

# Ethiopian Endemics

Naturetrek Tour Report

13 - 22 February 2009

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Ruppell's Glossy Starling



Woodland Kingfisher



Speckled Mousebird



Lammergeier

Report compiled by Chris Kehoe  
Images by kind courtesy of tour participant Bob Foskett



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## Day 1

Friday 13th February

### Outbound

Apart from Rainer, who was meeting us in Addis Ababa, we departed from London nearly an hour late from Heathrow at 21.55 on an Ethiopian Airlines direct flight to the national capital. After a bite to eat we settled down for an uneventful night in the air.

## Day 2

Saturday 14th February

Bole, Addis Ababa (c2300m asl); Gafersa Reservoir (c2600m asl); Solulta Plain (max. 2800m asl)

Weather: sunny and warm, a little breezy, dry

After a seven hour flight we touched down at Bole International Airport, Addis Ababa at 07.45 (local), just 15 minutes behind the scheduled time. Immigration formalities were straightforward and after collecting our bags and changing some money we met Merid, our local guide, in the arrivals hall. A few minutes later we were at the nearby Lalibella Hotel for a wash and change and to meet Rainer.

An hour later (at 09.45) we were back on the bus and negotiating the traffic of the bustling city as we made our way westwards to Gafersa Reservoir for some introductory birding. Ninety minutes later we arrived at the west end of the reservoir and were immediately confronted by our first endemic birds in the shape of Blue-winged Geese and Wattled Ibises. Further highlights during a two hour stay included three Abyssinian Longclaws (the only ones we saw), Ethiopian Cisticolas and Ethiopian Siskins as Augur Buzzards, Rüppell's and White-backed Vultures, White Storks and Lanner Falcons soared overhead. Moving on, after a picnic lunch, we paid a short visit to the southern part of the Solulta Plain where Erlanger's Larks, a Rüppell's Robin Chat and Groundscraper Thrushes were highlights.

By 16.30 we were back at the hotel for a shower and a rest following a rather long day. After dinner at 19.30 we completed the day's checklist and enjoyed a beer or three.

## Day 3

Sunday 15th February

Debre Libanos (c2400m asl)

Weather: sunny and warm for most of the day but overcast by evening with showery rain as we returned towards Addis Ababa

Early risers saw Mocking Cliff-chats and others around the hotel before breakfast at 06.30 and our 07.40 departure to Debre Libanos. After crossing the Sululta Plain (and collecting some bones) we arrived at a café perched on the edge of the vast gorge at Debre Libanos at 09.30 and immediately began to see Rüppell's Griffons and Fan-tailed Ravens soaring around as they waited for Merid to deliver some bones for their breakfast. As he did so an Erckel's Francolin gave a decent fly-by view and our first Rüppell's Black Chat (one of the key specialities of the area) popped into view, as did a Stout Cisticola. More vultures soon appeared with Hoodeds and Egyptians and a single White-headed showing well amongst the, by now, numerous Ruppell's Griffons. A couple of Tawny Eagles put on a good show too before we walked the short distance to the picturesque 16th Century Portuguese Bridge. En route to the bridge a troop of Gelada Baboons showed very well, indeed these stunning primates were in more or less continuous view, often at close range, for the rest of the morning. At the bridge itself, the hoped-for White-winged Cliff Chats soon put on a good show and other highlights before we strolled back to the café an hour later were more Rüppell's Black Chats, a Blue Rock Thrush, a pair of Abyssinian Ground Hornbills and a couple of soaring Lammergeiers.

Raptor watching continued from the café, were we had lunch, with the obvious highlight being superb views of an adult Lammergeier that dropped in briefly and made off with one of Merid's bones. After lunch, a short drive took us to the nearby church where the Sunday morning crowds had dispersed and we had a pleasant hour-long stroll around the wooded grounds where we saw several White-cheeked Turacos, a couple of White-backed Tits, several Abyssinian Slaty Flycatchers and others. White-billed Starling was an obvious omission from our list still so we set off back through the nearby village keeping an eye on the large escarpment above and soon noticed a flock of flying starlings. Positioning ourselves near a large fig tree, where Banded Barbet and more Turacos were seen. We spent thirty minutes scanning the escarpment and were rewarded with several decent flight views of the starlings and a few perched birds that showed their tell-tale white bills in the scope.

The journey back to Addis was punctuated by a short stop to look at some Black-winged Lapwings and we arrived back at the Lalibela Hotel in ample time for a shower and change before dinner at 19.00.

## Day 4

Monday 16th February

En route to Wondo Genet (c1880m asl) via Debre Zeit (c1900m asl) and Zwai (1650m asl)

Weather: dry, bright and warm/hot until mid-afternoon when overcast; a few spots of rain after dark

With the bus loaded up we set off at 07.45 and arrived at Lake Chelekkele in Debre Zeit a little over an hour later. Waterbirds were everywhere and we spent the next hour sifting through the various species with particular highlights being about 50 White-backed Ducks, a couple of Comb Ducks, a rather brief Black-crowned Crane, 30 Common Cranes, Greater Flamingos and others.

On the land a handful of Ruppell's Weavers were enjoyed before we set off to nearby Lake Hora. Woodland bordering the lake at Hora held Abyssinian White-eyes, Black-billed Barbets and others and we watched these while having drinks. A couple of hours (and a flock of Abdim's Storks) later we arrived at a hotel-cum-restaurant in the town of Zwai where lunch was punctuated by the appearance of Wattled Starlings and Marico Sunbirds amongst many other species in the small garden there.

Before continuing our journey to Wondo Genet, an hour at Lake Zwai produced a wealth of wetland birds including Temminck's Stint and Senegal Thick-knee, Three-banded Plover and African Spoonbill. Arriving at Wondo Genet shortly before darkness began to fall allowed looks at some of the garden birds there such as Thick-billed Ravens and Silvery-cheeked Hornbills.

## Day 5

Tuesday 17th February

Wondo Genet area (max 2000m asl)

Weather: Sunny and warm in the morning, overcast and a little breezy later with a light shower at lunchtime

Early risers were treated to views of several new birds near the hot springs and swimming pool a short walk from the hotel with Mountain Wagtails, Ethiopian Oriole, Double-toothed Barbets and an Abyssinian Ground-thrush all seen.

After breakfast, a four hour stroll up and down the valley above the hotel gave us even more high quality birds with displaying Crowned Eagles, Abyssinian Woodpeckers, Spotted Creepers, Sharpe's and Slender-billed Starlings and Red-headed Weavers just some of the highlights. Black-and-white Colobus Monkeys and Olive Baboons also put on a show.

After lunch, and a couple of hours siesta, we jumped on the bus for the short drive to an old quarry where we immediately connected with the hoped-for Half-collared Kingfisher and, with a bit of patience, all had reasonable scope views of perched Yellow-fronted Parrots, as well as several flight views, plus good numbers of Grosbeak Weavers.

## Day 6

Wednesday 18th February

En route to Goba (2700m asl) via Dodola (c2500m asl)

Weather: sunny and warm

A long travelling day began in fine style when one of the local guides at Wondo Genet found two Narina Trogons near the hotel entrance. With the bus loaded we commenced our journey to Goba at 07.30 and apart from a few kilometres of surfaced road at Shashemene spent the rest of the 200 kilometre journey eastwards on a dirt track; somewhat frustratingly this often ran parallel to a perfectly flat road waiting to be surfaced and therefore not in use. Even despite a delay caused by two trucks stuck in mud (which serendipitously allowed us exceptional views of a singing Cinnamon Bracken Warbler) we reached our lunch spot at Dodola shortly before noon and had an hour's respite from the 'road'.

