

**ETHIOPIA (incl. Rock Churches at Lalibela extension)**

May 5, 2012 to May 28, 2012  
Terry Stevenson & Richard Webster



*Spot-breasted Lapwing is a lovely plover of high-elevation grasslands, one that has presumably declined greatly in the face of agriculture. It is still reasonably common on the Sanetti Plateau, where we look for Ethiopian Wolf. (Photo by guide Richard Webster)*

Success can be defined in many ways, and by most ways our journey around Ethiopia was a success. It was a birding tour, and we had great success finding Ethiopia's special birds, including some with small populations and very limited ranges. The subtitle to this birding tour also mentioned a certain Wolf, and we were very successful in seeing not only Ethiopian Wolf, but several other endemic mammals. The tour was also a logistical success: the group's curiosity about seeing much of the diversity of Ethiopia, including regions well off the tourist track, was also satisfied thanks to the behind-the-scenes work of Experience Ethiopia Tours and the on-the-scenes management of Kibrom.

May is in advance of the main rainy season in Ethiopia, and this year was no exception in the north, which was brown, locally tinged green. Some rain may reach southern Ethiopia in April and May, and this year was an exception in that major rain had fallen in the southern third of the country, as it had in neighboring Kenya. Fortunately we happened to avoid coinciding with the heaviest downpours, and were able to get everywhere and enjoy an extraordinarily green landscape, and many singing and breeding species (although in a few cases, some birds may have dispersed, e.g., from Sof Omar).

The trip started with three days of birding on the escarpments and dry valleys north of Addis Ababa. While the avifauna of the agricultural highlands is limited, many of the endemics occur here, and we saw perhaps half of our eventual total just in these three days. Venturing lower on the slopes added many more widespread species. Highlights from this section included Blue-winged Goose, Wattled Ibis, Harwood's Francolin, White-collared Pigeon, Ethiopian (Tropical) Boubou, White-rumped Babbler, Rueppell's Chat, White-winged Cliff-Chat, Ankober and Yellow-throated serins, and Red-billed Pytilia.

Heading south from Addis, we traveled to the desert environment of Bilen Lodge, our lowest elevation of the tour but still 3,000' above Ethiopia's low point of the Danakil Depression. We were fortunate to find Arabian Bustard there, along with many other fine birds, including Spotted Thick-knee, Abyssinian Roller, Yellow-breasted Barbet, and Nile Valley and Shining sunbirds. Returning up the Rift Valley, we entered the dry bush country of Awash National Park, where we enjoyed the hospitality of Awash Falls Lodge, located on the rim of the canyon within sight of the falls. Although human

encroachment has limited the mammals, we did see Beisa Oryx, Salt's Dik-dik, and Soemmering's Gazelle. Avian pleasures included Four-banded Sandgrouse, White Helmetshrike, Rosy-patched Bushshrike, Gillet's Lark singing at length, Somali Fiscal, and, on the nearby lava fields, the very local Sombre Chat.

Moving south up the Rift Valley, we stopped at several lakes and then based ourselves at Lake Langano for some of the "birdiest" days of the trip. Memorable species from this segment and our night at Lake Awassa later included African Pygmy-Goose, White-backed Duck, Black Heron canopy feeding, Gray Kestrel, tame Black Crake, Lesser Jacana, White-winged Terns in breeding plumage, Black-winged Lovebird feeding at close range, Rufous-necked Wryneck, Gray-headed Bushshrike, White-winged Black-Tit, many weavers in breeding plumage, and Abyssinian (Fawn-breasted) Waxbill.

For many, the most distinctive and special environment was the Bale Mountains, and the national park of that name. Based in Goba and using 4WD, we traveled as high as 4,300m on the Sanetti Plateau, and above treeline had repeated looks at perhaps six different Ethiopian Wolves, one of which had just captured a Giant Root-Rat. Bird species were few, but included the striking Spot-breasted Lapwing, Chestnut-naped and Moorland francolins, and Rouget's Rail, plus the bonus of Wattled Cranes being around this year. Forests on both slopes provided more new birds, including White-cheeked Turaco, Abyssinian Woodpecker, Abyssinian Catbird, White-backed Black-Tit, and Dark-headed Oriole. The park's protection also allowed us to have great views of Mountain Nyala and Menelik's Bushbuck. Our day trip to Sof Omar had a lucky connection with Salvadori's Serin, some other good birds (Narina Trogon, Bristle-crowned Starling), and for those who wanted, a walk into the scenic and historic cave.

Two stops in the remote south provided access to a few more endemics and many species shared with Kenya's arid north. In Negele we considered ourselves fortunate to find two of the most difficult birds of the trip. Prince Ruspoli's Turaco responded with surprising ease, and we had another later, while the Sidamo (Liben) Lark, threatened with extinction, took some looking and puzzling, but our one ended up wonderfully cooperative. White-crowned Starling was another special bird, and an aesthetic highlight was provided by late afternoon light on Red-and-yellow Barbet and a flock of tame Red-bellied (Orange-bellied) Parrots.

We found Stresemann's Bush-crow even before reaching Yabello, and had a close-range encounter with a family group feeding fledged young; this is perhaps Ethiopia's most distinctive bird. Continuing to bird the region, we found the other local endemic, White-tailed Swallow, and many other great birds (Vulturine Guineafowl, Short-tailed Lark, Shelley's, Golden-breasted, and Magpie starlings, Northern Grosbeak-Canary, and Shelley's Rufous Sparrow), while some of us recovered (sigh) from real life, the wrong box lunch. Our return to Addis was enlivened by two Yellow-fronted Parrots coming to roost at Wondo Genet, where both parrots and forest are being depleted at a rapid rate.

Most of the group went on the extension to Lalibela to see the historic rock-hewn churches. Between visits to the churches we did go birding, and saw two additional endemics, Erckel's Francolin (what a performer!) and Yellow-rumped (White-throated) Seedeater. We also saw many specialties again, including some of our best views of species such as Banded Barbet, Abyssinian Black (Schalow's) Wheatear, and White-billed Starling. The views of Lammergeier from our hotel and elsewhere were one of the aesthetic highlights of the trip.

Thanks to all of you for joining us on this trip; it was a truly memorable experience. Terry and I look forward to guiding you to another destination someday soon.

--Richard

(Taxonomy follows Clements and supplements to at least a considerable degree. "Endemic" is used in the sense of Redman, Stevenson, and Fanshawe, emphasizing the region, not single countries. Conservation information is drawn from the publications of BirdLife International.)

For more information about this tour, including future departures, visit our website at [www.fieldguides.com](http://www.fieldguides.com). And to see this same triplist online, go to <http://www.fieldguides.com/triplists/eth12LIST.pdf> and you will find the list in its entirety.

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#### KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: \* = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

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## BIRDS

### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

**WHITE-FACED WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna viduata*) – Widespread in small numbers at Rift Valley Lakes, with large flocks at Lake Koka.

**FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) – A few at Lakes Koka and Awassa.

**WHITE-BACKED DUCK** (*Thalassornis leuconotus*) – Good views of a few at Lake Awassa.

**BLUE-WINGED GOOSE** (*Cyanochen cyanoptera*) – Fairly common and tame in marshy areas of the highlands, first in agricultural areas north of Addis Ababa, then in Bale Mtns. N.P. This endemic is most closely related to the sheldgeese of southern South America. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population under 10,000. [E]

**EGYPTIAN GOOSE** (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*) – Widespread, seen nearly daily.

**RUDDY SHELDUCK** (*Tadorna ferruginea*) – We saw a few pairs on the wetlands of the Sanetti Plateau. A lovely bird, and the one African breeding outpost for this temperate species.

**SPUR-WINGED GOOSE** (*Plectropterus gambensis*) – Three were seen at Lake Ziway.

**AFRICAN PYGMY-GOOSE** (*Nettapus auritus*) – Widespread in Africa, but often local. We saw a few lovely pairs at Lake Ziway and Lake Awassa.

**AFRICAN BLACK DUCK** (*Anas sparsa*) – Not a rarity, but rarely seen because its habitat, mountain streams, are hard to cover. We were lucky to see a pair on a creek en route to Sof Omar (unusual in such an open habitat).

**YELLOW-BILLED DUCK** (*Anas undulata*) – Widespread in small numbers in highland marshy spots and at Rift Valley lakes.

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Anas clypeata*) – Three lingering winterers were at Lake Abiata. [b]

**HOTTENTOT TEAL** (*Anas hottentota*) – A few distant birds at Lake Koka; better views for those who walked down the dike at Lake Awassa.

**CAPE TEAL** (*Anas capensis*) – Common on alkaline Lake Abiata.

**SOUTHERN POCHARD** (*Netta erythrophthalma*) – Good views of several dozen at Lake Abiata.

### Numididae (Guineafowl)

**HELMETED GUINEAFOWL** (*Numida meleagris*) – Flocks were seen regularly in the arid, lower Rift Valley: Bilen Lodge and Awash N.P.

**VULTURINE GUINEAFOWL** (*Acryllium vulturinum*) – This stunning bird was a lucky find (not rare, we just did not have much time to encounter them) south of Yabello; nice views.

### Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

**CRESTED FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus sephaena*) – Widespread by voice at lower elevations, with good views several times.

**MOORLAND FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus psilolaemus*) – It takes a combination of luck and good spotting, the latter provided by Ebenezer on the Sanetti Plateau, where two were close to the road.

**ERCKEL'S FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus erckelii*) – On the Lalibela extension only, a wonderfully responsive bird seen well, and more spotted by scanning the slopes far below. Heard most mornings and evenings at our hotel. [E]

**HARWOOD'S FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus harwoodi*) – One of the more difficult endemics, we were fortunate to find one with strong hormones, i.e. respond from a long way off. It stayed fairly far off, but with telescopes it was a good look on the slopes of the Jemma Valley. This poorly-known bird is considered "Vulnerable," with a population of 6,000 to 15,000. [E]

**YELLOW-NECKED FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus leucoscepus*) – This widespread bird in Africa was eventually seen north of Yabello.

**CHESTNUT-NAPED FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus castaneicollis*) – A relatively easy endemic francolin? (Famous last



*A small, isolated population of Wattled Cranes occurs in Ethiopia; this pair occurred with Ethiopian Wolves on the Sanetti Plateau of Bale Mountains N.P. (Photo by guide Richard Webster)*

words?). But they seem not too difficult along the road to the Sanetti Plateau, often coming out onto the verge and not running off instantly. [E]

**BLUE QUAIL** (*Coturnix adansonii*) – Not well documented in Ethiopia, and after our observation of one in flight after we flushed it on the Liben Plain, still not well documented in Ethiopia! But better than nothing!

#### Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**LITTLE GREBE** (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) – Widespread on major lakes and ephemeral rain ponds. Around 100 on Lake Hora.

**EARED GREBE** (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – Perhaps the sleaziest addition to the triplist, the three specks in the shimmer of Lake Abiata's heat haze near noon. But nobody argued the ID!

#### Phoenicopteridae (Flamingos)

**GREATER FLAMINGO** (*Phoenicopus roseus*) – In small numbers as African flamingo counts go, but still enough to enjoy at Lake Abiata.

**LESSER FLAMINGO** (*Phoenicopus minor*) – Ditto. It is considered "Near Threatened."

#### Ciconiidae (Storks)

**ABDIM'S STORK** (*Ciconia abdimii*) – Widespread, but always in small numbers, mostly in flight, sometimes in fields or towns. A few appeared to be nesting on the cliffs of Lake Langano.

**WOOLLY-NECKED STORK** (*Ciconia episcopus*) – Singles in the Jemma Valley, flying by our lunch stop in Yirga Chefe, and on our way back from Yabello.

**SADDLE-BILLED STORK** (*Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*) – One adult was seen by part of the group as it flew over Bilen Lodge.

**MARABOU STORK** (*Leptoptilos crumeniferus*) – On only a few days of the tour, but then by the 100s in the setting of towns next to Rift Valley lakes.

**YELLOW-BILLED STORK** (*Mycteria ibis*) – Ten in the Jemma Valley were followed by singles at Lakes Ziway and Langano and near Negele.

#### Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**GREAT CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) – Small numbers at many of the lakes we visited.

**LONG-TAILED CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax africanus*) – Ditto.

#### Anhingidae (Anhingas)

**AFRICAN DARTER** (*Anhinga rufa rufa*) – At least three at Lake Ziway.

#### Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

**GREAT WHITE PELICAN** (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) – Small numbers at four Rift Valley lakes, maximum of around 75 at Lake Koka.

**PINK-BACKED PELICAN** (*Pelecanus rufescens*) – Several on Lake Hora and a dozen or so at Lake Awassa.

#### Scopidae (Hamerkop)

**HAMERKOP** (*Scopus umbretta*) – Amongst all the heron-stork-ibis types, this species may have been the most widespread, with only Sacred Ibis seen on about the same number of days. Never in large numbers (a couple dozen at a couple of the lakes), but it is able to utilize many habitats. Wonderfully tame at Lake Ziway.

#### Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**DWARF BITTERN** (*Ixobrychus sturmii*) – A lucky write-in for part of the group. This intra-Tropical migrant was probably "wintering" along the little creek in wet-after-early-rains Negele.

**GRAY HERON** (*Ardea cinerea*) – Scarce; just a few.

**BLACK-HEADED HERON** (*Ardea melanocephala*) – A half dozen (i.e., scarce), including four with breeding plumes at a temporary wetland near Yabello.

**GOLIATH HERON** (*Ardea goliath*) – A couple in the Jemma Valley (a dry place, but the river was good to us this visit), and one at Lake Ziway (the best guess as to what it ate was a Lesser Jacana!).

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – Only a handful.

**LITTLE EGRET** (*Egretta garzetta*) – Ditto, but they included a couple with lovely breeding plumes at Lake Ziway.

**BLACK HERON** (*Egretta ardesiaca*) – Singles at Lake Ziway and Lake Awassa; both engaged in frequent canopy feeding

(fun photos!).

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – In a country with a huge amount of habitat (where habitat is defined solely by domestic stock!), this is a scarce bird. Just a few small flocks, plus roosts at Bilen Lodge and Awash N.P.

**SQUACCO HERON** (*Ardeola ralloides*) – One at Lake Hora and perhaps ten at Lake Awassa.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – A handful at Bilen Lodge.

*Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)*

**GLOSSY IBIS** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – One flying by Lake Ziway.

**SACRED IBIS** (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*) – Widespread, generally in small numbers, but it uses diverse habitats (even one at 4,000m on the Sanetti Plateau).

**HADADA IBIS** (*Bostrychia hagedash*) – Heard as much as seen, and in flight more than on the ground, but eventually good looks, e.g., at Lake Langano.

**WATTLED IBIS** (*Bostrychia carunculata*) – This endemic is fairly common in the highlands, where we had repeated good views, including of the small wattle. [E]

**AFRICAN SPOONBILL** (*Platalea alba*) – A dozen at Lake Koka and two near Yabello.

*Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)*

**BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE** (*Elanus caeruleus*) – Two singles in the highlands north of Addis Ababa.

**BLACK KITE (YELLOW-BILLED)** (*Milvus migrans parasitus*) – Almost daily, often common around human habitation. Migrant black-billed types are common in Ethiopia, but by the time of our May tour all that is left is the resident 'Yellow-billed,' which is split by many.

**AFRICAN FISH-EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus vocifer*) – A wonderful feature of rivers and lakes, from our lodge at Awash N.P., where we could hear them from our rooms, to all the Rift Valley lakes.

**HOODED VULTURE** (*Necrosyrtes monachus*) – Declining in Kenya, but still common in Ethiopia, where it is the common vulture of towns. It is considered "Endangered," which seems strange in the context of Ethiopia, but it has crashed recently in Kenya and many other places.

**LAMMERGEIER** (*Gypaetus barbatus*) – We had nice views in the Jemma Valley, with one more at the Sanetti Plateau, but the spectacular site was on the extension, where we had repeated close views at our hotel of this huge bird riding the winds like an albatross.

**EGYPTIAN VULTURE** (*Neophron percnopterus*) – Declining in Kenya, and perhaps also in Ethiopia, where we had singles at Lake Langano and on the Liben Plain. It is considered "Endangered," and, for instance, is seldom seen on our Kenya tours anymore.

**WHITE-BACKED VULTURE** (*Gyps africanus*) – Scattered small numbers along the whole route, plus many "Gyps sp." that doubtless included more of this species. It is considered "Endangered" despite a large population because of rapid, drastic declines in some regions.

**RUEPPELL'S GRIFFON** (*Gyps rueppellii*) – Many vultures are still doing well in Ethiopia, including this one, although their ecology must have been re-organized greatly by the switch from native herbivores to abundant domestic animals. It is considered "Endangered."

**LAPPET-FACED VULTURE** (*Torgos tracheliotus*) – One of the specialist vultures, and so never common, we had two encounters, with two over highland fields north of Addis and another at a carcass along the highway in the Rift Valley. It is considered "Vulnerable."

**WHITE-HEADED VULTURE** (*Trionoceps occipitalis*) – For those who were not in the bathroom at Dodola, we had two fly over. It is considered "Vulnerable."

**BLACK-BREASTED SNAKE-EAGLE** (*Circaetus pectoralis*) – One over Sof Omar, and lovely looks at another NW of Negele.

**BATELEUR** (*Terathopius ecaudatus*) – Another species declining in many areas, evidently in Ethiopia, too--only one this trip, an immature south of Yabello. It is considered "Near Threatened."

**AFRICAN HARRIER-HAWK** (*Polyboroides typus*) – A half dozen, including a pair with a nest at Awash N.P. a.k.a. Gymnogene.

**DARK CHANTING-GOSHAWK** (*Melierax metabates*) – Fairly widespread, and the more common of the two on this tour route.

**EASTERN CHANTING-GOSHAWK** (*Melierax poliopterus*) – In Ethiopia, a bird of the south and east, which we saw near Sof Omar and again in the Negele-Yabello region. Formerly part of Pale Chanting-Goshawk.

**SHIKRA** (*Accipiter badius*) – Our first were a couple at Sof Omar, where we had nice views of a perched bird after lunch,

followed by a couple more by parts of the group.

**LITTLE SPARROWHAWK** (*Accipiter minullus*) – Good spotting! Nice views of one eating a passerine (too far gone to be identified) right below the verandah of the Awash Falls Lodge (looking down is a nice angle to see the tail spots).

**AUGUR BUZZARD** (*Buteo augur*) – Common from middle to the highest elevations, where we also saw a few dark-phase birds. Many good views.

**TAWNY EAGLE** (*Aquila rapax*) – In small numbers, but common enough to be seen on a majority of days.

**VERREAUX'S EAGLE** (*Aquila verreauxii*) – Two encounters with this hyrax killer, first a pair along the escarpment of Gemessa Gedel, one of which was strafed by a Peregrine Falcon, and another for part of the group at Sof Omar, where it was strafed by an African Hawk-Eagle.

**AFRICAN HAWK-EAGLE** (*Aquila spilogaster*) – Two at Sof Omar and three at Lalibela.

**BOOTED EAGLE** (*Hieraaetus pennatus*) – One at Melka Ghebdu was a late migrant. [b]

**AYRES'S HAWK-EAGLE** (*Hieraaetus ayresii*) – One over our lunch stop in the town of Ziway seems surprising, but this species is apparently less of a forest bird in Ethiopia than farther south.

**LONG-CRESTED EAGLE** (*Lophaetus occipitalis*) – At least a half dozen, generally as fine ornaments to utility poles during our drives through the Rift Valley.

#### Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

**PYGMY FALCON** (*Polihierax semitorquatus*) – Two perched singles at Awash N.P.

**EURASIAN KESTREL** (*Falco tinnunculus*) – Ones and twos on five days of the trip. We were able to study the birds at Lalibela, where they were breeding, and see the tail markings of the local subspecies, *F. t. rufescens*.

**GRAY KESTREL** (*Falco ardosiaceus*) – Daphne spotted a perched bird behind the shores of Lake Awassa; good views.

**LANNER FALCON** (*Falco biarmicus*) – Ethiopia seems an especially good area for this widespread species, particularly in the highlands, where we saw as many as five in a day (often from the vehicle, but we had good views several times).

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) – An adult perched on the cliff at Gemessa Gedel ended up strafing a Verreaux's Eagle.

#### Otididae (Bustards)

**ARABIAN BUSTARD** (*Ardeotis arabs*) – A bird we cannot count on seeing, but Bilen Lodge came through again, with a pair along the entrance road and another flying over the Lodge the next morning. Wonderful. It is considered "Near Threatened."

