painted coffins to order: such as eagle, elephant, giant mobile phone and Lucozade bottle! Busy intersections are especially colourful as hawkers selling anything and everything add to the throng. Lunch is a buffet at Hut d'Eric, a restaurant at Winneba. Woodland Kingfisher, Green Woodhoopoe and colourful *Agama* lizards entertain us as we eat. In the heat of the afternoon, we explore the savanna habitat nearby, luckily in a pleasant breeze off the sea. Here the pick of the birds are Black-bellied Bustards (one in stately display flight), Lesser Black-winged Lapwings with two well-grown chicks, Red-winged Warbler and Yellow-crowned Gonolek.

Continuing west towards Kakum, we pass Cape Coast and turn inland. Our base for the next five nights is a newly built lodge at Jukwa with air-conditioned rooms and a swimming pool (even if it is rather green). We have time to relax and unpack before sundown. Checklist and a tasty dinner follow.

Monday, 11 March

Breakfast is at 0500: early up and early to bed will be a theme of the tour. Forty minutes later we set off for the Kakum National Park. As soon as we enter the park, we come to the car-park of the visitor centre where the famous canopy walkway was built in 1994. We climb on foot up a well-trodden path to the first bridge, as the sun rises over the forest. The bridges link the six platforms, each built around the trunk of a forest giant, with just enough room for us and our scopes. We start on Platform 3, which is about 40m off the ground. Fire-bellied Woodpeckers start us off, drumming and inspecting a dead tree. Velvet-mantled Drongo and Yellow-mantled Weaver become recurring themes as they are visible for much of our visit. We watch Preuss's Weaver, Little Green Woodpecker, Golden Greenbul and Ussher's Flycatcher, conveniently appearing one after another. Two Palm-nut Vultures flap over the canopy. Speckled Tinkerbird, Black Dwarf Hornbill, Blue-breasted Kingfisher and Forest Chestnut-winged Starling come next. A male Klaas's Cuckoo poses for photographs; and Sabine's Spinetails appear as we move on to Platform 5.

Here Chestnut-capped Flycatchers appear below us, and a pair of Brown-cheeked Hornbills pause on a dead tree-top. All the while Robert is using his great knowledge of calls acquired while a ranger here for 14 years. Andrew helps out too, finding birds, identifying butterflies, carrying a scope, and providing snacks and extra

water. We finish the morning walking a trail where we come across a quartet of fine Ghana species: Fraser's Eagle Owl, Rufous-sided Broadbill, Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, and Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill. The owl is more rufous around the head than the field guide suggests, as it faces us with ear-tufts standing erect. The broadbill treats us to a lengthy display, always returning to the same perch after a short circular flight. Green Hylia is the last bird before we return to the visitor centre and gift shop.

After lunch and siesta, we return to the visitor centre, where a group of four Black Bee-eaters steal the afternoon show. They pose well for the photographers, who wonder why they are given such a mundane name. Surely sapphire-spangled turquoise-rumped red-throated bee-eater would be more appropriate? The supporting cast along the trails is less charismatic, but each has its own charm: Grey-throated Flycatcher, Yellow-browed Camaroptera, Kemp's Longbill and Sharpe's Apalis. In the mammal department, all we can manage is two squirrel species: Green Bush and Gambian Sun. We return to base delighted with our first Kakum outings.

Tuesday, 12 March

After breakfast, we drive to the original national park headquarters at Antwikwa. The first hour is misty, and cooler than usual, but the sun gradually asserts authority. We only walk a few hundred metres in three hours, including an hour standing in the same spot: not intentionally, but because the succession of different birds detains us there. The habitat is forest edge, with mixed orchards of citrus, cocoa, oil-palm and banana. Sunbirds are a feature, with Superb, Green, Johanna's, Buff-throated, Olive and Blue-throated Brown all parading past us. Weavers are mostly Village, with a few Vieillot's Black and Black-necked. The central focus of the spot where we stand is a particular tree (*Astonia*) with open canopy that quickly becomes 'the malimbe tree' as first Crested and later Red-vented Malimbés appear there. It also attracts Lead-coloured and Black-and-White Flycatchers, and Rufous-crowned Eremomela. In neighbouring trees are four species of tinkerbirds, and both Hairy-breasted and Bristle-nosed Barbets. A Gabon Woodpecker of the distinct local subspecies appears here too: it is often split as a separate species, and named Melancholy. We also find Lemon-bellied and Green Crombecs, Dusky-blue Flycatcher, Black-winged Oriole and Simple Leaflove before continuing further. At the point where we turn round, an aggressive Speckled Tinkerbird in a fruiting bush attempts to evict any visiting sunbird, Tit-hylia, or White-breasted Negrofinch that dares settle. Cassin's Hawk-Eagle and Red-necked Buzzard also appear here. Margaret especially enjoys photographing the three bee-eater species here: Black, Rosy and White-throated.

After a wonderful three hours, in which the butterflies are as photogenic as the birds, we leave Antwikwa and head north to Twifo Praso. We stop to watch and photograph a dense colony of Preuss's Cliff Swallows nesting in a culvert; Little Bee-eaters are nesting in a nearby bank. Just north of the bustling market town, we stop on the bridge over the River Pra, which is the colour of pale milky coffee. Here we are delighted by White-throated Blue Swallows, a White-headed Lapwing, and (best of all) a family of Rock Pratincoles with two small chicks. They must have nested on the small rock in mid-stream where we find them, since the chicks are only half-grown and not yet ready to fly. We head back to base for a late lunch, stopping for bananas on the way and passing a Lizard Buzzard.

Lunch and siesta are followed by a short drive to Abrafo, the last village before the national park begins. Taking a track to the west, we soon reach forest edge. The shady walk starts quietly, as afternoon tropical walks often do with the heat only slowly subsiding. Starting with a Chestnut Wattle-eye and a Giant Forest Squirrel, activity picks up as we reach a clearing surrounded by fine old forest trees. Piping Hornbills utter cackling calls but can't be tempted into view. However, Red-headed Malimbe, Blue-throated Roller, Forest Wood-hoopoe, Copper-tailed Starlings and Red-fronted Parrot all appear in succession. Hornbills here are Brown-cheeked and White-crested. A feisty Velvet-mantled Drongo mobs an African Harrier-Hawk, attacking wings and tail.

Wednesday, 13 March

Breakfast features porridge and bananas as well as eggs, sausages and toast. Leaving at 0600, we return to the Abrafo track we took yesterday afternoon, but spend the first half of the trip along the cultivated section before the forest. Robert calls this habitat farmbrush. We start with some tricky scrub birding by the roadside where Puvél's Illadopsis (a skulking babbler), Red-cheeked Wattle-eye, Sooty Boubou, Grey-headed Bristlebill, Blue-billed Malimbe and Grey Longbill are all local residents. Not everyone sees them all well, since they are shy and there are many hiding places. An African Emerald Cuckoo comes to our rescue with

long scope views in the tree above us. African Pygmy Kingfishers are nesting in the banks along the road. Next come Western Bluebills, Black-and-White Mannikins and Vieillot's Barbets. A Grey Kestrel shares airspace with Lesser Striped Swallows. A Spotted Flycatcher, here for the winter, reminds us of home (although it is currently minus 2°C there).

We pause at a primary school which Robert's company supports: we have brought pencils, crayons and pens for pupils and teachers. Entering the forest, we spend time on elusive canopy birds such as Yellow-whiskered Greenbul, Sabine's Puffback and Cassin's Honeybird. Next come easier views of White-headed Wood-hoopoe. In the clearing the morning birds are quite different from those we found last evening. Yellow-spotted Barbet, Yellow-billed Turaco and Blue Cuckooshrike all surrender to our optical firepower. Robert somehow finds a Bioko Batis atop a forest giant, while Fanti and Square-tailed Saw-wings fly over together. A Crowned Eagle utters its far-carrying call as it displays above the forest, and Piping Hornbills watch us from a treetop. On the walk back, a mixed flock includes Shining Drongo and Icterine Greenbul, but other members such as Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher are only heard. Last bird of note is a Finsch's Flycatcher Thrush, which considerably stays on the same perch while we take turns at the scope.