Beyond Dodola we entered an area of extensive arable land where several Montagu's Harriers quartered over recently burned stubble, before beginning to climb into the Bale Mountains area. After crossing a high pass at c3500m asl we descended towards Dinsho and stopped for a short while to admire several obliging Rouget's Rails and Spot-breasted Lapwings near a roadside pool at 3050m asl. A little further on we watched Bohor Reedbucks and Mountain Nyalas in the scope for a while as more Rouget's Rails wandered about. No further stops were then made until we reached our comfortable hotel in Goba at 18.15. It had been a long day but some excellent birds, mammals and landscape were seen and we were now perfectly positioned for an assault on the high Sanetti Plateau tomorrow morning.

## Day 7

Thursday 19th February

Sanetti Plateau, Bale Mountains National Park (max. c4000m asl); road to Goba

Weather: dry and sunny, chilly in a light breeze on the Sanetti Plateau, otherwise pleasantly warm

Breakfast at a very civilised 07.00 gave an opportunity to have a look around the hotel grounds for early risers with Dark-capped Bulbuls and a Singing Cisticola as rewards. At 07.45 we were in the bus and beginning to climb towards the treeline and the Sanetti Plateau beyond but a short stop on the wooded slopes provided good views of Abyssinian Catbirds, a flock of Alpine Swifts and a Mountain Buzzard. Just beyond the treeline a couple of Chestnut-naped Francolins near the roadside gave good but fairly brief views. On reaching the transmitter area on the Sanetti Plateau we disembarked in the rarefied air to check some ponds near the road where Blue-winged Geese and African Snipes performed; our first Grass Rats were watched nearby, no doubt being scrutinised too by the Steppe Eagles that were overhead in the clear blue sky.

Back on the bus we headed to another area of the plateau and soon struck gold with superb views of a Simian Wolf lying next to the road, then trotting along it and beginning to hunt for Grass Rats. Soon afterwards Merid drew our attention to a Giant Mole Rat peeping from its burrow. As we disembarked again a little further on we were able to watch more Simian Wolves hunting and more Grass Rats and Mole Rats as up to six Steppe Eagles appeared in the air at once. After a while admiring these animals in a spectacular sunlit landscape dotted with giant Lobelias we made our way back to the transmitter area where we ate our packed lunches and succeeded in finding some skittish Moorland Francolins and Starck's Hares.

After a quick, and successful, stop at Merid's stake-out for 'Bale' Parisomas, we spent the rest of the day slowly walking back down the road towards Goba through open woodland and mixed farmland. Amongst more familiar species we came across several Cinnamon Bracken Warblers, Yellow-crowned Canaries and Abyssinian Catbirds, a couple of Mountain Buzzards showed well, as did Brown Woodland Warblers and a group of Yellow-bellied Waxbills and, for some, an Abyssinian Ground Thrush.

## Day 8

Friday 20th February

En route to Awassa (c1700m asl) via Dinsho (c3200m asl)

Weather: dry and sunny, hot in the middle of the day

Breakfast at 06.30 preceded our 07.15 departure from Goba and a return to the west along that 'road'. Several stops during the morning produced a succession of excellent birds and animals. First stop was in the town of Robe, the westernmost point of the range of Somali Crows and about a dozen were duly seen with a bonus fly-over by a Black Sparrowhawk for some. A thirty minute stroll along a wooded riverbank nearby failed to produce the hoped-for African Black Ducks but compensation came in the shape of a few Common Duikers, some photogenic Blue-winged Geese and our only Tree Pipit.

At Dinsho we had an hour-long stroll through attractive woodland at the Bale Mountains National Park Headquarters with many highlights including point-blank views of Bohor Reedbucks, Mountain Nyalas and Menelik's Bushbucks, a superb Montane Nightjar shown to us by a local guide, African Goshawk in the scope, a couple of Abyssinian Ground Thrushes and a White-backed Tit. Half an hour later we pulled up beside an old roadside quarry where one of Merid's contacts had a fantastic Cape Eagle Owl staked-out for us and while savouring that a couple of Rock Hyraxes and Chestnut-naped Francolins were found. The next three hour's drive was somewhat tortuous as we ascended and descended the high pass (where three Red-billed Choughs were seen) but we eventually arrived in Dodola for a late lunch at 15.00.

Beyond Dodola the track was somewhat flatter and straighter and we made good time back to Shashemene (with a quick stop to look at some Lesser Kestrels along the way) and actually arrived at our hotel in Awassa about 30 minutes ahead of our expected arrival time thanks to Asrat's skilful driving...which involved managing to avoid a collision with the only Golden Jackal of the tour as we neared Awassa. A power failure at Awassa resulted in some rummaging for torches and a candlelit dinner.

## Day 9

Saturday 21st February

Awassa, en route to Addis Ababa via Langanu (c1600m asl)

Weather: dry, sunny, hot in the middle of the day

Our final day began with a pre-breakfast stroll around the hotel grounds and adjacent lakeshore with Black Heron, Great Black-headed and Grey-headed Gulls, Common Redstart (of the distinctive race *samamiscus*) and several others new for the tour list. After breakfast, and a photo call with the Black-and-white Colobus Monkeys near our rooms, a 10 minute drive delivered us to Awassa fish market where large numbers of gulls and terns and a few White Pelicans lingered for scraps; the adjacent marsh provided Goliath Heron, Black Crakes and a good selection of waders and other waterbirds while nearby trees repaid close attention with a couple of Nubian Woodpeckers and Spotted Creepers, a Red-throated Wryneck, a Black-headed Batis and, for some, a group of Crimson-rumped Waxbills - all in all an excellent hour's birding!

Heading north up the rift valley towards our lunch stop at Lake Langanu a quick stop was made to admire Abyssinian Rollers and Grey-backed Fiscals on the wires and we arrived at Langanu in time for some birding in the hotel grounds before and after lunch. Despite the midday hour there were plenty of new birds to see with several obliging Slender-tailed Nightjars, a pair of Greyish Eagle Owls and a Clapperton's Francolin the obvious highlights but the supporting cast of Superb Starlings, Von der Deckens Hornbills, White-headed Buffalo-weavers and others was pretty impressive too. Having sated ourselves on this feast of new birds it was time to re-board the bus and head back to Addis Ababa, our birding completed...in theory.

A few kilometres south of Zwai the tarpaulin covering our bags on the roof came loose and while Asrat dealt with that a quick leg stretch turned into a fifteen minute birding bonanza that produced Red-faced Crombec, Brubru, Red-fronted Barbet, African Grey Flycatcher and a fly-over Saker Falcon! With the tarpaulin tied tightly we continued towards Addis (a couple more Saker Falcons evidence of a migratory movement according to Merid) and arrived back at the Lalibella Hotel in plenty of time to shower, change, pack, say goodbye to Rainer who was catching an earlier flight, and have a bite to eat before transferring to the airport at 21.00.

Airport formalities went smoothly enough and we had time to partake in a shopping extravaganza (or not) in the departure area before the flight was called.

## Day 10

Sunday 22nd February

Inbound to London Heathrow (23m asl)

Our Ethiopian Airlines flight took off about 30 minutes late at 01.00 and we arrived over London, via an hour in Rome, on time at c07.15 (though the inevitable stacking at Heathrow delayed our landing there by 30 minutes). Having collected our bags we said our goodbyes at the carousel and departed to our respective corners of a chilly, grey and virtually endemic free UK.