**KORI BUSTARD** (*Ardeotis kori*) – Recent rains had attracted some (they do move around), and we had very nice views of several at Awash N.P. and a couple dozen more (mostly distant) on the Liben Plain.

**BUFF-CRESTED BUSTARD** (*Eupodotis gindiana*) – Heard several times at Awash N.P., where seen on the ground and doing a display flight, and heard again south of Yabello.

#### Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

**ROUGET'S RAIL** (*Rougetius rougetii*) – A strange and truly different rail, one of the nice differences being its willingness to come out of the shrubbery like a scrubhen! Not common, but seen several times in Bale Mtns. N.P. It is considered "Near Threatened." [E]

**BLACK CRAKE** (*Amaurornis flavirostra*) – Conspicuous, even tame, at several of the Rift Valley lakes.

**EURASIAN MOORHEN** (*Gallinula chloropus*) – A few in the Rift Valley, from Bilen Lodge to Lake Awassa.

**RED-KNOBBED COOT** (*Fulica cristata*) – Common at several Rift Valley Lakes and smaller marshes, such as near Dinsho (Gaysay V.), where red knobs were demanded, and red knobs were delivered.

#### Gruidae (Cranes)

**WATTLED CRANE** (*Bugeraanus carunculatus*) – A wonderful pair was seen on both of our transits of the Sanetti Plateau.



*An unexpected bonus in 2012 was a pair of Four-banded Sandgrouse in Awash N.P., known from the area, but seldom seen. This photo shows the brightly-colored male. (Photo by guide Richard Webster)*

Generally in the area, but an element of luck is involved: Will they be at a marsh visible from the road? They were, and we enjoyed lengthy views. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population of around 5,000.

*Burhinidae (Thick-knees)*

**SENEGAL THICK-KNEE** (*Burhinus senegalensis*) – Our first was one spotted by Linda P. during the women's rest stop in the Jemma Valley, followed by others at Bilen Lodge and Awash N.P.

**SPOTTED THICK-KNEE** (*Burhinus capensis*) – Not rare, just not easy to find; we stumbled (happily) into a pair resting under an acacia at Bilen Lodge.

*Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)*

**SPUR-WINGED PLOVER** (*Vanellus spinosus*) – Widespread, generally near water at lower elevations.

**BLACK-WINGED LAPWING** (*Vanellus melanopterus*) – Several on the Liben Plain, typical habitat for a bird that prefers upland grasslands.

**CROWNED LAPWING** (*Vanellus coronatus*) – Our first were in the Rift Valley in the L. Langano area, including parents with a chick; also common on the Liben Plain, the plumage reddened by the wet soil, and again south of Yabello.

**WATTLED LAPWING** (*Vanellus senegallus*) – An uncommon lapwing, we were fortunate to see them twice: Two near Negele and four flying over near Yabello.

**SPOT-BREASTED LAPWING** (*Vanellus melanocephalus*) – A really sharp bird, and a fun endemic to see. They are common on the Sanetti Plateau, and they were breeding (we saw a couple of chicks), but we did not see them anywhere else, e.g. in the vast upland agricultural fields. [E]

**KITTLITZ'S PLOVER** (*Charadrius pecuarius*) – Common at alkaline Lake Abiata.

**THREE-BANDED PLOVER** (*Charadrius tricollaris*) – One in the Jemma Valley, and two at close range at Lake Ziway, where we watched one feeding by 'foot paddling.'

*Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)*

**BLACK-WINGED STILT** (*Himantopus himantopus*) – Two at Lake Koka.

**PIED AVOCET** (*Recurvirostra avosetta*) – Around ten at alkaline Lake Abiata.

*Jacanidae (Jacanas)*

**LESSER JACANA** (*Microparra capensis*) – Local around Africa, and uncommon in general; we had good views twice, first at Lake Ziway and then at Lake Awassa.

**AFRICAN JACANA** (*Actophilornis africanus*) – This lovely lotusbird was seen at several Rift Valley lakes.

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**COMMON SANDPIPER** (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – One in the Jemma Valley. [b]

**SPOTTED REDSHANK** (*Tringa erythropus*) – Wayne spotted one late bird along a creek in the uplands N of Addis Ababa. [b]

**WOOD SANDPIPER** (*Tringa glareola*) – One with the Redshank and several more at Lake Koka. [b]

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** (*Limosa limosa*) – A few in basic plumage at Lakes Koka and Ziway. [b]

**LITTLE STINT** (*Calidris minuta*) – A few at Lake Koka, then fairly common still at Lake Abiata, where many northbound migrants were in alternate plumage. [b]

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** (*Calidris ferruginea*) – Lake Koka and Lake Abiata; many showing some breeding color. [b]

**RUFF** (*Philomachus pugnax*) – A few at several lakes, and still a hundred plus at Lake Abiata; none with plumes. [b]

*Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)*

**COLLARED PRATINCOLE** (*Glareola pratincola*) – Two at Lake Abiata.

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**GRAY-HOODED GULL** (*Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus*) – One or two dozen at several of the lakes.

**BLACK-HEADED GULL** (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) – Late (or overwintering) birds in basic plumage were at Lake Ziway (2) and Lake Awassa (1). [b]

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** (*Larus fuscus*) – Single, late birds were at three lakes. [b]

**GULL-BILLED TERN** (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) – One at Lake Besaka and another at Lake Langano.

**WHITE-WINGED TERN** (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) – An abundant wintering species, still present in small numbers, with some stunning birds in full alternate plumage at several lakes. a.k.a. White-winged Black Tern. [b]

**WHISKERED TERN** (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – One or two at a couple of lakes.

*Pteroclididae (Sandgrouse)*

**CHESTNUT-BELLIED SANDGROUSE** (*Pterocles exustus*) – We managed to find eight near Bilen Lodge.

**LICHTENSTEIN'S SANDGROUSE** (*Pterocles lichtensteinii*) – Jeanne identified the sandgrouse near her cabin at Bilen Lodge as this species.

**FOUR-BANDED SANDGROUSE** (*Pterocles quadricinctus*) – A write-in, but known from this area. We were lucky to find them twice, first at Awash N.P. and again at Lake Langano. Great views of a lovely bird.

*Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Actually a rare bird; we saw Feral Pigeons on only a few occasions, including the town of Awash. [I]

**SPECKLED PIGEON** (*Columba guinea*) – Daily; a lovely bird that does well both in the wild and, especially, in Rock Pigeon habitat: Towns.

**WHITE-COLLARED PIGEON** (*Columba albitorques*) – Locally fairly common in the uplands, both in towns and agricultural areas. Good views. [E]

**RAMERON PIGEON** (*Columba arquatrix*) – What was rare was to see them perched so close: Great looks at a lovely bird in the Harena Forest. a.k.a. Olive Pigeon.

**LEMON DOVE** (*Columba larvata*) – One or two folks got a quick look at a bird Makonen pointed out at Wondo Genet.

**DUSKY TURTLE-DOVE** (*Streptopelia lugens*) – Fairly common in the highlands, one of several columbids doing well in the highland agricultural fields.

**MOURNING COLLARED-DOVE** (*Streptopelia decipiens*) – Common at lower elevations/dry acacia country; seen very well at several of our lodges. a.k.a. African Mourning Dove.

**RED-EYED DOVE** (*Streptopelia semitorquata*) – Generally at higher or wetter locations than the preceding species; common by voice, and seen periodically.

**RING-NECKED DOVE** (*Streptopelia capicola*) – Common, but somewhat local, primarily in dry areas of the south.

**LAUGHING DOVE** (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) – This attractive dove (point blank at Lake Langano) was widespread and common in drier areas.

**EMERALD-SPOTTED WOOD-DOVE** (*Turtur chalcospilos*) – Widespread in small numbers; generally in cover, but we had perched birds several times, and saw the iridescent spots on the wing.

**BLUE-SPOTTED WOOD-DOVE** (*Turtur afer*) – Good views of a bird that stayed perched as person after person stepped forward to see it at Wondo Genet.

**TAMBOURINE DOVE** (*Turtur tympanistria*) – Heard and glimpsed a couple of times in montane forest.

**NAMAQUA DOVE** (*Oena capensis*) – Fairly common in dry areas, seen especially well at Bilen Lodge and Awash N.P.

**BRUCE'S GREEN-PIGEON** (*Treron waalia*) – Uncommon, but several good encounters, first in the riparian at Awash N.P., then at Lake Langano, and in flight at Sof Omar.

*Psittacidae (Parrots)*

**BLACK-WINGED LOVEBIRD** (*Agapornis taranta*) – This beautiful variation on a great theme is not common, but it is widespread, and we had excellent views several times, particularly at Lake Hora and Lake Langano. [E]

**RED-BELLIED PARROT** (*Poicephalus rufiventris*) – One of the aesthetic highlights of the trip was a chance encounter with a couple dozen (an unusually large number) atypically tame (they really didn't care about us, the hundred domestic animals, or the herders) (were they drunk from what they were eating?) birds. In any event, fabulous views in lovely late afternoon light. And Terry, we are behind you 100% on "orange" over "red."



*White-cheeked Turaco is the "other" turaco of Ethiopia, seemingly taking second place to the much-coveted Prince Ruspoli's Turaco (the discoverer of White-cheeked was not killed by an elephant!), but this endemic is a real beauty, too. (Photo by guide Richard Webster)*

**YELLOW-FRONTED PARROT** (*Poicephalus flavifrons*) – We saw two. Whew. At Wondo Genet, where the spectacular rate of deforestation is making this species ever more marginal every year. Thanks to our local guide, we honed in on the roost area (those who could make the ascent), and were rewarded by two birds coming in; decent telescope views before they moved to a different roost tree. This species is marginal on our tour route, but we keep trying. [E]

*Musophagidae (Turacos)*

**WHITE-CHEEKED TURACO** (*Tauraco leucotis*) – This turaco is the "easy" turaco of the tour, although all turacos have a slippery streak. We enjoyed good views in the Bale Mtns. N.P. (above Goba and in Harena Forest) and again in the remnant forest patches at Wondo Genet. [E]

**PRINCE RUSPOLI'S TURACO** (*Tauraco ruspolii*) – The extra tough endemic turaco! Although its near instantaneous response this year did not make it seem so! And we added a second encounter that afternoon near Negele. But this bird is anything but easy, especially with the shrinking habitat along the road. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population between 2,500 and 10,000. [E]

**WHITE-BELLIED GO-AWAY-BIRD** (*Corythaixoides leucogaster*) – Just another one of Africa's great birds. Not a specialty of Ethiopia, but the kind of bird that makes it easy to enjoy birding in Ethiopia. Good views in many lower, drier locations.