Lunch includes an excellent bean stew, much enjoyed by us and our local staff friends. During siesta, ominous claps of thunder resound, but we stay dry. The afternoon walk, east of Abrafo village on a quiet road, is in an area that has had rain today. Rufous-chested Swallows are busy collecting mud from the road, and Vieillot's Black Weavers are building new nests. The village itself has a fine pair of Lanner Falcons, seen both perched and in flight. Further on, mixed seedeaters are feeding together in the corner of a field: Black-and-White and Bronze Mannikins, Orange-cheeked Waxbills, Red-headed Queleas and Pin-tailed Whydahs. A dead tree has both Brown-crowned Tchagra and Red-faced Cisticola perched; next come Common Wattle-eye and Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher. A Black-bellied Seedcracker causes excitement, but fails to stay perched for all to see well. A dark European Honey-buzzard with steely yellow eye, here for the winter, passes overhead. We finish with Buff-spotted Woodpecker and Blue-headed Coucal, which makes a good comparison with the mating Senegal Coucals we watched earlier.

We return to base after another fine, bird-filled day. It has been especially relaxing with the very short journeys involved.

Thursday, 14 March

Today we turn right out of the hotel gate for a change, and head for the coast. Splendid Glossy Starlings, Woodland Kingfishers and Mosque Swallows appear along the road. Walking in the coastal savannah at Brenu Akyinim, we find birds as diverse as Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Mottled Spinetail, Western Grey Plantain-eater, Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike and (briefly) Violet Turaco. Cisticolas are Singing and Short-winged, while both Tchagras (Brown-crowned and Black-crowned) show well. A third, Marsh Tchagra, is also here but heard only. Robert skilfully entices a skulking Blue-billed Firefinch into view with judicious use of playback. Flocks of Black-rumped Waxbills are busy feeding on roadside grass seeds.

In the mid-morning we need a break from the sun, and drive east to Cape Coast Castle, where we spend an hour looking round the fortress that was the centre of the slave-shipping trade. Guided by Oscar, 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. On the beach we watch fishermen working at their nets by their small wooden boats. In the courtyard of the castle, Ethiopian Swallows are nesting. One poses for photos at point-blank range on an open shutter. We see the plaque put up after the visit of President Obama and his wife in July 2009. The experience of imagining the horrors that took place here is sobering, but it is an important part of our itinerary.

A superb lunch is served for us next door in a breezy restaurant that overlooks the breaking surf and the Gulf of Guinea beyond. Mark, our ground agent, comes to meet us and kindly settles our drinks bill. Royal and Sandwich Terns fly west at regular intervals: the Royal looking noticeably larger and heavier in flight. On the way back to our lodge inland, we stop to replenish fruit supplies for the days ahead: 40 large bananas (a mere 10 cedis), pineapples and mangoes fill up spaces in the minibus. Robert buys them all for us: he won't let anyone contribute. Orange Weavers make a good photo stop as they build their nests at a roadside lake. Back at base, we stop for an hour's siesta, during which a male Green-headed Sunbird chases a Copper Sunbird off the nectar-rich flowers of a particular palm by the swimming pool.

At 1545 we set off again for our third and final visit to Abrafo forest; but on the way we discover that recent rain has made the dirt road impassable – amazingly we have missed getting wet again. So Plan B is a walk along the road in the short section where good forest exists on both sides. Here we come across Little Green, Blue-throated Brown and Olive Sunbirds, and an adult Rufous-crowned Eremomela preening its fledged chick. We have views of Black-winged Oriole, Blue-throated Roller, Little Grey and Spotted Greenbuls, and Chestnut-breasted Negrofinch. A flock of Maxwell's Black Weavers fly into roost close to the national park's administration block. While Barn Swallows head steadily north, the Common Swifts show no signs of migration, feeding above the canopy and rarely out of sight. We return for a slightly earlier checklist and dinner as we have a long day tomorrow....

Friday, 15 March

After an early breakfast, we start our walk at Aboabo (the northern end of Kakum National Park) at seven. If Antwikwa is sunbird city and Abrafo a mecca for greenbuls (among much else), I think of Aboabo as malimbe-land: there are Crested and Red-headed seen regularly, and one Blue-billed too. As we walk along the quiet, sandy road, we come across a steady stream of interesting birds, from Tit-hylia and Blue Cuckooshrike to Black Dwarf Hornbill. Robert puts us onto a diminutive male African Piculet at the exact spot where we found one three years ago. Five Red-fronted Parrots fly over, calling, and both Black and Sabine's Spinetails join the parade of swifts and swallows overhead. A Yellow-billed Barbet poses for the scopes: a large, distinctive species. Locally grown ripe bananas provide a welcome mid-morning snack.

Continuing east along a dirt road, we stop for Green-backed Heron, Black Bee-eater, and Speckled Tinkerbirds at a nest. Lunch is a fine buffet in a new air-conditioned restaurant at Assin Fossu, whose garden has a nesting African Jacana on a lily-pond. The large eggs have exquisite scribbling markings; but we can't see how many: is this the female still laying, or the male who always takes over all nesting duties when the complete clutch of four is laid? Now we head north, for our rendezvous with the birds of the tour, the Yellow-headed Picathartes.

Luckily they do not let us down. We arrive in the small village where a few trained locals keep an eye on the nesting colony and act as local guides. We stop briefly for Didric Cuckoo and Chestnut Wattle-eye, and hear Yellow-throated and Yellow-rumped Tinkerbirds, Emerald, Klaas's and Red-chested Cuckoos, Grey Longbill and White-tailed Alethe. After an hour's walk, first through cocoa plantations and soon into forest, we arrive at the benches that our agents have placed for watching the rockfowl (their other name) as they arrive at their mud-nests. At 1600, the first two appear on top of the outcrop ahead of us, from where they launch themselves downwards onto vines. Moving in large bouncing hops, they arrive on their favourite rock ledge in front of their nests, which resemble overgrown Barn Swallow nests. After waiting almost an hour with no further activity, one of the pair returns for another visit to the ledge, where Margaret takes a portrait shot from 15m away. 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 the French ornithologist René 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 and walls of caves or rock overhangs. They are rarely seen away from their nests, as they depart silently at the slightest sound of disturbance. Robert has never heard one make any sound. Even in the non-breeding season in March, they return to their nests each night to roost. 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.

Suddenly the sky darkens, and as we head back we are instantly drenched by a tropical thunderstorm. Five of us slip over, making us a sight for the villagers to laugh at as we board the bus! Soaked but happy, we mull over the Picathartes experience during the drive to Kumasi. We are glad of hot showers before a late dinner.

Saturday, 16 March

Breakfast is at the leisurely hour of seven, and we leave soon after eight, with all our wet boots from yesterday's hike tied onto the roof-rack to dry in the sun. Around the hotel are African Pygmy Kingfisher, and Copper, Green-headed and Olive-bellied Sunbirds. It takes an hour to clear the suburbs of Kumasi, Ghana's second city. Now Appiah puts his foot down, as we have 420 km to cover today. Lunch is at

Kintampo, but our usual restaurant near the waterfall is closed for renovation. The alternative we find – at a recently constructed hotel - is delightful but of course it takes time as we have not been able to book in advance. After a longer break than intended, we continue, well fed on rice, red snapper and tropical fruits.

After crossing the Volta River, the landscape looks drier and less fertile. Cattle, sheep and goats become more numerous; we have left behind the oil-palm, cocoa and maize. We notice huge quantities of charcoal for sale by the road: a slow-fire method of creating quick-fire degradation of habitat. New birds appear as we approach Mole: Grasshopper Buzzard and a lone Dark Chanting Goshawk, Piapiac and Speckled Pigeon, and Hamerkop. At a puddle in the road, Fork-tailed Drongos are drinking with Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu. Bush Petronias and Bruce's Green Pigeons are in the same spot. We enter the national park just beyond the village of Larabanga, and arrive at our new home in the Mole Motel just after dark. The buffet dinner on the terrace is delicious, and afterwards we complete two days of checklist. Robert outlines our plans for tomorrow.

Sunday, 17 March

Miles disturbs a Greyish Eagle Owl on his way to our 0530 breakfast, but a later search fails to relocate it. Warthogs have brought their young onto the grass outside our rooms. We set off in the vehicle to explore the Samole Loop before the heat builds up. On board is armed ranger Moses, in the unlikely event of meeting a rogue Elephant. Margaret gets us going with a covey of Stone Partridge right by the track. With the adults are two day-old chicks: tiny balls of dark brown cotton-wool on legs. Our first walk, to a small waterhole, reveals that Red-throated Bee-eaters and Vinaceous Doves are common, and that Beautiful Sunbird is the most numerous of its family here. Flocks of mixed seedeaters include Pin-tailed Whydahs, Red-headed and Red-billed Queleas, Wilson's Indigobirds, Bar-breasted and Red-billed Firefinches, and Orange-cheeked Waxbills. White-shouldered Black Tit, Oriole Warbler and Least Honeyguide appear as we walk. At the waterhole, we stand and watch as birds come and go: Snowy-crowned Robin Chat, Bronze-tailed Glossy Starling, Levillant's Cuckoo, Greater Honeyguide, Blue-breasted Kingfisher, Senegal Parrot, and Violet-backed Starling, to name just a few. African Golden Oriole and Northern Puffback are here too. Bateleurs fly over, and later a kettle of soaring vultures include a few African White-backed. After seeing many domestic Helmeted Guineafowl in the villages yesterday, we watch the wild versions, both scuttling through the bush and flying.