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## Systematic lists

### BIRDS

Species order, nomenclature and taxonomy generally follow The IOC World Birdlist (version 1.7) produced by the International Ornithological Congress and available online at <http://worldbirdnames.org/>. Species split by Sinclair and Ryan in Birds of Africa South of the Sahara (Struick, 2003) are included but their disputed taxonomy is mentioned. Alternative English and scientific names are given when there is a risk of confusion. Species marked N/L were not seen by the tour leader/guide, those marked L/O were only seen by the tour leader/guide; the latter, and any species heard only or not fully identified, are square bracketed. Subspecies are indicated when known, if not the likely subspecies options are given; subspecies are taken from Clements's Checklist of the Birds of the World (6th Edition) or the Handbook of the Birds of the World (Vols. 1-12).

#### Key:

E - Endemic to Ethiopia

NE - near endemic (occurring only in the Horn of Africa: primarily in Ethiopia but also in Eritrea or adjacent parts of Somalia or Sudan)

RR: restricted range (occurring only in north-east Africa, i.e. from Sudan to Tanzania)

e: endemic subspecies

#### STRUTHIONIFORMES: *Struthionidae*

[Ostrich species *Struthio* sp.]

One seen from the moving bus north of Shashemene was more than likely of captive origin as an ostrich farm formerly existed in the area and many birds escaped and now live in a feral state

#### GALLIFORMES: *Numididae*

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida m. meleagris*

About 15 were seen on the roadside north of Awassa

#### GALLIFORMES: *Phasianidae*

Moorland Francolin *Scleroptila p. psilolaema* RR; e

A total of five were seen on the Sanetti Plateau

[Scaly Francolin *Pternistis squamatus*]

One was heard but not seen at Wondo Genet

Clapperton's Francolin *Pternistis clappertoni*

One showed well at Lake Langano

Chestnut-naped Francolin *Pternistis c. castaneicollis* NE

Two were seen on the Sanetti Plateau and two more at the quarry west of Dinsho; a couple of briefly seen francolins elsewhere in the Bale Mountains area were probably also this species



Erckel's Francolin *Pternistis erckelii* NE

Three were seen briefly at Debre Libanos

ANSERIFORMES: *Anatidae*

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*

About 10 were at Lake Chelekleke

White-backed Duck *Thalassornis l. leuconotus*

At least 50 were at Lake Chelekleke, a reliable site for this rather localised species

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus g. gambensis*

About 50 were at Lake Chelekleke

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis m. melanotos*

Two were at Lake Chelekleke; also known as Comb Duck

Blue-winged Goose *Cyanochen cyanoptera* E

After the first six or so at Gafersa Reservoir, a total of about 50 more were seen at upland wetlands on the Sululta Plain and in the Bale Mountains. Considered vulnerable by Birdlife International due to habitat loss; more recently some hunting has also occurred in the wake of an influx of Chinese workers

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Most wetlands held at least a few, though not at the very highest elevations

African Pygmy Goose *Nettion auritus*

Two were at Lake Zwai and four at Awassa fish market

Gadwall *Anas s. strepera*

One was seen at Lake Chelekleke (N/L)

Yellow-billed Duck *Anas undulata rueppelli*

After a couple at Gafersa Reservoir a further 50 or so were shared between Lakes Chelekleke and Zwai

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

A handful were on a pool on the Sululta Plain with about 10 at Lake Chelekleke

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhynchos*

A couple were seen at Lake Chelekleke (N/L)

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

About 10 were on Lake Chelekleke

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

About 10 were at Lake Chelekleke and five more at Awassa fish market

Eurasian Teal *Anas c. crecca*

At least three were on a pool on the Sululta Plain and another at Lake Chelekleke

Hottentot Teal *Anas hottentota*

Up to six were at Lake Chelekleke with a few more at Lake Zwai

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Up to 20 were at Lake Chelekleke

PODICIPEDIFORMES: *Podicipedidae*Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis capensis*

By far the largest gathering was about 500 on Lake Hora but a few more were at Gafersa Reservoir and Lakes Chelekleke and Awassa

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus infuscatus*

Four were at Lake Chelekleke

PHOENICOPTERIFORMES: *Phoenicopteridae*Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

About 20 were at Lake Chelekleke

CICONIIFORMES: *Ciconiidae*Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*

One was seen briefly at Lake Chelekleke (N/L)

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

One was soaring with a Lammergeier at Debre Libanos

Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii*

About 30 were seen in flight from the moving bus near Modjo

White Stork *Ciconia c. ciconia*

About 10 flew over at Gafersa Reservoir and a few more were seen from the moving bus, mainly in the rift valley

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumeniferus*

Common in the rift valley and at Debre Zeit, many active nests were seen in Awassa

CICONIIFORMES: *Threskiornithidae*African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis a. aethiopicus*

Small numbers were seen regularly as we travelled with larger concentrations at Lakes Chelekleke and Awassa

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash nilotica*

About six were seen at Wondo Genet

Wattled Ibis *Bostrychia carunculata* E

Fairly common in upland areas such as the Sululta Plain and Bale Mountains with smaller numbers at Wondo Genet and in the rift valley; one of few species seen daily

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

About 50 were at Lake Chelekleke and another 10 at Awassa

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*

Two were at Lake Zwai with a couple were seen from the moving bus at Lake Koka as we returned towards Addis Ababa

CICONIIFORMES: *Ardeidae*Striated Heron *Butorides striata atricapilla*

One was at Lake Awassa (N/L)

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

Common at Lakes Chelekleke and Awassa with a few more seen as we travelled through the rift valley

'Western' Cattle Egret *Bubulcus (i.) ibis*

Regularly seen, often in association with livestock; Asian birds are now often considered a separate species from those in Europe and Africa

Grey Heron *Ardea c. cinerea*

One was at the Sululta Plain and a handful at Lake Chelekleke

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*

Two were viewed distantly on the Sululta Plain and four more were at Lake Chelekleke

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*

One gave great views at Awassa fish market after one flew over at our nearby hotel

Great Egret *Ardea alba melanorhyncha*

Most lowland wetlands held at least a few and hundreds were at Lake Awassa

Yellow-billed Egret *Egretta intermedia brachyrhyncha*

Two were at Lake Zwai, others may have been overlooked as it was hardly possible to scrutinise all the many egrets seen; also known as Intermediate Egret

Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca*

Two were at Lake Awassa, quite a scarce bird in Ethiopia

Little Egret *Egretta g. garzetta*

Most wetlands in the lowlands held several and hundreds were at Lake Awassa

PELECANIFORMES: *Scopidae*

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*

Small numbers were seen in most lowland wetland contexts, several nests were seen

PELECANIFORMES: *Pelecanidae*

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*

One was at Lake Zwai and four at Awassa fish market

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens*

Four were viewed distantly on Lake Hora with singles at Lakes Awassa and Koka

PELECANIFORMES: *Phalacrocoracidae*

Reed Cormorant *Phalacrocorax a. africanus*

A handful were at Lakes Chelekleke, Hora and Zwai but well over 100 were at Lake Awassa; also known as Long-tailed Cormorant

White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax lucidus*

Two at Gafersa Reservoir were followed by two more at Lake Hora and about 50 at Lake Awassa. Sometimes considered a subspecies of Great Cormorant *P. carbo*

PELECANIFORMES: *Anhingaidae*

African Darter *Anhinga r. rufa*

Three were at Lake Zwai. Some authors consider all Old World darters as part of one species, *A. melanogaster*

