



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**ETHIOPIA 2014**

Apr 4, 2014 to Apr 27, 2014  
Terry Stevenson & Richard Webster

*For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).*

Our 2014 journey through Ethiopia went very well. Central to that success were the planning of Absolute Ethiopia, the logistical legerdemain of Kibrom, and the steady hand on the wheel of Wonde. Most of Ethiopia's special birds fall into place, but when luck was needed, we had it, and finished the tour with an excellent list of endemics and specialties, a great assortment of classic African birds as well, and several very special mammals.

There are always a few surprises of various kinds. The weather was unusually wet in several areas in the north, although we were not prevented from completing any major activities, and typical "spring" rains in the south had turned the countryside pleasantly green. The state of Ethiopia's limited network of roads is always of concern, and the good news is that the trend continues upward, with energetic road building making some days significantly easier each trip. But as we learned the hard way, sometimes roads are allowed a downward trajectory before being resurfaced; thank you for your patience on the road to Yabello!

The highlands of Ethiopia have been incredibly altered, but that does not mean that they are without birds, and our first three days north of Addis provided a lengthy list of species, including Blue-winged Goose, Wattled Ibis, Abyssinian Longclaw, Rueppell's Chat, White-winged Cliff-Chat, White-billed Starling, Abyssinian Siskin, and Brown-rumped Seedeater. Our route was planned for several very local birds, and we successfully located Ankober and Yellow-throated serins and Harwood's Francolin, although Red-billed Pytilia did not emerge. The mammal highlight was the long-haired Gelada, an endemic primate related to the baboons.



*It takes some nerve to put a bloody horse carcass on the front page, but our encounter with this Ethiopian Wolf, licking its chops over a carrion bonanza, was one of the most memorable experiences on a memorable tour (one horse equals many, many root rats, the wolf's main prey!). (Photo by guide Richard Webster)*

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Next up was the driest and lowest desert area of the trip, with stays at Bilen Lodge and Awash Falls Lodge. Birding was again very productive, with highlights including Arabian Bustard, Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse, Abyssinian Roller, Yellow-breasted Barbet, Black-billed Woodhoopoe, Gillet's Lark, Sombre Chat, Somali Fiscal, and Nile Valley Sunbird. The reserves in this area have not been fully protected and the mammal list is now short, but it includes Beisa Oryx, Salt's Dik-dik, and Soemmering's Gazelle, and a group of Hamadryas Baboons was on 'the bread line' at a construction stop.

As we traversed the Rift Valley in several installments we had the opportunity to visit some of the more productive lakes, including Ziway, Langan, Abiata, and Hawassa. We did not get lucky with something like Black Crowned-Crane, but we did have great looks at many species of waterbird, including African Pygmy-Goose, White-backed Duck, Black and Goliath herons, Greater and Lesser flamingos, Lesser and African jacanas, and many migrants from Eurasia, including stunning White-winged Terns in breeding plumage. Fringing woodland added many landbirds, including Grayish Eagle-Owl, Banded and Double-toothed barbets, Rufous-necked Wryneck, and African Spotted-Creeper. Traversing long stretches of Ethiopia also produces some interesting chance encounters, such as groups of Abyssinian Ground-Hornbills, gigantic Thick-billed Ravens, or a delectable item of road kill, such as the dead dog that had five species of vulture in attendance.

The Bale Mountains include a national park of the same name, and may be the single highlight of the tour. Our two mornings above treeline both produced multiple sightings of the tour's subtitle, the endangered Ethiopian Wolf, most memorably one scavenging a dead horse, and the forests around the HQ provided observations of the impressive Mountain Nyala and endemic Menelick's Bushbuck. The birding was fine too, with good views of Moorland and Chestnut-naped francolins, Rouget's Rail, Spot-breasted Lapwing, a surprise bonus of African (Abyssinian) Long-eared Owl, White-cheeked Turaco, Abyssinian Woodpecker, and White-backed Black-Tit, but no Wattled Cranes were in any of the marshes visible from the road. A Golden Eagle was an Africa bonus.

Two of Ethiopia's rarest birds took us to Negele, where we found Prince Ruspoli's Turaco quite quickly, while the Sidamo (Liben) Lark search went on and on until we were rescued by the local guide of another group, who found one and kindly shared it with us. Regional specialties included Somali Short-toed Lark, Salvadori's Weaver, and White-crowned Starling.

Our farthest south point in Ethiopia was Yabello, where two very local species are to be found, the distinctive Stresemann's Bush-Crow and White-tailed Swallow, both of which provided excellent looks. One of the best birding days of the tour was around Yabello, because in addition to the headline species, we saw many other fine creatures, including Vulturine Guineafowl, Red-naped (and Gray-headed and Rosy-patched) bushshrikes, Northern Grosbeak-Canary, Straw-tailed Whydah, Golden-breasted, White-crowned, and Shelley's starlings, and a host of 'bushbirds.' Our way back to Addis Ababa was graced by a pair of the increasingly difficult Yellow-fronted Parrots.

Most of the group added the cultural and historical extension to the Rock Churches of Lalibela. Those churches are certainly a stakeout! Thanks to Kibrom, we also learned a great deal about their history and the evolution of Christianity in Ethiopia (and elsewhere, and of other religions). In addition to our visits to the churches, we did some birding, most often from the roof of the hotel, but also to a remnant patch of disturbed woodland, and had a satisfying re-immersion in Ethiopia's distinctive highland birds, with good looks at Erckel's Francolin, Black-winged Lovebird, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, Rueppell's Chat, White-winged Cliff-Chat, White-rumped Babbler, and White-billed Starling. We don't know how to find Yellow-rumped Serin for sure, but fortunately once again the serins came to the hotel and found us. The rugged vistas of the Lalibela area were also much enjoyed from the hotel, as were the repeated encounters with Lammergeier, one of the aesthetic highlights of the tour. And that was a memorable local wedding next to Bet Giorgis.

Taxonomy tries to follow the latest edition of Clements' Checklist (Cornell), with frequent reference to more widely used names. Conservation status is drawn from the publications of BirdLife International.

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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

### Struthionidae (Ostrich)

**OSTRICH (SOMALI)** (*Struthio camelus molybdophanes*) – We saw several specks on the plains near Bilen Lodge. Ostriches have declined greatly in Ethiopia. And no, we are not counting the two "pets" at Awash Falls Lodge, which were the wrong subspecies anyway! But those pets were amazing when one literally had to keep them at arm's length.

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

**WHITE-FACED WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna viduata*) – A few were heard flying over Bilen Lodge at night and we had good looks at Lake Ziway.

**FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) – For part of the group at Lake Ziway.

**WHITE-BACKED DUCK** (*Thalassornis leucotis*) – Great views at Lake Hawassa. A widespread species, but generally local and these views were a treat.

**BLUE-WINGED GOOSE** (*Cyanochen cyanoptera*) – Numbers were small, but they are often quite tame, as on the plains north of Addis Ababa, and provide great views. The closest relatives are the sheldgeese of southern South America. It is considered "Vulnerable" with a population of under 10,000. [E]

**COMB DUCK** (*Sarkidiornis melanotos*) – Small numbers were at several lakes and ponds, including Lake Ziway and a small reservoir near Negele.

**EGYPTIAN GOOSE** (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*) – Widespread, and noisy in defense of territories, as around our lodge at Lake Langano.

**RUDDY SHELDUCK** (*Tadorna ferruginea*) – We saw a few pairs on the Sanetti Plateau, the one place in Africa where this Eurasian species breeds.

**SPUR-WINGED GOOSE** (*Plectropterus gambensis*) – A few of this big "goose" were seen well at Lake Ziway.

**AFRICAN PYGMY-GOOSE** (*Nettapus auritus*) – A few were seen at Lake Ziway, and we had wonderfully close views at Lake Hawassa.

**YELLOW-BILLED DUCK** (*Anas undulata*) – Just at a few highland ponds, but we had great close-range views along a marshy creek on our way back from the Jemma Valley.

**HOTTENTOT TEAL** (*Anas hottentota*) – Good views at Lake Ziway.

**CAPE TEAL** (*Anas capensis*) – Common on alkaline Lake Abiata; none on the freshwater lakes we visited.

**SOUTHERN POCHARD** (*Netta erythrophthalma*) – One that got away at Lake Ziway was followed by good views of many on Lake Abiata.

**MACCOA DUCK** (*Oxyura maccoa*) – A handful of female-plumaged birds were at Lake Abiata. It is considered "Near Threatened."

### Numididae (Guinea fowl)

**HELMETED GUINEAFOWL** (*Numida meleagris*) – "Herds" were seen in open areas around Bilen Lodge, Awash N.P., and Yabello.

**VULTURINE GUINEAFOWL** (*Acryllium vulturinum*) – This stunning regional specialty (often seen at Samburu in Kenya) is always a thrill, one that we enjoyed near Yabello (several "herds", perhaps reflecting a good breeding season past).

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

**CRESTED FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus sephaena*) – Mostly heard, but pairs were seen several times at Bilen Lodge and Awash N.P.

**MOORLAND FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus psilolaemus*) – Uncommon and tough to spot on the Sanetti Plateau, we had good views on our second transit of the road above Goba.

**ERCKEL'S FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus erckelii*) – Not quite an endemic, but none of us is going to Sudan soon! Usually seen only on the extension, this year we were lucky twice on rocky slopes north of Addis, and then had more views below our hotel at Lalibela.