A break in the coach gives a chance to cool down and rehydrate. Abyssinian Roller and Chestnut-crowned Sparrow Weaver appear along this stretch. Next we visit a raised hide overlooking the same waterhole that we can see from the lodge. Here the highlight is watching ten bull Elephants, with some youngsters among them: five are pale mud-colour, standing on the bank and adding more mud with their trunks. The other five are wallowing and cavorting in the deepest part of the pond. Two Nile Crocodiles share their bath-water, but at a respectful distance. Birds here include Grey-headed Kingfisher, Hadada Ibis, African Wattled Lapwing, and an elusive Black Crake. The bushes around us attract Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike, and Little Weaver. On the way back to the lodge, we watch a male Saddle-billed Stork (males have dark eyes), as we complete the loop.

Miles and I sample the delights of the fine swimming pool just below our dining terrace. Lunch is an extensive buffet, including vegetable soup, roast guinea fowl, kebabs, vegetable stew, rice and even tuna sandwiches. To follow are generous amounts of the most juicy and sweet fresh pineapple. Alec and Ann join the swimming club during the siesta; and at 1600 we set off again. Highlights of the trip to Brugbani Forest are the Patas Monkeys and Waterbuck that start us off; the Sun Lark, Abyssinian Roller and Forbes's Plover in an open gravelly area; and a waterhole as dusk approaches where we watch a lone Northern Carmine Bee-eater, Long-tailed Glossy Starlings, and fly-by views of Spotted Thick-knee and a female Standard-winged Nightjar. The crescent moon is close to Jupiter, with two moons of its own visible in the scopes. On the drive back, two nightjars of two different species – Long-tailed and Plain – sit on the road together.

Dinner is set out for us tonight under the stars by the swimming pool – cooler than last night's on the raised terrace, but still 31°C from start to finish!

Monday, 18 March

We spend two hours by the Mole River at Mognori, on the eastern edge of the national park. Beautiful and Scarlet-chested Sunbirds are joined by a female Pygmy Sunbird. Square-tailed Drongo, Red-headed

Lovebird, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird and African Blue Flycatcher are all new. The abundant Red-throated Bee-eaters perch in the trees all around, while a flock of European Bee-eaters pause on their northbound migration, hawking insects overhead. Five kingfisher species appear at the bridge: Pygmy and Malachite, Grey-headed, Blue-breasted and Giant. A shy White-crowned Robin Chat finally gives good views to all, as does a Black Crake feeding along the river bank. Eagles are represented by Bateleur and Wahlberg's.

We stop briefly at the Mognori Primary School and hand over more supplies we have brought. The teachers accept them gratefully, and we meet a few of the 115 children. Unfortunately the school seems very short of teaching materials. Back at base, we spend an hour on the terrace, looking down on the waterhole below, where the Elephants were bathing yesterday. Now they are wallowing in a closer pool. The bank immediately below us produces Northern Puffback, Northern Crombec, Grey-backed Camaroptera and a pair of Familiar Chats. A touch of Europe is provided by Melodious Warbler and Pied Flycatcher below us, and a few Common House Martins flying at eye-level.

Lunch is another fine and varied buffet, with an excellent carrot soup to start. Light rain falls during siesta, but our afternoon walk near the salt-lick on the Samole Loop stays dry, despite thunder rattling around. Double-spurred Francolin and Stone Partridge represent the gamebirds, while bee-eaters and rollers are again conspicuous. Lavender Waxbill and Red-winged Pytilia are both new: sharing a colour scheme but nevertheless very different in detail. A Pearl-spotted Owlet poses for the scopes in an open canopy, where it is harassed by Beautiful Sunbirds and Senegal Eremomelas. There are Green Wood-hoopoes and a Violet Turaco, an African Cuckoo (singing a repeated *oo-cuck*) and Bruce's Green Pigeons. Two that only show themselves briefly are African Moustached Warbler and Black-faced Firefinch. Violet-backed Starlings and Greater Honeyguide perch in the trees at the salt-lick, where many Four-banded Sandgrouse come in for dust-bathing and drinking in the half-light at 1825. Robert's final coup is to find us an African Scops Owl, well illuminated in his torch and magnified in the scope, before we head back to dinner. Today has been filled with good birds, and especially relaxing too.

Tuesday, 19 March

Breakfast at our usual 0530 is followed by a drive round the Office Loop. After heavy rain last night, the morning is cooler and fresher than previous ones. Red-necked Buzzard and Palm-nut Vulture look wet and bedraggled in the treetops. Double-spurred Francolin and Stone Partridge are busy feeding in the newly softened earth. Spring is in the air too, as African Cuckoo Hawks chase each other in display flight, and Blue-bellied Rollers perform rolling courtship aerobatics. African Grey and Northern Red-billed Hornbills make regular appearances; while one of many Senegal Parrots escapes with its life as a Shikra calls off the chase. There's a succession of new birds during our morning ramble: Rufous Cisticola, Senegal Batis, Striped Kingfisher, Rufous-crowned Roller, and Red-headed Weaver. A White-throated Francolin pauses as it crosses the track near us, and Vieillot's Barbets duet vigorously through closed bills. We have photographable Lizard Buzzard, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater and Woolly-necked Storks. As the air warms, five Bateleur soar together: most of those we have seen here are immature. Above all, the morning belongs to the buntings: as Brown-rumped, Cabanis', and Cinnamon-breasted Rock all show up.

During siesta, a flock of 60 Grasshopper Buzzards soar high over the motel, and head north. They are non-breeding visitors here, and last night's rain was a signal for them to head back to breeding grounds in the Sahel zone, for example in Burkina Faso and Mali. The afternoon drive starts with Levillant's Cuckoo and African Golden Oriole. Ants and termites are hatching everywhere, providing a feast (in one spot) for Pygmy and Scarlet-chested Sunbirds, Pale and Pied Flycatchers, Yellow White-eye, Yellow-fronted Canary, and Senegal Eremomela. All these are fly-catching the winged insects, but a Violet-backed Starling just stays perched on a tree-top, finding a swarm to feed on without moving anywhere. The Pygmy Sunbird is a fine long-tailed male. Next come a further group of Grasshopper Buzzards feeding alongside us as the termites emerge from the ground. So intent on its banquet, one flies to within four metres of the coach, offering itself to the photographers. Further on are Black Scimitarbill (formerly called Black Wood-hoopoe) and a flock of White Helmet Shrikes. As dusk falls we visit the old airstrip, which hasn't been used for planes for years. A Violet Turaco flies across, and several more Grasshopper Buzzards are flying in to roost. The day total for these fine raptors must be about 130.

The day's highlight is still to come. At 1830, in the half-light, two male Standard-winged Nightjars appear on the tarmac in front of us, both rising into display flight. They hold the two vanes of their primaries above

them, and fly round as if carrying two flags waving above. A third appears too, and Robert spots a female. Amazing sight: as unlikely as any bird of paradise! For good measure a Black Cuckoo can be scoped too, before darkness falls. We head back to base happy with another day of great wildlife.

Wednesday, 20 March

We enjoy a later breakfast as it gets light. A short session on the viewing platform reveals distant Waterbuck and Kob, African Wattled Lapwing and Intermediate Egret below us; while on the bank around us are feeding parties of Red-cheeked Cordon-bleus, Little Weavers, and a Familiar Chat gathering nesting material. A lone Callithrix Monkey (the local form of vervet) sits in a tree watching us. A Scarlet-chested Sunbird adds spiders' webs to a domed nest in razor wire, designed to stop monkeys destroying the satellite dish.