FALCONIFORMES: *Falconidae*

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

Six were hawking around a stubble fire near Dodola. Considered vulnerable by Birdlife International, primarily due to habitat degradation in the breeding areas.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus rufescens*

Ones and twos were occasionally seen from the moving bus in the rift valley and en route to and from the Bale Mountains; about 20 were seen in total

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus abyssinicus*

A couple were over Gafersa Reservoir and the Sululta Plain and another at the Sanetti Plateau, fewer than might have been expected

Saker Falcon *Falco c. cherrug*

Three immatures seen between Langano and Debre Zeit as we returned towards Addis Ababa at the end of the tour were presumably migrants returning north. Considered endangered by Birdlife International due to habitat loss and theft for falconry

FALCONIFORMES: *Accipitridae*Black-winged Kite *Elanus c. caeruleus*

One was seen from the bus on the Sululta Plain and another en route to Goba (N/L). Formerly known as Black-shouldered Kite but that name is now reserved for an Australasian species

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus a. aegyptius*

Common and widespread, especially abundant in urban contexts but seen everywhere except on the Sanetti Plateau. The split of sub-saharan populations from Black Kite *M. migrans* is fairly widely accepted. A further split of the two African races has been proposed based on molecular evidence but the situation is confused as that evidence does not correspond with the distribution of the currently described races!

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*

Two or three were at Lakes Chelekleke, Hora and Zwai, a couple were over Dodola and Wondo Genet and about 10 were at Lake Awassa

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus meridionalis*

Between two and four were at Debre Libanos, one of which showed very well indeed, one was seen en route to Goba and two more were on the Sanetti Plateau. Also known as Bearded Vulture

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron p. percnopterus*

Four were at Debre Libanos and one near Debre Zeit. Considered endangered by Birdlife International, the causes of declines vary from region to region but in an African context the reduction of wild ungulate populations is probably the main factor at present

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*

Fairly common and widespread but most abundant in urban contexts and rare at the highest elevations, though one was seen near the Sanetti Plateau

White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*

The four seen were at Gafersa Reservoir, Zwai and Dodola (twice). Considered near-threatened by Birdlife International due mainly to habitat loss and the reduction in populations of wild ungulates; the number of individuals of this species seen on tours to Ethiopia seem to be falling sharply

Rüppell's Vulture *Gyps rueppellii erlangeri*

Up to 40 were at Debre Libanos with much smaller everywhere else except for about 20 at a roadside carcass in the rift valley. Considered near-threatened by Birdlife International due mainly to habitat loss and the reduction in populations of wild ungulates

White-headed Vulture *Aegypius occipitalis*

One gave a couple of close fly-pasts at Debre Libanos and another was in the mountains west of Dinsho. Considered vulnerable by Birdlife International, the causes of declines are probably similar to those having an impact on Egyptian Vulture populations in sub-Saharan Africa

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus a. aeruginosus*

Three or four were at Lakes Chelekleke and Hora with a few more from the moving bus in the rift valley

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*

An adult male flew over the moving bus near Dodola and a couple of the unidentified harriers seen near there were likely this species too. Considered near-threatened by Birdlife International due to habitat loss in the breeding areas of Central Asia

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Of about 10 harriers seen east of Dodola at least four were certainly this species, two more were seen in the rift valley

African Harrier-hawk *Polyboroides t. typus*

Ones and twos were at Wondo Genet, above Goba and at Langanu

Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax m. metabates*

Two flew over at Zwai during our lunch stop there and a couple more were seen from the moving bus in the rift valley

African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro unduliventer / croizati*

A perched bird gave good scope views at Dinsho

Black Sparrowhawk *Accipiter m. melanoleucus*

One flew over the moving bus at Robe

'Steppe' Common Buzzard *Buteo b. vulpinus*

A couple were at Wondo Genet and another above Goba

Mountain Buzzard *Buteo o. oreophilus* RR

Singles were seen on two occasions at Wondo Genet and five times in the Bale Mountains

Augur Buzzard *Buteo augur*

Up to four per day were seen with except during our day in the mountains above Goba when up to 10 were noted

Tawny Eagle *Aquila r. rapax / belisarius*

One was over the hotel in Addis Ababa, about four showed well at Debre Libanos and a further six were noted at widespread mainly lowland sites

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis orientalis*

One near Dinsho was followed by about 20 on the Sanetti Plateau, all were immatures

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

Singles were over Zwai and Wondo Genet

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis*

About four were seen at Wondo Genet and three more near Awassa

Crowned Eagle *Stephanoaetus coronatus*

A displaying pair gave some good views over Wondo Genet

GRUIFORMES: *Rallidae*Rouget's Rail *Rougetius rougetii* NE

Only seen in the Bale Mountains where it was quite common and easy to see, especially along the roadside west of Dinsho; about 30 were seen in total. Considered near-threatened by Birdlife International with habitat loss and disturbance regarded as the main threats

Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostra*

Two were at Awassa fish market

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus meridionalis*

A few were at Lakes Chelekleke, Hora and Awassa

Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata*

Gatherings of over 50 were at Lakes Chelekleke and Awassa with much smaller numbers at Lake Hora; also known as Crested Coot

GRUIFORMES: *Gruidae*Black Crowned Crane *Balearica pavonina*

One showed quite briefly at Lake Chelekleke before disappearing into long grass. Considered near-threatened by Birdlife International with habitat loss and degradation regarded as the main threats.

Common Crane *Grus grus*

About 30 were at Lake Chelekleke with a couple more over Lake Hora

CHARADRIIFORMES: *Burhinidae*Senegal Thick-knee *Burhinus senegalensis*

One was at Lake Zwai

CHARADRIIFORMES: *Recurvirostridae*Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Small groups were seen at a few lowland wetlands

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Three or four were on the Sululta Plain and three more at Awassa

CHARADRIIFORMES: *Charadriidae*Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus*

Small numbers were at most lowland wetlands after the first at Gafersa Reservoir

Black-winged Lapwing *Vanellus m. melanopterus*

Four were on the Sululta Plain with five more near Dodola as we came and went from the Bale Mountains

Spot-breasted Lapwing *Vanellus melanocephalus* E

Up to 10 were seen west of Dinsho as we approached there from Dodola, very attractive birds

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius curonicus*

About 10 were at Lake Zwai

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius t. tricoloris*

One was at Lake Zwai and another near Dinsho

CHARADRIIFORMES: *Jacaniidae*African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*

Up to 50 in total were seen at Lakes Chelekleke, Zwai and Awassa



CHARADRIIFORMES: *Scolopacidae*African Snipe *Gallinago nigripennis aequatorialis*

Two on the Sanetti Plateau eventually gave some good scope views

Common Snipe *Gallinago g. gallinago*

About 12 in total were seen at Lakes Chelekleke, Zwai and Awassa

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa l. limosa*

After three on a pool on the Sululta Plain a few more were seen at lakes in the rift valley. Considered near-threatened by Birdlife International with habitat loss in breeding areas the main cause of declines

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

One at Gafersa Reservoir was followed by about 10 at Lake Chelekleke and a similar number at Lake Awassa

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Singles were at Gafersa Reservoir and the Sanetti Plateau and about 10 were at Lake Awassa

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

A couple at Gafersa Reservoir were followed by small numbers at most wetlands visited, including two at nearly 4000m on the Sanetti Plateau

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Ten were at Lakes Chelekleke and Zwai with a few more at Lake Awassa

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Ones and twos were at most wetlands visited

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

About 10 were at Lake Zwai

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

One was at Lake Zwai

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

One was on the Sululta Plain and another 50 or so at Lakes Zwai and Awassa

CHARADRIIFORMES: *Glareolidae*Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* ssp.