**HARWOOD'S FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus harwoodi*) – Thanks to good spotting by Ann-Charlott, we had telescope views of a bird foraging calmly (on some trips we are happy simply to see them flush) below us on the slopes of the Jemma Valley. A very local and difficult endemic that is considered "Vulnerable," with a population under 15,000. [E]

**YELLOW-NECKED FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus leucoscepus*) – A few at Awash N.P. and near Yabello. a.k.a. Yellow-necked Spurfowl.

**CHESTNUT-NAPED FRANCOLIN** (*Francolinus castaneicollis*) – At least in the early morning, a fairly easy bird to see along the road up the Sanetti

Plateau. Our first were in the forest behind the Bale Mtns NP HQ. [E]

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**LITTLE GREBE** (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) – Locally common on lakes. Memorable was a pair with three tiny young near the dock at Lake Hawassa.

[N]

**EARED GREBE** (*Podiceps nigricollis*) – A speck on Lake Abiata. a.k.a. Black-necked Grebe.

Phoenicopteridae (Flamingos)

**GREATER FLAMINGO** (*Phoenicopus roseus*) – Small numbers were mixed in with the Lessers at Lake Abiata, providing a nice comparison.

**LESSER FLAMINGO** (*Phoenicopus minor*) – By Rift Valley standards, the numbers we saw were tiny, but most of us live flamingo-free lives, so it was exciting to see hundreds at close range at Lake Abiata, and some distant pink smudges at a couple of other lakes. It is considered "Near Threatened."

Ciconiidae (Storks)

**ABDIM'S STORK** (*Ciconia abdimii*) – This intra-tropical migrant was seen headed north to the breeding grounds. Our first were exciting flocks on the plains near Bilen Lodge, attracted to the overflow from well drilling (presaging the end of that nice habitat) and we saw scattered others, with some nice studies of roosting birds near Negele.

**WOOLLY-NECKED STORK** (*Ciconia episcopus*) – Our first were in the Jemma Valley, where Bart spotted a pair that turned out to have a nest on a cliff above a tributary of the Blue Nile (Abay River); others were seen along the way, e.g., in high-elevation meadows near Agere Maryam. [N]

**MARABOU STORK** (*Leptoptilos crumenifer*) – Locally common to abundant, e.g., Lake Hawassa, with many close encounters, such as at the fish market at Lake Ziway.

**YELLOW-BILLED STORK** (*Mycteria ibis*) – Small numbers at several lakes; good views.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**GREAT CORMORANT (WHITE-BREASTED)** (*Phalacrocorax carbo lucidus*) – Widespread in small numbers along rivers and lakeshores.

**LONG-TAILED CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax africanus*) – In small numbers, first at Lake Hora, and again at several other lakes, such as swimming underwater as seen from the dock at Lake Hawassa.

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

**AFRICAN DARTER** (*Anhinga rufa rufa*) – Good views of a handful at Lake Ziway.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

**GREAT WHITE PELICAN** (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) – This magnificent bird was seen well at Lake Ziway.

**PINK-BACKED PELICAN** (*Pelecanus rufescens*) – Small numbers were seen at Lake Hora and Lake Hawassa.

Scopidae (Hamerkop)

**HAMERKOP** (*Scopus umbretta*) – One or two were seen on many days, even at tiny pools or creeks in the highlands, and the species was common (and tame) at Lake Ziway. We also saw several of the huge nests.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**GRAY HERON** (*Ardea cinerea*) – A few at several wetlands.

**BLACK-HEADED HERON** (*Ardea melanocephala*) – Scarce in comparison with Kenya; one might think this 'dry land' heron would thrive in the fields of Ethiopia, but they don't. We saw two on the Liben Plain.

**GOLIATH HERON** (*Ardea goliath*) – After a speck for part of the group at Lake Hawassa, we had a nice view at Lake Ziway of the heron that David would not want to have faced.

**PURPLE HERON** (*Ardea purpurea*) – A couple of sightings (Bilen Lodge, Lake Hawassa).

**GREAT EGRET (AFRICAN)** (*Ardea alba melanorhyncha*) – Single-digit numbers at a few wetlands.

**INTERMEDIATE EGRET** (*Mesophox intermedia*) – One seen by part of the group at Lake Ziway.

**LITTLE EGRET** (*Egretta garzetta*) – Like Great, in single-digit numbers.

**BLACK HERON** (*Egretta ardesiaca*) – One spotted by Harriet at Lake Ziway then put on a show, fishing under its canopy of wings (or its umbrella). a.k.a. Black Egret.

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – A roost at Bilen Lodge and a few flocks along the way, but overall not a common bird.

**SQUACCO HERON** (*Ardeola ralloides*) – Scattered locales, but overall uncommon, the best views coming at Lake Ziway.

**STRIATED HERON** (*Butorides striata*) – Deborah had one along the Awash River near the lodge.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – Some were seen returning to roost early in the morning at Bilen Lodge.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

**GLOSSY IBIS** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – A few of this pantropical species at Lake Ziway.

**SACRED IBIS** (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*) – Widespread, mostly in small numbers, but also an impressive concentration of several hundred near Negele.

**HADADA IBIS** (*Bostrychia hagedash*) – One at Lake Langano, a nest in a tree over the parking lot at Lake Hawassa, and a few en route. [N]

**WATTLED IBIS** (*Bostrychia carunculata*) – This distinctive endemic was locally common in the highlands, but also absent from some long stretches. First heard in Addis, and then seen in marshy swales north of Addis, at Lake Langano (unusually low elevation?), and around the Bale Mountains.

[E]

**AFRICAN SPOONBILL** (*Platalea alba*) – Seen in flight over Awash N.P., with a few the same day at Lake Ziway.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE** (*Elanus caeruleus*) – Several in the Bilen Lodge area, and singles on five other days.

- AFRICAN HARRIER-HAWK** (*Polyboroides typus*) – At least seven over the course of three weeks was a good total, a couple showing bright flushing of the facial skin.
- LAMMERGEIER** (*Gypaetus barbatus*) – Ethiopia is a great country for this widespread-but-local bird. Our first was in the Jemma Valley, followed by several around the Sanetti Plateau, one of them perched nearby briefly, and finally the excellent show at Lalibela, especially from the rooftop deck at our hotel, where they were seen daily, several times dramatically close (especially if cameras were not out!).
- EGYPTIAN VULTURE** (*Neophron percnopterus*) – This uncommon bird was seen at Awash N.P. (two) and the Liben Plain (one speck). It is considered "Endangered," with a population of under 40,000.
- AFRICAN CUCKOO-HAWK** (*Aviceda cuculoides*) – A perched bird in the forest near Agere Maryam was a notable find--a scarce species in Ethiopia, and not really common anywhere.
- WHITE-HEADED VULTURE** (*Trigonoceps occipitalis*) – An uncommon vulture that is easily missed. We had great views of two at a carcass in farm country along the road to Goba. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population of under 12,500.
- LAPPET-FACED VULTURE** (*Torgos tracheliotus*) – Ditto: Uncommon, easily missed, and we had great views of two at the same carcass. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population of under 5,700.
- HOODED VULTURE** (*Necrosyrtes monachus*) – Many vultures are having major problems in Africa (and elsewhere) for varying reasons; this species is now rare in Kenya, for instance. In Ethiopia, it is still common and is the species most commensal with humans. Present, often in numbers, in most towns. It is considered "Endangered," with a population under 200,000 birds.
- WHITE-BACKED VULTURE** (*Gyps africanus*) – In small numbers (are they in trouble here, too?), although widespread. It is considered "Endangered."
- RUEPELL'S GRIFFON** (*Gyps rueppellii*) – This species seems still to be fairly common in the rocky gorges north of Addis, and we saw a scattered few elsewhere (though none at Lalibela). Most memorable was the aggregation at the three roadkill donkeys near Debre Birhan. It is considered "Endangered."
- BATELEUR** (*Terathopius ecaudatus*) – One immature south of Yabello. Termed "common" in recent publications, for our tour it is anything but common (it has declined greatly in some countries, the result of poisoned carcasses aimed at other species).
- BLACK-BREASTED SNAKE-EAGLE** (*Circaetus pectoralis*) – Nice views of soaring birds at Awash N.P. and the Liben Plain.
- BROWN SNAKE-EAGLE** (*Circaetus cinereus*) – Nice views of a pair near Yabello.
- LONG-CRESTED EAGLE** (*Lophaetus occipitalis*) – Perhaps ten seen, mostly on utility poles along the highways of the Rift Valley.
- WAHLBERG'S EAGLE** (*Hieraaetus wahlbergi*) – A single soaring bird east of Goba.
- AYRES'S HAWK-EAGLE** (*Hieraaetus ayresii*) – An adult was soaring high over Sof Omar.
- TAWNY EAGLE** (*Aquila rapax*) – In small numbers, but almost daily throughout the route, including an impressive (and confusing) variety of plumages.
- STEPPE EAGLE** (*Aquila nipalensis*) – A couple lingering winterers/migrants were seen on the plains north of Addis Ababa. [b]
- GOLDEN EAGLE** (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – An immature was seen soaring over the Sanetti Plateau. A first in Ethiopia for your guides, who were excited to see one of the tiny breeding population, the only breeding location in Africa.
- VERREAUX'S EAGLE** (*Aquila verreauxii*) – An exciting pair was seen in quick transit over our lunch spot high above the Jemma Valley.
- AFRICAN HAWK-EAGLE** (*Aquila spilogaster*) – Three encounters, including some good views of flying birds.
- DARK CHANTING-GOSHAWK** (*Melierax metabates*) – Daily in the northern Rift Valley, most commonly at Awash N.P.
- EASTERN CHANTING-GOSHAWK** (*Melierax poliopterus*) – This species largely replaces the preceding to the south and east, e.g., around Negele and Yabello. a.k.a. (Eastern) Pale Chanting-Goshawk.
- GABAR GOSHAWK** (*Micronisus gabar*) – A pair, including a dark bird, was seen briefly at the Lake Abiata N.P. entrance station.
- MONTAGU'S HARRIER** (*Circus pygargus*) – Migrants/winterers were seen at four spots, most or all apparently this species (i.e., not Pallid, but the ID is not easy at distance). [b]
- AFRICAN GOSHAWK** (*Accipiter tachiro unduliventer*) – A perched bird was seen in the College forest near Wondo Genet; it was of this Ethiopian subspecies.
- SHIKRA** (*Accipiter badius*) – Birds in flight were seen twice, typically (for any accipiter) not for all.
- LITTLE SPARROWHAWK** (*Accipiter minullus*) – This was for all: Two birds were perched nicely in the canopy of gallery forest along the Awash River.
- BLACK KITE (YELLOW-BILLED)** (*Milvus migrans parasitus*) – Almost daily (scarce only in the desert areas toward Bilen Lodge), often common around towns.
- AFRICAN FISH-EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus vocifer*) – Some fine encounters, mostly along the lakes of the Rift Valley. Perched and in flight, calling, foraging, . . . .
- MOUNTAIN BUZZARD** (*Buteo oreophilus*) – Widespread, but generally uncommon, and always a nice find. We had one perched bird briefly in the Haremma Forest, seen soaring a couple of moments later.
- AUGUR BUZZARD** (*Buteo augur*) – Widespread, generally at medium or high elevations. Most numerous on the Sanetti Plateau, where we had good views of both dark and light phase birds.

