



*The White-necked Rockfowl is somewhat misnamed as it has both a yellow neck and head but the name is presumably inspired by the dried and colourless corpses to be found in museum collections. Once again we enjoyed a marvellous and unforgettable encounter with this wonderful bird. (Nik Borrow)*

## **BEST OF GHANA**

**7 – 21 MARCH 2018**

**LEADERS: NIK BORROW and PAUL MENSAH**

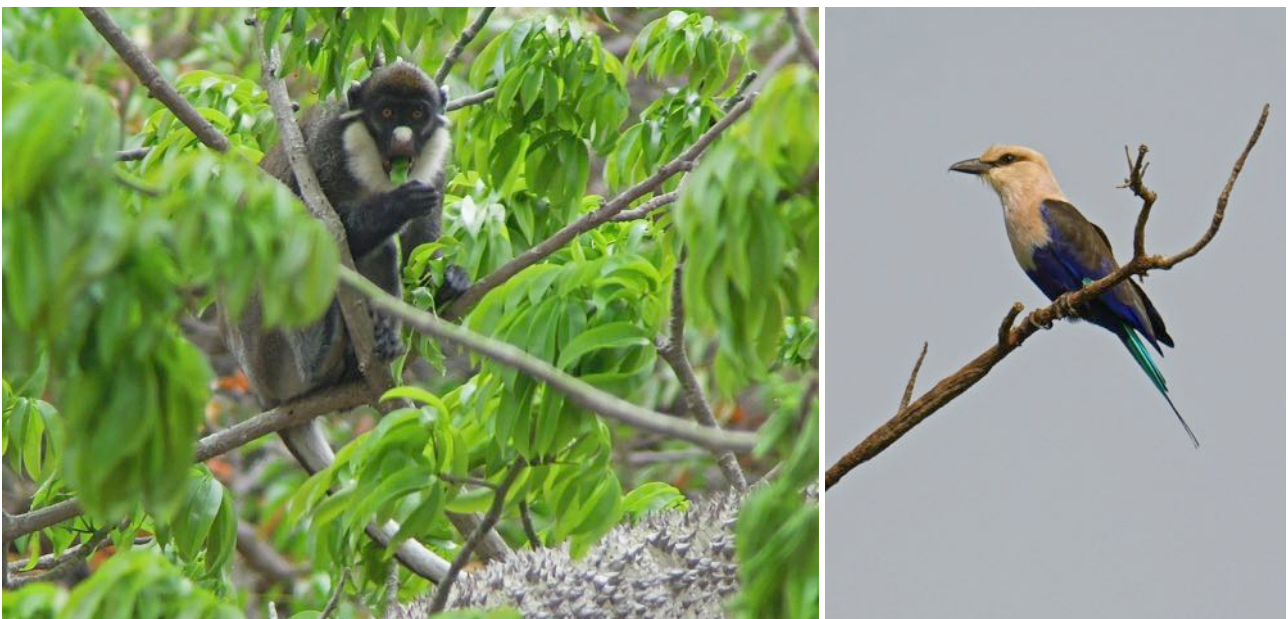
Ghana, once known as the 'Gold Coast' is situated in the very heart of West Africa and the country's growing tourist industry has much to offer visitors through the country's colourful and vibrant culture, turbulent history and a coast lined with beautiful beaches and numerous slave forts that are still left standing to remind visitors of a grim past. However, the aim of our 'Best of' tour was to discover the cream of Ghana's avian riches and our focus was on an exciting selection of Upper Guinea Forest endemic birds and one very special species in particular; the strange and bizarre White-necked Rockfowl (aka Yellow-headed Picathartes). Our success with this charismatic species was total and absolute with close views of at least four individuals at close range and this event was voted the highlight of the trip! Our tour started at Shai Hills where, birding in the

thickets that surround the base of the rocky outcrops that are frequented by White-crowned Cliff Chats and colourful Double-toothed and Bearded Barbets, we managed to hear the scarce local form of African Barred Owllet sometimes split as Etchécopar's Owllet. Sadly the Winneba Plains grasslands have recently been largely destroyed and turned into a solar energy plant but even so we enjoyed great views of an African Hobby here. Spending time at Kakum National Park with its famous canopy walkway and in the surrounding farmbrush we were introduced to a mind-boggling array of forest zone species that included Upper Guinea endemics such as Fire-bellied and Melancholy Woodpeckers, West African and Red-cheeked Wattle-eyes, Sharpe's Apalis, Ussher's Flycatcher, Buff-throated Sunbird and other mouth-watering species like Rosy Bee-eater, Brown, Long-tailed and Plain Nightjars, and Puvel's Illadopsis as well as some mammals that included the wonderful and strange Pel's Anomalure. Rock Pratincoles and White-throated Blue Swallows showed well on the Pra River and then travelling westwards, stops along the coastal strip gave us Allen's Gallinule, a pair of Hartlaub's Ducks and Mangrove and Reichenbach's Sunbirds. As usual, the superb evergreen forest at Ankasa was hard work and often frustrating but we had successes with views of the Upper Guinea endemic Yellow-bearded Greenbul, Red-billed Helmetshrike, Finsch's Rufous Thrush, White-tailed Alethe, Rufous-winged Illadopsis and Red-fronted Antpecker as well as Long-tailed Hawk, Akun and Fraser's Eagle-Owls, Shining-blue and White-bellied Kingfisher, Lowland Akalat and a terrific sighting of a pair of Nkulengu Rail on their roost site. Heading up to the north we managed sightings of a group of Capuchin Babblers and the visit to Mole National Park was a great success with close up views of the desirable Forbes's Plover, Greater Painted-snipe, Denham's Bustard, Greyish Eagle-Owl, Northern White-faced Owl, Standard-winged Nightjar, several Sun Larks, Brown-rumped Bunting and a pair of showy White-throated Francolins. Even further north we searched out Fox Kestrel, Rock-loving Cisticolas and Gosling's Buntings in the boulder-strewn Tongo Hills. A Lesser Jacana we found at Nasia Swamp was the first record of this species for Ghana and on the borders of Burkina Faso, sublime Egyptian Plovers obliged along the banks of the White Volta River whilst nearby we also discovered a pair of Yellow Penduline Tit which was a great find and a male Golden-breasted Bunting. Several Green Bee-eaters (a species only added to the Ghanaian list two years ago) were seen at Tono Dam before we returned south to visit the butterfly sanctuary at Bobiri where both Black and Red-billed Dwarf Hornbills showed themselves well. Amongst the many other wonderful specialties encountered during this tour were Stone Partridge, Latham's Francolin, Spot-breasted Ibis (heard only), Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, Congo Serpent Eagle (heard only), Red-chested Goshawk, Red-thighed Sparrowhawk, Violet Turaco, Black-throated Coucal, Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo (heard only), Black Spinetail, Blue-bellied Roller, Brown-cheeked and Yellow-casqued Hornbills, Hairy-breasted Barbet, Least Honeyguide, African Piculet (heard only), Fine-spotted and Little Green Woodpeckers, Brown-necked Parrot, Senegal Batis, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Dusky Crested Flycatcher, Yellow Penduline Tit, White-throated Greenbul, Grey-headed Bristlebill, Western Bearded Greenbul, Fanti Saw-wing, West African Swallow, Preuss's Cliff Swallow, Kemp's Longbill, Rufous and Black-backed Cisticolas, Oriole Warbler, African Spotted Creeper, Chestnut-bellied Starling, Olivaceous and Little Grey Flycatchers, White-crowned Robin-Chat, 'Western' and 'Ghana' Forest Robins, White-fronted Black Chat, Pygmy Sunbird, Orange, Heuglin's Masked and Maxwell's Black Weavers, Red-vented Malimbe, Red-winged Pytilia, Black-faced Firefinch, Wilson's Indigobird and Exclamatory Paradise Whydah.



*The highly desirable Forbes's Plover was seen well in Mole National Park with up to five individuals seen on the dry plains. (Nik Borrow)*

As the group arrived in Accra in Ghana the main question on everyone's lips (or at the very least that was in their minds) was "will we see it?" The 'it' referred to the totally bizarre rockfowl but it was going to be some time before the chance of seeing this very special bird would arise. Our arrival was in the evening for an overnight stop and a short night's sleep in a comfortable hotel near the airport for we were up early the next day at five for breakfast and then drove the short distance to the Shai Hills Reserve, an area that comprises open grassland savannah and rocky inselbergs. Our visit was well into the dry season but the vegetation was still quite lush. There were numerous Double-spurred Francolins flushed from the tracks as we made our way around one of the well-vegetated inselbergs that rise up out of the surrounding scrubby plains. Before us extended a range of wooded hills that were covered in thick shrubbery and emergent trees where Senegal Parrots screeched past, Violet Turacos and shaggy-crested Western Plantain-eaters were feeding and a dapper male White-crowned Cliff Chat perched up on top of the boulders. While the morning was still fresh we struggled in the dense thickets to lure into view the local form of African Barred Owllet that is sometimes treated as a separate species; Etchécopar's Owllet. The bird called back at us repeatedly but despite trying very hard we failed to see it. Away from the thicket, the piping calls of African Grey Hornbills sounded out over the plains where a few Buffon's Kobs were grazing, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbirds hammered away and we also found Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird and colourful Vieillot's and Bearded Barbets. There were numerous White-throated Bee-eaters, some high-flying Rosy Bee-eaters and a pairs of colourful Swallow-tailed Bee-eater and Blue-bellied Roller were also admired. A distant Beaudouin's Snake Eagle was seen and other raptors on the rising thermals included Shikra, Yellow-billed Kite, Red-necked Buzzard and Lanner Falcon. A Spot-nosed Monkey was found gorging itself on leaves and other species recorded during the morning walk included Red-eyed Dove, Blue-spotted Wood Dove, Guinea Turaco, Striped Kingfisher, Green Wood Hoopoe, Senegal Batis, Black-crowned Tchagra, Northern Puffback, Fork-tailed Drongo, African Paradise Flycatcher, Piapiac, Pied Crow, Common Bulbul, Northern Crombec, Croaking, Short-winged and Zitting Cisticolas, Senegal Eremomela, Purple Starling, African Thrush, Northern Black and Spotted Flycatchers, Whinchat, Splendid and Copper Sunbirds, Bronze Mannikin, Yellow-throated Longclaw and Plain-backed Pipit.