About six were watched hawking at Lake Zwai

CHARADRIIFORMES: *Laridae*Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus f. fuscus*

About 20 were seen at Lakes Awassa and Langano; all the adults appeared to be of the black-backed race *fuscus* from Scandinavia rather than *beuglini* from Arctic Russia

Pallas's Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*

Four adults in breeding plumage formed an impressive sight before breakfast at Lake Awassa; also known as Great Black-headed Gull

Grey-hooded Gull *Larus c. cirrocephalus*

Only seen at Lakes Awassa and Langano, about 100 were at the former and a handful at the latter; also known as Grey-headed Gull

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Most of the lakes visited in the rift valley held a few after the first 10 or so at Lake Hora

Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica*

Singles were seen briefly at Lakes Zwai and Awassa

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias b. hybrida*

One at Lake Zwai was followed by a few more at Lake Awassa

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

About 40 were at Lake Chelekleke with a few more at Lakes Hora, Zwai and Langano; most of about 500 marsh terns seen at Lake Awassa also appeared to be this species

COLUMBIFORMES: *Columbidae*[Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* 'domesticus']

Present in Addis Ababa at least

Speckled Pigeon *Columba g. guinea*

Very common and widespread, seen everywhere except the Sanetti Plateau

White-collared Pigeon *Columba albitorques* NE

Common at higher elevations, i.e. Gafersa Reservoir, the Sululta Plain, Debre Libanos and especially near Dinsho

African Olive Pigeon *Columba arquatrix*

Two flew over above Goba

Lemon Dove *Columba larvata bronzina*

Three were seen very briefly at Wondo Genet

Dusky Turtle Dove *Streptopelia lugens* RR

Common around Addis Ababa and either side of Dinsho with smaller numbers in other upland areas

Mourning Collared Dove *Streptopelia d. decipiens / elegans*

Several were at our lunch stop at Zwai with several more at Awassa and Langanano

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*

Common and widespread away from the highest elevations

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia s. senegalensis*

A couple in Debre Zeit were followed by a handful more at rift valley sites

Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistria*

One was seen quite briefly at Wondo Genet

Namaqua Dove *Oena c. capensis*

Ones and twos were occasionally seen from the moving bus as we travelled through the rift valley and one showed well south of Zwai during our roadside stop there

Bruce's Green Pigeon *Treron waalia*

A total of six were at Lake Zwai and Wondo Genet

PSITTACIFORMES: *Psittacidae*

Black-winged Lovebird *Agapornis taranta* NE

A few were near our hotel in Addis Ababa and around the church in Debre Libanos, about 10 showed well at Wondo Genet and a few more were at Awassa and Langanano

Yellow-fronted Parrot *Poicephalus flavifrons* E

Six were seen, including two perched birds, and several more heard at Wondo Genet; often one of the trickier endemics to see well

MUSOPHAGIFORMES: *Musophagidae*

White-cheeked Turaco *Tauraco l. leucotis / donaldsoni* E

About six were at Debre Libanos, 10 or more at Wondo Genet and seven above Goba; magnificent looking birds, even by the high standards of the family

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

Two were at Langanano

STRIGIFORMES: *Strigidae*

Cape Eagle-Owl *Bubo capensis dillonii*

One at a roadside quarry west of Dinsho gave great scope views

Greyish Eagle-Owl *Bubo cinerascens*

A pair gave good views at Langano after initially being a bit skittish

CAPRIMULGIFORMES: *Caprimulgidae*

Montane Nightjar *Caprimulgus poliocephalus* RR

One showed superbly while roosting on a rock at Dinsho after being located for us by a local guide there. Also known as Abyssinian Nightjar

Slender-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus clarus* RR

Up to six roosting birds gave some great views at Langano

APODIFORMES: *Apodidae*

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba africana* etc

A flock of 40 was seen above Goba

[Nyanza Swift *Apus n. niansae* / *somalicus* RR]

A flock of 50 swifts over Debre Libanos were very probably this species but they didn't linger to allow confirmation

White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer*

Three were seen from the bus as we crossed the Sululta Plain (N/L)

COLIIFORMES: *Coliidae*

Speckled Mousebird *Colinus striatus leucotis* / *hilgerti*

Fairly common and widespread, though largely absent from higher elevations

TROGONIFORMES: *Trogonidae*

Narina Trogon *Apaloderma n. narina*

A pair showed very well just before we departed from Wondo Genet; payback for giving the local guides there a decent tip the day before!

CORACIIFORMES: *Coraciidae*

Abyssinian Roller *Coracias abyssinicus*

Two were on roadside wires north of Awassa

CORACIIFORMES: *Alcedinidae*

Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon s. senegalensis*

One at Wondo Genet was followed by about five more at Awassa

Malachite Kingfisher *Alcedo cristata galerita*

Four were at Lakes Chelekleke and Hora and another five or more at Awassa

Half-collared Kingfisher *Alcedo semitorquata heuglini*

One was seen a couple of times at the quarry above Wondo Genet; increasingly difficult to find in Ethiopia and often tricky elsewhere too

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle r. rudis*

Two were at Lake Zwai and at least 10 at Lake Awassa

CORACIIFORMES: *Meropidae*

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus cyanostictus*

One was seen briefly from the moving bus in Debre Zeit

Blue-breasted Bee-eater *Merops variegatus lafresnayii*

Small numbers were seen on five dates after the first at Lake Hora. Birds of the subspecies *lafresnayii* are sometimes split as Abyssinian (or Ethiopian) Bee-eater *M. lafresnayii* which would be a near-endemic (also occurring locally in Sudan)

Northern Carmine Bee-eater *Merops nubicus*

After a few on roadside wires near there one posed for the scope at Lake Zwai, many more were seen on roadside wires further south towards Awassa

CORACIIFORMES: *Upupidae*

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa e. epops* etc

A couple were at Zwai, one near Dodola and one above Goba, the birds at Zwai were certainly of the migratory nominate race and the others were seen too briefly to be sure they weren't so-called 'Central' African Hoopoes *Upupa (africana) senegalensis*; authorities are divided on how many species of hoopoe should be recognised and which races should belong to which species

CORACIIFORMES: *Bucerotidae*

Hemprich's Hornbill *Tockus hemprichii* RR

Three were seen at Debre Libanos and four more in the rift valley as we travelled

Von der Decken's Hornbill *Tockus deckeni* RR

Two or three were seen at Langanjo

Silvery-cheeked Hornbill *Bycanistes brevis*

Up to 30 were at Wondo Genet with a few more at and near Awassa

CORACIIFORMES: *Bucorvidae*

Abyssinian Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus abyssinicus*

A pair at the Portuguese Bridge at Debre Libanos (and odd seeming location) were followed by two more pairs seen from the bus as we drove through the rift valley. Also known as Northern Ground Hornbill

PICIFORMES: *Ramphastidae*

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus c. chrysoconus / xanthostictus*

Two were seen at Wondo Genet

Red-fronted Barbet *Tricholaema d. diademata* RR

One was seen at the roadside stop south of Zwai

Banded Barbet *Lybius u. undatus / thiogaster / leucogenys / salvadori* NE

Two at Debre Libanos were followed by another at Awassa; very smart looking birds

Black-billed Barbet *Lybius guifsobalito* RR

One was at Lake Hora and another at Langano

Double-toothed Barbet *Lybius bidentatus aequatorialis*

Two were seen at Wondo Genet

PICIFORMES: *Indicatoridae*

Green-backed Honeybird *Prodotiscus zambesiae ellenbecki*

One showed well at Wondo Genet. Also known as Slender-billed Honeyguide

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor diadematus*

About four were seen briefly at Wondo Genet

PICIFORMES: *Picidae*

Red-throated Wryneck *Jynx ruficollis* ssp.