Today is mostly a travel day as we head back to Kumasi. We stop for Rufous-crowned Roller, Violet Turaco, and our one and only Bearded Barbet. Raptors include Dark Chanting Goshawk and Beaudouin's Snake Eagle. A good leg-stretch at Kintampo Falls includes the 152 steps down and up to view the cataract. Lunch is at the newly built hotel where we stopped on Saturday. This time Joy and her staff are expecting us and provide a splendid meal.

Robert tells us about a new site for Blue-headed Bee-eater which we try in late afternoon. Andrew has been here researching butterflies, but the site is new to Robert. It is called Oपुरo Forest, which means squirrel. We find no squirrels, but the beautiful Blue-headed Bee-eater doesn't keep us waiting long. Robert inevitably finds it first, as it perches on a vine, pumping its tail slowly up and down. This is a small and especially attractive member of the family. There are also views of Black Cuckoo, African Pygmy Kingfisher, African Cuckoo-Hawk, and Black-winged Oriole. A Western Bearded Greenbul and a distant Afep Pigeon remain heard only.

Now we make all speed to Kumasi, entering the city at 1830. An hour later, after some entanglement with rush-hour, we arrive at the hotel, where we have the same rooms as before.

Thursday, 21 March

At sunrise we are stepping out of the coach at Bobiri, a nature reserve famous for butterflies, just east of Kumasi. Old friends from Kakum reappear, such as Yellow-mantled Weaver, African Pied Hornbill, Red-headed Malimbe and Velvet-mantled Drongo. An African Hobby flies over: a prelude to further raptor excitement to come. Johanna's Sunbird, Chestnut-capped Flycatcher and Green Hylia all turn up, and a Lemon-bellied Crombec builds a nest above the track. Andrew steps in with a great sighting of a male Narina's Trogon, which has been singing for a while unseen. Preuss's Weaver inspects branches in the tall trees above us. Robert alerts us to a Congo Serpent Eagle perched: the scopes are useful for a few moments before it disappears. But the show-stopper is a Long-tailed Hawk, which perches in full view, for many long looks in the scopes. The grey head (with steely yellow eye) contrasts with chestnut underparts, and long, patterned black and white tail.

Now we split into two groups for the final hour. Robert finds us three Black Cuckoos, and a flock of 50 or more Magpie Mannikins feeding on the seeds of the giant bamboo. A European Honey-buzzard drifts aimlessly over and back again. The last two birds are Western Black-headed Oriole (surprisingly our first) and a seldom seen Willcock's Honeyguide. Meanwhile Andrew has a following of butterfly-photographers. There are some magnificent subjects, such as Long-tailed Striped Swordtail, Ussher's Palla, and the gorgeous Broad-banded Green Swallowtail. Passers-by disturb clouds of small butterflies such as various species of babul blues, as they pass the puddles on the track.

We leave Bobiri – a totally different experience from three years ago, when a thick haze kept bird activity low – and head towards Accra. Along the main road, Cane Rats are offered for sale – both alive, and already cooked as bush-meat. Lunch and siesta are at a restaurant in Bunso, where we have pre-ordered our meals. At 1530 we set out again, for our first exploration of the Atewa foothills. Under stormy skies, we start along the track that we will climb tomorrow. We have just found Splendid Glossy Starlings, a Klaas's Cuckoo, and a Buff-throated Sunbird, when the humidity and high temperature suddenly give way to a cool wind. We are just back in the coach in time to avoid an impressive tropical storm.

An hour's drive now takes us to our comfortable hotel in Koforidua, which is grander and with more business clientele than we have been used to.

Friday, 22 March

Breakfast is on the way to Atewa, at yesterday's lunch place in Bunso. Soon we are wandering up the track that we had to abandon too early yesterday. Lesser Striped Swallows are busy collecting fresh mud for their nests. As farmland becomes forest, we pick up birds such as Magpie Mannikin, Superb Sunbird, Grey Longbill, and Dusky-blue Flycatcher. A Western Nicator shows off its wing spots to some of us, but such is the nature of tropical forest birding that not everyone sees everything. Easier to watch are the White-throated Bee-eaters and African Harrier-Hawk, which are in no hurry to hide. Three of the malimbos show up: Crested and Blue-billed low in vine-tangles, and Red-headed in the canopy. Two species are new to us: a superb (and rare) Yellow-throated Cuckoo which Trevor spots, and Fraser's Forest Flycatcher, chasing off a Levaillant's Cuckoo. Until two years ago, it was possible to drive up to the Atewa ridge (at 600m) in jeeps, but this option is no longer available: the forest gate is now padlocked for vehicles. Luckily on Wednesday we saw the Blue-headed Bee-eater, which is the star of the Atewa forest. It would need a walk of 5.6 km, climbing 300m, to reach the ridge. Time dictates that we must turn round at the lowest spot where Robert has ever found it, as we have a plane to catch this evening!

We pass a magnificent roost of Straw-coloured Fruit Bats on the way, with hundreds still flying round in the middle of the day. Soon we are back at our base in Koforidua, cleaning the mud from our boots, showering and repacking before a tasty buffet lunch. The journey to Accra Airport takes less than two hours, and now we make our base at a breezy outdoor restaurant, for drinks and a final checklist. A Woodland Kingfisher flies onto the wires, demanding inclusion in the list. At our final meal, we make presentations to Robert, Appiah and Andrew for all they have done to make the tour such a success. There is a round of drinks courtesy of Ornitholidays. Appiah drives us the last few metres round to the departures area, ending our 2,300 km safari. We say our fond farewells, and check in for our flights to London or Amsterdam. Both flights are on time.

Friday, 22 March

The London flight arrives at a wintry Heathrow at 0530. We say our final farewells by the carousels, and disperse to various homes, driving in snow in some cases. A dramatic example of climate change!

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. Andrew assisted him in the field constantly, carrying a scope and heavy bottles of water to keep us hydrated. His knowledge of butterflies was also much appreciated. Many thanks to Appiah for safe driving and frequent luggage-loading. 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 sometimes humid climate. I hope we may meet up on another Ornitholiday again soon. Thanks also to Trevor and Margaret Bonhan, Howard and Mary Armson, Margaret Hosking, Alec Crawford and Miles Roberts for the photographs that illustrate this report.

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April 2013

Itinerary & Weather

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

- 09 Mar Arrive Accra 2040. Tena.
Dry, 25°C (77°F)
- 10 Mar Sakumona Lagoon. Winneba Plains. Jukwa.
Dry, sunny late pm. 25-32°C(77-90°F)
- 11 Mar Kakum N.P, including Canopy Walkway.
Dry, sunny, 25-35°C (77-95°F)
- 12 Mar Kakum: Antwikwa & Twifo Praso (a.m); Abrafo (forest to W) pm.
Misty early; sunny, 24-35°C (75-95°F)
- 13 Mar Kakum: Abrafo (farmbush & forest to W) a.m; (farmbush to E) p.m.
Dry, some sun, distant thunder. 25-34°C (77-94°F)
- 14 Mar Brenu Savanna & Cape Coast Castle a.m; Kakum NP pm.
Dry, sunny, 24-34°C (75-94°F)
- 15 Mar Kakum to Kumasi, via Aboabo, Assin Fossu and Picathartes site.
Sunny until 1700, then tropical storm. 24-35°C (75-95°F)
- 16 Mar Kumasi to Mole N.P. via Kintampo. Sunny, 22-35°C (72-95°F)
- 17 Mar Mole NP: Samole Loop a.m; Brugbani pm.
Sunny, 27-36°C (81-97°F)
- 18 Mar Mole NP: Mognori a.m; salt-lick on Samole Loop pm.
Dry, mostly sunny (but thunder threatening), 27-36°C (81-97°F)
- 19 Mar Mole NP: Office Loop a.m; Mognori Road & airstrip pm.
Overnight rain, then sunny, 23-33°C (73-91°F)
- 20 Mar Mole to Kumasi via Kintampo and Opuro Forest.
Sunny, 27-36°C (81-97°F)
- 21 Mar Kumasi to Koforidua via Bobiri & Atewa Farmbush.
Mostly cloudy, tropical storm late pm 25-36°C (77-97°F)
- 22 Mar Koforidua. Atewa Hills forest. Accra Airport. Depart 2240.
24-34°C (75-94°F)

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING TOUR

No of days recorded	Locations	Abundance Scale (max. seen on 1 day)
1 2h means seen on 1 day and heard on 2 other days	C = Coastal sites, i.e. Sakumona, Accra, Brenu, and Cape Coast K = Kakum, Antwikwa, Abrafo, Aboabo O = Other forest areas, viz. Picathartes site, Opuro & Bobiri; also Kumasi M = Mole N.P. >M = On journey to or from Mole A = Atewa	1 = 1 - 4 2 = 5 - 9 3 = 10 - 99 4 = 100 - 999 5 = 1,000+

Taxonomic notes (^{1,2, etc}) follow the list. Location letters are given only for less widely distributed species.