**EASTERN PLANTAIN-EATER** (*Crinifer zonurus*) – An uncommon bird on our route, but we stumbled into them a couple of times, first at Melka Ghebdu and again in the riparian at Awash N.P.

*Cuculidae (Cuckoos)*

**PIED CUCKOO** (*Clamator jacobinus*) – The unusual rains in the south helped greatly with cuckoos this year. We had a fly-by near the Genale River, and then a good view south of Yabello.

**LEVAILLANT'S CUCKOO** (*Clamator levaillantii*) – Only one, but a fine performer, for lengthy, close views in the Harena Forest.

**RED-CHESTED CUCKOO** (*Cuculus solitarius*) – A few were heard at length, especially in the Harena Forest, and a couple of attempts to see them produced sightings of birds perched briefly.

**BLACK CUCKOO** (*Cuculus clamosus*) – Common by voice in the wet south; a couple of responsive birds were seen well.

**KLAAS'S CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx klaas*) – One calling bird was extremely responsive, perching at length at close range south of Yabello.

**AFRICAN EMERALD CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx cupreus*) – This beauty was seen in the Harena Forest (if you were not distracted by the oriole or the hornbill!) and again at Wondo Genet (where there were other distractions!).

**DIDERIC CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx caprius*) – A responsive bird was seen well at Lake Langano, and several more were heard later in the tour.

**BLUE-HEADED COUCAL** (*Centropus monachus*) – This marshland skulker was seen unusually well as it hopped around on the hotel lawn at Lake Langano.

**WHITE-BROWED COUCAL** (*Centropus superciliosus*) – Several sightings, including at Bilen Lodge and Yabello, with others heard.

*Strigidae (Owls)*

**CAPE EAGLE-OWL** (*Bubo capensis dillonii*) – Widespread in the highlands of Ethiopia, but hard to find. Fortunately, an historic roost worked, and we enjoyed good views of two birds en route to Debre Birhan.

**GRAYISH EAGLE-OWL** (*Bubo cinerascens*) – Kibrom got the locals involved, and we were treated to good views of a roosting adult and large juvenile at Lake Langano (that local knowledge was quite useful, given that we had walked right by them already!). As split from Spotted Eagle-Owl.

**PEARL-SPOTTED OWLET** (*Glaucidium perlatum*) – Tape of this species was not especially productive, for owlets or small passerines, except at Sof Omar, where it was productive for owlets--good views.

**AFRICAN WOOD-OWL** (*Strix woodfordii*) – Our park guide in the Bale Mountains knew the roost (by the bathroom) of one, and we had good views (but, alas, again, no stakeout for the Abyssinian Long-eared).

*Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)*

**SLENDER-TAILED NIGHTJAR** (*Caprimulgus clarus*) – We had excellent views of a roosting bird at Bilen Lodge, and heard it at Lake Langano.

*Apodidae (Swifts)*

**ALPINE SWIFT** (*Apus melba*) – Always a chance affair, we were visited by this species several times, with the better views with Mottled at Sof Omar and from the roof deck at Lalibela on the extension.

**MOTTLED SWIFT** (*Apus aequatorialis*) – A flock of this large swift came over several times at Sof Omar.

**NYANZA SWIFT** (*Apus niansae*) – The most common and widespread swift, but even then not seen on most days.

**LITTLE SWIFT** (*Apus affinis*) – Not ubiquitous, as it is in many African countries; we saw a few in the Rift Valley.

**HORUS SWIFT** (*Apus horus*) – An uncommon species, we did well, with good views at Lake Hora, Lake Langanu, and Lake Awassa.

**WHITE-RUMPED SWIFT** (*Apus caffer*) – Small numbers at several spots; good views, memorably while we waited for the dumptruck full of sand to be removed from the road!

**AFRICAN PALM-SWIFT** (*Cypsiurus parvus*) – Good views over Awash Falls Lodge.

#### *Coliidae (Mousebirds)*

**SPECKLED MOUSEBIRD** (*Colius striatus*) – Seen on most days of the tour, in wetter and/or higher habitats, starting with on the bottlebrush in Addis Ababa.

**BLUE-NAPED MOUSEBIRD** (*Urocolius macrourus*) – Overlaps with Speckled, but tends toward the drier habitats where they both occur. Good views at several stops, particularly Awash Falls Lodge.

#### *Trogonidae (Trogons)*

**NARINA TROGON** (*Apaloderma narina*) – We were in pursuit of a calling bird when Wayne spotted another at Sof Omar; eventually, good views of both members of the pair.

#### *Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)*

**MALACHITE KINGFISHER** (*Corythornis cristatus*) – At just a few spots, but common at some of those, such at Lake Awassa, where we had close-range views of this stunning 'trash' bird of Africa.

**AFRICAN PYGMY-KINGFISHER** (*Ispidina picta*) – One of many kingfishers of bush country, and subject to movements; we had a good trip, with sightings a half dozen times.

**GRAY-HEADED KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon leucocephala*) – Another non-aquatic kingfisher, encountered regularly, starting at Melka Ghebdu.

**WOODLAND KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon senegalensis*) – A couple of sightings at Awash N.P. and Lake Awassa; "Woodland" is a 'woodland' kingfisher.

**STRIPED KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon chelicuti*) – Just a few at Awash N.P. and Lake Langanu.

**PIED KINGFISHER** (*Ceryle rudis*) – Common on the Rift Valley Lakes; like Malachite, an aquatic species.

#### *Meropidae (Bee-eaters)*

**LITTLE BEE-EATER** (*Merops pusillus*) – It can be a common species, but wasn't; just a few at Bilen Lodge and Awash N.P.

**BLUE-BREASTED BEE-EATER** (*Merops variegatus*) – Widespread at middle and upper elevations, in forest and woodlands. We saw *M. v. lafresnayii*, isolated from other populations in west and central Africa, and a potential split. We watched parents feeding a couple of fledged juveniles at Sof Omar.

**WHITE-THROATED BEE-EATER** (*Merops albicollis*) – Common at Bilen Lodge, where vocal and displaying; also seen at Awash N.P.

**MADAGASCAR BEE-EATER** (*Merops superciliosus*) – A few recent arrivals from the south (though they may breed in Ethiopia, also) were at Awash N.P. [a]

#### *Coraciidae (Rollers)*

**ABYSSINIAN ROLLER** (*Coracias abyssinicus*) – Several pairs at Bilen Lodge, one of them displaying, with a couple more at Awash N.P. On the extension, one at 2400m in Lalibela was at a surprising elevation.

**LILAC-BREASTED ROLLER** (*Coracias caudatus lorti*) – Regular in the south (Genale River, Negele, Yabello). Note the subspecies: The 'Lilac-throated' Roller.

**RUFOUS-CROWNED ROLLER** (*Coracias naevius*) – Scarce: One at Lake Langanu and a few south of Yabello.

**BROAD-BILLED ROLLER** (*Eurystomus glaucurus*) – A pair along the Genale River, one of which put on a show, in flight and perched, in lovely late light.

#### *Upupidae (Hoopoes)*

**EURASIAN HOOPOE (CENTRAL AFRICAN)** (*Upupa epops waibeli*) – Widespread singles and pairs, some singing; seen best at Lake Langanu and Lalibela. We saw this resident subspecies, which is most closely related to the Eurasian taxa, not "African" taxa.

Phoeniculidae (Woodhoopoes and Scimitar-bills)

**BLACK-BILLED WOODHOPOE** (*Phoeniculus somaliensis*) – This specialty was encountered regularly, often in extended family groups. The group at Lake Langano, showing its purple gloss, was especially nice. [E]

**ABYSSINIAN SCIMITAR-BILL** (*Rhinopomastus minor*) – We saw the nominate at Bilen and Awash, and *cabanisi* near Yabello.

Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

**NORTHERN RED-BILLED HORNBILL** (*Tockus erythrorhynchus*) – Widespread in bush country.

**EASTERN YELLOW-BILLED HORNBILL** (*Tockus flavirostris*) – Four encounters; as split from the southern Yellow-billed birds.

**VON DER DECKEN'S HORNBILL** (*Tockus deckeni*) – Seen at close range at Lake Langano, with another fly-by at Sof Omar.

**HEMPRICH'S HORNBILL** (*Tockus hemprichii*) – A local bird in Kenya, it is more widespread in Ethiopia, although cliffs are a necessary element in both areas. We had especially nice views at Lake Langano, where they had adapted well to human habitation, using an antenna as a calling station.

**AFRICAN GRAY HORNBILL** (*Tockus nasutus*) – Daily in the Bilen/Awash area.

**SILVERY-CHEEKED HORNBILL** (*Ceratogymna brevis*) – Our first were fine encounters in Harena Forest, followed by more during our drives through the highlands and at Wondo Genet.

**ABYSSINIAN GROUND-HORNBILL** (*Bucorvus abyssinicus*) – This species is doing at least OK in Ethiopia, where it is regularly encountered, and not just in parks-- indeed, all of encounters were outside of parks. Some great views of pairs and family groups. This genus is considered by some to be a separate family.

Lybiidae (African Barbets)

**RED-AND-YELLOW BARBET** (*Trachyphonus erythrocephalus*) – This beauty was the other star of the Orange-bellied (yes, "Orange") Parrot stop; we saw another south of Yabello.

**YELLOW-BREASTED BARBET** (*Trachyphonus margaritatus*) – A specialty of the Sahel region, that band between the Sahara and the wetter south from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. We had a great view of pair that was bringing food to a nest hole at Melka Ghebdu; we had more at Bilen Lodge (very vocal) and the Mt. Fantalle lava.

**D'ARNAUD'S BARBET** (*Trachyphonus darnaudii*) – Several encounters south of Yabello; good views.

**RED-FRONTED TINKERBIRD** (*Pogoniulus pusillus*) – A scattered few, including the "disappointing" birds at Lalibela, where we were looking for Yellow-fronted!