*Spot-nosed Monkey (left) and the gorgeous Blue-bellied Roller (right) were both seen well at Shai Hills Reserve. (Nik Borrow)*

After lunch we headed back towards Accra where the heavy traffic in and around the capital consumed us and the only birds apparent were a few Yellow-billed Shrikes along the way with numerous Western Cattle Egrets, Laughing Doves, Northern Grey-headed Sparrows, Yellow-billed Kites small numbers of Hooded Vultures, African Palm and Little Swifts, Common Kestrel, Barn Swallow, Village Weaver and the ubiquitous Pied Crow. Having finally escaped the sprawling city we arrived at Winneba Lagoon but high water levels and many fishermen meant that there was little to see apart from Striated Heron, Western Reef Heron, Reed Cormorant, Black-winged Stilt, Spur-winged Lapwing, Common Greenshank, 'West African' Royal and Sandwich Terns, Broad-billed Roller and Woodland and Pied Kingfishers. We moved on to what is left of the Winneba Plains for some late afternoon birding. The majority of this area of once open grassland has now basically been destroyed and covered with solar panels for a renewable energy project so we spent our short time here birding the more shrubby areas amongst the thickets and Eucalyptus trees. A cracking African

Hobby was on show as we set foot in the grasslands and a pair of gorgeous Yellow-crowned Gonolek was seen but apart from Western Marsh Harrier, African Cuckoo, Singing Cisticola and Tree Pipit there was little else added to our lists. A Black-bellied Bustard was heard calling but we could not see it but a pair of Senegal Lapwing spotted just as we were leaving certainly made the stop worthwhile. A Slender-billed Weaver was seen at a colony just as it was getting dark and we then drove the remaining distance to the comfortable 'Rainforest Lodge' near Kakum National Park for a three nights stay.



*An African Hobby (left) put on a wonderful show over the Winneba Plains. A visit to the famous canopy walkway in Kakum National Park is always a highlight of the tour (right). (Nik Borrow)*

Our first day in the area was spent in the famous Kakum National Park. Although created in 1932, the park wasn't officially opened to the public until 1994. Covering an area of 347 square kilometres, it is semi-evergreen rain forest that has been 'selectively' logged in the recent past and anyone expecting to find pristine forest here would be sadly disappointed. Fortunately the regenerating secondary growth can be extremely 'birdy'! Kakum is perhaps most famous for it being the site of Africa's first and to date only rain forest canopy walkway. Constructed in 1995 it is comprised of about 350 metres of bridges suspended between six tree platforms that reach a height of up to 40 metres above the forest floor. Officially, it opens at 8.30 a.m. to a seemingly constant stream of whooping and screaming tourists that treat the whole thing like a funfair ride but we had arranged early entry into the park from dawn onwards that meant we had the place more or less to ourselves during the most productive time of day. In the early morning half-light we started climbing the stone steps that led us up the hillside to the start of the walkway itself.

The walkway bounced and the platforms creaked and shifted and it was a strange feeling to be suspended underneath the main canopy and amongst the boughs of the medium sized trees but high above the tops of the vine covered trunks and shrubbery below us. Speckled, Red-rumped and Yellow-throated Tinkerbirds and Yellow-spotted Barbet pooped, trilled and squeaked all around us but were not easy to see. Our first Upper Guinea endemic species were encountered; Fire-bellied Woodpecker, West African Wattle-eye, Sharpe's Apalis and the vaguely hirundine-like Ussher's Flycatcher which could be found in the higher branches of the giant trees was seen.

During our vigil Velvet-mantled Drongo and African Pied Hornbill were virtually constant companions. Green Hyllias piped out their disyllabic call from thick vegetation that provided wonderful hiding places for Tambourine Dove, Buff-spotted Woodpecker and Yellow-browed Camaroptera. Amongst the fruiting trees we were introduced to a confusing array of greenbuls that included Slender-billed, Ansorge's, Plain, Yellow-whiskered, Golden and Honeyguide Greenbuls whilst liberal splashes of colour were provided by species such as African Green Pigeon, Blue Malkoha, Diederik, Klaas's and African Emerald Cuckoos, Blue-throated Roller, Western and Black-winged Orioles, and an amazing selection of glittering sunbirds that included Little Green, 'Yellow-chinned' Grey-chinned, Collared, Blue-throated Brown, Olive, Buff-throated, Tiny, Johanna's and Superb Sunbirds.

Higher in the trees a male Preuss's Weaver and Red-headed Malimbos crept along the bare branches and White-breasted, Chestnut-breasted and Grey-headed Nigritas were seen whilst the spreading canopies allowed good foraging opportunities for a spiky-crested Levillant's Cuckoo, Red-chested Cuckoo, Naked-faced Barbet, Sabine's Puffback, Blue and Purple-throated Cuckooshrikes, Wood Warbler, Rufous-crowned Eremomela, Little Grey Flycatcher, Maxwell's Black and Yellow-mantled Weaver.



A male Preuss's Weaver (left) was seen well as it crept along the boughs of the huge tree we were under. The canopy walkway is a great place to see Blue Malkoha (right). (Nik Borrow)

A perched African Cuckoo-Hawk was scoped and in the skies above us was the large and seemingly tail-less Cassin's Spinetail along with the smaller Sabine's Spinetail, Fanti Saw-wing and Lesser Striped Swallow. A few airborne raptors included African Harrier-Hawk, Palm-nut Vulture and European Honey Buzzard.

As the morning wore on so the sweat bees increased as the humidity rose and the first groups of screaming visitors arrived to play on the walkway. We therefore deemed it best to make a hasty retreat and sought the shade of the forest interior. In the dim, tangled mesh of vegetation a pair of seldom seen Olivaceous Flycatcher performed and we enjoyed great views of a skulking Blackcap Illadopsis and the pretty little 'Ghana' Forest Robin. This is the recently described form *inexpectatus* that has even been proposed to be a separate species!

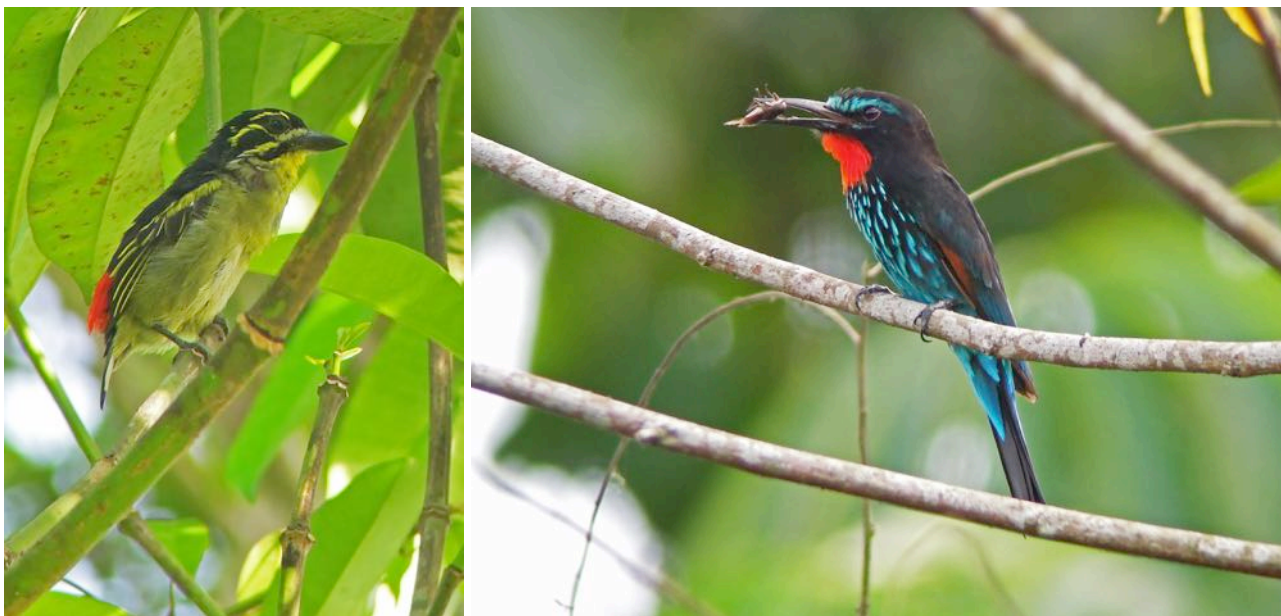


At night we managed some superb views of the bizarre Pel's Anomalure (left) and a Long-tailed Nightjar with its chick (right) was enough to melt the hardest heart. (Nik Borrow)

Taking a break for lunch we noted Mottled Spinetails en route to the hotel and later returned to the canopy walkway in the afternoon and waited for any evening activity. As dusk fell a Brown Nightjar started calling

and luckily we spotted it perched on some bare branches and watched it calling, puffing out its white throat patches with every note uttered. The astonishing Pel's Anomalure showed very nicely and returning to the bus we spotlighted tiny Demidoff's Galagos whilst roadside stops produced both Plain and Long-tailed Nightjars, the latter included an individual with a young chick.

The next morning we travelled to Antwikwaa, an area on the northern edge of the main Kakum forest. Cocoa farms, oil palm and other cultivation have eaten into the forest on this border of Kakum but indeed this sort of farmbrush can be surprisingly productive. Initially we spent a long time in a thicket somewhat unsuccessfully trying to prise out some very secretive birds that included a White-spotted Flufftail in the shadows and a pair of Brown Illadopsis that kept to the thick undergrowth whilst a Red-cheeked Wattle-eye was no more than a disembodied voice. Eventually we gave up and moved onto another area where superb Black Bee-eaters perched up for all to see, the Upper Guinea endemic Melancholy Woodpecker put in an appearance and even the mega-skulking Kemp's Longbill showed for all. Vieillot's Black Weavers were common and here are of the striking *castaneofuscus* form, which is sometimes treated as separate species known as Chestnut-and-black Weaver. The very impressive White-crested Hornbill posed for us and both Red-vented and Blue-billed Malimbos were added to our list. It got hot quickly and a trio of soaring raptors turned out to be Cassin's Hawk-Eagles. A few Palearctic migrant Common Swifts were seen and other species added during our visit included Red-chested Goshawk, Tambourine Dove, Senegal Coucal, African Pygmy Kingfisher, Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher, Little Greenbul, Red-breasted Swallow, Grey Longbill, Green Crombec, Whistling Cisticola, Chestnut-winged Starling and Olive-bellied Sunbird.



At Antwikwaa we watched the attractive Red-rumped Tinkerbird (left) and found some excellent Black Bee-eaters (right) a species that is always a firm favourite on these tours. (Nik Borrow)

As the day was getting hotter and the humidity was rising fast we travelled further north to visit a river that gave us the shining White-bibbed (or White-throated Blue) Swallow as well as several Rock Pratincoles of the rufous-naped race *iberiae* and also Common Sandpiper, Giant Kingfisher, Little Bee-eater, Northern Fiscal, Ethiopian Swallow and African Pied Wagtail. Nearby we found good numbers of Preuss's Cliff Swallows that were breeding under a culvert.

We finished the morning session and returned to the lodge and a short siesta before venturing out again to the forest at Abrafo. Afternoons are always quiet and this one was no exception however we were pleased to find a male Rufous-sided Broadbill that allowed some excellent views as it twirled around on its perch like a mechanical toy. Sadly a Chocolate-backed Kingfisher was not so well behaved and seemed reluctant to show itself well but a group of five Brown-cheeked Hornbills that flew directly over our heads was much appreciated and we also saw our first Yellow-billed Turacos, Yellow-spotted and Hairy-breasted Barbets and managed good looks at the interesting little Chestnut-capped Flycatcher.