#### Otididae (Bustards)

- ARABIAN BUSTARD** (*Ardeotis arabs*) – Always a nail-biter, we did very well this year, first seeing four at a spot near Bilen Lodge that is threatened by agricultural development (sigh), then one in Awash N.P., where extra scarce. Great views. It is considered "Near Threatened."
- KORI BUSTARD** (*Ardeotis kori*) – One in Awash N.P. and then three in the Liben Plain-Negele area, where a couple had variably reddish necks (adventitious coloring or a character of a local population?). It is considered "Near Threatened."
- WHITE-BELLIED BUSTARD** (*Eupodotis senegalensis*) – Five in Awash N.P. included a pair that was wonderfully responsive, and four more were seen distantly on the Liben Plain.
- BUFF-CRESTED BUSTARD** (*Eupodotis gindiana*) – Several encounters in Awash N.P., and another south of Yabello. a.k.a. Red-crested Bustard.

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

**ROUGET'S RAIL** (*Rougetius rougetii*) – What a great rail--totally distinctive and often out in the open without enticement. Our first were at the Dinsho Pools, followed by several more in the heath below the Sanetti Plateau. It is considered "Near Threatened." [E]

**BLACK CRAKE** (*Amauornis flavirostra*) – Good views at Lake Ziway; heard at Lake Hawassa.

**EURASIAN MOORHEN** (*Gallinula chloropus*) – Lake Ziway (now split from Common Gallinule of the Western Hemisphere).

**RED-KNOBBED COOT** (*Fulica cristata*) – In small numbers, including nesting at the Dinsho Pool. [N]

#### Burhinidae (Thick-knees)

**SENEGAL THICK-KNEE** (*Burhinus senegalensis*) – Good views of several at Bilen Lodge, where it is a common nighttime voice, with one or two more seen (and heard) at Awash N.P.

#### Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

**BLACK-WINGED STILT** (*Himantopus himantopus*) – Good views at Lake Ziway; one more near Negele.

**PIED AVOCET** (*Recurvirostra avocetta*) – One at alkaline Lake Abiata.

#### Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

**SPUR-WINGED PLOVER** (*Vanellus spinosus*) – Widespread on grassy banks etc. of wetlands; some great views of this handsome species. a.k.a. Spur-winged Lapwing.

**BLACK-WINGED LAPWING** (*Vanellus melanopterus*) – We drove by a couple in the highlands, and then missed them on the Liben Plain, and then were rescued by one in a field near Yabello.

**CROWNED LAPWING** (*Vanellus coronatus*) – First seen on the grassy margins to Lake Abiata, then as a common (and noisy) breeder on the Liben Plain and elsewhere around Negele.

**SPOT-BREASTED LAPWING** (*Vanellus melanocephalus*) – Fairly common on the Sanetti Plateau, one of the (few?) strongholds for this highland endemic (should it be considered a threatened species--we do not see them in our transects of the highlands elsewhere). Good views of a striking bird. [E]

**KITTLITZ'S PLOVER** (*Charadrius pecuarius*) – Common along the shore of alkaline Lake Abiata.

**COMMON RINGED PLOVER** (*Charadrius hiaticula*) – Small numbers of migrants were seen at a couple of Rift Valley lakes. [b]

**THREE-BANDED PLOVER** (*Charadrius tricollaris*) – Larry spotted one by a small pool in the Sombre Chat lava fields, and an adult with a large juvenile was at the Dinsho Pools. [N]

#### Jacaniidae (Jacanas)

**LESSER JACANA** (*Microparra capensis*) – The water levels at Lake Ziway were good for the water lilies, and we saw several, eventually including a relatively close one--unusually good views of this tiny bird.

**AFRICAN JACANA** (*Actophilornis africanus*) – A lovely bird that is easily enjoyed at close range on some of the Rift Valley Lakes. We especially enjoyed close views at Lake Hawassa of a pair with a tiny chick that was already nimbly moving across the lily pads.

#### Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

**COMMON SANDPIPER** (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – Scattered ones and twos. [b]

**COMMON GREENSHANK** (*Tringa nebularia*) – A handful. [b]

**MARSH SANDPIPER** (*Tringa stagnatilis*) – A few at Lake Ziway. [b]

**WOOD SANDPIPER** (*Tringa glareola*) – Small numbers were sprinkled around the country, including some smaller creeks and marshes as well as the shores of the larger lakes. [b]

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** (*Limosa limosa*) – Several small flocks at Lake Ziway, still mostly in basic plumage. It is considered "Near Threatened." [b]

**RUFF** (*Calidris pugnax*) – Small numbers at several freshwater marshes, and common toward abundant at Lake Abiata N.P. Still very much in basic plumage.

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** (*Calidris ferruginea*) – A few were at Lake Ziway and Lake Abiata, these including a couple in lovely alternate plumage. [b]

**TEMMINCK'S STINT** (*Calidris temminckii*) – One was seen well along the creek at Mukatari, and another was at Lake Ziway. [b]

**LITTLE STINT** (*Calidris minuta*) – A few here and there, and like Ruff, abundant along the shore of alkaline Lake Abiata. [b]

**AFRICAN SNIPE** (*Gallinago nigripennis*) – A snipe, probably this species, was flushed along a marshy creek at Mukatari, but migrant Common Snipe was not eliminated.

#### Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)

**TEMMINCK'S COURSER** (*Cursorius temminckii*) – Good views of one were enjoyed on the Liben Plain.

**COLLARED PRATINCOLE** (*Glareola pratincola*) – A half dozen were seen along the shores of Lake Abiata.

#### Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

**GRAY-HOODED GULL** (*Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus*) – Nice views of dozens on several of the Rift Valley lakes.

**BLACK-HEADED GULL** (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) – A few wintering birds were still present on the Rift Valley lakes. [b]

**LITTLE TERN** (*Sternula albifrons*) – Jane spotted two birds in alternate plumage at Lake Ziway on 12 April. Poorly known in Ethiopia away from the coast, occurrence on a Rift Valley lake is not completely surprising given that it is regular in small numbers at Lake Turkana in northern Kenya. [b]

**GULL-BILLED TERN** (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) – One or two each at Lakes Ziway and Langano, and two from the bus over a dirt field in the Rift Valley.

**WHITE-WINGED TERN** (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) – Fairly common on the Rift Valley lakes, where we enjoyed some birds in stunning breeding plumage. a.k.a. White-winged Black Tern.

**WHISKERED TERN** (*Chlidonias hybrida*) – A few at Lake Ziway included two in breeding plumage. [b]

#### Pteroclididae (Sandgrouse)

**CHESTNUT-BELLIED SANDGROUSE** (*Pterocles exustus*) – A couple of flocks in flight at Bilen Lodge were not very satisfactory.  
**LICHTENSTEIN'S SANDGROUSE** (*Pterocles lichtensteinii*) – Tonya found a pair outside of the main lodge building at Bilen Lodge; good views for those who were around at the time. Not rare, just hard to find (a crepuscular drinker).

*Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Mentioned once or twice from a moving vehicle. [I]  
**SPECKLED PIGEON** (*Columba guinea*) – Common and widespread throughout; a lovely "trash" bird.  
**WHITE-COLLARED PIGEON** (*Columba albitorques*) – Common in flocks in some highland areas, but seemingly sparse in others. Memorably resting under the sheltering roof of our first church at Lalibela. [E]  
**RAMERON PIGEON** (*Columba arquatrix*) – Seen by a couple of folks from the bus during a quick stop for a turaco above Goba. a.k.a. African Olive Pigeon.  
**EUROPEAN TURTLE-DOVE** (*Streptopelia turtur*) – Wintering birds were still common around Bilen Lodge. [b]  
**DUSKY TURTLE-DOVE** (*Streptopelia lugens*) – Common in highland communities and crops, absent from lower elevations.  
**MOURNING COLLARED-DOVE** (*Streptopelia decipiens*) – Common on the lower half of the slopes, especially at sites like Bilen Lodge and Yabello. a.k.a. African Mourning Dove etc.  
**RED-EYED DOVE** (*Streptopelia semitorquata*) – Never in large numbers, but widespread in generally moist areas, extending out into some acacia woodlands.  
**RING-NECKED DOVE** (*Streptopelia capicola*) – Locally common in the southern and eastern parts of our route. a.k.a. Cape Turtle Dove.  
**LAUGHING DOVE** (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) – Common and widespread, generally in drier areas, hence on the lower half of the slopes, but up to 2,400m at Lalibela (plenty dry!).  
**EMERALD-SPOTTED WOOD-DOVE** (*Turtur chalcospilos*) – Mostly heard, with the occasional bird seen.  
**BLUE-SPOTTED WOOD-DOVE** (*Turtur afer*) – Just a couple seen; missed by most.  
**NAMAQUA DOVE** (*Oena capensis*) – Uncommon, but nearly daily in dry areas of the northern Rift, but very few in dry areas of the south.  
**BRUCE'S GREEN-PIGEON** (*Treron waalia*) – We had great views of a bird that Kathy saw fly into a fruiting fig in the Jemma Valley. A few more were evident along the way, e.g., in figs along the Awash River.

*Musophagidae (Turacos)*

**WHITE-CHEEKED TURACO** (*Tauraco leucotis*) – A series of sightings of this lovely bird, starting in the Bale Mtns., our best looks perhaps of one that Ann-Charlott spotted toward the end of the tour. This species is a "functional endemic," one that occurs outside the Horn of Africa, but not where birders dare tread.  
**PRINCE RUSPOLI'S TURACO** (*Tauraco ruspolii*) – We saw three near the Genale River. They approached quietly but did not evade Tonya's detection, and we had very good views perched and in flight. We plan time to work on seeing it, and always have, but this is a tough bird. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population estimated at 2,500 to 10,000. [E]  
**WHITE-BELLIED GO-AWAY-BIRD** (*Corythaixoides leucogaster*) – Common at lower elevations. Hardly a rarity, were it a localized specialty, it would be one of the highlights of the tour. A fabulous animal.  
**EASTERN PLANTAIN-EATER** (*Crinifer zonurus*) – Less common than the Go-away-bird, we were fortunate to find them at two spots, getting good looks at the second.

*Cuculidae (Cuckoos)*

**PIED CUCKOO** (*Clamator jacobinus*) – African birds like sun. Cuckoos like rain. Several parts of our tour route had had rain, and we hit a couple of pockets with vocal cuckoos, including this species, seen at Awash N.P. and near Yabello. a.k.a. Black-and-white or Jacobin Cuckoo.  
**RED-CHESTED CUCKOO** (*Cuculus solitarius*) – A few toward the end of the tour, including a responsive bird in the Harenna Forest that allowed some good views.  
**BLACK CUCKOO** (*Cuculus clamosus*) – A few heard in the south, including a responsive bird that briefly made a very close approach at our lunch stop south of Yabello.  
**KLAAS'S CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx klaas*) – One singing bird responded near Melka Ghebdu, mostly overshooting, but seen well.  
**AFRICAN EMERALD CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx cupreus*) – Heard in a couple of wet montane forests, including Harenna Forest, where a responsive bird perched in a eucalyptus (sigh), but great looks at a stunning bird are enjoyable even in an introduced tree! Wow!  
**DIDERIC CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx caprius*) – Just a few singing in the south; one seen well near Yabello.  
**BLUE-HEADED COUCAL** (*Centropus monachus*) – This coucal of marshes was seen in flight by all at Lake Hawassa, and better for some on the grounds of our hotel.  
**WHITE-BROWED COUCAL** (*Centropus superciliosus*) – A scattered few over the whole tour.

*Strigidae (Owls)*

**GRAYISH EAGLE-OWL** (*Bubo cinerascens*) – Kibrom and hotel staff helped us locate two roosting birds at Lake Langano; very nice views. As split from Spotted Eagle-Owl (south of Lake Baringo!).  
**PEARL-SPOTTED OWLET** (*Glaucidium perlatum*) – We saw them at least four times, including a chance encounter at Lake Langano, an encounter that produced a spontaneous mob of small birds after a couple of Black-headed Batises went 'ape.'  
**AFRICAN WOOD-OWL** (*Strix woodfordii*) – Thanks to a local guide in Bale Mtns. N.P., we saw roosting birds at the same spot (over an outhouse!) as two years ago. We were pleased. For those staying in Addis to catch later flights, we were ECSTATIC: Rosia and Yen found a roosting bird being mobbed in the ivy around a tree right in Addis, and five of the group had terrific views! Thanks for the call!  
**AFRICAN LONG-EARED OWL** (*Asio abyssinicus*) – It involved chance, and was a little strange while also very exciting. Near the top of the Sanetti Plateau, the lead vehicles flushed a large owl, and we tracked it down and it flushed again, flying straight toward the group; to our surprise it was this species, not the Cape Eagle-Owl we expected. It vanished 'around the corner'. a.k.a. Abyssinian Long-eared Owl. Certainly not our grandparents' temperate Long-eared Owl!!

*Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)*

**SLENDER-TAILED NIGHTJAR** (*Caprimulgus clarus*) – Heard at a couple of spots, then seen well at Lake Langano (thanks, Larry), with good views of a roosting bird on the ground, and another seen nearby.

*Apodidae (Swifts)*

**ALPINE SWIFT** (*Apus melba*) – This impressive swift was seen at least four times, and could involve any of several populations. Recent studies with geolocators show that Palearctic migrants do, as suspected, sleep on the wing for months at a time.

**MOTTLED SWIFT** (*Apus aequatorialis*) – Another impressively large swift; it was seen several times.

**COMMON SWIFT** (*Apus apus*) – A small group of migrants was mixed with other swifts at Sof Omar. [b]

**NYANZA SWIFT** (*Apus niansae*) – The most widespread swift on our route; no large numbers, but routinely encountered.

**LITTLE SWIFT** (*Apus affinis*) – Scarce (why? why do they not adapt to human structures more?); a few sightings of small numbers.

**HORUS SWIFT** (*Apus horus*) – Good views for part of the group before breakfast at Lake Langano, where probably breeding in the banks.

**WHITE-RUMPED SWIFT** (*Apus caffer*) – Scattered small numbers, mostly in towns, including above our outdoor table at the Nile in Negele!

**AFRICAN PALM-SWIFT** (*Cypsiurus parvus*) – Just a few pairs at Awash (town), Awash N.P., and Lake Hawassa.

*Coliidae (Mousebirds)*

**SPECKLED MOUSEBIRD** (*Colius striatus*) – Common, nearly daily, generally in moist habitats, but these include riparian out into the 'desert.'

**BLUE-NAPED MOUSEBIRD** (*Urocolius macrourus*) – The 'desert' mousebird, generally occurring in drier habitats below 1,500m.

*Trogonidae (Trogons)*

**NARINA TROGON** (*Apaloderma narina*) – Heard at Sof Omar, but stubbornly unresponsive, then heard at Wondo Genet, and pleasantly responsive for good views.

*Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)*

**MALACHITE KINGFISHER** (*Corythornis cristatus*) – A gem, soaked up at several Rift Valley lakes like Ziway and Hawassa.

**AFRICAN PYGMY-KINGFISHER** (*Ispidina picta*) – A 'dry land' kingfisher, seen at several spots, including Melka Ghebdu and Bilen Lodge. Like the aquatic Malachite, a gem.

**GRAY-HEADED KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon leucocephala*) – Good views of several at several spots; another 'dry land' kingfisher.

**WOODLAND KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon senegalensis*) – Another fine bird, seen at very close range in the riparian at Awash N.P. and in the woodland and scrub near Lakes Ziway and Hawassa.

**STRIPED KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon chelicuti*) – Just one encounter, at our random lunch stop en route to Negele. That was a great encounter with a close pair.

**GIANT KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle maximus*) – Widespread, but a scarce species. We saw two along the river in the Jemma Valley, an adult and apparently a full-fledged juvenile. Great views.

**PIED KINGFISHER** (*Ceryle rudis*) – An aquatic species, routinely seen along large rivers and major lakes.

*Meropidae (Bee-eaters)*

**LITTLE BEE-EATER** (*Merops pusillus*) – Just a few at lower elevations, but good views, including a parent with a fledged juvenile at our White-tailed Swallow spot.

**BLUE-BREASTED BEE-EATER** (*Merops variegatus lafresnayii*) – It would be difficult to disparage any bee-eater, but this one is above average! A real beauty. This 'Abyssinian' subspecies is a likely split and a regional specialty, but requires further study. Widespread in Ethiopia, but generally in small numbers.