**RED-FRONTED BARBET** (*Tricholaema diademata*) – Three sightings: Lake Langano, Genale River, and south of Yabello.

**BLACK-THROATED BARBET** (*Tricholaema melanocephala*) – A pair south of Yabello.

**BANDED BARBET** (*Lybius undatus*) – A couple of encounters: Lake Hora and the Harena Forest. Then, on the extension, good views of several at Lalibela, including during our visit to Bet Giyorgis. [E]

**BLACK-BILLED BARBET** (*Lybius guifsobalito*) – This beauty was regular early in the trip (Jemma Valley, L. Hora, Bilen, Awash), and again at Lalibela.

Indicatoridae (Honeyguides)

**LESSER HONEYGUIDE** (*Indicator minor*) – A couple at Sof Omar and one at Wondo Genet.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

**RUFOUS-NECKED WRYNECK** (*Jynx ruficollis*) – Ann had them from her porch at Lake Langano, and we later had terrific views nearby on the grounds.



*Yellow-breasted Barbet is an example of a bird that is seen across Africa, but only in the narrow belt of the Sahel, lying between the Sahara and wetter, forested belts to the south. This barbet is about to deliver some insect protein to its young in a burrow in a bank.*

*(Photo by guide Richard Webster)*

**NUBIAN WOODPECKER** (*Campethera nubica*) – Widespread in small numbers.

**ABYSSINIAN WOODPECKER** (*Dendropicos abyssinicus*) – One of the most difficult specialties because, while widespread in highland forests, it is uncommon and inconspicuous. We did very well to find it twice in Bale Mtns. N.P., first above Dinsho, then quickly at the upper edge of Hareenna Forest. [E]

**CARDINAL WOODPECKER** (*Dendropicos fuscescens*) – A scattered few.

**GRAY-HEADED WOODPECKER** (*Dendropicos spodocephalus*) – A handful of sightings, first in Bale Mtns. N.P., then at Lake Awassa and Lalibela. As split from Gray Woodpecker.

*Platysteiridae (Wattle-eyes and Batises)*

**GRAY-HEADED BATIS** (*Batis orientalis*) – A good find at Bilen Lodge.

**BLACK-HEADED BATIS** (*Batis minor*) – Good views at Lake Langanu; seen again at Sof Omar.

*Prionopidae (Helmetshrikes and Allies)*

**WHITE HELMETSHRIKE** (*Prionops plumatus*) – A family group of this great bird was around Awash Falls Lodge, where it was seen a couple of times from the main building.

*Malaconotidae (Bushshrikes and Allies)*

**BRUBRU** (*Nilaus afer*) – Just a few--Bilen Lodge and Lake Langanu.

**NORTHERN PUFFBACK** (*Dryoscopus gambensis*) – A few in diverse habitats from Awash NP to Hareenna Forest.

**BLACK-CROWNED TCHAGRA** (*Tchagra senegalus*) – Widespread in small numbers, from Melka Ghebdu to the last day at Lalibela.

**THREE-STREAKED TCHAGRA** (*Tchagra jamesi*) – Seen by a few folks in the dry scrub south of Yabello.

**TROPICAL BOUBOU (ETHIOPIAN)** (*Laniarius aethiopicus aethiopicus*) – The wonderful voice was heard often, and we saw them at least four times, first at Melka Ghebdu. This taxon is often split based on a genetic study. [E]

**SLATE-COLORED BOUBOU** (*Laniarius funebris*) – Widespread in the acacia woodland of the south, although heard more than seen.

**ROSY-PATCHED BUSHSHRIKE** (*Rhodophoneus cruentus*) – We saw several, with a nice view of one perched up, in Awash N.P. R. c. hilgerti.

**SULPHUR-BREADED BUSHSHRIKE** (*Telophorus sulfureopectus*) – Heard several times, then a responsive bird was seen south of Yabello.

**GRAY-HEADED BUSHSHRIKE** (*Malaconotus blanchoti*) – Widespread, but uncommon and secretive, so always a good find. We had a great view of this impressive bird at Lake Langanu.

*Campephagidae (Cuckoo-shrikes)*

**RED-SHOULDERED CUCKOO-SHRIKE** (*Campephaga phoenicea*) – A few folks saw a bird we called this species south of Yabello; in retrospect, the guides are not sure it wasn't Black Cuckoo-shrike, although that species is poorly known in Ethiopia; so "cuckoo-shrike" sp. may be the best decision.

*Laniidae (Shrikes)*

**LESSER GRAY SHRIKE** (*Lanius minor*) – One late bird in Awash N.P. [b]

**GRAY-BACKED FISCAL** (*Lanius excubitoroides*) – A few around Lake Awassa.

**SOMALI FISCAL** (*Lanius somalicus*) – Good views of several in Awash N.P.

**COMMON FISCAL** (*Lanius collaris*) – Widespread in the highlands.

**WHITE-RUMPED SHRIKE** (*Eurocephalus rueppelli*) – Regular in acacia woodland. a.k.a. N. White-crowned Shrike, as split from (S.) White-crowned Shrike.

*Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)*

**DARK-HEADED ORIOLE** (*Oriolus monacha*) – Our first several were in Hareenna Forest, where we had telescope views of one on a nest (the part of it that was above the nest!), with follow-up views at Wondo Genet. [E]

**AFRICAN BLACK-HEADED ORIOLE** (*Oriolus larvatus*) – After hearing them at several spots, we saw a couple near Negele.

*Dicruridae (Drongos)*

**FORK-TAILED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus adsimilis*) – Widespread in small numbers.

*Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)*

**AFRICAN PARADISE-FLYCATCHER** (*Terpsiphone viridis*) – This spectacular bird was widespread and often living in very close proximity to man, particularly in the trees in restaurant courtyards, e.g. in Dilla, where the parents were feeding a juvenile just two meters above our table.

*Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*

**STRESEMANN'S BUSH-CROW** (*Zavattariornis stresemanni*) – One of Ethiopia's special birds, perhaps its most distinctive. We had a memorable encounter (the birds and the village life) with a great group north of Yabello. The adults were feeding begging, fledged juveniles on the ground in front of us. It is considered "Endangered," with a population between 10,000 and 20,000. [E]

**RED-BILLED CHOUGH** (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*) – A pair for most of the group on the Sanetti Plateau. Widespread in Eurasia, but a very limited distribution in Africa.

**CAPE CROW** (*Corvus capensis*) – Common in the agricultural highlands. a.k.a. Cape Rook.

**PIED CROW** (*Corvus albus*) – Common at upper elevations.

**SOMALI CROW** (*Corvus edithae*) – We saw them east of Goba on the way to Sof Omar (e.g., at the carcass with vultures) and again on the Liben Plain. a.k.a. Dwarf Raven, as split from Brown-necked Raven.

**FAN-TAILED RAVEN** (*Corvus rhipidurus*) – Seen nearly daily, some of the last the most memorable as they cruised by our hotel at Lalibela and chased the Lammergeiers.

**THICK-BILLED RAVEN** (*Corvus crassirostris*) – Scattered and somewhat local, but good views several times, including the surprise pair inside the Haremma Forest. A huge bird with a truly remarkable bill. [E]



*Stresemann's Bush-Crow is perhaps Ethiopia's most special, at least distinctive, endemic. Reminding those who know western North America of Clark's Nutcracker, it is a monotypic genus without close relatives, living in a small region of bushed grassland with scattered trees in southern Ethiopia. Generally treated as a corvid, there is still an outstanding question about even its proper family affiliation (starlings?). Photo by guide Richard Webster)*

*Alaudidae (Larks)*

**SINGING BUSHLARK** (*Mirafraga cantillans*) – We had good looks at a small cluster in the grasslands of Awash N.P.

**GILLETT'S LARK** (*Mirafraga gilletti*) – This was a good year for seeing this bird, as they were singing regularly at Awash N.P., perching up. [E]

**SIDAMO LARK** (*Heteromirafraga sidamoensis*) – We were very fortunate to find one of the remaining few hundred of this endangered species. Recent rains had stimulated larks to be singing, and we found it by its flight song. The rains had also left it, like many other birds, stained by the reddish soil, and increased the challenge of identifying it. A great study of a bird that lives only in that one spot (unless Archer's Lark is the same thing, which it might be, in which case it is merely an extremely rare bird!). a.k.a. Liben Lark. [E]

**FOXY LARK** (*Calendulauda alopex*) – Several were singing in the rain-freshened grassed bush south of Yabello.

**CHESTNUT-HEADED SPARROW-LARK** (*Eremopterix signatus*) – A female at Bilen Lodge and a couple more at Awash N.P.

**ERLANGER'S LARK** (*Calandrella erlangeri*) – We had one in the telescope north of Addis Ababa, and then it started doing a flight song, and it flew and sang and flew and sang and . . . we left it flying and singing, without telescope views for all. [E]

**SOMALI SHORT-TOED LARK** (*Calandrella somalica*) – Confusingly similar to Sidamo Lark, especially in voice; it is the common lark of the Liben Plain, and we saw several well.

**SHORT-TAILED LARK** (*Pseudalaemon fremantlii*) – Good views of a couple pairs south of Yabello, another bonus from the early rains, as the larks had paired up and were carrying nesting material.

**THEKLA LARK** (*Galerida theklae*) – Our most common lark, seen in several areas of the highlands, both in agriculture and natural areas.

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**PLAIN MARTIN** (*Riparia paludicola*) – A scattered few.

**BANK SWALLOW** (*Riparia riparia*) – Late migrants were seen several times in the first week of the tour, including several hundred in the Lake Langano-Abiata area. [b]

**ROCK MARTIN** (*Ptyonoprogne fuligula*) – Widespread.

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) – Late migrants of this abundant winterer were seen in the first week of the tour, with a few later on the Liben Plain. [b]

**ETHIOPIAN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo aethiopica*) – This regional specialty was seen in small numbers at Bilen Lodge, Awash N.P., Metahara, and the Liben Plain.

**WIRE-TAILED SWALLOW** (*Hirundo smithii*) – Seen at several spots, the best studies coming at Bilen Lodge, where perched at length on the utility wires.

**WHITE-TAILED SWALLOW** (*Hirundo megaensis*) – Its range is almost as limited as that of the bush-crow. We searched for them south of Yabello, and ended up with good looks and !!! perched on the road--a family group. [E]

**RED-RUMPED SWALLOW** (*Cecropis daurica*) – A few in the highlands, including off the deck of our hotel at Lalibela.

**LESSER STRIPED-SWALLOW** (*Cecropis abyssinica*) – Small numbers at lower elevations.

**BLACK SAWWING** (*Psalidoprocne pristoptera pristoptera*) – There are four subspecies described from Ethiopia, differing primarily in the color of the gloss, a hard character to assess in the field. We had excellent looks at this (sub)species at Lalibela.