The next morning we started soon after dawn in a still dark thicket in farmbrush at the edge of Kakum where a Puvel's Illadopsis was singing loudly and it was only a relatively short battle to get everyone to see this secretive species. Also in the farmbrush we added Ayres's Hawk-Eagle, Tawny-flanked Prinia, African Yellow

White-eye, Green-headed Sunbird, Red-headed Quelea and Black-and-white Mannikin to the list before moving into the forest itself which although rather quiet produced the regional endemic Western Bearded Greenbul and Grey-headed Bristlebill, some rather good views of the sometimes tricky White-throated Greenbul as well as Shining Drongo, Little Grey Greenbul, a flock of Spotted Greenbuls, Violet-backed Starling, Fraser's Sunbird and Western Bluebill.



*A male Rufous-sided Broadbill (left) allowed prolonged views in the Kakum area. On our first evening at Ankasa we found a superb Fraser's Eagle Owl (right). (Nik Borrow)*

After lunch we packed our bags on the bus and set off for Ankasa. We made two short but very productive stops en route. The first was at a pool where many weavers were busy breeding and we found some Orange Weavers amongst the more numerous Village and 'Chestnut-and-black' Vieillot's Black Weavers. Two Allen's Gallinules were a real bonus and there were also White-faced Whistling Duck, ten African Pygmy Geese, Little Grebe, Squacco Heron, Purple Heron, Intermediate Egret, Common Moorhen, African Jacana, and a Grey Kestrel. Later at a river crossing a pair of Hartlaub's Ducks was watched through the scopes and we were also treated to excellent views of two specialist West African sunbirds, Reichenbach's and Mangrove (or Brown) Sunbird. We also added Grey Heron, Great Egret, Common Ringed Plover, Whimbrel and Malachite Kingfisher to the list. We arrived at Ankasa Conservation Area late in the afternoon and after dinner we enjoyed great views of a very fine Fraser's Eagle Owl.

Ankasa Conservation Area is a superb area of wet evergreen forest that between the years 1960 to 1974 only suffered relatively light logging. Nine years ago we were the first organised birding group to visit this forest but since then visiting the forest has been made easier and this year we stayed in a tented camp situated just inside the park. It must be stressed that West African forests are not easy places to go birding. The tall trees hide their avian treasures very well and bird densities are comparatively low and this year we really struggled to find some of our targets with long periods of inactivity between sightings. After a good breakfast we set off in 4WD vehicles to take us deeper into the forest and were pleased to see an obliging Blue-headed Wood Dove walking in the tracks ahead of the vehicle. A stop inside the forest enabled us to see a juvenile Long-tailed Hawk that was calling loudly from its perch in a tall tree but it took quite some time before we were able to locate the bird. Continuing on to a series of pools, we spotted a Dwarf Crocodile swimming through the murky waters as we settled down to see what would turn up. It wasn't long before a brilliant little White-bellied Kingfisher put in a mega appearance but otherwise the pools did not seem to be very busy although we did see our first Dusky-blue Flycatchers. During some efforts to see the 'Western' Forest Robin we discovered one of the great surprises of the tour; the uncommon Lowland Akalat feeding quietly on the forest floor and soon after we encountered a Pale-breasted Illadopsis and were thrilled to get excellent views of a male Upper Guinea endemic Red-fronted Antpecker. We watched some Square-tailed Saw-wings fluttering over the clearings and at lunchtime a Crowned Eagle displayed overhead. A tasty meal had been sent up to us and we took a relaxing break before entering the forest for the afternoon session. Our walk in the dark jungle produced a few goodies; a pair of Dusky Crested Flycatcher was seen, there were Icterine and Red-tailed Greenbuls, Upper Guinea endemic Red-billed Helmetshrike, Finsch's Rufous Thrush and White-tailed Alethe and we finally got good looks at a cracking Chocolate-backed Kingfisher.

Some noisy Yellow-casqued Hornbills directly overhead pulled us out from the forest in the late afternoon and we rushed to the clearing by the power lines hoping to get better views of these huge birds but it was not to be. Instead we settled for views of Piping Hornbill and Great Blue Turacos and heard some Spot-breasted Ibis just as darkness fell. We were also hoping to hear the loud cries of Nkulengu Rails going to roost but sadly the forest remained quiet so it was a great surprise when one of the drivers managed to find a roosting pair in the inky blackness. The roosting birds remained on their perch and we all had amazing views. After dinner we spent a long time battling to get views of a vocal Akun Eagle Owl and finally located it at the top of a very tall tree but by this time it was quite late at night and everyone collapsed exhausted into their beds. No sooner had we done so but an African Wood Owl started calling just outside our tents but it was only Nik that struggled out of bed for to see the bird...it had been quite a day!



*The stunning male Red-fronted Antpecker (left). A superb Akun Eagle-Owl at the top of a tall forest tree (right). (Nik Borrow)*

A Red-chested Goshawk was calling and displaying at dawn over the forest before once again we slipped in between the enormous trees in search of the rare Upper Guinea endemic Rufous-winged Illadopsis. We reached a known territory and fortunately the bird was vocal. Even so it was not initially easy to see but with perseverance everyone managed some good views. In the same area was Yellow-bearded Greenbul, another scarce regional endemic. Red-tailed Bristlebill was also seen and along the river we found a male African Finfoot as well as a super Shining-blue Kingfisher and pairs of Cassin's Flycatchers.



*Ankasa birds: The pretty White-bellied Kingfisher (left) on a forest pool and the rare Rufous-winged Illadopsis (right). (Nik Borrow)*



Our time was short and passed too quickly for it was time to move on and after an early lunch we retraced our steps back towards Kakum. In the late afternoon we broke our journey at an area of coastal scrub where we found a breeding plumaged male Wilson's Indigobird along with its host species, the Bar-breasted Firefinch. Also present were an excitable Red-winged Warbler as well as African Wattled Lapwing, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Red-faced Cisticola, Yellow-mantled Widowbird, Orange-cheeked and Black-rumped Waxbills and Pin-tailed Whydah. At the end of the day there was just enough light left to track down a female Marsh Tchagra.

We spent the following morning birding in farmbrush along the southern edge of Kakum National Park. We were hoping to see the Upper Guinea endemic Red-cheeked Wattle-eye and after a lengthy battle this wonderful little gem finally gave itself up. As a bonus we were treated to a close up view of a Blue-shouldered Robin-Chat in exactly the same place but a Red-thighed Sparrowhawk simply shot past over our heads and disappeared. A Western Nicator allowed itself to be seen briefly before burying itself inside bamboo and we also saw Simple Greenbul and a perky female Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher before it was time to leave and we continued to Assin Foso for lunch.

The time had now come for us to set off to a site where we all were hoping to find the main prize of the tour, namely the totally amazing Yellow-headed Picathartes. This species is rather unfortunately named White-necked Rockfowl in some lists but the neck is certainly not white as the yellow colour of the skin shines through the feathers as if lit from within. This peculiar bird nests in the rainy season and makes swallow-like mud-cup nests which are attached beneath the dry overhangs of the large granitic boulders and inselbergs that are such a feature of the region. We arrived at the nearest villages that benefit from the proceeds raised by visiting birders donating to the community-based project and met up with the guides that were to lead us to the rocks where the birds nest. The tension and excitement was certainly mounting and we embarked on an hour's relatively easy although undulating uphill walk with only the last few minutes being a climb up the steep slope to the rocks where the nests are situated. There were several good birds to be seen along the way for firstly a low-flying Black Spinetail was watched circling low over the farmbrush at the forest edge whilst inside we managed looks at a Grey-throated Tit-flycatcher. We reached the colony in good time and settled into our seats and at 17:15 the first birds arrived for the evening show and the relief of finally setting our eyes on these incredible creatures was simply immense! Anyone who has ever seen the picathartes has always been overwhelmed by their beauty and oddness. Indeed there is something mysterious and even spiritual about them and the sculptured rocks where they live and it is easy to see why they are revered in certain areas. It was then a long two and a half hours drive to our hotel in Kumasi for an overnight stop where we ate a late meal and collapsed into our beds tired but very happy.



*The journey north gave us Double-toothed Barbet (left) and our first Grasshopper Buzzards (right). (Nik Borrow)*

From Kumasi we spent most of the day travelling as our long journey took us northwards to Mole National Park. While it was still relatively cool we made a stop on the edge of Opro Forest and although it did not look very promising the walk was certainly worthwhile. The big prize was the sighting of a small party of Capuchin Babblers, a notoriously difficult species to see and we were quite happy with our views of them as they crossed the track ahead of us only to melt into the bush as if they were never there! A Least Honeyguide was another good discovery and we enjoyed some scope views of this uncommon bird. Palearctic migrant Melodious Warbler and European Pied Flycatcher were seen, we just caught the tail-end of a fast disappearing Red-fronted Parrot and we also spotted Lizard Buzzard, Ashy Flycatcher and Black-necked

Weaver during the short time available. Travelling north along the main road was good for spotting raptors; a perched Beaudouin's Snake Eagle was much appreciated and there were also sightings of Long-crested Eagle, Dark Chanting Goshawk and good numbers of Grasshopper Buzzard. We reached Mole National Park just before dark.



*Numerous Red-throated Bee-eaters (left) are a feature of Mole National Park and the pretty Brown-rumped Bunting (right) is another one of the specialties. (Nik Borrow)*

We had two full days to try to see the best of Mole's birds and despite the very hot conditions we did well. There had recently been rain so some of the bird flocks had dispersed, as there was less need to be drawn to the more permanent water sources. Around the large waterhole that lies below the motel are the thickets where we began our day. In the cool of the morning dowdy Swamp Flycatchers hawked for insects, noisy Stone Partridges were easier to see and everywhere was a riot of colour with species like Purple and Abyssinian Rollers, Grey-headed Kingfisher and gorgeous Red-throated Bee-eaters that nest in the eroded banks. Purple and Long-tailed Glossy Starlings were both seen along with colourful Orange-breasted Bushshrike, Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike and some gorgeous Pygmy, Scarlet-chested and Beautiful Sunbirds. Pigeons and doves are a feature of this dry bush country and we recorded Vinaceous Dove, Black-billed Wood Dove and Bruce's Green Pigeon. Smaller birds were numerous and we noted African Blue Flycatcher, White-shouldered Black Tit, Yellow-throated Leaflove, Moustached Grass Warbler, Willow Warbler, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Blackcap and Brown Babblers, Grey Tit-Flycatcher, Pale Flycatcher, White-crowned and Snowy-crowned Robin-Chats, Bush Petronia, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver, Little and Black-headed Weavers, Red-billed Quelea, Black-winged and Northern Red Bishops, Red-winged Pytilia, Black-bellied Firefinch, Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu, the pretty little Lavender Waxbill, Exclamatory Paradise Whydah and Yellow-fronted Canary. The uncommon Rufous Cisticola proved easy to see this year and we also found the bizarre Oriole Warbler (or Moho), which is currently placed in the family *Cisticolidae* although they were not always so easy to see in the dense shrubbery.