**WHITE-THROATED BEE-EATER** (*Merops albicollis*) – Great views at Bilen Lodge, where small numbers were displaying energetically. Also at Awash, but no others. An intra-tropical migrant.

**MADAGASCAR BEE-EATER** (*Merops superciliosus*) – Fairly common in the Awash area, but not seen elsewhere. Another intra-tropical migrant with a complex life history.

**EUROPEAN BEE-EATER** (*Merops apiaster*) – Migrants were seen moving through the southeastern part of our route, the best views coming while en route to Negele. [b]

*Coraciidae (Rollers)*

**ABYSSINIAN ROLLER** (*Coracias abyssinicus*) – Great views of a few at Bilen Lodge and Awash N.P.

**LILAC-BREASTED ROLLER** (*Coracias caudatus lorti*) – Daily in the south around Negele and Yabello. This subspecies ("Lilac-throated") is a potential split.

**RUFOUS-CROWNED ROLLER** (*Coracias naevius*) – Five encounters with one or two birds in woodland, mostly to the south.

*Upupidae (Hoopoes)*

**EURASIAN HOOPOE (CENTRAL AFRICAN)** (*Upupa epops senegalensis*) – Routine from the second day of the tour to Lalibela. We saw a couple of apparent migrants early in the tour, then progressively more residents. The taxonomy is complicated and hardly settled; the populations we saw are currently treated as part of the Eurasian group, not the African (even though some are resident in Africa).

*Phoeniculidae (Woodhoopoes and Scimitar-bills)*

**BLACK-BILLED WOODHOOPOE** (*Phoeniculus somaliensis*) – Not an endemic, but typically a lifebird for all. We were thoroughly engaged by a group at Bilen Lodge, and saw another at Lake Langano. Two of the three birds at Bilen Lodge were carrying spiders (bonding among adults rather than feeding young?), and showed some red in the bill, illustrating the taxonomic complexities within this group.

**BLACK SCIMITAR-BILL** (*Rhinopomastus aterrimus*) – A pair in quick transit at Melka Ghebdu was a bonus; while not a major rarity, this is an uncommon species we generally miss.

**ABYSSINIAN SCIMITAR-BILL** (*Rhinopomastus minor*) – Heard at Awash, and seen south of Yabello.

*Bucerotidae (Hornbills)*

**NORTHERN RED-BILLED HORNBILL** (*Tockus erythrorhynchus*) – This small hornbill was widespread. As split from four other components of the original, continent-wide "Red-billed Hornbill."

**EASTERN YELLOW-BILLED HORNBILL** (*Tockus flavirostris*) – Seen at several low, dry spots, including Bilen Lodge and Awash N.P. This hornbill has also been split into regional components across the continent.

**VON DER DECKEN'S HORNBILL** (*Tockus deckeni*) – Less numerous than the preceding two.

**HEMPRICH'S HORNBILL** (*Tockus hemprichii*) – A series of sightings, perhaps more than normal, including a couple in towns or along the highway that were well away from typical cliff habitat--are they adapting to 'urban cliffs'?

**AFRICAN GRAY HORNBILL** (*Tockus nasutus*) – Scattered small numbers.

**SILVERY-CHEEKED HORNBILL** (*Ceratogymna brevis*) – An exciting first encounter in the Harena Forest, followed by a few in montane forests along the roads, and more at Wondo Genet.

#### *Bucorvidae (Ground-Hornbills)*

**ABYSSINIAN GROUND-HORNBILL** (*Bucorvus abyssinicus*) – Sightings on seven days was a notable total, and included some excellent views along the roads. This species seems to be doing well in Ethiopia; ground-hornbills have declined in many regions.

#### *Lybiidae (African Barbets)*

**RED-AND-YELLOW BARBET** (*Trachyphonus erythrocephalus*) – One for one vehicle near Negele, and then we stopped for one north of Yabello (not rare, we just stumbled into them less often than normal).

**YELLOW-BREASTED BARBET** (*Trachyphonus margaritatus*) – A regional specialty that is typically a lifer for everyone on the tour. We had good views at Melka Ghebdu, and enjoyed more around Bilen Lodge.

**D'ARNAUD'S BARBET** (*Trachyphonus darnaudii*) – Fairly common in the acacia woodland around Yabello.

**RED-FRONTED TINKERBIRD** (*Pogoniulus pusillus*) – A sprinkling, including good views at Bilen Lodge.

**YELLOW-FRONTED TINKERBIRD** (*Pogoniulus chrysoconus*) – Tonya had this montane tinkerbird at Wondo Genet.

**RED-FRONTED BARBET** (*Tricholaema diademata*) – A few at Lake Langano and another near Yabello.

**BLACK-THROATED BARBET** (*Tricholaema melanocephala*) – One in dry country near Yabello.

**BANDED BARBET** (*Lybius undatus*) – We had good views of a pair that Tonya spotted in tall acacias at Lake Hawassa, an endemic that had been eluding us. [E]

**BLACK-BILLED BARBET** (*Lybius guifsobalito*) – Almost daily in the first week of the trip; many good views, especially in the riparian at Awash N.P.

**DOUBLE-TOOTHED BARBET** (*Lybius bidentatus*) – Great views of this striking barbet at Lake Hawassa, and another was at Wondo Genet.

#### *Indicatoridae (Honeyguides)*

**WAHLBERG'S HONEYGUIDE** (*Prodotiscus regulus*) – One was in woodland near Yabello. a.k.a. Wahlberg's Honeybird.

**LESSER HONEYGUIDE** (*Indicator minor*) – One at Sof Omar. Several other "honeyguide sp." were seen.

#### *Picidae (Woodpeckers)*

**RUFOUS-NECKED WRYNECK** (*Jynx ruficollis*) – An uncommon and local species with which we did well, seeing them three times, first at Lake Langano (great views), with nice repeat encounters above Goba and at Lake Hawassa.

**NUBIAN WOODPECKER** (*Campethera nubica*) – A half dozen sightings, starting with good views at Bilen and Awash.

**ABYSSINIAN WOODPECKER** (*Dendropicos abyssinicus*) – One of the more difficult endemics, we had to look and look, hearing one at the Dinsho HQ that went frustratingly unseen (and we were close), but then seeing one after much fishing in the open Hypericum woodland above Goba. [E]

**CARDINAL WOODPECKER** (*Dendropicos fuscescens*) – As a matter of happenstance, very few, with a couple finally seen well near Yabello.

**GRAY-HEADED WOODPECKER** (*Dendropicos spodocephalus*) – Good views of a number, our first coming during a stop to fix a tire near Nazaret.

#### *Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)*

**LESSER KESTREL** (*Falco naumanni*) – This declining migrant was seen mixed with Common Kestrels on the bustard plain near Bilen; at least two birds. [b]

**EURASIAN KESTREL (EURASIAN)** (*Falco tinnunculus tinnunculus*) – Wintering and migrant birds were apparently common in open areas, although a number, especially from the bus, were not identified to population. [b]

**EURASIAN KESTREL (EURASIAN)** (*Falco tinnunculus rufescens*) – We had good views of a nesting pair at St. Naa/Cutoleab monastery near Lalibela. Some others scattered through our trip may well have been local breeders as well, but were certainly outnumbered by migrants.

**EURASIAN HOBBY** (*Falco subbuteo*) – At least a dozen over the course of the tour was a good total, perhaps helped by the low clouds we had on a number of days. A northbound migrant in general, some were probably making a stopover to add weight. [b]

**AFRICAN HOBBY** (*Falco cuvierii*) – A perched individual eating a bird near the Dinsho Park HQ was a nice sighting; widespread, but uncommon.

**LANNER FALCON** (*Falco biarmicus*) – Fairly common for a large falcon, with repeat sightings, especially in the highlands north of Addis and on the Sanetti Plateau.

**SAKER FALCON** (*Falco cherrug*) – Sometimes the more you look up, the murkier it gets. Our belief is that the large falcon we saw on the plains near Bilen was this species (more, but not all, characters point toward Saker than a young Lanner), but we can't be 100% positive. Although having a huge range, the population is under 30,000 birds, and it is considered "Endangered." As a wintering bird, it is rare but regular in Ethiopia.

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) – Several sightings during the main tour, and another by Yen at Lalibela.

#### *Psittacidae (Parrots)*

**BLACK-WINGED LOVEBIRD** (*Agapornis taranta*) – Seen somewhere every few days, often with good looks at this attractive little parrot. We twice saw them eating Lantana; it is nice that there is some use for birds of this invasive. [E]

**RED-BELLIED PARROT** (*Poicephalus rufiventris*) – We had some nice views at Awash N.P., with a few more at Lake Langano and near Yabello. a.k.a. African Orange-bellied Parrot.

**YELLOW-FRONTED PARROT** (*Poicephalus flavifrons*) – Although not regarded as a threatened species, numbers have declined greatly at many birding locales. With terrific local help (thanks, Kibrom), we found two birds on our second attempt at Wondo Genet, and had good looks in the canopy of a large tree. [E]

*Platysteiridae (Wattle-eyes and Batises)*

**BROWN-THROATED WATTLE-EYE** (*Platysteira cyanea*) – A pair at Lake Hawassa was seen well along the promenade.

**GRAY-HEADED BATIS** (*Batis orientalis*) – This regional specialty was seen well at Bilen Lodge.

**BLACK-HEADED BATIS** (*Batis minor*) – The most widespread batis, with a half dozen encounters, including great views at Lake Langano.