**BLACK SAWWING** (*Psalidoprocne pristoptera antinorii*) – Birds seen at Lake Hora were probably this form, and one near Negele and two at Wondo Genet were certainly this taxon.

#### Paridae (Chickadees and Tits)

**WHITE-WINGED BLACK-TIT** (*Melaniparus leucomelas*) – Another one of Ann's yard birds at Lake Langano, we did catch up with them there and again near the Genale River.

**WHITE-BACKED BLACK-TIT** (*Melaniparus leuconotus*) – A bird of highland forests, we saw them well in Bale Mtns. N.P., first near Dinsho, and again in the Haremma Forest. [E]

**SOMALI TIT** (*Melaniparus thruppi*) – Several were in acacias at Sof Omar and two more were south of Yabello.

#### Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)

**MOUSE-COLORED PENDULINE-TIT** (*Anthoscopus musculus*) – Widespread but scarce, so always a nice find: We had them twice--Bilen Lodge and Awash N.P.

#### Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)

**COMMON BULBUL (COMMON)** (*Pycnonotus barbatus schoanus*) – Four (sub)species of Common Bulbul keeps one challenged, although not necessarily excited. This is the northern bird, including everything from Addis north, plus south to Wondo Genet.

**COMMON BULBUL (COMMON)** (*Pycnonotus barbatus spurius*) – We saw this one a few times in wet habitats of the SE Mountains, especially in Bale Mtns. N.P.

**COMMON BULBUL (SOMALI)** (*Pycnonotus barbatus somaliensis*) – On our route, limited to the dry NE, seen at Bilen Lodge and in Awash N.P.

**COMMON BULBUL (DODSON'S)** (*Pycnonotus barbatus dodsoni*) – And this bulbul is the one of the dry south, from Sof Omar to Negele and Yabello.

#### Macrosphenidae (African Warblers)

**NORTHERN CROMBEC** (*Sylvietta brachyura*) – A sprinkling in low, dry country, with particularly good views at Bilen Lodge.

**RED-FACED CROMBEC** (*Sylvietta whytii*) – Several sightings around Lake Langano.

#### Phylloscopidae (Leaf-Warblers)

**BROWN WOODLAND-WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus umbrovirens*) – A few in Bale Mtns. N.P. P. u. omoensis.

**WILLOW WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) – One late migrant at Lake Hora. [b]

#### Acrocephalidae (Reed-Warblers and Allies)

**EASTERN OLIVACEOUS WARBLER** (*Hippolais pallida*) – One late migrant at Lake Langano. [b]

**EURASIAN REED-WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) – One at Lake Awassa on the 20th was exceptionally late. [b]

**LESSER SWAMP-WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus gracilirostris*) – Seen, and more heard, around Lake Awassa.

#### Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

**CINNAMON BRACKEN-WARBLER** (*Bradypterus cinnamomeus*) – Common by voice, and seen several times skulking in shrubbery at Bale Mtns. N.P. The nominate form.

Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

**YELLOW-BREASTED APALIS** (*Apalis flavida*) – We saw several pairs south of Yabello. These are A. f. flavocincta, a brown-tailed form of dry, lower habitats; keep track of the taxa that you see of this complex.

**GREEN-BACKED CAMAROPTERA (GRAY-BACKED)** (*Camaroptera brachyura brevicaudata*) – Common by voice (the 'bleating' warbler), and seen regularly. Technically, we saw C. b. abessinica, which is part of the gray-backed brevicaudata group, which is the controlling name for this group, and what we have used here.

**RED-FRONTED WARBLER** (*Urorhipis rufifrons*) – One family group south of Yabello.

**GRAY WREN-WARBLER** (*Calamonastes simplex*) – After hearing them several times in arid country, we worked on them, and had good looks south of Yabello.

**RED-FACED CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola erythroptus*) [E]

**SINGING CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola cantans*) – Seen during our Harwood's Francolin search and heard in the Haremma Forest; those on the extension met a star performer at our kneecaps.

**BORAN CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola bodessa*) – Great views of a responsive bird near Negele; big wing flaps while perched singing.

**RATTLING CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola chiniana*) – At several locales.

**WINDING CISTICOLA (ETHIOPIAN)** (*Cisticola galactotes lugubris*) – Seen well on our first morning north of Addis, and again in a marshy area at Bale Mtns. N.P.; also by part of the group in Addis. This taxon is split by many authorities.

[E]

**FOXY CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola troglodytes*) – In the Jemma Valley, a bonus that came from the extra time afforded by the early appearance of Harwood's Francolin.

**TINY CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola nana*) – Two were seen well in low scrub south of Yabello.

**PECTORAL-PATCH CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola brunnescens*) – We were busy with larks, but this species was heard and then seen doing 'cloud-scraping' flight displays over the Liben Plain.

**BUFF-BELLIED WARBLER** (*Phyllolais pulchella*) – A half dozen encounters with this bird of large acacia trees.

**TAWNY-FLANKED PRINIA** (*Prinia subflava*) – Widespread in scrub and forest edge of the highlands.

**PALE PRINIA** (*Prinia somalica*) – Good view of a few in the thorn scrub south of Yabello.

**YELLOW-BELLIED EREMOMELA** (*Eremomela icteropygialis*) – Some good views, e.g., at Lake Langano.

Sylviidae (Old World Warblers)

**ABYSSINIAN CATBIRD** (*Parophasma galinieri*) – One of the most distinctive endemics. Our first good views were at the Dinsho entrance gate to Bale Mtns. N.P., and were followed by more in the Haremma Forest. [E]

**AFRICAN HILL BABBLER** (*Pseudoalcippe abyssinica*) – A couple were seen briefly in the Haremma Forest, and the lovely song was heard there.

**BROWN WARBLER** (*Parisoma lugens griseiventre*) – One of our better finds (they are inconspicuous) in Bale Mtns. N.P. was this subspecies of Brown Warbler = Brown Parisoma. Known as 'Bale' Parisoma, it has been split by some, though an analysis has not been published. [E]

**BANDED WARBLER** (*Parisoma boehmi*) – One south of Yabello.

Zosteropidae (Yuhinas, White-eyes, and Allies)

**BROAD-RINGED WHITE-EYE (MONTANE)** (*Zosterops poliogastrus poliogastrus*) – Seen on all three days that we birded forested habitats in Bale Mtns. N.P.

**WHITE-BREASTED WHITE-EYE** (*Zosterops abyssinicus*) – Widespread in small numbers. We generally saw the nominate, a.k.a. Abyssinian White-eye, but we also saw yellowish jubaensis south of Yabello.

Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes)

**RUFOUS CHATTERER** (*Turdoides rubiginosa*) – Small groups of this skulker (but not a really bad skulker) were seen at lowland sites throughout.

**WHITE-RUMPED BABBLER** (*Turdoides leucopygia*) – Our first good looks were above Melka Ghebdu, and were followed by more in the Jemma Valley, near Negele, and at Lalibela, enough of a spread to show us some of the geographic variability in head color and face pattern. [E]

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

**GRAYISH FLYCATCHER** (*Bradornis microrhynchus*) – In acacia woodland of several areas. This is the squishy new name for African Grey Flycatcher.

**ABYSSINIAN SLATY-FLYCATCHER** (*Melaenornis chocolatinus*) – This pale-eyed bird was seen by some in gardens in Addis, and then well by the group in Bale Mtns. N.P. (Dinsho, Harena Forest), Wondo Genet, and Lalibela. [E]

**NORTHERN BLACK-FLYCATCHER** (*Melaenornis edolioides*) – This drongo look alike was seen in acacia woodland at several locales.

**DUSKY-BROWN FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa adusta*) – Widespread from middle elevations on up, memorable birds including the very tame ones at the restaurant in Ziway. a.k.a. African Dusky Flycatcher.

**RED-BACKED SCRUB-ROBIN** (*Cercotrichas leucophrys*) – Our first, a responsive bird in Awash N.P., was followed by more good views of birds carrying food near Yabello. This widespread and variable species is a.k.a. White-browed Scrub-Robin; we saw a white-winged type, *C. l. leucoptera*.

**RUEPPELL'S ROBIN-CHAT** (*Cossypha semirufa*) – Common and less skulking than many robin-chats. We saw this highland species at several stops, both the nominate and closely related *C. s. donaldsoni*; these Ethiopian taxa are vocally quite different from some others, so keep track of where you see them.

**WHITE-BROWED ROBIN-CHAT** (*Cossypha heuglini*) – A local bird in Ethiopia, although common elsewhere; we saw one at Lake Awassa.

**SPOTTED MORNING-THRUSH** (*Cichladusa guttata*) – One near Negele and another south of Yabello.

**LITTLE ROCK-THRUSH** (*Monticola rufocinereus*) – Locally fairly common; seen on a half dozen days, including on the lodge grounds at Lake Langano.

**STONECHAT** (*Saxicola torquatus*) – Wintering birds had long departed, leaving the resident *S. t. albofasciatus*, which is uncommon. We saw one male in the Gaysay Valley of Bale Mtns. N.P., and Linda found a pair at our lunch stop beyond Kibre Mengist.

**RUEPPELL'S CHAT** (*Myrmecocichla melaena*) – We had good views of several on the escarpment of the Jemma Valley, and more in similar habitat at Lalibela. a.k.a. Rueppell's Black Chat. [E]

**MOCKING CLIFF-CHAT** (*Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris*) – This handsome bird was seen well in several rocky regions from Lake Langano to Lalibela. *T. c. albiscapulata*.

**WHITE-WINGED CLIFF-CHAT** (*Thamnolaea semirufa*) – This striking endemic occurs in similar habitat to the Mocking Cliff-Chat, and may overlap substantially, e.g. in Lalibela. Good views several times. [E]

**SOMBRE CHAT** (*Cercomela dubia*) – The endemic Sombre Chat is still known from fewer than a dozen sites, although we certainly drove by some potential habitat that might hold more! We were very pleased to have a fairly easy time with this difficult bird, and were able to get away before the heat drove us away. So a great bird in one sense, but very sombre! [E]

**BLACKSTART** (*Cercomela melanura*) – One for most of the group in rocky scrub in Awash N.P.

**MOORLAND CHAT** (*Cercomela sordida*) – Difficult to reach in other countries, in Ethiopia this is an easily seen bird of the highlands, both because it is common and because it is often confiding.