As the day warmed up so the raptors took to the thermals and we were pleased to see good numbers of Bateleur as well as quite a few White-backed Vulture and a single female White-headed Vulture. Around the main waterhole Helmeted Guineafowl scurried about, a few Woolly-necked Storks were seen and we also caught up with Hadada Ibis, Black-crowned Night Heron, Black-headed Heron, Hamerkop, Black Crake, Senegal Thick-knee, Wood Sandpiper, Blue-breasted Kingfisher and Wire-tailed Swallow. We were particularly delighted to find two well-hidden Greater Painted-snipe; a Palearctic migrant Sedge Warbler was seen and a large flock of Pallid Swifts came down to drink. A siesta was welcomed after lunch as temperatures reached at least 40° C and having slept, rested or bathed in the pool we ventured out again in the late afternoon.

On the edges of the park there were fewer of these insects but at times during walkabouts in the dry bush country we were seriously plagued by sweat bees that endeavoured to enter our eyes, ears, noses and mouths but as a reward for our suffering we were treated to views of a female White-fronted Black Chat, Northern Carmine Bee-eater, Sun Lark and the much-wanted Forbes's Plover of which we counted up to five

individuals. A pair of White-throated Francolin allowed some good looks and we were surprised to find a pair of Black-bellied Bustard and a lone Denham's Bustard, which was seen on both days of our visit. We scored well with woodpeckers achieving good views of Fine-spotted, Golden-tailed, Cardinal, African Grey and Brown-backed Woodpeckers although an African Spotted Creeper was only seen briefly in flight. Other species seen during the stay included Spotted Thick-knee, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Striped Kingfisher, Black Scimitarbill, Abyssinian Ground Hornbill, Northern Red-billed Hornbill, Greater Honeyguide, Brown-necked Parrot, Rose-ringed Parakeet, White-crested Helmetshrike, African Golden Oriole, Flappet Lark and the attractive Brown-rumped Bunting showed well. Mammals were much in evidence too with Patas and Green (Callithrix) Monkeys, African Savanna Elephant, Common Warthog, Central Bushbuck, Buffon's Kob, and Western Hartebeest all being seen well.

As dusk fell the purring bleeps of African Scops Owls sounded out, Greyish Eagle-Owl could be found around the motel itself and at night we hunted out the stunning Northern White-faced Owl and spectacular Standard-winged Nightjar.



*We enjoyed some fabulous views of the striking Northern White-faced Owl during our stay at Mole National Park. (Nik Borrow)*

Our time at Mole had come to an end and once again we boarded the bus for a long journey that took us even further with our destination being Bolgatanga in the very far north. As we left Mole we had time for a short cultural visit to the ancient mosque at Larabanga, which is built with mud and reeds in the Sudanic-Sahelian architectural style and dates from 1421 where Red-chested Swallows were easily seen. On the journey we saw our first Namaqua Dove and stopped for a leg stretch at a swamp where a 'small bird' spotted by David turned out to be a Lesser Jacana and the first record of this species for Ghana! We were fortunate to scope some Quailfinch on the ground but a flock of fast disappearing Orange-breasted Waxbill were not so obliging. A juvenile Pallid Harrier was spotted and Winding Cisticola seen.

After this our next port of call was the Tongo Hills a series of strangely sculpted granitic rocks where Speckled Pigeons were common. However our main target was the attractive Fox Kestrel, which fortunately surrendered itself very quickly and we had some marvellous views of it perched up on the huge boulders.

Soon after we harvested our next target, the aptly named Rock-loving Cisticola running over the rocks. A string of new birds kept coming with a super male Black-faced Firefinch, Familiar Chat and plenty of Gosling's Buntings. From the hills it was only a relatively short distance to our destination of Bolgatanga for a two nights stay.



*We saw the two main targets in the Tongo Hills quite easily: Fox Kestrel (left) and Rock-loving Cisticola (right). (Nik Borrow)*

Starting early the next morning we headed northeast almost to the border with neighbouring Burkina Faso where we paid a visit to the White Volta for one very special bird in particular. This was the sublime Egyptian Plover and we were treated to some really superb views of this unique shorebird in an attractive setting. We watched at least six adults for as long as we wished as they fed on the open sandbanks and engaged in territorial squabbles. Some members of the group travelled across to the sandbank by pirogue to get even closer views.



*As usual we enjoyed amazing views of the wonderful Egyptian Plover in the far north. (David Turner)*

Also in this area we saw a selection of species that were a sure sign that the Sahel was not far away. These included Black-headed Lapwing, Northern Red-billed Hornbill, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Western Olivaceous Warbler, Speckle-fronted Weaver and Chestnut-bellied Starling. A pair of lovely Red-necked Falcon put on a great show as they dashed around terrorising the local birds. We identified a solitary Heuglin's Masked Weaver, a male Golden-breasted Bunting was another good bird, as was a pair of diminutive Yellow Penduline Tits and we also noted Mourning Collared Dove, Woodchat Shrike, West African Swallow, Greater Blue-eared Starling, Yellow-billed Oxpecker and Sand Martin.

In the afternoon we visited Tono Dam, a vast expanse of water that is often devoid of birds and certainly not a waterbird paradise so our time was spent in the scrub and cultivation below the dam. A pair of Singing Bush Lark was put up at our feet and was a good find as there are not many records for the country. Elsewhere we found Chestnut-backed Sparrow Lark and African Silverbill but we were particularly pleased to discover four Green Bee-eaters, a species that was only recorded in Ghana for the first time at the same location in April 2016. Our final bird for the day were some Four-banded Sandgrouse that mainly flushed from under our feet but we managed good views of a male on the ground.

Our time in the north had come to a close and now the long journey back to Kumasi lay ahead of us. We spent most of the day travelling but a productive stop at the swamp allowed us to photograph and document satisfactorily the Lesser Jacana. We also obtained excellent looks at some showy Black-backed Cisticola and everyone got wonderful views of flocks of pretty little Orange-breasted Waxbills.



*A Chestnut-bellied Starling (left) in the far north on the border with Burkina Faso and some Yellow-billed Oxpeckers (right) feasting on some tick laden cattle. (Nik Borrow)*

For our final morning we made a visit to Bobiri Forest and Butterfly Sanctuary a place that is usually blessed with good birds as well. As things turned out it was generally rather quiet but we added some quality species. A very vocal Latham's Francolin was coaxed towards us and some people managed to see it through the dense undergrowth. A Crested Malimbe in the tangled lianas and a Black-throated Coucal that flew across the track were other species only seen by the lucky few. However we all saw a Little Green Woodpecker and perhaps the best sightings of the morning were the good looks obtained of both Black and Red-billed Dwarf Hornbills. The time passed all too rapidly and now we had reached the end of our grand tour of Ghana and all that was left to do was to pack our bags and make the final journey back to Accra airport.

Ghana is a friendly and stable country; the roads are mostly good although in some places getting a little too pot-holed for comfort these days. The food is definitely tasty and the accommodation really quite comfortable. The Yellow-headed Picathartes is currently very reliable and usually seen extremely well and the sighting of a good number of the Upper Guinea regional endemics certainly made the visit more than worthwhile. With Liberia and Ivory Coast still out of the game and Sierra Leone in a state of recovery Ghana really does offer the visitor a chance to get to grips with one of the most charismatic of all West African birds in much more comfort and less time than anywhere else presently available. This tour is now a classic BirdQuest!



A pair of Nkulengu Rails on their roost in Ankasa Conservation Area was the big prize of our stay there. (Nik Borrow)

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **IOC World Bird Names**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from *Threatened Birds of the World*, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

**CR** = Critical, **E** = Endangered, **V** = Vulnerable, **NT** = Near Threatened, **DD** = Data Deficient.

### BIRDS

**White-faced Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna viduata* Widespread sightings with largest numbers en route to Ankasa.

**Hartlaub's Duck** *Pteronetta hartlaubii* Great scope views of a pair at Ebi River.

**African Pygmy Goose** *Nettapus auritus* 10 on a roadside pool near Takoradi and a pair at Nasia Swamp.

**Helmeted Guineafowl** *Numida meleagris* Common in Mole NP

**Stone Partridge** *Ptilopachus petrosus* These 'rock chickens' were common in Mole NP.

**Latham's Francolin (Forest F)** ◇ *Peliperdix lathamii* Some of us managed to see a vocal male in Bobiri Forest.

**White-throated Francolin** ◇ *Peliperdix albogularis* Excellent views of a pair in Mole NP.

**Double-spurred Francolin** *Pternistis bicalcaratus* This large francolin seen well at Shai Hills and in the far north.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* 4 were seen on a roadside pool near Takoradi.

**Woolly-necked Stork** *Ciconia episcopus* At least 2 seen in Mole NP.

**Spot-breasted Ibis** ◇ *Bostrychia rara* (H) Heard flying over Ankasa at dusk.

**Hadada Ibis** *Bostrychia hagedash* Small numbers seen in Mole NP.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* At least 2 in Mole NP.

**Striated Heron (Green-backed H)** *Butorides striata* Widespread sightings in low numbers.

**Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides* Widespread sightings in low numbers.

**Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* Widespread sightings of this common bird throughout the tour.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* Singletons at the Ebi River and more in the north.

**Black-headed Heron** *Ardea melanocephala* Just 1 seen in Mole NP.

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* Singletons near Takoradi and Nasia Swamp.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba* Singletons at the Ebi River and Nasia Swamp.

**Intermediate Egret (Yellow-billed E)** *Ardea [intermedia] brachyrhyncha* Widespread sightings in low numbers.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* 1 at Sapeliga.

**Western Reef Heron** *Egretta gularis* 1 at Winneba Lagoon and at least 10 birds at the Ebi River.

**Hamerkop** *Scopus umbretta* Easily seen in the north.

**Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C)** *Microcarbo africanus* Widespread sightings in suitable habitat.

**Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* Widespread sightings but nowhere common.

**African Harrier-Hawk (Gymnogene)** *Polyboroides typus* Widespread sightings and regularly encountered.

**Palm-nut Vulture** *Gypohierax angolensis* Just 2 at Kakum, 1 at Ankasa and another in Mole NP.

**European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* 2 of these Palearctic migrants in Kakum NP and 1 for some at Ankasa.