SPECIES	No of days recorded	Location	Abundance Scale	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Little Grebe	2	C	1	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>
Long-tailed Cormorant	5	C K	M 3	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>
Black-crowned Night-Heron	1		M 1	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Squacco Heron	3	C	M 3	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>
Western Cattle Egret	13		4	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Green-backed (Striated) Heron	1	K	1	<i>Butorides striata</i>
Black Heron	1	C	1	<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i>
Western Reef Egret	2	C	2	<i>Egretta gularis</i>
Little Egret	2	C O	3	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Intermediate Egret	3	C	M 3	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>
Great Egret	2	C	3	<i>Egretta alba</i>
Purple Heron	1		M 1	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Grey Heron	4	C	M 2	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Black-headed Heron	1	C	1	<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>
Hamerkop	5		M 1	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>
Woolly-necked Stork	1		M 1	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
Saddle-billed Stork	1		M 1	<i>Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis</i>
Glossy Ibis	1	C	2	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
Hadada Ibis	4		M 1	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>
White-faced Whistling-Duck	5	C	M 3	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>
Common Teal	1	C	1	<i>Anas crecca</i>
African Cuckoo-Hawk	2		O M 1	<i>Aviceda cuculoides</i>
European Honey-buzzard	2	K O	1	<i>Pernis apivorus</i>
Black-shouldered Kite	2	C O	1	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
Yellow-billed Kite ¹	12		4	<i>Milvus (migrans) parasitus</i>
Palm-nut Vulture	6	K	M 1	<i>Gypohierax angolensis</i>
Hooded Vulture	10		3	<i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>
African White-backed Vulture	2		M 1	<i>Gyps africanus</i>
Beaudouin's Snake Eagle	1		>M 1	<i>Circaetus beaudouini</i>
Bateleur	3		M 2	<i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>
Congo Serpent-Eagle	1	1h K O	1	<i>Dryotriorchis spectabilis</i>
African Harrier-Hawk	6	C K	M A 1	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>
Western Marsh-Harrier	1	C	1	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Dark Chanting-Goshawk	2		>M 1	<i>Melierax metabates</i>
Shikra	6	C K O	M 2	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
Long-tailed Hawk	1		O 1	<i>Urotriorchis macrourus</i>
Grasshopper Buzzard	4		M 4	<i>Butastur rufipennis</i>
Lizard Buzzard	2	K	M 1	<i>Kaupifalco monogrammicus</i>
Red-necked Buzzard	6	K	M 1	<i>Buteo auguralis</i>
Wahlberg's Eagle	1		M 1	<i>Aquila wahlbergi</i>
Booted Eagle	1		M 1	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>
Cassin's Hawk Eagle	1	K	1	<i>Spizaetus africanus</i>
Crowned Eagle	1	K	1	<i>Stephanoaetus coronatus</i>
Common (Eurasian) Kestrel	6	C O	A 3	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
Grey Kestrel	3	C K	1	<i>Falco ardosiaceus</i>
African Hobby	1		O 1	<i>Falco cuvierii</i>
Lanner Falcon	3	C K	M 1	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>

Helmeted Guineafowl	2					M	3	<i>Numida meleagris</i>	
Stone Partridge	3					M	2	<i>Ptilopachus petrosus</i>	
White-throated Francolin	1					M	1	<i>Francolinus albogularis</i>	
Double-spurred Francolin	3	1h	C			M	2	<i>Francolinus bicalcaratus</i>	
White-spotted Flufftail	-	1h		K			1	<i>Sarothrura pulchra</i>	
Black Crane	2					M	1	<i>Amaurornis flavirostra</i>	
Purple Swamphen	1		C				1	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	
Common Moorhen	2		C	K			1	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	
Black-bellied Bustard	1		C				1	<i>Eupodotis melanogaster</i>	
African Jacana	7		C	K	O	M	3	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>	
Black-winged Stilt	2		C				3	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	
Senegal Thick-knee	3	1h	C			M	1	<i>Burhinus senegalensis</i>	
Spotted Thick-knee	1					M	1	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>	
Collared Pratincole	1		C				2	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>	
Rock Pratincole	1			K			1	<i>Glareola nuchalis</i>	
Common Ringed Plover	1		C				3	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	
Kittlitz's Plover	1		C				2	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	
Forbes's Plover	1					M	1	<i>Charadrius forbesi</i>	
Grey Plover	1		C				2	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	
African Wattled Lapwing	2					M	1	<i>Vanellus senegallus</i>	
White-headed Lapwing	1			K			1	<i>Vanellus albiceps</i>	
Spur-winged Lapwing	1		C				1	<i>Vanellus spinosus</i>	
Lesser Black-winged Lapwing	1		C				1	<i>Vanellus lugubris</i>	
Little Stint	1		C				3	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	
Curlew Sandpiper	1		C				3	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	
Whimbrel	2		C				1	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	
Common Greenshank	1		C				3	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	
Wood Sandpiper	2		C				2	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	
Common Sandpiper	1		C				2	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	
Royal Tern	1		C				1	<i>Sterna maxima</i>	
Sandwich Tern	2		C				2	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	
Whiskered Tern	1		C				1	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	
Four-banded Sandgrouse	1					M	2	<i>Pterocles quadricinctus</i>	
African Green Pigeon	7			K		M	3	<i>Treron calvus</i>	
Bruce's Green Pigeon	3					M	2	<i>Treron waalia</i>	
Blue-spotted Wood Dove	7	2h	C	K		M	A	1	<i>Turtur afer</i>
Black-billed Wood Dove	3					M		1	<i>Turtur abyssinicus</i>
Tambourine Dove	4	2h		K	O		A	1	<i>Turtur tympanistria</i>
Speckled Pigeon	1					>M		1	<i>Columba guinea</i>
Afep Pigeon	-	1h			O			-	<i>Columba uncinata</i>
Rock (Feral) Pigeon (<i>Introduced</i>)	6							3	<i>Columba livia</i>
Red-eyed Dove	10							2	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>
Vinaceous Dove	4					M		3	<i>Streptopelia vinacea</i>
Laughing Dove	13							4	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>
Senegal Parrot	3					M		2	<i>Poicephalus senegalensis</i>
Red-fronted Parrot	2			K				1	<i>Poicephalus gularis</i>
Red-headed Lovebird	1					M		1	<i>Agapornis pullarius</i>
Rose-ringed Parakeet	2					M		2	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
Yellow-billed Turaco	2	1h		K				1	<i>Tauraco macrorhynchus</i>
Violet Turaco	4		C			M		1	<i>Musophaga violacea</i>
Western Grey Plantain-eater	8							3	<i>Crinifer piscator</i>
Levaillant's Cuckoo	4		C			M	A	1	<i>Oxylophus levaillantii</i>
Red-chested Cuckoo	-	1h			O			1	<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>
Black Cuckoo	4	1h		K	O	M	A	1	<i>Cuculus clamosus</i>
African Cuckoo	2					M		1	<i>Cuculus gularis</i>
African Emerald Cuckoo	1	2h		K	O		A	1	<i>Chrysococcyx cupreus</i>
Yellow-throated Cuckoo	1						A	1	<i>Chrysococcyx flavigularis</i>
Klaas' Cuckoo	2	7h		K	O	M	A	1	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>
Didric Cuckoo	2				O		A	1	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>
Yellowbill	5	1h		K	O		A	1	<i>Ceuthmochares aereus</i>
Black-throated Coucal	-	1h		K				-	<i>Centropus leucogaster</i>
Senegal Coucal	9							1	<i>Centropus senegalensis</i>
Blue-headed Coucal	1	3h		K			A	1	<i>Centropus monachus</i>