**NORTHERN WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) – One late bird at Awash N.P. [b]

**MOURNING WHEATEAR (SCHALOW'S)** (*Oenanthe lugens lugubris*) – An uncommon bird of dry, rocky highlands. We saw our first two en route to Ankober, followed by a couple more in the Jemma Valley and at Lalibela, where on perched on the roof of our hotel. This form is often split as Abyssinian Black Wheatear. [E]

**RED-BREASTED WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe bottae*) – We had good looks in highland pastures north of Addis Ababa.

#### *Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**ABYSSINIAN GROUND-THRUSH** (*Zoothera piaggiae*) – At least a couple of folks (Ann & Mike) saw one in the Harena Forest.

**GROUNDSCRAPER THRUSH** (*Psophocichla litsipsirupa*) – Common in the open highlands of Ethiopia, a long way from the other populations in southern Africa.

**ABYSSINIAN THRUSH** (*Turdus abyssinicus abyssinicus*) – Common and easily seen in the highlands, starting on the



*Rufous-necked (Red-throated) Wryneck has a spotty distribution around Africa. This ant-eating woodpecker was enjoyed near Lake Langano as it foraged tamely on the ground. (Photo by guide Richard Webster)*

hotel grounds in Addis Ababa. a.k.a. Olive Thrush; part of a complex of highland thrushes in Africa.

**AFRICAN THRUSH** (*Turdus pelios*) – Uncommon, but widespread, seen a half dozen times, usually "in between" its congeners, in neither the highest nor the driest habitats.

**AFRICAN BARE-EYED THRUSH** (*Turdus tephronotus*) – Good views of a few in acacia woodland south of Yabello.

*Sturnidae (Starlings)*

**WATTLED STARLING** (*Creatophora cinerea*) – A flock drinking from a puddle at Lake Langanu included several in breeding plumage (full wattles); a flock was seen in flight at the Liben Plain.

**GREATER BLUE-EARED GLOSSY-STARLING** (*Lamprotornis chalybaeus*) – Seen virtually every day; a stunning bird.

**RUEPPELL'S GLOSSY-STARLING** (*Lamprotornis purpuroptera*) – In small numbers in the Rift Valley, seen on a half dozen days.

**GOLDEN-BREASTED STARLING** (*Lamprotornis regius*) – This stunning bird is uncommon in southern Ethiopia; we had nice views of a few south of Yabello.

**SUPERB STARLING** (*Lamprotornis superbus*) – Absent from the highest elevations, but widespread otherwise, and enjoyed on most days of the tour.

**SHELLEY'S STARLING** (*Lamprotornis shelleyi*) – This starling of arid areas was fairly common in the Yabello area.

**VIOLET-BACKED STARLING** (*Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*) – We found two pairs of this beauty, one at Lake Langanu, the other near Negele.

**WHITE-CROWNED STARLING** (*Spreo albicapillus*) – Although not a monotypic genus, this bird seems really distinctive, like it ought to be. We had good looks near both Negele and Yabello, including at our hotel in Yabello.

**RED-WINGED STARLING** (*Onychognathus morio*) – These 'red-winged' starlings are not always easy to identify. We saw this species several times, with the best views coming at our hotel in Yabello.

**SLENDER-BILLED STARLING** (*Onychognathus tenuirostris*) – Scattered small numbers, as high as 4,000m on the Sanetti Plateau.

**BRISTLE-CROWNED STARLING** (*Onychognathus salvadorii*) – Eventually we had good views at Sof Omar, where small flocks were twice chased by a Shikra.

**WHITE-BILLED STARLING** (*Onychognathus albirostris*) – Our only one on the main tour was at Gemessa Gedel; we then had good views of flocks at Lalibela, where some of them were 'pink-billed', the result of eating reddish berries. [E]

**MAGPIE STARLING** (*Speculipastor bicolor*) – One male of this nomadic species was seen south of Yabello.

*Buphagidae (Oxpeckers)*

**RED-BILLED OXPECKER** (*Buphagus erythrorhynchus*) – Scattered small numbers of oxpeckers attending herds of domestic stock.

*Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)*

**COLLARED SUNBIRD** (*Hedydipna collaris*) – Not a widespread bird in Ethiopia. We saw one or two each at Sof Omar and near Negele.

**NILE VALLEY SUNBIRD** (*Hedydipna metallica*) – We did well this year, finding males in full plumage several times at Bilen Lodge, Awash N.P., and the Mt. Fantalle lava.

**SCARLET-CHESTED SUNBIRD** (*Chalcomitra senegalensis*) – This beauty was seen in small numbers from Lake Awassa to Lalibela.

**HUNTER'S SUNBIRD** (*Chalcomitra hunteri*) – Similar to Scarlet-chested, but more of a 'desert' bird; seen south of Yabello.

**TACAZZE SUNBIRD** (*Nectarinia tacazze*) – This large, spectacular sunbird is a common one in Ethiopia, occurring throughout the highlands.

**BEAUTIFUL SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris pulchellus*) – Fairly common and widespread at middle elevations. We had repeated good views, often at our lodging.

**MARIQUA SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris mariquensis*) – Uncommon; widely scattered, some of our best looks coming at Lake Langanu.

**TSAVO SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris tsavoensis*) – Only recently reported from Ethiopia, we did not add much to the record, seeing a male briefly in Commiphora scrub south of Yabello. As split from Purple-banded.

**SHINING SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris habessinicus*) – Most sunbirds are striking (well, at least the males, if they are in alternate plumage), but this one can be extra-striking! And it was, as seen feeding on the aloes at Bilen Lodge.

**VARIABLE SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris venustus*) – A sprinkling, with yellow-bellied fazoqlensis in the Jemma Valley, at Wondo Genet, and most commonly at Lalibela; and white-bellied albiventris near Yabello.

*Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)*

**MOUNTAIN WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla clara*) – Just a few, seen best in the Jemma Valley and en route to Wondo Genet.

**AFRICAN PIED WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla aguimp*) – A few, seen best in the Jemma Valley and along the Awash River.

**AFRICAN PIPIT** (*Anthus cinnamomeus*) – A few. a.k.a. Grassland or Grassveld Pipit.

**LONG-BILLED PIPIT** (*Anthus similis*) – After one on the escarpment of the Jemma Valley, repeated good views at Lalibela. Splits are likely in this species if and when someone has time to study them; we saw *A. s. hararensis*.

**PLAIN-BACKED PIPIT** (*Anthus leucophrys*) – Several on the Liben Plain, and another near Yabello. *A. l. omoensis*.

**ABYSSINIAN LONGCLAW** (*Macronyx flavicollis*) – Scarce; one on the plains north of Addis Ababa. [E]

*Emberizidae (Buntings, Sparrows and Allies)*

**CINNAMON-BREADED BUNTING** (*Emberiza tahapisi*) – On review of photographs and the literature, it appears that all of the buntings we saw were this species, and were of the northern subspecies, *E. t. septemstriata* (i.e., we did not see *Striolata* at Melka Ghebdu).

*Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)*

**ANKOBER SERIN** (*Carduelis ankoberensis*) – We hit the right flock at the right moment on top of the escarpment beyond Debre Birhan. It can be very difficult, but they had been feeding nearby and were easily viewed on that spectacular afternoon. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population under 15,000. [E]

**YELLOW-CROWNED CANARY** (*Serinus flavivertex*) – Common at upper elevations, especially in the Bale Mountains.

**YELLOW-FRONTED CANARY** (*Serinus mozambicus*) – One of this western species in the Jemma Valley.

**ABYSSINIAN SISKIN** (*Serinus nigriceps*) – Locally common in the highlands. a.k.a. Black-headed Siskin. [E]

**AFRICAN CITRIL** (*Serinus citrinelloides*) – A scattered few at Rift Valley lakes, a little more common at Lalibela. The nominate form.

**REICHENOW'S SEEDEATER** (*Serinus reichenowi*) – A handful at a handful of spots, including the Jemma Valley, Lake Langano, Negele, and Yabello. a.k.a. Yellow-rumped Seedeater; as split from Black-throated Seedeater.

**YELLOW-RUMPED SERIN** (*Serinus xanthopygius*) – This extra-unstriking bird was a good find at Lalibela, where we saw them a couple of times, but felt lucky doing so. a.k.a. White-throated Seedeater. [E]

**WHITE-BELLIED CANARY** (*Serinus dorsostriatus*) – One near Yabello.

**YELLOW-THROATED SERIN** (*Serinus flavigula*) – We really did well with Ethiopia's tough serins, finding this one at one of the few well known localities, Melka Ghebdu. It is considered "Endangered," with a population under 1,000. [E]

**SALVADORI'S SERIN** (*Serinus xantholaemus*) – And this one at Sof Omar, again a tough bird to find at one of relatively few known localities. The pair did put on a good show after being a no-show for much of the morning. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population under 10,000. [E]

**NORTHERN GROSBEAK-CANARY** (*Serinus donaldsoni*) – Not an endemic, but a difficult bird to find anywhere. We had a nice view of a singing bird south of Yabello.

**STREAKY SEEDEATER** (*Serinus striolatus*) – Widespread and common in the highlands.

**BROWN-RUMPED SEEDEATER** (*Serinus tristriatus*) – The easiest endemic seedeater; widespread in the highlands. [E]

*Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)*

**SHELLEY'S RUFOUS SPARROW** (*Passer shelleyi*) – A few were seen in very open thornscrub where we found the White-tailed Swallows; a regional specialty.

**SWAINSON'S SPARROW** (*Passer swainsonii*) – The common, widespread flavor of Gray-headed Sparrow on this tour.

**CHESTNUT SPARROW** (*Passer eminibey*) – Just a few this year; seen south of Yabello.

**YELLOW-SPOTTED PETRONIA** (*Petronia pyrgita*) – Scattered pairs in arid areas, including near Yabello, where a fledged juvenile was being fed.