**African Cuckoo-Hawk** *Aviceda cuculoides* Good views in the Kakum area and a singleton at Bobiri.

**Hooded Vulture** *Necrosyrtes monachus* (CR) Most numerous along the coast. A maximum count of 6 in Mole NP.

**White-backed Vulture (African W-b V)** *Gyps africanus* (CR) At least 6 seen in Mole NP.

**White-headed Vulture** *Trigonoceps occipitalis* (CR) 1 female seen in Mole NP.

**Beaudouin's Snake Eagle** ◇ *Circaetus beaudouini* (V) 1 distant at Shai Hills and 1 perched roadside in the north.

**Congo Serpent Eagle** ◇ *Circaetus spectabilis* (H) Heard only in the Kakum area.

**Bateleur** *Terathopius ecaudatus* (NT) Small numbers seen in the north with a maximum count of 8 in Mole NP.



We saw good numbers of the 'Near-Threatened' Bateleur in Mole National Park. (David Turner)

**Crowned Eagle** *Stephanoetus coronatus* (NT) A single displaying bird over Ankasa.

**Long-crested Eagle** *Lophaetus occipitalis* 1 roadside bird as we headed north.

**Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus* 1 sighting of this Palearctic migrant at Nasia Swamp.

**Ayres's Hawk-Eagle** *Hieraaetus ayresii* 1 seen overhead in the Kakum area.

**Cassin's Hawk-Eagle** *Aquila africana* 3 displaying birds over Antwikwaa.

**Lizard Buzzard** *Kaupifalco monogrammicus* A few widespread sightings in the north.

**Gabar Goshawk** *Micronisus gabar* (LO) 1 flew across the road as we headed south.

**Dark Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax metabates* Just two sightings in the north.

**Long-tailed Hawk** ◊ *Urotriorchis macrourus* A juvenile was scoped at Ankasa.

**Red-chested Goshawk** ◊ *Accipiter toussenelii* 3 sightings in the forests.

**Shikra** *Accipiter badius* 1 at Shai Hills and 3 in Mole NP.

**Red-thighed Sparrowhawk** ◊ *Accipiter erythropus* 1 flew overhead in the Kakum area.

**Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* Widespread sightings of this Palearctic migrant.

**Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* (NT) A juvenile of this Palearctic migrant at Nasia Swamp on 18/3.

**Yellow-billed Kite** *Milvus aegyptius* A commonly encountered and widespread species.

**Grasshopper Buzzard** *Butastur rufipennis* Easily seen in the north.

**Red-necked Buzzard** *Buteo auguralis* Commonly seen in appropriate habitat throughout the tour.

**Denham's Bustard** *Neotis denhami* (NT) The same individual seen both days in Mole NP.

**Black-bellied Bustard** *Lissotis melanogaster* Heard at Winneba and a pair seen in Mole NP.

**White-spotted Flufftail** *Sarothrura pulchra* Hard work but finally seen in the Kakum area.

**African Finfoot** *Podica senegalensis* A male seen briefly at Ankasa.

**Nkulengu Rail** ◊ *Himantornis haematopus* A pair watched on their roost site at Ankasa.

**Black Crake** *Amaurornis flavirostra* 2 seen in Mole NP.

**Allen's Gallinule** *Porphyrio alleni* 2 on a roadside pool near Takoradi.

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* 3 on a roadside pool near Takoradi.

**Senegal Thick-knee** *Burhinus senegalensis* Easily seen in Mole NP and again at Sapeliga.

**Spotted Thick-knee** *Burhinus capensis* 5 were seen in Mole NP.

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus* 6 at Winneba Lagoon.

**Spur-winged Lapwing (S-w Plover)** *Vanellus spinosus* Seen on coastal lagoons and in the far north.

**Black-headed Lapwing** *Vanellus tectus* A pair was seen at Sapeliga.

**Senegal Lapwing (Lesser Black-winged L)** *Vanellus lugubris* A pair was seen on the Winneba Plains.

**African Wattled Lapwing (Wattled L)** *Vanellus senegallus* Small numbers scattered in the north.

**Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula* 1 of these Palearctic migrants at the Ebi River.

**Forbes's Plover** ◊ *Charadrius forbesi* Excellent encounters with at least 5 birds in Mole NP.

**Egyptian Plover** ◊ *Pluvianus aegyptius* Super views of at least 6 adults at Sapeliga.

**Greater Painted-snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis* 3 birds in Mole NP and 1 at Nasia Swamp.

**Lesser Jacana** *Microparra capensis* 1 at Nasia Swamp on 18/3 and 20/3. The first record for Ghana!



*Denham's Bustard in Mole NP (left) and this Lesser Jacana (right) at Nasia Swamp was the first record for Ghana! (Nik Borrow)*



**African Jacana** *Actophilornis africanus* Widespread sightings in appropriate habitat.

**Whimbrel** *Numerius phaeopus* Up to 5 of these Palearctic migrants at Ebi River.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants at widespread localities.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* Palearctic migrants seen in the north.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* Singletons of these Palearctic migrants at Winneba Lagoon and Ebi River.

**Rock Pratincole** *Glareola nuchalis* 4 of the race *iberiae* on the Pra River.

**Royal Tern (West African R T)** *Thalasseus [maximus] albididorsalis* 1 briefly at Winneba Lagoon.

**Sandwich Tern** *Thalasseus sandvicensis* 6+ at Winneba Lagoon.

**Four-banded Sandgrouse** *Pterocles quadricinctus* Seen well at Tono Dam.

**Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon)** *Columba livia* 'Table' birds only.

**Speckled Pigeon** *Columba guinea* Common in the far north.

**Mourning Collared Dove (African M D)** *Streptopelia decipiens* Easily seen at Sapeliga.

**Red-eyed Dove** *Streptopelia semitorquata* Common and widespread.

**Vinaceous Dove** *Streptopelia vinacea* Common in the north.

**Laughing Dove** *Spilopelia senegalensis* Common and widespread.

**Black-billed Wood Dove** *Turtur abyssinicus* Commonly encountered in the north.

**Blue-spotted Wood Dove** *Turtur afer* Regularly encountered in the forest zone.

**Tambourine Dove** *Turtur tympanistris* Commonly encountered in the forest although mainly heard or in flight.

**Blue-headed Wood Dove** *Turtur brehmeri* Seen well feeding on the main track in Ankasa NP.

**Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis* Small numbers in the north.

**Bruce's Green Pigeon** *Treron waalia* Small numbers seen in Mole NP and at Tono Dam.

**African Green Pigeon** *Treron calvus* Widespread sightings and commonly encountered in the south.

**Great Blue Turaco** *Corythaeola cristata* 3 of these impressive turacos were scoped at Ankasa.

**Guinea Turaco (Green T)** *Tauraco persa* Seen well at Shai Hills and on the Winneba Plains.

**Yellow-billed Turaco** *Tauraco macrorhynchus* We had several chances to see this species well in the forests.

**Violet Turaco** ♦ *Musophaga violacea* Small numbers seen in appropriate habitat during the tour.



*Blue-headed Wood Dove on the track at Ankasa (left). Violet Turacos (right) showed particularly well in Mole NP. (Nik Borrow)*

**Western Plantain-eater** *Crinifer piscator* Commonly encountered with widespread sightings during this tour.

**Black-throated Coucal** ♦ *Centropus leucogaster* As is often the case, heard in the forests but views for some.

**Senegal Coucal** *Centropus senegalensis* Widespread sightings.

**Blue-headed Coucal** *Centropus monachus* (H) Heard in the Kakum area.

**Blue Malkoha (Yellowbill)** *Ceuthmochares aereus* A number of good sightings in the forests.

**Levaillant's Cuckoo** *Clamator levaillantii* Sightings of this spiky-crested cuckoo in Kakum and Mole NPs.

**Diederik Cuckoo (Didric C)** *Chrysococcyx caprius* 2 sightings in the Kakum area.

**Klaas's Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx klaas* Widespread encounters but more often heard than seen.

**African Emerald Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx cupreus* At least 2 seen in Kakum NP and heard elsewhere.

**Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo** ♦ *Cercococcyx mechowi* (H) A vocal bird would not respond at Ankasa.

**Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo** *Cercococcyx olivinus* (H) None of those heard in the forests would respond.  
**Red-chested Cuckoo** *Cuculus solitarius* 1 in Kakum NP.  
**African Cuckoo** *Cuculus gularis* 1 on the Winneba Plains and excellent views in Mole NP.  
**African Scops Owl** *Otus senegalensis* It took a while but finally seen well in Mole NP.  
**Northern White-faced Owl** *Ptilopsis leucotis* Wonderful views at Mole.  
**Greyish Eagle-Owl** *Bubo cinerascens* 1 frequented our hotel in Mole NP after dark.  
**Fraser's Eagle-Owl** ◊ *Bubo poensis* Fantastic views of 1 at Ankasa.  
**Akun Eagle-Owl** ◊ *Bubo leucostictus* Thanks to Paul's hard work 1 was seen at Ankasa.  
**African Wood Owl** *Strix woodfordii* (LO) Nik was the only one to struggle out of bed at Ankasa NP.



*African Scops Owl in Mole NP (left) and an African Wood Owl that frequented our Ankasa camp in the dead of night (right). (Nik Borrow)*

**Pearl-spotted Owlet** *Glaucidium perlatum* Seen during the day in Mole NP.  
**African Barred (Etchécopari's) Owlet** ◊ *Glaucidium [capense] ethecopari* (H) Heard at Shai Hills.  
**Brown Nightjar** ◊ *Veles binotatus* 1 seen perched from the canopy walkway in Kakum NP.  
**Plain Nightjar** ◊ *Caprimulgus inornatus* Excellent views of 1 in the Kakum area.  
**Long-tailed Nightjar** *Caprimulgus climacurus* Adults with young in the Kakum area and also seen in Mole NP.  
**Standard-winged Nightjar** *Caprimulgus longipennis* Great views of breeding plumaged males in Mole NP.  
**Mottled Spinetail** *Telacanthura ussheri* 2 sightings in the south.  
**Black Spinetail** ◊ *Telacanthura melanopygia* Good views of 1 flying over the farmbrush at Bonkro.  
**Sabine's Spinetail** *Rhaphidura sabini* Good numbers over the Kakum forests.  
**Cassin's Spinetail** *Neafrapus cassini* 2 seen over the canopy walkway.  
**African Palm Swift** *Cypsiurus parvus* Widespread sightings and commonly encountered throughout the tour.  
**Common Swift** *Apus apus* Small numbers of this Palearctic migrant at widespread localities.  
**Pallid Swift** *Apus pallidus* 60+ seen coming down to drink from the Mole NP waterhole.  
**Little Swift** *Apus affinis* Widespread sightings and commonly encountered throughout the tour.  
**Narina Trogon** *Apaloderma narina* (H) Just heard in Bobiri Forest.  
**Purple Roller (Rufous-crowned R)** *Coracias naevius* 1 en route to Kakum but more common in the north.  
**Abyssinian Roller** *Coracias abyssinicus* Easily seen in the north.

**Blue-bellied Roller** ◊ *Coracias cyanogaster* A pair at Shai Hills and also seen en route to Mole NP.

**Blue-throated Roller** *Eurystomus gularis* A number of sightings in the forest zone.

**Broad-billed Roller** *Eurystomus glaucurus* Widespread sightings during the tour.

**Chocolate-backed Kingfisher** *Halcyon badia* Glimpsed in Kakum NP and seen well at Ankasa.

**Grey-headed Kingfisher** *Halcyon leucocephala* Stunning colours and easily seen in Mole NP.

**Striped Kingfisher** *Halcyon chelicuti* 1 at Shai Hills and 2 seen in Mole NP.

**Blue-breasted Kingfisher** *Halcyon malimbica* Heard at Ankasa and seen well in Mole NP.

**Woodland Kingfisher** *Halcyon senegalensis* Widespread sightings in the forest zone.

**African Dwarf Kingfisher** *Ispidina lecontei* (H) Heard at Ankasa NP. This is not an easy bird in Ghana.

**African Pygmy Kingfisher** *Ispidina picta* Regularly encountered with scattered sightings during the tour.

**White-bellied Kingfisher** ◊ *Corythornis leucogaster* Excellent views at Ankasa.

**Malachite Kingfisher** *Corythornis cristatus* Seen at the Ebi River and in Mole NP.

**Shining-blue Kingfisher** *Alcedo quadribrachys* Wonderful views at Ankasa.

**Giant Kingfisher** *Megaceryle maxima* 1 at the Pra River.

**Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* Small numbers in appropriate habitat.

**Black Bee-eater** *Merops gularis* 6 seen well at Antwikwaa and another near Abrafo.

**Swallow-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops hirundineus* Good looks at a pair at Shai Hills and a trio in Mole NP.