*Vangidae (Vangas, Helmetshrikes, and Allies)*

**WHITE HELMETSHRIKE** (*Prionops plumatus*) – We had a nice experience with a flock of perhaps a dozen of this helmetshrike on our way back from the Genale River area to Negele.

*Malaconotidae (Bushshrikes and Allies)*

**BRUBRU** (*Nilaus afer*) – One or two at most of the acacia woodland areas at which we spent some time.

**NORTHERN PUFFBACK** (*Dryoscopus gambensis*) – A scattering, including at a hotel in Nazaret, in eucalyptus at a bathroom stop en route to Lake Hawassa, and on the grounds of our hotel in Negele.

**BLACK-CROWNED TCHAGRA** (*Tchagra senegalus*) – Seen (and heard) around several areas, particularly including the Jemma Valley.

**THREE-STREAKED TCHAGRA** (*Tchagra jamesi*) – Good views of several in the dry scrub south of Yabello.

**RED-NAPED BUSHSHRIKE** (*Laniarius ruficeps*) – We had some great views south of Yabello: Bart spotted one that was probably responding slowly to playback, and it hung around. A couple more were heard. A regional specialty that highlighted a great day for bushshrikes.

**TROPICAL BOUBOU (ETHIOPIAN)** (*Laniarius aethiopicus aethiopicus*) – The rich voice was heard regularly, and birds were seen periodically throughout the tour. Generally split from Tropical Boubous elsewhere.

**SLATE-COLORED BOUBOU** (*Laniarius funebris*) – Regularly heard in arid areas, and seen well several times.

**ROSY-PATCHED BUSHSHRIKE** (*Rhodophoneus cruentus*) – We had a fine encounter with a responsive pair doing a duet south of Yabello, and saw another pair north of Yabello later that day.

**SULPHUR-BREASTED BUSHSHRIKE** (*Telophorus sulfureopectus*) – Good views of a calling pair at the Prince Ruspoli's Turaco spot; heard again near Yabello.

**GRAY-HEADED BUSHSHRIKE** (*Malaconotus blanchoti*) – A pair was fairly responsive south of Yabello; pulling one of those out of a mistnet would probably be a painful experience!

*Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes)*

**BLACK CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Campephaga flava*) – One female mobbed a Pearl-spotted Owlet near Yabello. This species is poorly known in Ethiopia, but seems to be regular around Yabello.

*Laniidae (Shrikes)*

**RED-BACKED SHRIKE** (*Lanius collurio*) – While migration in general seemed poor in Ethiopia this April, we did encounter some waves of shrikes, including lovely Red-backed in breeding plumage, e.g., around Negele. [b]

**ISABELLINE SHRIKE** (*Lanius isabellinus*) – Bart saw one from the bus north of Addis Ababa. [b]

**LESSER GRAY SHRIKE** (*Lanius minor*) – Another common migrant, with many seen from the bus in the southern and eastern parts of our route. [b]

**GRAY-BACKED FISCAL** (*Lanius excubitorius*) – Several encounters in the Rift Valley, including with a nesting pair at Lake Langano that was catching grasshoppers. [N]

**SOMALI FISCAL** (*Lanius somalicus*) – The open plains at Awash N.P. were once again a good site for this regional specialty, typically a lifer for all. We watched one impale a centipede on a thorn.

**NORTHERN FISCAL** (*Lanius humeralis*) – Note the correction to the checklist we used on the tour; we saw Northern Fiscal, as split from Southern (combined f.k.a. Common Fiscal).

**WOODCHAT SHRIKE** (*Lanius senator*) – One of this attractive migrant was seen in Awash N.P. [b]

**WHITE-RUMPED SHRIKE** (*Eurocephalus rueppelli*) – Regularly seen in dry areas from Bilen Lodge to Yabello. a.k.a. Northern White-crowned Shrike.

*Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)*

**DARK-HEADED ORIOLE** (*Oriolus monacha*) – We saw several chasing birds in the forest near Agere Maryam and heard others, and repeated the experience at Wondo Genet. a.k.a. Abyssinian Oriole. [E]

**AFRICAN BLACK-HEADED ORIOLE** (*Oriolus larvatus*) – Several sightings, most memorably the bird "going ape" in mobbing a Pearl-spotted Owlet near Yabello.

*Dicruridae (Drongos)*

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

*Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)*

**AFRICAN PARADISE-FLYCATCHER** (*Terpsiphone viridis*) – Widespread and fairly common, seen during 'regular' birding, but also from moving vehicles and in towns. Most or all were white morph. What a stunning bird, especially to have around habitations and businesses.

*Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*

**STRESEMANN'S BUSH-CROW** (*Zavattariornis stresemanni*) – It took a little while to get untracked, but we ended up with some great encounters with groups of this highly distinctive endemic, including birds foraging at close range and using a couple of nests near Yabello. It is considered "Endangered," with a population of 10,000 to 20,000. [E]

**RED-BILLED CHOUGH** (*Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax*) – As with Ruddy Shelduck and Golden Eagle, a local African outpost exists in the Bale Mountains. We were fortunate to see two on the Sanetti Plateau (they are not common).

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

**PIED CROW** (*Corvus albus*) – Common, seen nearly daily, absent only from some desert areas (but often in desert towns).

**SOMALI CROW** (*Corvus edithae*) – Our first were two east of Bilen Lodge, followed by more east of Goba and on the Liben Plain. We also saw two hybrids with Pied Crow at a carcass east of Shashamene. a.k.a. Dwarf Raven, as split from Brown-necked Raven.

**FAN-TAILED RAVEN** (*Corvus rhipidurus*) – These great birds were a regular feature of rocky areas, and were especially common around Lalibela, where a nearly perpetual feature of the airspace over the hotel deck.

**THICK-BILLED RAVEN** (*Corvus crassirostris*) – This monster is somewhat local and uncommon, but we chanced upon some in traditional areas in the center, including several towns (why aren't they in every highland town??). [E]

#### *Alaudidae (Larks)*

**SINGING BUSHLARK** (*Mirafra cantillans*) – A cluster in Awash N.P.

**GILLETT'S LARK** (*Mirafra gilletti*) – Some recent rains had stirred several up, and we had good views of birds singing from the top of acacias in Awash N.P.

**SIDAMO LARK** (*Heteromirafra sidamoensis*) – We were doing poorly (easy to do with this rare bird, but not fun) when we were rescued by the guide of a small Swedish group, who found one and shared it with us. We ended up with great looks at a bird we certainly can't guarantee, one that seems headed for extinction. It is considered "Critically Endangered," with a population under 250. The expected lump with Archer's Lark, even less accessible, hardly changes the equation. a.k.a. Liben Lark. [E]

**FOXY LARK** (*Calendulauda alopec*) – Good views of several south of Yabello. Park of the Fawn-breasted Lark complex.

**CHESTNUT-BACKED SPARROW-LARK** (*Eremopterix leucotis*) – We had good looks at a couple of groups outside of Bilen Lodge.

**ERLANGER'S LARK** (*Calandrella erlangeri*) – We found a few in agricultural areas north of Addis Ababa. [E]

**SOMALI SHORT-TOED LARK** (*Calandrella somalica*) – This regional specialty was undoubtedly a lifer for all on the Liben Plain and is much easier (more common) than the Sidamo Lark.

**THEKLA LARK** (*Galerida theklae*) – Fairly common in highland agricultural areas. We saw *G. t. praetermissa* and closely related *G. t. huei*.

#### *Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**PLAIN MARTIN** (*Riparia paludicola*) – A few in the Jemma Valley and the Rift Valley. a.k.a. African Sand Martin.

**BANK SWALLOW** (*Riparia riparia*) – Flocks were seen primarily in the Rift Valley. [b]

**ROCK MARTIN** (*Ptyonoprogne fuligula*) – Widespread in suitable habitat (real and synthetic "rocks").

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) – Common. [b]

**ETHIOPIAN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo aethiopica*) – After one or two got away, good views at close range of birds foraging low over the Liben Plain.

**WIRE-TAILED SWALLOW** (*Hirundo smithii*) – Great views in the Jemma Valley (perched on the bridge) and at Bilen Lodge (perched on the wires).

**WHITE-TAILED SWALLOW** (*Hirundo megaensis*) – This localized bird can be a challenge, but we ended up with a nice set of birds south of Yabello, both foraging low (ankle level) and close, and perched. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population of 2,500 to 10,000. [E]

**RED-RUMPED SWALLOW** (*Cecropis daurica*) – Widespread in small numbers in the highlands.

**LESSER STRIPED-SWALLOW** (*Cecropis abyssinica*) – A few at lower elevations, e.g., Jemma Valley and Yabello.

**MOSQUE SWALLOW** (*Cecropis senegalensis*) – This uncommon swallow was seen near Lake Ziway, apparently nesting in our hotel at Lake Hawassa, and in verdant acacia woodland south of Yabello.

**BLACK SAWWING** (*Psalidoprocne pristoptera antinorii*) – We saw two along a stream just above Goba.

#### *Paridae (Chickadees and Tits)*

**WHITE-BACKED BLACK-TIT** (*Melaniparus leuconotus*) – This endemic was seen a couple of times in the Bale Mountains, including one that Larry relocated near the Dinsho HQ and others at lunch the next day above Goba. [E]

**SOMALI TIT** (*Melaniparus thruppi*) – Seen at two spots, Sof Omar and Yabello. a.k.a. Somali Grey Tit.

#### *Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)*

**MOUSE-COLORED PENDULINE-TIT** (*Anthoscopus musculus*) – A small flock was moving around the cabanas at Bilen Lodge.

#### *Certhiidae (Treecreepers)*

**AFRICAN SPOTTED-CREEPER** (*Salpornis salvadori erlangeri*) – A very responsive pair at Lake Hawassa provided excellent views of this local bird. "Spotted Creeper" has been split into African and Indian, and is now correct on the checklist!