African Scops Owl	1	2h	C			M	1	<i>Otus senegalensis</i>	
Greyish Eagle-Owl	1	1h				M	1	<i>Bubo cinerascens</i>	
Fraser's Eagle-Owl	1			K			1	<i>Bubo poensis</i>	
Pearl-spotted Owlet	1					M	1	<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>	
Long-tailed Nightjar	1					M	1	<i>Caprimulgus climacurus</i>	
Plain Nightjar	1					M	1	<i>Caprimulgus inornatus</i>	
Standard-winged Nightjar	2					M	1	<i>Macrodipteryx longipennis</i>	
Sabine's Spinetail	5			K			1	<i>Rhaphidura sabini</i>	
Black Spinetail	1			K			1	<i>Telacanthura melanopygia</i>	
Mottled Spinetail	2		C			M	1	<i>Telacanthura ussheri</i>	
African Palm-Swift	12						3	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	
Common Swift	6			K	O	M	3	<i>Apus apus</i>	
Little Swift	8						3	<i>Apus affinis</i>	
Narina's Trogon	1				O		1	<i>Apaloderma narina</i>	
Chocolate-backed Kingfisher	1			K			1	<i>Halcyon badia</i>	
Grey-headed Kingfisher	4					M	1	<i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>	
Blue-breasted Kingfisher	3			K		M	1	<i>Halcyon malimbica</i>	
Woodland Kingfisher	6		C	K	O		2	<i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>	
Striped Kingfisher	1					M	1	<i>Halcyon chelicuti</i>	
African Pygmy-Kingfisher	5			K	O	M	A	2	<i>Ceyx pictus</i>
Malachite Kingfisher	5		C	K	O	M		1	<i>Alcedo cristata</i>
Giant Kingfisher	1					M		1	<i>Megaceryle maxima</i>
Pied Kingfisher	3		C		O			3	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
Black Bee-eater	4			K				2	<i>Merops gularis</i>
Blue-headed Bee-eater	1				O			1	<i>Merops muelleri</i>
Little Bee-eater	3		C	K		M		1	<i>Merops pusillus</i>
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater	1					M		1	<i>Merops hirundineus</i>
Red-throated Bee-eater	3					M		4	<i>Merops bulocki</i>
White-throated Bee-eater	9							3	<i>Merops albicollis</i>
European Bee-eater	1					M		2	<i>Merops apiaster</i>
Rosy Bee-eater	3			K				2	<i>Merops malimbicus</i>
Northern Carmine Bee-eater	1					M		1	<i>Merops nubicus</i>
Rufous-crowned Roller	2					M		1	<i>Coracias naevius</i>
Blue-bellied Roller	2				O	M		1	<i>Coracias cyanogaster</i>
Abyssinian Roller	5					M		1	<i>Coracias abyssinicus</i>
Blue-throated Roller	3			K	O			1	<i>Eurystomus gularis</i>
Broad-billed Roller	6		C		O	M		1	<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>
Forest Wood-hoopoe	1			K				1	<i>Phoeniculus castaneiceps</i>
White-headed Wood-hoopoe	1			K				1	<i>Phoeniculus bollei</i>
Green Wood-hoopoe	5		C			M		1	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>
Black Scimitarbill (Wood-hoopoe)	2					M		1	<i>Rhinopomastus aterrimus</i>
White-crested Hornbill	1			K				1	<i>Tropicranus albocristatus</i>
Black Dwarf Hornbill	2			K				1	<i>Tockus hartlaubi</i>
Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill	1			K				1	<i>Tockus camurus</i>
(Northern) Red-billed Hornbill	2					M		1	<i>Tockus (e.) erythrorhynchus</i>
African Pied Hornbill	8		C	K	O			3	<i>Tockus fasciatus</i>
African Grey Hornbill	6		C		O	M		2	<i>Tockus nasutus</i>
Piping Hornbill	2	1h	C	K				1	<i>Bycanistes fistulator</i>
Brown-cheeked Hornbill	2			K				1	<i>Bycanistes cylindricus</i>
Bristle-nosed Barbet	2			K				1	<i>Gymnobucco peli</i>
Naked-faced Barbet	4			K	O			1	<i>Gymnobucco calvus</i>
Speckled Tinkerbird	4	1h		K			A	1	<i>Pogoniulus scolopaceus</i>
Red-rumped Tinkerbird	1	2h		K	O		A	1	<i>Pogoniulus atrofasciatus</i>
Yellow-throated Tinkerbird	1	2h		K	O		A	1	<i>Pogoniulus subsulphureus</i>
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird	2	1h		K	O			1	<i>Pogoniulus bilineatus</i>
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird	1					M		1	<i>Pogoniulus chrysoconus</i>
Yellow-spotted Barbet	1	2h		K				1	<i>Buccanodon duchaillui</i>
Hairy-breasted Barbet	3	2h		K	O			1	<i>Tricholaema hirsuta</i>
Vieillot's Barbet	2	1h		K		M	A	1	<i>Lybius vieillotii</i>
Bearded Barbet	1					M		1	<i>Lybius dubius</i>
Yellow-billed Barbet	1			K				1	<i>Trachylaemus purpuratus</i>
Cassin's Honeybird	1			K				1	<i>Prodotiscus insignis</i>
Greater Honeyguide	3					M		1	<i>Indicator indicator</i>

Least Honeyguide	1				M	1	<i>Indicator exilis</i>		
Willcock's Honeyguide	1			O		1	<i>Indicator willcocksi</i>		
African Piculet	1			K		1	<i>Sasia africana</i>		
Fine-spotted Woodpecker	1				M	1	<i>Campethera punctuligera</i>		
Little Green Woodpecker	1			K		1	<i>Campethera maculosa</i>		
Buff-spotted Woodpecker	1	1h		K		A	1	<i>Campethera nivos</i>	
Melancholy (Gabon) Woodpecker ²	1			K		1	<i>Dendropicos lugubris</i>		
Fire-bellied Woodpecker	2			K		1	<i>Dendropicos pyrrhogaster</i>		
Grey Woodpecker	2				M	1	<i>Dendropicos goertae</i>		
Rufous-sided Broadbill	1			K		1	<i>Smithornis rufolateralis</i>		
Flappet Lark	-	1h	C			1	<i>Mirafr</i>		
Sun Lark	1				M	1	<i>Galerida modesta</i>		
Square-tailed Saw-wing	1			K		1	<i>Psalidoprocne nitens</i>		
Fanti Saw-wing	3			K	M	2	<i>Psalidoprocne obscura</i>		
Rufous-chested Swallow	1			K		1	<i>Hirundo semirufa</i>		
Mosque Swallow	1		C			1	<i>Hirundo senegalensis</i>		
Lesser Striped Swallow	5		C	K		A	3	<i>Hirundo abyssinica</i>	
Preuss's Cliff Swallow	3		C	K		4	<i>Hirundo preussi</i>		
Wire-tailed Swallow	2				M	2	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>		
White-throated Blue Swallow	1			K		1	<i>Hirundo nigrita</i>		
Ethiopian Swallow	4		C	K		2	<i>Hirundo aethiopica</i>		
Red-chested Swallow	2				M	3	<i>Hirundo lucida</i>		
Barn Swallow	10					3	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		
Common House Martin	2				M	2	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>		
African Pied Wagtail	8					2	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>		
Yellow Wagtail	1		C			2	<i>Motacilla flava</i>		
Yellow-throated Longclaw	-	1h	C			1	<i>Macronyx croceus</i>		
Red-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike	1				M	1	<i>Campephaga phoenicea</i>		
Blue Cuckooshrike	2			K		1	<i>Coracina azurea</i>		
Little Greenbul	6			K		A	1	<i>Andropadus virens</i>	
Little Grey Greenbul	4			K	O	1	<i>Andropadus gracilis</i>		
Slender-billed Greenbul	4			K		A	1	<i>Andropadus gracilirostris</i>	
Yellow-whiskered Greenbul	1			K		1	<i>Andropadus latirostris</i>		
Golden Greenbul	2			K		A	1	<i>Calyptocichla serina</i>	
Spotted Greenbul	2			K		2	<i>Ixonotus guttatus</i>		
Simple Leaflove	3			K		1	<i>Chlorocichla simplex</i>		
Yellow-throated Leaflove	1				M	1	<i>Chlorocichla flavicollis</i>		
Swamp Palm Bulbul	1			K		1	<i>Thescelocichla leucopleura</i>		
Icterine Greenbul	1			K		1	<i>Phyllastrephus icterinus</i>		
Grey-headed Bristlebill	1	1h		K		1	<i>Bleda canicapillus</i>		
Common Bulbul	13					3	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>		
Western Nicator	2	3h		K	O	A	1	<i>Nicator chloris</i>	
Western Bearded Greenbul	-	1h			O	1	<i>Criniger barbatus</i>		
Red-tailed Greenbul	-	1h				A	1	<i>Criniger calurus</i>	
Forest Robin	-	1h		K		1	<i>Stiphornis erythrothorax</i>		
Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat	1	1h	C			M	1	<i>Cossypha niveicapilla</i>	
White-crowned Robin-Chat	1					M	1	<i>Cossypha albicapilla</i>	
Blue-shouldered Robin-Chat	1			K		1	<i>Cossypha cyanocampter</i>		
White-tailed Alethe	-	3h		K	O	1	<i>Alethe diademata</i>		
Finsch's Flycatcher-Thrush	1	2h		K	O	1	<i>Stizorhina finschi</i>		
Whinchat	2		C			M	1	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	
Familiar Chat	3					M	1	<i>Cercomela familiaris</i>	
African Thrush	5		C	K		M	A	1	<i>Turdus pelios</i>
African Moustached Warbler	1					M	1	<i>Melocichla mentalis</i>	
Melodious Warbler	1					M	1	<i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>	
Kemp's Longbill	1	1h		K		A	1	<i>Macrosphenus kemp</i>	
Grey Longbill	2	1h		K	O	A	1	<i>Macrosphenus concolor</i>	
Senegal Eremomela	4		C			M	2	<i>Eremomela pusilla</i>	
Rufous-crowned Eremomela	3			K		1	<i>Eremomela badiceps</i>		
Northern Crombec	2		C			M	1	<i>Sylvietta brachyura</i>	
Green Crombec	2	2h		K		A	1	<i>Sylvietta virens</i>	
Lemon-bellied Crombec	4			K	O	A	1	<i>Sylvietta denti</i>	
Willow Warbler	3					M	2	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	