One showed well at Awassa fish market; birds in Ethiopia are supposed to be of the endemic subspecies *aequatorialis* but those occurring in the rift valley look much closer in appearance to the more widespread, but patchily distributed, nominate race

Nubian Woodpecker *Campethera n. nubica* RR

Two showed well at Awassa fish market

Abyssinian Woodpecker *Dendropicos abyssinicus* NE

Two were seen very well at Wondo Genet

‘African’ Grey-headed Woodpecker *Dendropicos s. spodocephalus* RR

About 10 were seen at four lowland sites after the first at our hotel in Addis Ababa

PASSERIFORMES: *Platysteiridae*

‘Western’ Black-headed Batis *Batis (minor) erlangeri*

One or two were at Awassa fish market

Brown-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira cyanea aethiopica*

Two were seen at Wondo Genet

PASSERIFORMES: *Malaconotidae*

Northern Puffback *Dryoscopus gambensis erythraea*

Two were seen at Debre Libanos and two more at Wondo Genet

Tropical Boubou *Laniarius a. aethiopicus*

Two were seen, and others heard, at Wondo Genet, also heard at Dinsho

Brubru *Nilaus a. afer*

One was at our roadside stop south of Zwai

PASSERIFORMES: *Campephagidae*

Grey Cuckooshrike *Coracina caesia pura*

One was seen at Wondo Genet

Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike *Campephaga phoenicea*

One was seen at Wondo Genet

PASSERIFORMES: *Laniidae*

Grey-backed Fiscal *Lanius excubitoroides intercedens*

One was at Lake Chelekleke and about 10 on roadside wires north of Awassa

Common Fiscal *Lanius collaris humeralis*

Ones and twos

[Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus*]

One was at Langano (L/O)

PASSERIFORMES: *Oriolidae*

Ethiopian Oriole *Oriolus m. monacha* / *meneliki* NE

About 20 were seen during our full day at Wondo Genet. Also known as Abyssinian Black-headed, Dark-headed & Black-headed Forest Oriole

PASSERIFORMES: *Dicruridae*

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis divaricatus*

A nesting pair were at Zwai and three or four were at Awassa fish market

PASSERIFORMES: *Monarchidae*

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis ferretti*

Ones and twos were seen at Lakes Hora, Awassa and Langano with a couple more at our lunch stops in Dodola

PASSERIFORMES: *Corvidae*

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax baileyi* e

Three were seen on the high pass between Dinsho and Dodola

Cape Crow *Corvus capensis kordofanensis*

Fairly common and widespread away from the highest elevations visited but largely replaced by the next species in urban contexts

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*

Locally common, mainly in urban contexts

Somali Crow *Corvus edithae* RR

About 20 were seen in Robe, the westernmost limit of this poorly known species' range. Also known as Dwarf Raven and formerly considered a subspecies of Brown-necked Raven *C. ruficollis*

Fan-tailed Raven *Corvus rhipidurus*

Common at Debre Libanos, above Wondo Genet quarry and in parts of the Bale Mountains, a handful were also seen in the rift valley

Thick-billed Raven *Corvus crassirostris* NE

After the first were seen in flight near Shashemene this awesome looking crow was seen well at Wondo Genet and at Awassa with a couple more elsewhere in the rift valley as we travelled

PASSERIFORMES: *Paridae*

White-winged Black Tit *Parus l. leucomelas* e

One was at Langano



White-backed Black Tit *Parus leuconotus* E

Three showed well at Debre Libanos and another was seen briefly at Dinsho

PASSERIFORMES: *Hirundinidae*

Black Saw-wing *Psaldoprocne pristopectera blanfordi* e / *antinorii* e

Common at Wondo Genet where flocks of over 100 were seen; at least most birds showed rather distinctive white or whitish underwing coverts.

The taxonomy of 'Black' Saw-wings is complicated but it seems likely that at some point splits will occur (as several population meet without apparent interbreeding); this could result in Ethiopia gaining further endemic species, i.e. Ethiopian or Brown Saw-wing *P. antinorii* (including ssp. *blanfordi*, though this also sometimes mooted as being specifically distinct). The range of *blanfordi* is given as the highlands of west-central Ethiopia while *antinorii* is said to occur in the highlands of northeast, south and east-central Ethiopia. Wondo Genet is best described as being in south-central Ethiopia so it is not quite clear which race we saw based on published distributional information. Other races occur elsewhere in Ethiopia (far north and far southwest), one of these is the nominate race *pristopectera* of Black saw-wing (likely to be renamed Blue Saw-wing in the event of splits) but the other is also mooted as a possible separate species so Ethiopia could ultimately end up with anything from one to four Saw-wing species, three of which would be endemic and one near-endemic

Brown-throated Martin *Riparia paludicola schoensis* e

Large gatherings were seen at Lake Chelekleke and near Robe with smaller numbers seen while en route between sites in more lowland areas

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* ssp

One was seen on the Sululta Plain (N/L)

Barn Swallow *Hirundo r. rustica* etc

Small numbers were seen, mostly in the rift valley, many seemed to be migrating north

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula pusilla*

Small numbers were at Gafersa Reservoir, Debre Libanos, Wondo Genet and the quarry west of Dinsho

Common House Martin *Delichon u. urbicum / meridionale*

Two were seen in the Bale Mountains and one at Awassa

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica rufula / domicella / melanocrissus* e

Up to four per day were seen everywhere except the Bale Mountains

PASSERIFORMES: *Alaudidae*

Erlanger's Lark *Calandrella erlangeri* E

Four or five showed well on the Sululta Plain, a rather striking lark

Thekla Lark *Galerida theklae praeterrmissa e / buè e*

A couple on the Sululta Plain were followed by about 10 on the Sanetti Plateau with a few more in the Bale Mountains near Dinsho

PASSERIFORMES: *Cisticolidae*

Singing Cisticola *Cisticola c. cantans*

One was seen at our hotel in Goba

Ethiopian Cisticola *Cisticola lugubris* NE

Two showed well at Gafersa Reservoir and were followed by a couple more on the Sululta Plateau and in the Bale Mountains. Sometimes considered part of Rufous-winged Cisticola *C. galactotes*

Stout Cisticola *Cisticola r. robustus e*

A couple showed briefly at Debre Libanos

Pectoral-patch Cisticola *Cisticola b. brunnescens*

A couple were at Gafersa Reservoir and on the Sululta Plain

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia s. subflava / pallescens*

Two were seen at Debre Libanos and two more above Goba

Buff-bellied Warbler *Phyllolais pulchella* RR

One was seen briefly and photographed at Zwai (N/L)

Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brevicaudata* ssp.

Up to 10 were at Wondo Genet with a couple more at Awassa

PASSERIFORMES: *Pycnonotidae*

Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus schoanus*

Common throughout except where replaced by the next species in the Bale Mountains

Dark-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus tricolor*

Fairly common at and above Goba in the Bale Mountains; often considered a subspecies of Common Bulbul

PASSERIFORMES: *Sylviidae*

Cinnamon Bracken Warbler *Bradypterus c. cinnamomeus* RR

One between Shashamene and Dodola was followed by about six more in the Bale Mountains

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

A few were seen and heard at Lakes Chelekleke and Hora

[Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* ssp.]