#### *Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)*

**NORTHERN BROWNBUL** (*Phyllastrephus strepitans*) – A few were seen at Sof Omar and en route to Negele.

**COMMON BULBUL (COMMON)** (*Pycnonotus barbatus schoanus*) – This is the widespread type of Common Bulbul of the Addis region and Lalibela. While splits are perhaps not likely, the close proximity of discrete populations is intriguing, so we pay some attention.

**COMMON BULBUL (SOMALI)** (*Pycnonotus barbatus somaliensis*) – We saw a few of this subspecies at Bilen Lodge and Awash N.P.

**COMMON BULBUL (DODSON'S)** (*Pycnonotus barbatus dodsoni*) – We saw this form in the south and east, e.g., around Negele and Yabello.

**COMMON BULBUL (DARK-CAPPED)** (*Pycnonotus barbatus spuris*) – And this type occurred in the wetter habitats around the Bale Mountains.

#### *Macrosphenidae (African Warblers)*

**NORTHERN CROMBEC** (*Sylvietta brachyura*) – A few sightings: Jemma Valley, Awash N.P., en route to Negele, and at Lalibela.

**RED-FACED CROMBEC** (*Sylvietta whytii*) – We saw Red-faced at Lake Langano (where Tonya located a nest) and Yabello. [N]

#### *Phylloscopidae (Leaf-Warblers)*

**BROWN WOODLAND-WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus umbrovirens*) – This montane warbler was seen well at Dinsho, heard above Goba, and seen again at Lalibela.

**WILLOW WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) – A common migrant, at least in the first half of the trip. [b]

Acrocephalidae (Reed-Warblers and Allies)

**EASTERN OLIVACEOUS WARBLER** (*Iduna pallida*) – One was seen at Lake Langano. [b]

**ICTERINE WARBLER** (*Hippolais icterina*) – One migrant was foraging in a distant acacia at Sof Omar. [b]

**SEDGE WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*) – Two were seen at Lake Ziway (winterers/migrants). [b]

**LESSER SWAMP-WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus gracilirostris*) – A responsive bird was observed at Lake Hawassa.

**GREAT REED-WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*) – A rainy night was probably responsible for knocking down several migrants of this species. [b]

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

**CINNAMON BRACKEN-WARBLER** (*Bradypterus cinnamomeus*) – Common by voice in the shrubbery of the Bale Montains N.P., where we worked on seeing one of this skulker.

Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

**YELLOW-BREASTED APALIS** (*Apalis flavida*) – We saw several in the Negele and Yabello areas. These are *A. f. flavocincta*, part of the 'brown-tailed' group typical of low, dry areas. Splits are possible, so keep track of where you see what.

**GREEN-BACKED CAMAROPTERA (GRAY-BACKED)** (*Camaroptera brachyura brevicaudata*) – Common by voice (song and the 'bleating warbler' call) and seen regularly. We saw gray-backed types that are technically *C. b. abessinica*, which is part of the *brevicaudata* group (we use the controlling name on the checklist).

**GRAY WREN-WARBLER** (*Calamonastes simplex*) – Seen several times in dry habitats, most commonly south of Yabello, where we had telescope views.

**RED-FACED CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola erythropis*) – Quick views for some of a singing bird at Lake Hawassa.

**SINGING CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola cantans*) – Common on the dry slopes of the Jemma Valley and at Lalibela.

**BORAN CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola bodessa*) – First seen east of Goba, then en route to Negele and near Yabello.

**RATTLING CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola chiniana*) – A series of sightings, starting with good looks (and listens) at Lake Langano.

**ASHY CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola cinereolus*) – We saw one of several singing birds in Awash N.P.

**WINDING CISTICOLA (ETHIOPIAN)** (*Cisticola galactotes lugubris*) – First seen in drainage lines north of Addis Ababa, with others at the Dinsho Pool and near Goba. Splits in this group are likely, so keep track of the listed subspecies.

**FOXY CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola troglodytes*) – We had good views of responsive birds in the Jemma Valley.

**TINY CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola nana*) – One or two were seen perched up south of Yabello.

**PECTORAL-PATCH CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola brunnescens*) – We found a couple in a swale north of Addis Ababa, and the watched (and listened) to the 'cloudscraper' display flight over the Liben Plain.

**BUFF-BELLIED WARBLER** (*Phyllolais pulchella*) – Regularly seen in the crowns of acacias in dry regions.

**TAWNY-FLANKED PRINIA** (*Prinia subflava*) – Scattered around the tour route; most numerous at Lalibela.

**PALE PRINIA** (*Prinia somalica*) – A regional specialty of arid areas, we had nice views of two south of Yabello.

**YELLOW-BELLIED EREMOMELA** (*Eremomela icteropygialis*) – Seen at Lake Langano and again near Yabello.

Sylviidae (Sylvids)

**ABYSSINIAN CATBIRD** (*Parophasma galinieri*) – One of the special birds of Ethiopia--a monotypic endemic genus with a great voice. We saw (and heard) our first in Bale Mtns. N.P. near the Dinsho HQ, and saw more in other parts of the park over the next several days, especially hearing many of them in the Haremma Forest. [E]

**AFRICAN HILL BABBLER** (*Sylvia abyssinica*) – Also heard in the Haremma Forest, but less cooperative, and we ran out of time. [\*]

**BLACKCAP** (*Sylvia atricapilla*) – A locally common (Lalibela, Melka Ghebdu) migrant, but otherwise few and far between. [b]

**GARDEN WARBLER** (*Sylvia borin*) – One for part of the group at Lake Langano. [b]

**BANDED WARBLER** (*Sylvia boehmi*) – A couple of sightings in scrub south of Yabello.

**BROWN WARBLER** (*Sylvia lugens griseiventris*) – One was seen somewhat distantly in Bale Mtns. N.P. at Dinsho, and then a pair was seen very well bringing food to a nest in a *Hypericum* right by our lunch spot above Goba. This subspecies has been split occasionally, something that doesn't really grab your guides. [N]

Zosteropidae (Yuhinas, White-eyes, and Allies)

**BROAD-RINGED WHITE-EYE (MONTANE)** (*Zosterops poliogastrus poliogastrus*) – Fairly common in forests and towns in the mountains; many good views.

**WHITE-BREASTED WHITE-EYE** (*Zosterops abyssinicus*) – A few of this gray-breasted type were seen at Lake Hora, Lake Langano, and Lalibela. a.k.a. Abyssinian White-eye.

**WHITE-BREASTED WHITE-EYE** (*Zosterops abyssinicus jubaensis*) – This subspecies has yellow underparts, and was seen in the south and east around Negele and Yabello.

Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes and Allies)

**RUFOUS CHATTERER** (*Turdoides rubiginosa*) – Seen a handful of times in scrub and acacia woodland.

**WHITE-RUMPED BABBLER** (*Turdoides leucopygia*) – We saw several 'flavors' of this highly variable endemic. Our first were at Melka Ghebdu, with more at Lake Langano, Lake Hawassa, and Lalibela.

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

**GRAYISH FLYCATCHER (ETHIOPIAN)** (*Bradornis microrhynchus pumilus*) – Locally fairly common in acacia habitats and scrub at lower elevations. Preferably a.k.a. (African) Grey Flycatcher.

**ABYSSINIAN SLATY-FLYCATCHER** (*Melaenornis chocolatinus*) – A few in the higher, wetter areas, ranging from Bale Mtns. N.P. to towns and hotel gardens. [E]