Wood Warbler	1	1h		K			1	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	
Green Hylia	4	3h		K	O	A	1	<i>Hylia prasina</i>	
Red-faced Cisticola	3	1h	C	K		A	1	<i>Cisticola erythrops</i>	
Singing Cisticola	1		C				1	<i>Cisticola cantans</i>	
Whistling Cisticola	2	2h		K		A	1	<i>Cisticola lateralis</i>	
Croaking Cisticola	2		C			M	1	<i>Cisticola natalensis</i>	
Short-winged Cisticola	1		C				1	<i>Cisticola brachypterus</i>	
Rufous Cisticola	1					M	1	<i>Cisticola rufus</i>	
Tawny-flanked Prinia	1					M	2	<i>Prinia subflava</i>	
Red-winged Warbler	1	1h	C			M	1	<i>Heliolais erythropterus</i>	
Yellow-breasted Apalis	1					M	1	<i>Apalis flavida</i>	
Sharpe's Apalis	1			K			1	<i>Apalis sharpii</i>	
Grey-backed Camaroptera	5	2h	C	K		M	1	<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>	
Yellow-browed Camaroptera	3	1h		K		A	1	<i>Camaroptera superciliaris</i>	
Olive-green Camaroptera	-	3h		K	O	A	1	<i>Camaroptera chloronota</i>	
Oriole Warbler	1	2h	C			M	1	<i>Hypergerus atriceps</i>	
Fraser's Forest Flycatcher	1					A	1	<i>Fraseria ocreata</i>	
Northern Black Flycatcher	2					M	1	<i>Melaenornis edoloides</i>	
Pale Flycatcher	1					M	2	<i>Melaenornis pallidus</i>	
Spotted Flycatcher	1			K			1	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	
Swamp Flycatcher	2					M	2	<i>Muscicapa aquatica</i>	
Dusky-blue Flycatcher	2			K		A	1	<i>Muscicapa comitata</i>	
Ussher's Flycatcher	2			K			1	<i>Muscicapa ussheri</i>	
Grey-throated (Tit-)Flycatcher	1			K			1	<i>Myioparus griseigularis</i>	
Lead-coloured (Grey Tit-) Flycatcher	1			K			1	<i>Myioparus plumbeus</i>	
Pied Flycatcher	5					M	A	2	<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>
Chestnut-capped Flycatcher	2			K	O		1	<i>Erythrocerus mccallii</i>	
African Blue Flycatcher	1					M	1	<i>Elminia longicauda</i>	
African Paradise Flycatcher	1					M	1	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	
Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher	3	2h		K		A	1	<i>Terpsiphone rufiventer</i>	
Black-and-White Flycatcher	1			K			1	<i>Bias musicus</i>	
Chestnut Wattle-eye	3			K	O		1	<i>Platysteira castanea</i>	
Red-cheeked Wattle-eye	1			K			1	<i>Platysteira blissetti</i>	
Common Wattle-eye	2	2h	C	K		M	1	<i>Platysteira cyanea</i>	
Senegal Batis	1					M	1	<i>Batis senegalensis</i>	
West African (Bioko) Batis ³	1			K			1	<i>Batis(poensis) occulta</i>	
Yellow-headed Picathartes	1				O		1	<i>Picathartes gymnocephalus</i>	
Puvel's Illadopsis	1			K			1	<i>Illadopsis puveli</i>	
Brown Babbler	2	1h	C			M	2	<i>Turdoides plebejus</i>	
White-shouldered Black Tit	3					M	1	<i>Parus guineensis</i>	
Tit-hylia	3			K		A	1	<i>Pholidornis rushiae</i>	
Green Sunbird	1			K			1	<i>Anthreptes rectirostris</i>	
Little Green Sunbird	3			K	O	A	1	<i>Anthreptes seimundi</i>	
Green-headed Sunbird	2		C	K	O		1	<i>Cyanomitra verticalis</i>	
Blue-throated Brown Sunbird	2			K			1	<i>Cyanomitra cyanolaema</i>	
Western Olive Sunbird ⁴	4	1h		K	O	A	1	<i>Cyanomitra obscura</i>	
Buff-throated Sunbird	2			K		A	1	<i>Chalcomitra adelberti</i>	
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	4					M	1	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>	
Collared Sunbird	7			K	O	A	2	<i>Hedydipna collaris</i>	
Pygmy Sunbird	2					M	1	<i>Hedydipna platyura</i>	
Olive-bellied Sunbird	3			K	O		1	<i>Cinnyris chloropygius</i>	
Beautiful Sunbird	3					M	3	<i>Cinnyris pulchellus</i>	
Johanna's Sunbird	3			K	O		1	<i>Cinnyris johannae</i>	
Superb Sunbird	2			K		A	1	<i>Cinnyris superbus</i>	
Copper Sunbird	5		C	K	O	M	1	<i>Cinnyris cupreus</i>	
Yellow White-eye	3			K		M	2	<i>Zosterops senegalensis</i>	
Common Fiscal	6						2	<i>Lanius collaris</i>	
Yellow-billed Shrike	2		C			M	2	<i>Corvinella corvina</i>	
Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike	2	1h	C			M	1	<i>Malaconotus sulfureopectus</i>	
Marsh Tchagra	-	1h	C				1	<i>Bocagia minuta</i>	
Black-crowned Tchagra	3	1h	C	K		M	1	<i>Tchagra senegalus</i>	
Brown-crowned Tchagra	2		C	K			1	<i>Tchagra australis</i>	
Sabine's Puffback	2	1h		K	O		1	<i>Dryoscopus sabini</i>	