Heard but not seen at Lake Hora

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais p. pallida / elaeica*

Singles were seen at our hotel at Awassa and at Awassa fish market

Brown Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus u. umbrovirens / omoensis* RR

Two or three at Wondo Genet were followed by about four in the Bale Mountains

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* ssp.

One was seen and heard at Awassa

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* ssp.

Fairly common and very widespread, including at over 3000m in the Bale Mountains, some were singing. Some greyer looking individuals were evidently of the race *abietinus* and given the location of Ethiopia all were probably of that race

Red-faced Crombec *Sylvietta whytii loringi*

One was seen just south of Zwai

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* ssp.

Ones and twos were seen at widespread locations, and varying altitudes, recorded on four dates

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* ssp.

Several were at Awassa after an earlier bird at Debre Libanos

Bale Parisoma *Parisoma griseiventris* E

Two showed well just below the treeline above Goba. Most authors regard these birds as a form of Brown Parisoma *P. lugens*

PASSERIFORMES: *Timaliidae*

Abyssinian Catbird *Parophasma galinieri* NE

About eight were seen and several others heard in the forest above Goba, others were heard at Dinsho

PASSERIFORMES: *Zosteropidae*

Abyssinian White-eye *Zosterops a. abyssinicus / omoensis / jubaensis* RR

A handful at Lake Hora were identified by their distinctly pale bills and greenish rather than yellow foreheads. White-eye taxonomy in East Africa (and elsewhere) is complex and confusing, none of the current field guides illustrate the particular races occurring in Ethiopia

Montane White-eye *Zosterops p. poliogastrus / kaffensis* RR

Small numbers were seen on four dates after the first in Addis Ababa; also known as Broad-ringed White-eye

PASSERIFORMES: *Certhiidae*Spotted Creeper *Salpornis spilonotus erlangeri* c

Three at Wondo Genet were followed by a couple more at Awassa fish market, all gave great views. This species has a curious distribution, it occurs in pockets across sub-Saharan Africa and also in parts of northern India, while all look essentially similar there are some marked vocal differences with birds from West Africa and India sounding the same but distinctly different from those in Eastern and Southern Africa; it seems likely that more than one species is involved and the name Eastern African Spotted Creeper *S. salvadori* has been suggested for the birds we saw

PASSERIFORMES: *Sturnidae*Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea*

About six were in trees at our lunch stop in Zwai; some were in their spectacular breeding garb

Greater Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chalybaeus cyaniventris*

Small numbers were seen at widespread sites including Addis Ababa, Zwai and Goba, recorded on five dates

Rüppell's Starling *Lamprotornis purpuroptera aeneocephalus* RR

Small numbers were seen in the rift valley, especially around hotel gardens at Awassa and Langano

Superb Starling *Lamprotornis superbus* RR

About 15 were seen at Langano

Slender-billed Starling *Onychognathus t. tenuirostris* RR

Up to thirty were seen at Wondo Genet, including several that posed for the scope, a couple more flew over at Goba

White-billed Starling *Onychognathus albirostris* NE

Patience paid off as a few from a mobile flock of 20 or more settled for the scope at Debre Libanos, albeit rather distantly

Sharpe's Starling *Pholia sharpii* RR

Up to 10 were found at Wondo Genet

Red-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhynchus*

Small groups were seen on livestock, mainly donkeys, on four occasions, three of which were as we drove from Goba to Awassa

PASSERIFORMES: *Turdidae*Abyssinian Ground Thrush *Zoothera p. piaggiae* RR

One at Wondo Genet was followed by another in the forest above Goba and two more at Dinsho

Groundscraper Thrush *Psophocichla litsitsirupa simensis*

After the first on the Sululta Plain there were five further encounters with birds at higher elevations

African Thrush *Turdus pelios centralis*

One was identified at Langano (N/L)

Abyssinian Thrush *Turdus abyssinicus* RR

Birds resembling this form (with dark/saturated plumage tones and orange bills) were recorded almost throughout. The taxonomy of *Turdus* thrushes in Africa is very confused and confusing, *abyssinicus* was formerly one of 14 subspecies of the widespread Olive Thrush *T. olivaceus* (as were most races that currently fall under African Thrush) and some argue that it should remain so, at least until relationships within the whole complex are better understood. Also known as Mountain Thrush

PASSERIFORMES: *Muscicapidae*[Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* ssp]

Heard but not seen at Awassa

Rüppell's Robin-chat *Cosypha s. semirufa* RR

After the first on the Sululta Plain one or two were seen on four dates, mainly at higher elevations

White-browed Robin-chat *Cosypha b. heuglini*

One was seen briefly but well in our hotel garden at Awassa. Also known as Heuglin's Robin Chat

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus p. samamisticus*

Singles were seen at Awassa and Langano; both were males of the distinctively white-winged race *samamisticus* which breeds in the Caucasus and Crimea and is colloquially known as 'Ehrenburg's' Redstart

African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus albofasciatus*

Singles of this distinctively black-breasted race were seen on the Sululta Plain and near Dinsho (N/L). In addition, a couple of other stonechats were seen briefly from the moving bus and seem likely to also have been this race which occurs in Ethiopia, Sudan and northern Uganda and has been mooted as a possible split; conversely some dispute the validity of the split of African Stonechat from birds found across the Palearctic and suggest all should be regarded as Common Stonechats (as opposed to six or seven species as others have argued)

Botta's Wheatear *Oenanthe bottae frenata* NE

A couple were at Gafersa Reservoir with a few more at the Sululta Plain and as we travelled to and from Goba. Formerly lumped with what is now known as Heuglin's Wheatear and known as Red-breasted Wheatear, the latter name is still used for *bottae* by IOC but Botta's is preferable to avoid confusion with the former and enlarged species

[Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*]

One was seen on the Sululta Plain (L/O)

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*

Fairly common at lower elevations, mainly seen from the moving bus; recorded on six dates

Moorland Chat *Cercomela s. sordida* RR; e

Common in the Bale Mountains, especially on the Sanetti Plateau where dozens were found

Rüppell's Black Chat *Myrmecocichla melaena* NE

Up to 10 were seen at and around Debre Libanos

Mocking Cliff Chat *Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris albiscapulata* e

A pair were at our hotel in Addis Ababa on successive mornings

White-winged Cliff Chat *Thamnolaea semirufa* E

Two showed well at the Portuguese bridge at Debre Libanos

Little Rock Thrush *Monticola r. rufocinereus*

One was seen briefly at Langanjo (N/L)

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius* ssp.