**Little Bee-eater** *Merops pusillus* Singletons at the Pra River and Brenu.

**Red-throated Bee-eater** *Merops bulocki* This glorious bee-eater is impossible to miss in Mole NP.

**White-throated Bee-eater** *Merops albicollis* Non-breeding migrants are common and easy to see on this tour.

**Green Bee-eater (Little G B-e)** *Merops orientalis* 4 were seen well at Tono Dam.

**European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster* 4 of these Palearctic migrants were seen well at Opro Forest.

**Rosy Bee-eater** ◊ *Merops malimbicus* Small numbers of this beautiful bee-eater at Shai Hills and in the Kakum area.

**Northern Carmine Bee-eater** *Merops nubicus* Small numbers in Mole NP and at Sapeliga.



Green Bee-eater at Tono Dam (left) and Northern Carmine Bee-eater in Mole NP (right). (Nik Borrow)

**Green Wood Hoopoe** *Phoeniculus purpureus* Small numbers in the south and Mole NP.

**Black Scimitarbill** *Rhinopomastus aterrimus* Singletons in Mole NP and at Tono Dam.

**Northern Red-billed Hornbill** *Tockus erythrorhynchus* Easily seen in the far north.

**(West) African Pied Hornbill** ◊ *Lophoceros [fasciatus] semifasciatus* Common and easy to see on this tour.

**African Grey Hornbill** *Lophoceros nasutus* Easily seen in the savannah zone.

**Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill** *Lophoceros camurus* 3 were seen in Bobiri Forest.

**Piping Hornbill** ◊ (Western P H) *Bycanistes fistulator* Seen well at Ankasa.

**Brown-cheeked Hornbill** ◊ *Bycanistes cylindricus* 5 were seen in flight in the Kakum area.

**Yellow-casqued Hornbill** ◊ (Y-c Wattled) *Ceratogymna elata* Glimpses through the canopy at Ankasa.

**Black Dwarf Hornbill** ◊ (Western Little H) *Horizocerus hartlaubii* Great views of a male in Bobiri Forest.

**White-crested Hornbill** ◊ (Western Long-tailed H) *Horizocerus albocristatus* 2 sightings in the forests.

**Naked-faced Barbet** *Gymnobucco calvus* Good looks at this 'punkish' barbet in Kakum NP.

**Speckled Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus scolopaceus* The most commonly seen tinkerbird in the forests.

**Red-rumped Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus atroflavus* Often heard and seen well at Kakum.

**Yellow-throated Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus subsulphureus* Heard more often than seen in the various forests.

**Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus bilineatus* 1 seen at Shai Hills and heard at Opro Forest.

**Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* Seen well at Shai Hills and in the north.

**Yellow-spotted Barbet** *Buccanodon duchailui* Often heard in the forests and occasionally seen.

**Hairy-breasted Barbet** *Tricholaema hirsuta* Occasionally heard and seen in in the forests.

**Vieillot's Barbet** *Lybius vieilloti* Widespread sightings in savannah and forest edge.

**Double-toothed Barbet** *Lybius bidentatus* Seen well at Shai Hills and Opro Forest.

**Bearded Barbet** ◊ *Lybius dubius* Several opportunities to see this amazing barbet well at Shai Hills and in the north.

**Least Honeyguide** ◊ *Indicator exilis* An excellent sighting of a singing bird in Opro Forest on 15/3.

**Lesser Honeyguide** *Indicator minor* 1 in Mole NP.

**Greater Honeyguide** *Indicator indicator* 1 seen by some in Mole NP.

**African Piculet** ◊ *Sasia africana* (H) Heard in Kakum NP.

**Fine-spotted Woodpecker** ◊ *Campethera punctuligera* 6 seen in Mole NP.

**Golden-tailed Woodpecker** *Campethera abingoni* A pair seen in Mole NP.

**Little Green Woodpecker** ◊ *Campethera maculosa* 1 seen well at Bobiri Forest.

**Buff-spotted Woodpecker** *Campethera nivosa* 1 sighting from the canopy walkway in Kakum NP.

**Fire-bellied Woodpecker** ◊ *Chloropicus pyrrhogaster* Seen briefly in the Kakum forests.

**Cardinal Woodpecker** *Dendropicos fuscescens* 1 in Mole NP.

**Melancholy Woodpecker** ◊ *Dendropicos lugubris* 2 seen at Antwikwaa.

**African Grey Woodpecker (G W)** *Dendropicos goertae* A pair seen in Mole NP.



A Hairy-breasted Barbet at Opro Forest (left) and a female African Grey Woodpecker in Mole NP (right) (David Turner)

**Brown-backed Woodpecker** *Dendropicos obsoletus* A male seen in Mole NP.

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* Mostly noted in towns during journeys.

**Fox Kestrel** ◊ *Falco alopex* Great views of a pair in the Tongo Hills.

**Grey Kestrel** *Falco ardosiaceus* 4 widespread sightings in open areas.

**Red-necked Falcon** *Falco [chicquera] ruficollis* Terrific views of a pair at Sapeliga.

**African Hobby** *Falco cuvierii* Excellent views of 1 on the Winneba Plains.

**Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus* 1 at Shai Hills.

**Red-fronted Parrot** *Poicephalus gulielmi* Heard at Bonkro and 1 seen flying over Bobiri Forest.

**Brown-necked Parrot** ◊ *Poicephalus fuscicollis* 1 seen in Mole NP.

**Senegal Parrot** *Poicephalus senegalus* Good numbers at Shai Hills with more in the north.

**Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri* 3 in Mole NP and 1 at Sapeliga.

**Rufous-sided Broadbill** *Smithornis rufolateralis* 1 displaying male seen well in the Kakum area.  
**Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher (Vanga F)** *Bias musicus* 1 female seen at Kakum and a pair in Opro Forest.  
**Senegal Batis** ◊ *Batis senegalensis* Seen well at Shai Hills and in Mole NP.  
**West African Wattle-eye** ◊ *Platysteira hormophora* Great views in Kakum NP.  
**Brown-throated Wattle-eye (Common W)** *Platysteira cyanea* Scattered sightings.  
**Red-cheeked Wattle-eye** ◊ *Platysteira blissetti* It took us a long time to get good views of a pair at Kakum.  
**White-crested Helmetshrike (W H-s)** *Prionops plumatus* Busy flocks in Mole NP.  
**Red-billed Helmet-shrike** ◊ *Prionops caniceps* Great views of these characterful birds at Anaksa.



A male West African Wattle-eye in Kakum NP (left). Red-billed Helmetshrike was seen well in Anaksa NP (right). (Nik Borrow)

**Orange-breasted Bushshrike (Sulphur-b B-s)** *Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus* A pair in Mole NP.  
**Marsh Tchagra** *Bocagia minuta* Great looks at a female at Brenu.  
**Brown-crowned Tchagra** *Tchagra australis (H)* Heard at Shai Hills.  
**Black-crowned Tchagra** *Tchagra senegalus* Seen well in the various savannahs.  
**Sabine's Puffback** ◊ (Large-billed P) *Dryoscopus sabini* Seen well in Kakum NP and Bobiri Forest.  
**Northern Puffback** *Dryoscopus gambensis* Seen well in the various savannahs.  
**Yellow-crowned Gonolek** ◊ *Laniarius barbarus* First seen on the Winneba Plains with more great views in Mole NP.  
**Brubru** *Nilaus afer* 1 in Mole NP.  
**Blue Cuckooshrike** *Coracina azurea* Just 1 in Kakum NP.  
**Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike** *Campephaga phoenicea* A male was seen in Mole NP.  
**Purple-throated Cuckooshrike** *Campephaga quiscalina* A pair was seen from the Kakum walkway.  
**Yellow-billed Shrike** *Corvinella corvina* Small numbers seen in the savannahs.  
**Northern Fiscal** *Lanius humeralis* Regularly encountered throughout the tour, often by roadsides.  
**Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator* 1 of these Palearctic migrants was seen at Sapeliga.  
**African Golden Oriole** *Oriolus auratus* Just 2 sightings in Mole NP.  
**Western Oriole (W Black-headed O)** *Oriolus brachyrynchus* Small numbers were seen or heard in the forests.  
**Black-winged Oriole** *Oriolus nigripennis* Less common than the previous species in the forests.  
**Shining Drongo** *Dicrurus atripennis* Only small numbers seen in Anaksa NP.  
**Fork-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus adsimilis* The common drongo of the savannahs.  
**Velvet-mantled Drongo** *Dicrurus [modestus] coracinus* Replaces the previous species in the forests.  
**Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher** *Trochocercus nitens (H)* Only heard in the forests.  
**Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone rufiventer* Commonly encountered in the forests.  
**African Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone viridis* Replaces the previous species in the wooded savannahs.  
**Piapiac** *Ptilostomus afer* Small numbers in the far north and even seen at Shai Hills.  
**Pied Crow** *Corvus albus* An abundant and widespread species.