**BUSH PETRONIA** (*Petronia dentata*) – One in the Jemma Valley and two at Lalibela.

*Ploceidae (Weavers and Allies)*

**RED-BILLED BUFFALO-WEAVER** (*Bubalornis niger*) – A couple of colonies were near Negele.

**WHITE-HEADED BUFFALO-WEAVER** (*Dinemellia dinemelli*) – Widespread in the Rift Valley and other dry areas.

**WHITE-BROWED SPARROW-WEAVER** (*Plocepasser mahali*) – Ditto.

- RED-HEADED WEAVER** (*Anaplectes rubriceps*) – A few sightings, including several males that were starting construction of nests.
- BAGLAFECHE WEAVER** (*Ploceus baglafaecht*) – Widespread and common at higher elevations, including a real variety of plumages: Mostly the nominate, also some emini, and a dash of reichenowi.
- LITTLE WEAVER** (*Ploceus luteolus*) – A few; seen best at our lodge at Lake Langano.
- SPECTACLED WEAVER** (*Ploceus ocularis*) – One at Melka Ghebdu.
- LESSER MASKED-WEAVER** (*Ploceus intermedius*) – A small colony at Bilen Lodge.
- VITELLINE MASKED-WEAVER** (*Ploceus vitellinus*) – A few near Yabello.
- RUEPPELL'S WEAVER** (*Ploceus galbula*) – Fairly common and in good plumage, mostly in the Rift Valley and on nearby slopes.
- SPEKE'S WEAVER** (*Ploceus spekei*) – Nesting in a tree across the road from our hotel in Yabello.
- VILLAGE WEAVER** (*Ploceus cucullatus*) – Common, with some wonderfully engaging colonies at Awash and Lake Langano. *P. c. abyssinicus*.
- CHESTNUT WEAVER** (*Ploceus rubiginosus*) – Just a few, but including some in fine plumage at Lake Langano.
- RED-BILLED QUELEA** (*Quelea quelea*) – Large (to us, but not as this species goes) flocks were roosting near Bilen Lodge, and we saw some at close range that were in good plumage.
- ORANGE BISHOP** (*Euplectes franciscanus*) – A few at Melka Ghebdu, flocks at Bilen Lodge, and a few at Lake Awassa. Some were attaining breeding plumage.
- BLACK-WINGED BISHOP** (*Euplectes hordeaceus*) – We strongly suspect that the bishops we saw in basic plumage in the Jemma Valley were this species.
- YELLOW BISHOP** (*Euplectes capensis*) – Birds in the highlands north of Addis Ababa were in basic plumage.
- WHITE-WINGED WIDOWBIRD** (*Euplectes albonotatus*) – A few around Negele and Yabello had moulted into breeding plumage.
- RED-COLLARED WIDOWBIRD** (*Euplectes ardens*) – A couple in basic plumage at Lalibela.
- GROSBK WEAVER** (*Amblyospiza albifrons*) – A couple of roosting flocks were seen in rapid transit at Lake Awassa.
- Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)*
- YELLOW-BELLIED WAXBILL** (*Coccyzygia quartinia*) – Several were in the Haremma Forest, a few at Wondo Genet, and it was seen daily at Lalibela.
- FAWN-BREASTED WAXBILL (ABYSSINIAN)** (*Estrilda paludicola ochrogaster*) – We found several among a throng of feeding estrildids at Lake Awassa. [E]
- CRIMSON-RUMPED WAXBILL** (*Estrilda rhodopyga*) – In the same throng, with earlier sightings at Melka Ghebdu and Sof Omar.
- RED-RUMPED WAXBILL** (*Estrilda charmosyna*) – Good looks at two at Lake Langano. a.k.a. Black-cheeked Waxbill.
- RED-CHEEKED CORDONBLEU** (*Uraeginthus bengalus*) – Widespread.
- PURPLE GRENADIER** (*Granatina ianthinogaster*) – A female near Yabello.
- RED-BILLED PYTILIA** (*Pytilia lineata*) – One of the best finds of the trips; we saw two at Melka Ghebdu. As split from Red-winged Pytilia.
- GREEN-WINGED PYTILIA** (*Pytilia melba*) – A pair in Awash N.P.; a very attractive bird.
- RED-BILLED FIREFINCH** (*Lagonosticta senegala*) – Locally common.
- CUT-THROAT** (*Amadina fasciata*) – This distinctive bird was seen in the Jemma Valley, in Awash N.P., and at Lake Awassa.
- BRONZE MANNIKIN** (*Spermestes cucullatus*) – Widespread in small numbers.
- BLACK-AND-WHITE MANNIKIN** (*Spermestes bicolor*) – Good views of a small flock at Wondo Genet.
- AFRICAN SILVERBILL** (*Euodice cantans*) – Two in Awash N.P.
- Viduidae (Indigobirds)*
- PIN-TAILED WHYDAH** (*Vidua macroura*) – A scattered few, some in very nice plumage, plus an amazing flock of a couple hundred with the feeding throng at Lake Awassa.
- EASTERN PARADISE-WHYDAH** (*Vidua paradisaea*) – Four in basic plumage at Awash N.P.
- VILLAGE INDIGOBIRD** (*Vidua chalybeata*) – A few in the feeding throng at Lake Awassa, and a few more on the hotel grounds at Lalibela.

## MAMMALS

**BLACK-FACED VERVET MONKEY** (*Cercopithecus aethiops*) – Widespread. This form is split by some as Grivet Monkey.

**OLIVE BABOON** (*Papio anubis*) – Fairly common, and a bit of a pest at times, in protected areas such as parks (less frequent outside of them).

**GELADA** (*Theropithecus gelada*) – This spectacular endemic was enjoyed on the escarpment near Debre Birhan where we saw our Ankober Serins. A couple hundred were spread out, plucking grass, and going about family life as we watched. Seen again briefly in the Jemma Valley. [E]

**MANTLED GUEREZA** (*Colobus guereza*) – Seen in the Harenna Forest and at Wondo Genet. a.k.a. Black-and-white Colobus.

**CAPE HARE** (*Lepus capensis*) – We called everything Cape Hare, but not having checked the dentition, we don't know that they weren't all Scrub Hares. In any case, we regularly saw large Hares.

**STARCK'S HARE** (*Lepus starcki*) – This specialty is identifiable without reference to the teeth, and we saw them well on the Sanetti Plateau. [E]

**UNSTRIPED GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Xerus rutilus*) – Fairly common around Bilen Lodge, with occasional others in the south.

**STRIPED GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Xerus erythropus*) – One during our long drive to Negele.

**ETHIOPIAN ROOT-RAT** (*Tachyoryctes macrocephalus*) – For most, the only sighting was of one already dead in the jaws of an Ethiopian Wolf. A couple of people did see one poke out briefly on the Sanetti Plateau. [E]

**SIMIEN FOX (ETHIOPIAN WOLF)** (*Canis simensis*) – Certainly one of the highlights of the trip were our excellent encounters with this endangered canid on the Sanetti Plateau. Under a thousand remain, threatened by continued encroachment on the few parks where they occur. We had a half dozen sightings as we benefited from good weather on our day on top. [E]



*A male Gelada with one of its young. This huge primate looks fierce, but it is a vegetarian (they are plucking grass to eat). Gelada is related to the baboons, but is not a baboon, but a separate lineage in a monotypic genus. (Photo by guide Richard Webster)*

**BLACK-BACKED JACKAL** (*Canis mesomelas*) – Seen by one car.

**COMMON JACKAL** (*Canis aureus*) – One on our Jemma Valley day. a.k.a. Golden Jackal.

**SLENDER MONGOOSE** (*Herpestes sanguineus*) – One at Lake Langano.

**SPOTTED HYAENA** (*Crocuta crocuta*) [\*]

**ROCK HYRAX** (*Procavia capensis*) – At Gemessa Gedel, Sof Omar, and Lalibela.

**BUSH (YELLOW-SPOTTED) HYRAX** (*Heterohyrax brucei*) – At Sof Omar and Lalibela.

**WARTHOG** (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*) – Common in protected areas: Bilen Lodge, Awash N.P., and Bale Mtns. N.P.

**HIPPOPOTAMUS** (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) – Brief views of several in Lake Awassa.

**MOUNTAIN NYALA** (*Tragelaphus buxtoni*) – This spectacular animal is easily viewed where they cluster in the protection afforded by the Dinsho park H.Q. of Bale Mtns. N.P. The remaining population certainly numbers under 10,000. [E]

**MENELICK'S BUSHBUCK** (*Tragelaphus scriptus meneliki*) – This dark form of bushbuck was also around Park H.Q. near Dinsho. Bushbuck has increasingly been split into three to five species, with this being one of the splits. [E]

**GREATER KUDU** (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*) – Daphne spotted Kudu near Yabello, which turned out to be two females of this uncommon species.

**LESSER KUDU** (*Tragelaphus imberbis*) – One male across the river from Awash Falls Lodge.

**BOHOR REEDBUCK** (*Redunca redunca*) – Small numbers were in Bale Mtns. N.P. around Dinsho.

**BEISA ORYX** (*Oryx beisa*) – We saw a dozen or so each day in Awash N.P., where this species is threatened by encroachment on the park.

**KLIPSPRINGER** (*Oreotragus oreotragus*) – Two on a rocky knoll at the edge of the Sanetti Plateau.

**SALT'S DIK-DIK** (*Madoqua saltiana*) – This regional specialty was fairly common in the northern Rift Valley at Bilen Lodge and Awash N.P.

**GUENTHER'S DIK-DIK** (*Madoqua guentheri*) – A few were seen near Yabello.

**SOEMMERING'S GAZELLE** (*Gazella soemmerringi*) – Difficult in Awash N.P., where we finally found two on the plains. [E]

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Other critters:

We saw many, many rodents. More interesting than the ones that chewed any food left in our rooms at Awash, or left a sizeable hole in REW's backpack, were the abundant native species in the highlands. The problem is identifying them! For instance, there are 14 species of rodent in Bale Mtns. N.P., half of them endemic. IDs were of Naked-soled Gerbil north of Addis and Groove-toothed Rat in the Bale Mtns., plus a suspicion that the common rodent on the Sanetti Plateau is a *Stenocephalemys*, a Ethiopian Meadow Rat, but we really don't know.

In addition, we saw the sand being thrown out of burrows by Naked Mole-Rats, but we did not have a "countable" look!

Leopard Tortoise: Some nice ones at Bilen Lodge, Awash N.P., and Sof Omar.

Nile Crocodile: Awash Falls N.P.

Black Mamba: from the bus, crossing the road in Awash N.P.

Savannah Monitor: en route to Negele.

Agama lizards: widespread.

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**Totals for the tour: 402 bird taxa and 28 mammal taxa**