A wintering male showed well at the Portuguese Bridge at Debre Libanos

Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher *Dioptornis c. chokolatinus* NE

Locally common at Debre Libanos, Wondo Genet and above Goba

African Grey Flycatcher *Bradornis microrhynchus pumilus*

One was south of Zwai

Pale Flycatcher *Bradornis pallidus bowdleri*

One was at Debre Libanos (N/L)

African Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta minima*

Fairly common and widespread; seen on six dates after the first at Debre Libanos

PASSERIFORMES: *Nectariniidae*

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis cruentata*

A handful were at Lake Hora and Awassa with a couple more elsewhere in the rift valley

Tacazze Sunbird *Nectarinia t. tacazze* RR

Small numbers were seen in more upland areas such as Addis Ababa, Wondo Genet and Goba; recorded on five days

Beautiful Sunbird *Cinnyris pulchellus melanogastrus*

Up to 10 were seen at Zwai and Awassa, including a few males in breeding plumage

Marico Sunbird *Cinnyris mariquensis osiris*

Three were at Zwai and another at Langanu; also known as Mariqua Sunbird

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus fazoglensis*

Common at Lake Hora and Wondo Genet but not certainly identified elsewhere, all were in non-breeding plumage

PASSERIFORMES: *Passeridae*

White-browed Sparrow-Weaver *Plocepasser mahali melanorhynchus*

A couple at Zwai were followed by several more at Langanu

Swainson's Sparrow *Passer swainsonii* RR

Fairly common in the lowlands, for example in hotel gardens at Zwai, Awassa and Langanu

PASSERIFORMES: *Ploceidae*

White-headed Buffalo Weaver *Dinemellia d. dinemelli* RR

Up to six were at Langanu

Thick-billed Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons melanota*

Two flocks totalling about 100 birds were at the quarry above Wondo Genet; also known as Grosbeak Weaver

Baglafaecht Weaver *Ploceus b. baglafaecht*

Fairly common and very widespread away from the highest elevations, many were in breeding plumage

Little Weaver *Ploceus l. luteolus*

Half-a-dozen were at Awassa fish market

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis crocatus*

A few were seen at Wondo Genet and Awassa

Rüppell's Weaver *Ploceus galbula* NE

After the first at Lakes Chelekleke and Hora a few more were at Awassa and Langanu

Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus abyssinicus*

Small numbers were seen at Zwai and Awassa

Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes melanotis leuconotus*

Three or four were at Wondo Genet and a couple more were at Awassa, some were nest building

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea aethiopica*

Small numbers of non-breeding plumage birds were mixed in with bishops at Lake Chelekleke

Yellow Bishop *Euplectes capensis xanthomelas* e

Four non-breeding plumage birds were seen briefly near Dinsho

Northern Red Bishop *Euplectes f. franciscanus*

Small flocks of non-breeding birds were at Lakes Chelekleke and Hora

PASSERIFORMES: *Estrildidae*

Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala brunneiceps*

Fairly common but rather unobtrusive, seen on five days at lower elevations

Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus b. bengalus*

Small numbers were in disturbed habitats at lower elevations, seen on three days

Yellow-bellied Waxbill *Estrilda q. quartinia*

Three were at Wondo Genet with another ten or more above Goba

Crimson-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda r. rhodopyga* RR

Three were at Awassa fish market (N/L)

Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura cucullata scutatus*

A couple were at Wondo Genet and about six at Awassa fish market

PASSERIFORMES: *Viduidae*

Village Indigobird *Vidua chalybeata ultramarina* e

A few were at our lunch stop in Zwai

PASSERIFORMES: *Motacillidae*

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla f. flava / beema / feldegg*.

Small numbers were seen regularly except at the highest elevations; black-headed subspecies *feldegg* seemed to be commonest in wetter areas while blue-headed *flava / beema* was found throughout.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* ssp.

A couple were seen at Wondo Genet

Mountain Wagtail *Motacilla c. clara* e

Up to six were seen at Wondo Genet and one near Robe

White Wagtail *Motacilla a. alba*

Four were at Gafersa Reservoir and the Sululta Plain and a couple at Lake Zwai



Abyssinian Longclaw *Macronyx flavicollis* E

Three were seen at Gafersa Reservoir and a couple more heard at the Sululta Plateau. Considered near-threatened by Birdlife International with habitat loss cited as the main cause for concern

African Pipit *Anthus c. cinnamomeus* / *annae*

One showed briefly but well at Gafersa Reservoir. Also known as Grassveld Pipit

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* ssp

A couple were seen at Gafersa Reservoir

Tree Pipit *Anthus t. trivialis*

One was seen near Robe

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*

Small numbers were seen most days at higher elevations after the first at Gafersa Reservoir; a couple were at almost 4000m on the Sanetti Plateau

PASSERIFORMES: *Fringillidae*

Yellow-crowned Canary *Serinus f. flavivertex*

About 20 were seen above Goba as we descended from the Sanetti Plateau

Ethiopian Siskin *Serinus nigriceps* E

Common in the Bale Mountains (even at 4000m on the Sanetti Plateau) after a handful of earlier birds at Gafersa Reservoir Also known as Black-headed Siskin

African Citril *Crithagra c. citrinelloides* RR

Fairly common and widespread away from higher elevations

Brown-rumped Seedeater *Crithagra tristriata* NE

Common at higher elevations, i.e. around Addis Ababa and in the Bale Mountains, not seen in the rift valley or at Wondo Genet

Streaky Seedeater *Crithagra s. striolata* RR

Rather common and widespread, particularly abundant above Goba

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## MAMMALS

Species order, nomenclature and taxonomy generally follow Duff and Lawson's Checklist of the Mammals of the World; A&C Black (2004)

Starck's Hare *Lepus starcki* E

About six were seen on the Sanetti Plateau, Bale Mountains; also known as Ethiopian Highland Hare

Ground Squirrel species *Xerux* sp.

One was seen south of Zwai; presumably it was an Unstriped Ground Squirrel *X. rutilus* if the distributional information in Duff and Lawson (2004) is correct

Gambian Sun Squirrel *Heliosciurus gambensis*

One was seen at Wondo Genet.

Abyssinian Grass Rat *Arvicanthbis abyssinicus* E

Common on the Sanetti Plateau

Giant Mole-rat *Tachyoryctes macrocephalus* E

About six were seen at and very near their burrow entrances on the Sanetti Plateau, Bale Mountains; also known as Big-headed Mole-rat and Root-rat

Golden Jackal *Canis aureus*

One narrowly avoided being run over as we approached Awassa

Ethiopian Wolf *Canis simensis* E

A total of at least six on the Sanetti Plateau in the Bale Mountains including some superb views down to 10 metres range and with animals watched at rest and while hunting Grass-rats. Also known as Simien Wolf, Fox and Jackal.

Considered endangered by IUCN (formerly critically endangered), the latest population estimate suggests a total population of 442 individuals (of which 239 are mature), more than half of these are in the Bale Mountains NP.

Source: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/3748>

Black-and-White Colobus *Colobus guereza*

Up to 40 were seen at and above Wondo Genet with another eight at Awassa. Also known as Mantled Guereza and Guereza Colobus

Gelada Baboon *Papio gelada* E

At least 50 including several fine males showed very well indeed at Debre Libanos

Olive Baboon *Papio anubis*

Eight were at Wondo Genet with several more along roadsides en route to and from Goba.

'Vervet' Monkey species *Cercopithecus* sp.

Fairly common at Wondo Genet and Awassa. Vervet Monkey taxonomy is rather complex and three currently recognised species meet and hybridise in Ethiopia. Based on distributional information in Duff and Lawson (2004) the ones we saw were perhaps Grivet Monkeys *C. aethiops* rather than Vervet Monkeys *C. pygerythrus*; the third species, Bale Monkey *C. djamdjensis* is confined to the Bale Mountains where we saw no 'Vervets'

Wart Hog *Phacochoerus aethiopicus*

At least 10 were seen in the Bale Mountains.

Mountain Nyala *Tragelaphus buxtoni* E

About 20 were seen in the Bale Mountains

Bohor Reedbuck *Redunca redunca*

Seven were near Dinsho as we approached there from the west, about five were on the Sanetti Plateau and a few in Dinsho as we returned westwards

'Menelik's' Bushbuck *Tragelaphus scriptus meneliki*

At least three showed well at Dinsho

Bush Duiker *Sylvicapra grimmia abyssinica*

Two or three were along the wooded stream just west of Robe

Rock Hyrax *Procavia capensis*

Two were in the quarry west of Dinsho