**White-necked Rockfowl** ◊ (Yellow-headed Picathartes) *Picathartes gymnocephalus* (V) A total success! 4+ birds.

**African Blue Flycatcher** *Elminia longicauda* A pair was seen well in Mole NP.

**Dusky Crested Flycatcher** ◊ *Elminia nigromitrata* A pair seen at Ankasa.

**White-shouldered Black Tit** *Melaniparus guineensis* Small numbers seen in Mole NP.

**Yellow Penduline Tit** ◊ *Anthoscopus parvulus* Excellent views of a pair near Sapeliga.

**Western Nicator** *Nicator chloris* Often heard in the various forests and seen at the edge of Kakum.

**Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix leucotis* 3 were seen at Tono Dam.

**Flappet Lark** *Mirafra rufocinnamomea* 1 in Mole NP.

**Singing Bush Lark** *Mirafra cantillans* A pair at Tono Dam on 19/3. This appears to now be a regular locality.

**Sun Lark** ◊ *Galerida modesta* Small numbers in Mole NP.

**Common Bulbul** *Pycnonotus barbatus* A ubiquitous species absent only from interior forest.

**Slender-billed Greenbul** *Stelgidillas gracilirostris* Small numbers encountered in the various forests.

**Little Greenbul** *Eurillas virens* Heard more often than the bird was seen in the forests.

**Little Grey Greenbul** *Eurillas gracilis* Seen in the Kakum forests.

**Ansorge's Greenbul** *Eurillas ansorgei* 1 seen from the walkway in Kakum NP.

**Plain Greenbul (Cameroon Sombre G)** *Eurillas curvirostris* Seen in Kakum NP.

**Yellow-whiskered Greenbul** *Eurillas latirostris* (H) Occasionally heard in the forests.

**Golden Greenbul** *Calyptocichla serina* 2 sightings in the Kakum area.

**Honeyguide Greenbul** *Baeopogon indicator* Scattered sightings in the Kakum area.

**Spotted Greenbul** *Ixonotus guttatus* A small flock seen in the Kakum area.

**Simple Greenbul (S Leaflove)** *Chlorocichla simplex* Good views in the Kakum farmbrush.

**Yellow-throated Leaflove** *Atimastillas flavicollis* A pair seen in Mole NP.

**Swamp Palm Bulbul** *Thescelocichla leucoptera* Commonly encountered in the forest zone, heard more than seen.

**Icterine Greenbul** *Phyllastrephus icterinus* A common member of mixed bird parties in the various forests.

**White-throated Greenbul** ◊ *Phyllastrephus albigularis* seen well in the Kakum forests.

**Red-tailed Bristlebill (Common B)** *Bleda syndactylus* Views for some at Ankasa.

**Grey-headed Bristlebill** ◊ *Bleda canicapillus* A skulking bird, heard often and seen briefly in the forests.

**Western Bearded Greenbul** ◊ *Criniger barbatus* Heard often and seen a few times in the forests.

**Red-tailed Greenbul** *Criniger calurus* Heard often and seen a few times in the forests.

**Yellow-bearded Greenbul** ◊ *Criniger olivaceus* (V) Seen at Ankasa.

**Square-tailed Saw-wing** *Psalidoprocne nitens* Seen flying over Ankasa.

**Fanti Saw-wing** ◊ *Psalidoprocne obscura* Small numbers in the Kakum area.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* 1 of these Palearctic migrants at Sapeliga.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* A Palearctic migrant commonly encountered in good numbers mainly in the south.

**Red-chested Swallow** *Hirundo lucida* Easily seen in the north.



Yellow-bearded Greenbul was seen at Ankasa (left). Red-chested Swallow associated with villages in the north (right). (Nik Borrow)

**Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo aethiopica*** Commonly noted during the tour on journeys in the south.  
**Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*** Easily seen in Mole NP.  
**White-bibbed Swallow (White-throated Blue S) *Hirundo nigrita*** A pair on the Pra River.  
**Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica*** Widespread sightings during this tour.  
**Red-breasted Swallow (Rufous-chested S) *Cecropis semirufa*** 1 on the edge of Kakum.  
**West African Swallow ◊ *Cecropis domicella*** 1 at Sapeliga.  
**Preuss's Cliff Swallow ◊ *Petrochelidon preussi*** Seen well at their nesting site north of Kakum.



*Breeding activity at the colony of Preuss's Cliff Swallows north of Kakum was getting well underway. (Nik Borrow)*

**Moustached Grass Warbler (African M W) *Melocichla mentalis*** 1 in Mole NP and another at Nasia Swamp.  
**Kemp's Longbill ◊ *Macrosphenus kempii*** A pair of these skulkers was seen in the Kakum area.  
**Grey Longbill *Macrosphenus concolor*** Regularly encountered in the forest zone.  
**Northern Crombec *Sylvietta brachyura*** Seen at Shai Hills, in Mole NP and at Tono Dam.  
**Green Crombec *Sylvietta virens*** More often heard than seen but we managed views in the Kakum area.  
**Lemon-bellied Crombec *Sylvietta denti* (H)** Heard in Kakum NP.  
**Chestnut-capped Flycatcher *Erythrocerus mccallii*** Seen well in the Kakum area and again in Bobiri Forest.  
**Green Hylia *Hylia prasina*** Numerous opportunities to see this one in the forests.  
**Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*** Small numbers of this Palearctic migrant in Mole NP.  
**Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*** 2 of these Palearctic migrants in Kakum NP.  
**Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*** 1 of these Palearctic migrants in Mole NP.  
**Western Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna opaca*** 1 of these Palearctic migrants at Sapeliga.  
**Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta*** Singletons of this Palearctic migrant in Mole NP and at Tono Dam.  
**Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops*** Heard more often than seen in the farmbrush and savannahs.  
**Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans*** First seen on the Winneba Plains.

**Whistling Cisticola** *Cisticola lateralis* Seen well in the Kakum farmbrush.  
**Rock-loving Cisticola** *Cisticola emini* Seen well in the Tongo Hills.  
**Winding Cisticola** *Cisticola marginatus* Seen at Nasia Swamp.  
**Croaking Cisticola** *Cisticola natalensis* Easily seen at Shai Hills.  
**Short-winged Cisticola (Siffling F)** *Cisticola brachypterus* Easily seen in the farmbrush and savannahs.  
**Rufous Cisticola** ◊ *Cisticola rufus* 5 seen in Mole NP.  
**Zitting Cisticola** *Cisticola juncidis* 1 seen at Shai Hills.  
**Black-backed Cisticola** ◊ *Cisticola eximius* Great views of several at Nasia Swamp.



*Rufous Cisticola in Mole NP (left) and Black-backed Cisticola in non-breeding dress at Nasia (right). (Nik Borrow)*

**Tawny-flanked Prinia** *Prinia subflava* Widespread sightings  
**Red-winged Warbler** *Heliolais erythropterus* A pair along the Brenu Road and heard in Mole NP.  
**Yellow-breasted Apalis** *Apalis flavida* 1 seen well in Mole NP.  
**Sharpe's Apalis** ◊ *Apalis sharpii* Seen well in the Kakum forests.  
**Oriole Warbler** ◊ *Hypergerus atriceps* Skulking but noisy birds seen well in Mole NP.  
**Grey-backed Camaroptera** *Camaroptera brevicaudata* Heard more often than seen in the farmbrush and savannahs.  
**Yellow-browed Camaroptera** *Camaroptera superciliaris* More often heard than seen on the forest edges.  
**Olive-green Camaroptera** *Camaroptera chloronota* (H) Often heard on the forest edges.  
**Senegal Eremomela** *Eremomela pusilla* These pretty little warblers were easy to see at Shai Hills and the north.  
**Rufous-crowned Eremomela** *Eremomela badiceps* A canopy flock in Kakum NP.  
**Blackcap Illadopsis** *Illadopsis cleaveri* Excellent views in Kakum NP and heard at Ankasa.  
**Rufous-winged Illadopsis** ◊ *Illadopsis rufescens* (NT) Everybody managed to see the individual in Ankasa NP.  
**Puvel's Illadopsis** ◊ *Illadopsis puveli* Difficult to see well at the edge of the Kakum forests.  
**Pale-breasted Illadopsis** *Illadopsis rufipennis* A skulking bird at Ankasa.  
**Brown Illadopsis** *Illadopsis fulvescens* Glimpsed at Antwikwaa.  
**Capuchin Babbler** ◊ *Phyllanthus atripennis* An excellent sighting of 5 birds crossing the track in Opro Forest.  
**Blackcap Babbler** *Turdoides reinwardtii* Noisy but skulking groups in Mole NP.  
**Brown Babbler** *Turdoides plebejus* 1 group seen in Mole NP.  
**African Yellow White-eye** *Zosterops senegalensis* Seen in Kakum farmbrush and again in Mole NP.  
**African Spotted Creeper** ◊ *Salpornis salvadori* 1 in flight in Mole NP could not be relocated.  
**Greater Blue-eared Starling** *Lamprotornis chalybaeus* A few seen at Sapeliga.  
**Splendid Starling** *Lamprotornis splendidus* Commonly seen in the south.  
**Purple Starling** *Lamprotornis purpureus* Seen at Shai Hills and in Mole NP.  
**Long-tailed Glossy Starling** *Lamprotornis caudatus* Easily seen in Mole NP.  
**Chestnut-bellied Starling** ◊ *Lamprotornis pulcher* Small numbers were seen in the far north.  
**Violet-backed Starling** *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* Seen from Kakum to Mole NP.  
**Chestnut-winged Starling** *Onychognathus [fulgidus] hartlaubii* 4 at Antwikwaa.  
**Yellow-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus africanus* About 10 birds seen on cattle near Sapeliga.



**Finsch's Rufous Thrush** ◊ (**F's Flycatcher T**) *Stizorhina finschi* Often heard and occasionally seen in the forests.

**African Thrush** *Turdus pelios* Seen at Shai Hills and in the north.

**White-tailed Alethe** ◊ *Alethe diademata* Often heard and seen briefly at Ankasa.

**Fraser's Forest Flycatcher** *Fraseria ocreata* (**H**) Noisy birds at Kakum could not be seen.

**Grey-throated Tit-Flycatcher (G-t F)** *Myioparus griseigularis* Often heard in the forests and seen at Ankasa.

**Grey Tit-Flycatcher (Lead-coloured F)** *Myioparus plumbeus* Seen in Mole NP.

**Northern Black Flycatcher** *Melaenornis edolioides* Seen at Shai Hills and in Mole NP.

**Pale Flycatcher** *Melaenornis pallidus* Small numbers in Mole NP and near Sapeliga.

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata* Palearctic migrants seen at Shai Hills, the Brenu Road and Opro Forest.

**Ashy Flycatcher** *Muscicapa caeruleascens* 1 seen in Opro Forest.

**Swamp Flycatcher** *Muscicapa aquatica* Small numbers in Mole NP.

**Cassin's Flycatcher** *Muscicapa cassini* Several seen in Ankasa NP.

**Olivaceous Flycatcher** ◊ *Muscicapa olivascens* A difficult species, a pair was seen in Kakum NP.

**Little Grey Flycatcher** ◊ *Muscicapa epulata* 1 from the canopy walkway in Kakum NP.



Two tricky flycatchers from Kakum NP; Olivaceous Flycatcher (left) and Little Grey Flycatcher (right). (Nik Borrow)

**Dusky-blue Flycatcher** *Muscicapa comitata* A pair at Ankasa.

**Ussher's Flycatcher** ◊ *Muscicapa ussheri* Forest flycatchers often in the highest treetops at Kakum.

**Blue-shouldered Robin-Chat** *Cossypha cyanocampter* A close bird at Kakum but you had to be quick!

**Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat** *Cossypha niveicapilla* Just 1 seen in Mole NP.

**White-crowned Robin-Chat** ◊ *Cossypha albicapillus* Several seen in Mole NP.

**Forest Robin** ◊ (**Western F R**) *Stiphornis [erythrothorax] erythrothorax* Seen well at Ankasa.

**Forest Robin** ◊ (**Ghana F R**) *Stiphornis [erythrothorax] inexpectatus* Seen well in Kakum NP.

**Lowland Akalat** ◊ *Sheppardia cyornithopsis* A great find at Ankasa.

**European Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca* A few sightings of this Palearctic migrant in the north.

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra* 2 of these Palearctic migrants at Shai Hills.