Northern Puffback	3				M	A	1	<i>Dryoscopus gambensis</i>
Yellow-crowned (Common) Gonolek	6	C					1	<i>Laniarius barbarus</i>
Sooty Boubou	1		K				1	<i>Laniarius leucorhynchus</i>
White Helmet-shrike	1				M		2	<i>Prionops plumatus</i>
Red-billed Helmet-shrike	2		K	O			1	<i>Prionops caniceps</i>
Black-winged Oriole	6	C	K	O			1	<i>Oriolus nigripennis</i>
Western Black-headed Oriole	1			O			1	<i>Oriolus brachyrhynchus</i>
African Golden Oriole	3				M		1	<i>Oriolus auratus</i>
Square-tailed Drongo	1				M		1	<i>Dicrurus ludwigii</i>
Shining Drongo	1		K				1	<i>Dicrurus atripennis</i>
Fork-tailed Drongo	5				M		3	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>
Velvet-mantled Drongo	7		K	O		A	3	<i>Dicrurus modestus</i>
Piapiac	2	C			>M		1	<i>Ptilostomus afer</i>
Pied Crow	13						4	<i>Corvus albus</i>
Forest Chestnut-winged Starling	1		K				1	<i>Onychognathus fulgidus</i>
Copper-tailed Glossy Starling	2		K				3	<i>Lamprotornis cupreocauda</i>
Purple Glossy Starling	5	C			M		2	<i>Lamprotornis purpureus</i>
Bronze-tailed Glossy Starling	1				M		1	<i>Lamprotornis chalcurus</i>
Lesser Blue-eared Starling	1	C					1	<i>Lamprotornis chloropterus</i>
Splendid Glossy Starling	2	C		O		A	3	<i>Lamprotornis splendidus</i>
Long-tailed Glossy Starling	3				M		1	<i>Lamprotornis caudatus</i>
Violet-backed Starling	3				M		2	<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>
Northern Grey-headed Sparrow	13						3	<i>Passer griseus</i>
Bush Petronia	5				M		3	<i>Petronia dentata</i>
Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver	2				M		1	<i>Plocepasser superciliosus</i>
Red-vented Malimbe	1		K				1	<i>Malimbus scutatus</i>
Crested Malimbe	3		K			A	1	<i>Malimbus malimbicus</i>
Blue-billed Malimbe	3		K			A	1	<i>Malimbus nitens</i>
Red-headed Malimbe	4		K	O		A	1	<i>Malimbus rubricollis</i>
Red-headed Weaver	1				M		1	<i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>
Little Weaver	3				M		1	<i>Ploceus luteolus</i>
Black-necked Weaver	6	C	K		M	A	1	<i>Ploceus nigricollis</i>
Orange Weaver	1		K				2	<i>Ploceus aurantius</i>
Vieillot's Black Weaver	5	C	K			A	2	<i>Ploceus nigerrimus</i>
Village Weaver	9						3	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>
Yellow-mantled Weaver	6		K	O		A	2	<i>Ploceus tricolor</i>
Maxwell's Black Weaver	1		K				3	<i>Ploceus albinucha</i>
Preuss's Weaver	2		K	O			1	<i>Ploceus preussi</i>
Red-headed Quelea	8	C	K	O	M		3	<i>Quelea erythrops</i>
Red-billed Quelea	1				M		2	<i>Quelea quelea</i>
Black-winged Bishop	1				M		1	<i>Euplectes hordeaceus</i>
Yellow-mantled Widowbird	2	C					2	<i>Euplectes macroura</i>
Grey-headed Negrofinch	6		K	O		A	2	<i>Nigrita canicapillus</i>
Chestnut-breasted Negrofinch	3		K			A	1	<i>Nigrita bicolor</i>
White-breasted Negrofinch	3		K			A	1	<i>Nigrita fusconotus</i>
Lavender Waxbill	2				M		2	<i>Estrilda caeruleascens</i>
Orange-cheeked Waxbill	5		K		M	A	2	<i>Estrilda melpoda</i>
Black-rumped Waxbill	2	C			M		3	<i>Estrilda troglodytes</i>
Western Bluebill	1		K				1	<i>Spermophaga haematina</i>
Black-bellied Seedcracker	1		K				1	<i>Pyrenestes ostrinus</i>
Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu	5				M		2	<i>Uraeginthus bengalus</i>
Red-winged Pytilia	1				M		1	<i>Pytilia phoenicoptera</i>
Red-billed Firefinch	2				M		1	<i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>
Bar-breasted Firefinch	5	C	K		M		1	<i>Lagonosticta rufopicta</i>
Black-faced Firefinch	3				M		1	<i>Lagonosticta larvata</i>
Blue-billed Firefinch	1	C					1	<i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>
Bronze Mannikin	7	C	K	O	M		3	<i>Spermestes cucullatus</i>
Black-and-White Mannikin	2		K			A	3	<i>Spermestes bicolor</i>
Magpie Mannikin	2			O		A	3	<i>Spermestes fringilloides</i>
Pin-tailed Whydah	3		K		M		2	<i>Vidua macroura</i>
Paradise Whydah <i>sp</i> ⁵	1				M		1	<i>Vidua sp</i>
Wilson's Indigobird	2				M		1	<i>Vidua wilsoni</i>
Yellow-fronted Canary	4				M		2	<i>Serinus mozambicus</i>

Cabanis's Bunting	1	M	1	<i>Emberiza cabanisi</i>
Brown-rumped Bunting	1	M	1	<i>Emberiza affinis</i>
Cinnamon-breasted Rock-bunting	1	M	1	<i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>

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

- 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*.
- 5 The non-breeding paradise whydah was probably Exclamatory (*V. interjecta*) but may have been the less common Togo (*V. togoensis*).

MAMMALS

Striped Ground Squirrel	1	C		1	<i>Xerus erythropus</i>	
Forest Giant Squirrel	2		K	1	<i>Protoxerus stangeri</i>	
Fire-footed Rope Squirrel	1		K	1	<i>Funisciurus pyrropus</i>	
Kintampo Rope Squirrel	1			M	1	<i>Funisciurus substriatus</i>
Gambian Sun Squirrel	1		K	1	<i>Heliosciurus gambianus</i>	
Green Bush Squirrel	1		K	1	<i>Paraxerus poensis</i>	
Zebra Mouse	1		K	1	<i>Lemniscomys barbarus</i>	
Marsh Mongoose	1			M	1	<i>Atilax paludinosus</i>
Straw-coloured Fruit Bat	2	C		A	5	<i>Eidolon helvum</i>
Olive Baboon	1			M	1	<i>Papio anubis</i>
Patas Monkey	2			M	3	<i>Cercopithecus patas</i>
Callithrix Monkey	3			M	1	<i>Chlorocebus sabaesus</i>
Warthog	5			M	3	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>
Bushbuck	3			M	2	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>
Kob	5			M	3	<i>Kobus kob</i>
Waterbuck	2			M	2	<i>Kobus ellipsyrimnus</i>
African Savanna Elephant	3			M	3	<i>Loxodonta africana</i>

Also seen being offered for sale as bush-meat: Greater Cane Rat (*Thryonomys swindernianus*), African Civet (*Civettictis civetta*) and Royal Antelope (*Neotragus pygmaeus*).

OTHER ANIMALS included Nile Crocodile, *Agama spp*, various skinks, geckos and terrapin *sp*.

BUTTERFLIES

(Compiled by Andrew Kankam Amankwah and Mary Armson)

African Beak	Common Sailer	River Sailer
African Blue Tiger	Common Striped Swordtail	Round-winged Orange-tip
African Emigrant	Common Tiger	Round-winged Vagrant
African Joker	Common Yellow Glider	Sabine Albatross
African Map	Dancing Acraea	Small Grass Yellow
Black-patch Hairstreak	Dark Blue Pansy	Soldier Pansy
Black-patched Babul Blue	Forest Caper White	Ussher's Palla
Blue Diadem	Forest Giant Epitopa	Variable Eggfly
Blue Vagrant	Forest Glade Nymph	Variable Sailer
Broad-banded Green Swallowtail	Forest Grass Yellow	Western Blue Policeman
Citrus Swallowtail	Forest Mother of Pearl	Western Creamy Glider
Common False Tiger	Fox Pathfinder	Western Red Glider
Common Grass Babul Blue	Large Orange-tip	White Lady (+larvae)
Common Grass Yellow	Lilac Beauty	
Common Leopard Fritillary	Long-tailed Striped Swordtail	

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

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Grasshopper Buzzard



Lizard Buzzard



Violet Turaco



Red-throated Bee-eater



African Pygmy-Kingfisher



Yellowbill



Long-tailed Hawk



White-throated Francolin



Black Bee-eater



Abyssinian Roller



White-throated Bee-eater



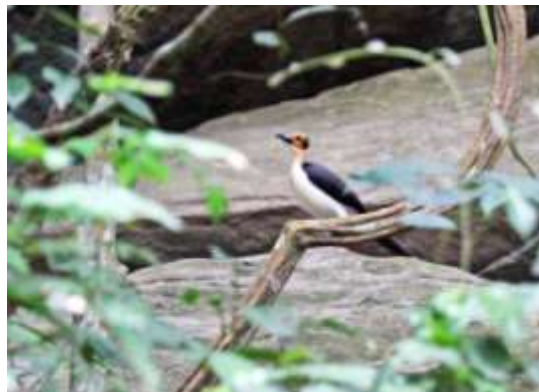
Brown-cheeked Hornbill



Rufous-sided Broadbill



Preuss's Cliff Swallows



Yellow-headed Picathartes



Orange Weaver



Vieillot's Black Weaver



Little Weaver



African Joker



Blue-banded Swallowtail & others



Flowers



Varied Grasshopper



Cape Coast Castle



Robert Ntakor on the Kakum Walkway

Front cover: Kakum Walkway

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