**White-crowned Cliff Chat** ◊ *Thamnota coronata* 3 seen at Shai Hills and another pair in the Tongo Hills.

**White-fronted Black Chat** ◊ *Oenanthe albifrons* A female seen well in Mole NP.

**Familiar Chat** *Oenanthe familiaris* 1 seen in the Tongo Hills.

**Fraser's Sunbird (Scarlet-tufted S)** *Deleornis fraseri* This atypical sunbird was seen well in the various forests.

**Mangrove Sunbird** ◊ (**Brown S**) *Anthreptes gabonicus* Several were seen at the Ebi River.

**Little Green Sunbird** *Anthreptes seimundi* Regularly encountered in the various forests.

**Grey-chinned Sunbird** ◊ (**Green S, Yellow-chinned S**) *Anthreptes rectirostris* A few seen at Kakum.

**Collared Sunbird** *Hedydipna collaris* Common and widespread in the forests.

**Pygmy Sunbird** ◊ *Hedydipna platura* Small numbers seen well in the north.

**Reichenbach's Sunbird** ◊ *Anabathmis reichenbachii* Seen well at the Ebi River.

**Green-headed Sunbird (Olive-backed S)** *Cyanomitra verticalis* Seen in the Kakum area and Opro Forest..

**Blue-throated Brown Sunbird** *Cyanomitra cyanoaema* Regularly encountered in the various forests.

**Olive Sunbird** *Cyanomitra olivacea* Common and widespread in the various forests.  
**Buff-throated Sunbird** ◊ *Chalcomitra adelberti* A beautiful sunbird, seen well at Kakum.  
**Scarlet-chested Sunbird** *Chalcomitra senegalensis* Common in the north.  
**Olive-bellied Sunbird** *Cinnyris chloropygius* Small numbers in the Kakum forests.  
**Tiny Sunbird** ◊ *Cinnyris minullus* A pair seen from the canopy walkway in Kakum NP.



*Mangrove (or Brown) Sunbird at the Ebi River (left) and a male Tiny Sunbird in Kakum NP (right). (Nik Borrow)*

**Beautiful Sunbird** *Cinnyris pulchellus* Easily seen in the north.  
**Splendid Sunbird** *Cinnyris coccinigastrus* Excellent views of this sunbird that certainly lives up to its name.  
**Johanna's Sunbird** ◊ *Cinnyris johannae* A few were seen in Kakum and Bobiri forests.  
**Superb Sunbird** *Cinnyris superbus* A few were seen in Kakum and Bobiri forests.  
**Copper Sunbird** *Cinnyris cupreus* Small numbers in the coastal savannas.  
**Northern Grey-headed Sparrow** *Passer griseus* Widespread and mainly seen on journeys.  
**Bush Petronia** *Gymnoris dentata* Common in the north.  
**Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver** *Plocepasser superciliosus* Small numbers in Mole NP.  
**Speckle-fronted Weaver** *Sporopipes frontalis* Small numbers seen near Sapeliga.  
**Slender-billed Weaver** *Ploceus pelzelni* (LO) 1 seen at an inactive colony.  
**Little Weaver** *Ploceus luteolus* Small numbers in Mole NP.  
**Black-necked Weaver** *Ploceus nigricollis* Strangely absent with just a couple of sightings.  
**Orange Weaver** *Ploceus aurantius* Seen well en route to Ankasa.  
**Heuglin's Masked Weaver** ◊ *Ploceus heuglini* A male in non-breeding plumage at Sapeliga.  
**Village Weaver** *Ploceus cucullatus* Common and widespread.  
**Vieillot's Black Weaver** ◊ (Chestnut-and-black W) *Ploceus [nigerrimus] castaneofuscus* Common in the south.  
**Black-headed Weaver** *Ploceus melanocephalus* Non-breeding plumaged birds in Mole NP and Nasia Swamp.  
**Yellow-mantled Weaver** *Ploceus tricolor* Our best views were from the canopy walkway in Kakum NP.  
**Maxwell's Black Weaver** ◊ *Ploceus albinucha* Small numbers from the canopy walkway in Kakum NP.  
**Preuss's Weaver** *Ploceus preussi* A male seen well from the canopy walkway in Kakum NP.  
**Red-vented Malimbe** ◊ *Malimbus scutatus* Easy to see at Antwikwaa.  
**Blue-billed Malimbe (Gray's M)** *Malimbus nitens* Small numbers seen in the forests.  
**Red-headed Malimbe** *Malimbus rubricollis* Easily seen in the various forests.  
**Crested Malimbe** *Malimbus malimbicus* A well-hidden bird in Bobiri Forest.  
**Red-headed Quelea** *Quelea erythrops* Small numbers of non-breeding birds in farmbrush in the south and Mole NP.  
**Red-billed Quelea** *Quelea quelea* Small numbers in Mole NP.  
**Black-winged Red Bishop** *Euplectes hordeaceus* Non-breeding plumaged birds in the north.  
**Northern Red Bishop (Orange B)** *Euplectes franciscanus* Non-breeding plumaged birds in the north.  
**Yellow-mantled Widowbird** *Euplectes macroura* Mainly non-breeding plumaged birds along the Brenu Road.  
**Red-fronted Antpecker** ◊ *Parmoptila rubrifrons* Great looks at a male at Ankasa.  
**White-breasted Nigrita (W-b Negrofinch)** *Nigrita fusconotus* 2 seen from the canopy walkway in Kakum NP.

**Chestnut-breasted Nigrita (C-b Negrofinch) *Nigrita bicolor*** Small numbers seen in the forests.

**Grey-headed Nigrita (G-crowned Negrofinch) *Nigrita canicapillus*** Commonly encountered in the forests.

**Red-winged Pytilia** ◊ *Pytilia phoenicoptera* A pair seen well in Mole NP.

**Western Bluebill *Spermophaga haematina*** A skulking bird in the Kakum forests.

**Black-bellied Firefinch *Lagonosticta rara*** A pair seen in Mole NP.

**Bar-breasted Firefinch *Lagonosticta rufopicta*** Seen along the Brenu Road and in the north.

**Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala*** Small numbers in the north.

**Black-faced Firefinch** ◊ *Lagonosticta larvata* A male seen in the Tongo Hills and more at Nasia Swamp.

**Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus bengalus*** Commonly encountered in the north.

**Lavender Waxbill *Estrilda caerulescens*** Small numbers in the north.

**Orange-cheeked Waxbill *Estrilda melpoda*** Seen along the Brenu Road and in the north.

**Black-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda troglodytes*** Seen along the Brenu Road and in the far north.

**Orange-breasted Waxbill (Zebra W) *Amandava subflava*** A restless flock at Nasia Swamp.

**Quailfinch *Ortygospiza atricollis*** Excellent close views at Nasia Swamp and Tono Dam.

**African Silverbill *Euodice cantans*** 4 seen at Tono Dam.

**Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura cucullata*** Common and widespread.

**Black-and-white Mannikin *Lonchura bicolor*** Small flocks were seen in the forest zone.

**Wilson's Indigobird** ◊ *Vidua wilsoni* A male in breeding plumage along the Brenu Road.

**Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*** A few widespread sightings included breeding plumaged birds.

**Exclamatory Paradise Whydah** ◊ *Vidua interjecta* A non-breeding plumaged bird in Mole NP.

**Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* (H)** Palearctic migrants heard in the north.

**African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*** Scattered sightings throughout the tour in the south.

**Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus*** Seen well at Shai Hills and Nasia Swamp.

**Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys*** 4 at Shai Hills.

**Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*** A single Palearctic migrant seen on the Winneba Plains.

**Yellow-fronted Canary *Crithagra mozambica*** Small numbers in the north.

**Gosling's Bunting** ◊ *Emberiza goslingi* Easily seen at Nasia Swamp, Tongo Hills and Tono Dam.

**Golden-breasted Bunting *Emberiza flaviventris*** A male was seen near Sapeliga on 19/3.

**Brown-rumped Bunting *Emberiza affinis*** 2 individuals seen well in Mole NP.



A female Black-faced Firefinch at Nasia Swamp (left) A male Brown-rumped Bunting in Mole NP (right). (Nik Borrow)



*Patas Monkey in Mole NP (Nik Borrow)*

## MAMMALS

- African Palm Civet** *Nandinia binotata* (H, LO) Heard at night by Nik in Ankasa.
- Spotted Hyaena** *Crocuta crocuta* (H) Heard in Mole NP.
- Common Slender Mongoose** *Galerella sanguinea* 2 sightings during journeys.
- Gambian Mongoose** *Mungos gambianus* 1 at night in Mole NP.
- Western Tree Hyrax** *Dendrohyrax dorsalis* (H) Heard at night in the forests.
- African Savanna Elephant** *Loxodonta africana* Just 3 in Mole NP.
- Common Warthog** *Phacochoerus africanus* Easily seen in Mole NP.
- Central Bushbuck** *Tragelaphus phaleratus* Small numbers in Mole NP.
- Buffon's Kob** *Kobus kob* Seen first at Shai Hills but common in Mole NP.
- Western Hartebeest** *Alcelaphus major* 4 in Mole NP.
- Demidoff's Dwarf Galago** *Galagoides demidovii* Seen at night in the various forests.
- Northern Lesser Galago (Senegal G)** *Galago senegalensis* 2 seen at night in Mole NP.
- West African Potto** *Perodicticus potto* (LO) Paul saw 1 at Ankasa.
- Olive Baboon** *Papio anubis* Seen at Shai Hills.
- Patas Monkey** *Erythrocebus patas* 1 seen in Mole NP.
- Green Monkey (Callithrix M)** *Cercopithecus sabaues* Seen at Shai Hills and Mole NP.
- Lowe's Monkey** *Cercopithecus lowei* (H) Heard in Kakum NP.
- Spot-nosed Monkey** *Cercopithecus petaurista* Seen well at Shai Hills.
- African Savanna Hare (Scrub H)** *Lepus victoriae* Seen in Mole NP.
- Pel's Anomalure (P Scaly-tailed Squirrel)** *Anomalurus peli* An excellent encounter at night in Kakum NP.
- Striped Ground Squirrel** *Euxerus erythropus* Seen in the far north.
- Gambian Sun Squirrel** *Heliosciurus gambianus* 1 seen at Tono Dam.

**Small Sun Squirrel *Heliosciurus punctatus*** 3 seen from the canopy walkway in Kakum NP and also at Ebi River.  
**Fire-footed Rope Squirrel *Funisciurus pyrropus*** 1 seen at Opro Forest.  
**Kintampo Rope Squirrel *Funisciurus substriatus*** 1 for some in Mole NP.  
**Green Bush Squirrel *Paraxerus poensis*** 1 seen at Antwikwaa.  
**Forest Giant Pouched Rat (Emin's P R) *Cricetomys emini*** 1 at night at Ankasa.  
**Straw-coloured Fruit Bat *Eidolon helvum*** Seen flying over Accra.  
**Hammer Bat *Hypsignathus monstrosus*** Seen flying over Kakum NP.  
**Gambian Fruit Bat *Epomophorus gambianus*** Roosting at Tamale.  
**Yellow-winged Bat *Lavia frons*** 1 in Mole NP.



Yellow-winged Bat in Mole NP (top left), Larabanga Mosque (top right) and Plain Nightjar at Kakum (bottom). (Nik Borrow)