- NORTHERN BLACK-FLYCATCHER** (*Melaenornis edolioides*) – A few were seen at Lake Langano and around Yabello.
- SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa striata*) – None the first ten days, then migrants were fairly common in the east and south. [b]
- DUSKY-BROWN FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa adusta*) – Widespread in small numbers in montane woodlands. a.k.a. (African) Dusky Flycatcher.
- RED-BACKED SCRUB-ROBIN** (*Cercotrichas leucophrys*) – Locally fairly common by voice, with a scattering seen, starting with good views at Melka Ghebdu. This variable complex includes the 'white-winged' group that we saw (*C. l. leucoptera*). a.k.a. White-browed Scrub-Robin.
- RUEPPELL'S ROBIN-CHAT** (*Cossypha semirufa*) – Common by voice in montane thickets and forest. We had good views in Bale Mtns. N.P., at Wondo Genet, and for some at Lalibela. We saw the nominate form and closely related *C. s. donaldsoni*; these Ethiopian forms sound different, so keep track of them.
- WHITE-BROWED ROBIN-CHAT** (*Cossypha heuglini*) – Good views a couple of times, first at Lake Hawassa.
- THRUSH NIGHTINGALE** (*Luscinia luscinia*) – We saw a couple of migrants at Sof Omar, part of a small fallout after a rainy night, and another was seen by some en route to Negele. Always a good find--a skulker. [b]
- LITTLE ROCK-THRUSH** (*Monticola rufocinereus*) – Locally fairly common on dry hillsides, e.g., Jemma Valley, Lake Langano (where a juvenile was following its parents, perching on the handrails in the hotel garden), and Lalibela.
- RUFOUS-TAILED ROCK-THRUSH** (*Monticola saxatilis*) – Single migrants were encountered near Negele and Yabello. a.k.a. European or Common Rock-Thrush.
- WHINCHAT** (*Saxicola rubetra*) – One of the more common northbound migrants, seen on almost half of the days of the trip. [b]
- RUEPPELL'S CHAT** (*Myrmecocichla melaena*) – Locally common, seen well on the slopes of the Jemma Valley and again at Lalibela, where on the hotel grounds. [E]
- MOCKING CLIFF-CHAT** (*Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris*) – Locally conspicuous in the Jemma Valley, at Lake Langano, and around Lalibela. We saw *T. c. albiscopulata*, visually distinctive, but in TS's view, sounding pretty familiar.
- WHITE-WINGED CLIFF-CHAT** (*Thamnolaea semirufa*) – We searched standard spots in the Jemma Valley, then found one right along the road! And then at Lalibela we had good views daily, some on the hotel grounds. [E]
- FAMILIAR CHAT** (*Cercomela familiaris*) – Seen by part of the group at Sof Omar.
- SOMBRE CHAT** (*Cercomela dubia*) – Having a damp morning certainly made the Fantalle lava fields more pleasant, and probably also made the chats happier--we had good looks (and listens) at a sombre-but-special bird. [E]
- BLACKSTART** (*Cercomela melanura*) – It took a little longer, but we did find a pair of Blackstarts on the same lava fields as the Sombre Chats.
- MOORLAND CHAT** (*Cercomela sordida*) – Locally common in the highlands and often tame and confiding.
- MOURNING WHEATEAR (SCHALOW'S)** (*Oenanthe lugens lugubris*) – They seemed conspicuous this year, especially in the Jemma Valley (just a couple of others seen). Good views of males and females. The taxonomy of this complex boggles the mind; expect at least a split that includes *lugubris* along with *schalowi* of East Africa. a.k.a. Abyssinian (Black) Wheatear.
- PIED WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe pleschanka*) – One briefly at Lake Langano and a better one for most near Negele. [b]
- ISABELLINE WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe isabellina*) – One briefly for some at the lava fields. [b]
- RED-BREASTED WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe bottae*) – After several brief sightings, we had good looks in the highland fields on our return from the Jemma Valley.

#### Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

- GROUNDSCRAPER THRUSH** (*Psophocichla litsitsirupa simensis*) – This striking bird is conspicuous in open areas of the highlands. This subspecies is also greatly disjunct from other populations far to the south.
- ABYSSINIAN THRUSH** (*Turdus abyssinicus abyssinicus*) – Common in the highlands, including in towns (especially in towns?). a.k.a. Mountain Thrush, part of the Olive Thrush complex.
- AFRICAN THRUSH** (*Turdus pelios*) – On average in lower and drier areas than the preceding, but also in some moist, mid-elevation locales such as Wondo Genet and Lake Hawassa.

#### Sturnidae (Starlings)

- WATTLED STARLING** (*Creatophora cinerea*) – A few small flocks, including one that had a few birds in breeding plumage, i.e., showing wattles.
- GREATER BLUE-EARED GLOSSY-STARLING** (*Lamprotornis chalybaeus*) – A stunning bird, seen nearly daily.
- RUEPPELL'S GLOSSY-STARLING** (*Lamprotornis purpuroptera*) – Most conspicuous at Awash N.P., and seen regularly in lower and drier areas.
- GOLDEN-BREASTED STARLING** (*Lamprotornis regius*) – This uncommon regional specialty (often seen at Samburu, so not a lifer for many) also happens to be one of the world's great birds. We saw them three times, the views improving near Yabello, but they are good at getting away.
- SUPERB STARLING** (*Lamprotornis superbus*) – Pretty fancy, too, and widespread on our route.
- SHELLEY'S STARLING** (*Lamprotornis shelleyi*) – Another regional specialty, seen well near Yabello.
- VIOLET-BACKED STARLING** (*Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*) – Scattered ones and twos, starting with great views of a male at Melka Ghebdu. a.k.a. Amethyst or Plum-colored Starling.
- WHITE-CROWNED STARLING** (*Spreo albicapillus*) – Occurring in northern Kenya, it is not an endemic, but it is always a lifer for all. This distinctive, large starling was seen first on the Liben Plain, with more and better views around Yabello.
- RED-WINGED STARLING** (*Onychognathus morio*) – This genus can be hit or miss, and this species was mostly 'miss' this year, with a few finally around Yabello, including on the roof of our hotel the last morning.
- SLENDER-BILLED STARLING** (*Onychognathus tenuirostris*) – This one was a little more 'hit,' starting with good views of pairs taking nesting material into a cliff by a trickling waterfall in the Jemma Valley, and a pair at a Giant Lobelia on the Sanetti Plateau.
- BRISTLE-CROWNED STARLING** (*Onychognathus salvadorii*) – Also some good views, first at Awash (town), then at Sof Omar and Negele.
- WHITE-BILLED STARLING** (*Onychognathus albirostris*) – Also in the 'hit' category on the main tour, with good views from our hotel in Debre Birhan and more than normal in the Jemma Valley. Lalibela seems reliable, and certainly was this year. [E]
- SHARPE'S STARLING** (*Pholia sharpii*) – A couple of quick sightings of this montane starling in the Harena Forest.

#### Buphagidae (Oxpeckers)

**RED-BILLED OXPECKER** (*Buphagus erythrorhynchus*) – With little wild game left in Ethiopia, especially on our tour route, the oxpeckers have had to adapt, which they have done in part by using domestic stock. We saw them on donkeys and camels, for instance. However, domestic stock is abundant and oxpeckers aren't, so perhaps many of the animals are dipped and not a good food source.

*Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)*

**COLLARED SUNBIRD** (*Hedydipna collaris*) – One sighting for part of the group.

**NILE VALLEY SUNBIRD** (*Hedydipna metallica*) – Always a good find, and it was nice to have them in attractive plumage this year. Our first looks were at Bilen Lodge, and we had more on the lava fields.

**SCARLET-CHESTED SUNBIRD** (*Chalcomitra senegalensis*) – This beauty was widespread in small numbers.

**HUNTER'S SUNBIRD** (*Chalcomitra hunteri*) – More of a desert bird than Scarlet-chested, we saw several well south of Yabello.

**TACAZZE SUNBIRD** (*Nectarinia tacazze*) – This stunning bird was fairly common in the highlands.

**BEAUTIFUL SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris pulchellus*) – They certainly lived up to the name, and were fairly common, seen on about half of the tour days.

**MARIQUA SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris mariquensis*) – Scattered in lower and drier areas, with good looks at many, especially at Negele and Yabello.

**SHINING SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris habessinicus*) – Something of a regional specialty, we perhaps had more than normal, including at the best spot, Bilen Lodge, where they were feeding on flowering aloes around the main building.

**VARIABLE SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris venustus*) – Fairly common at a few spots. We mostly saw yellow-bellied forms, but also a few white-bellied ones in the south and east.

*Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)*

**WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla flava*) – Wintering birds were still common, often in small flocks foraging at the feet of herds of domestic stock. Some were in good plumage, showing the characters of subspecies such as feldegg and beema. [b]

**MOUNTAIN WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla clara*) – One on a small cascade in the Jemma Valley, one along a mountain stream above Goba, and a pair on the hotel grounds at Wondo Genet.

**AFRICAN PIED WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla aguimp*) – Just a couple--along the Awash River.

**AFRICAN PIPIT** (*Anthus cinnamomeus*) – The most common of the resident pipits, seen in highland agricultural fields and other grassy areas, but generally in small numbers. a.k.a. Grassland or Grassveld Pipit.

**LONG-BILLED PIPIT** (*Anthus similis hararensis*) – A couple were seen by some in the Jemma Valley, and then daily at Lalibela. Keep track of where you see this highly variable, widespread species.

**PLAIN-BACKED PIPIT** (*Anthus leucophrys*) – Our best views were on the Liben Plain, with a couple more near Negele and Yabello.

**TREE PIPIT** (*Anthus trivialis*) – A couple of migrants. [b]

**RED-THROATED PIPIT** (*Anthus cervinus*) – This wintering bird was still fairly common in the highlands. Some were showing breeding colors. [b]

**ABYSSINIAN LONGCLAW** (*Macronyx flavicollis*) – This endemic can take some digging, but we were fortunate to find them fairly quickly the first day north of Addis Ababa. It is considered "Near Threatened." [E]

*Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)*

**ORTOLAN BUNTING** (*Emberiza hortulana*) – Tonya spotted one amongst many local seedeaters in a highland field en route to Debre Birhan. [b]

**CINNAMON-BREASTED BUNTING** (*Emberiza tahapisi*) – Good views at several spots of *E. t. septemstriata*, which we periodically tried to make into Striolated Bunting, but failed.

**SOMALI BUNTING** (*Emberiza poliopleura*) – We had great views of a singing bird at Awash N.P., and then enjoyed more south of Yabello. a.k.a. Somali Golden-breasted Bunting.

*Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)*

**ANKOBER SERIN** (*Carduelis ankoberensis*) – Birding the escarpment in low, thick, damp clouds was not going well. But one of the local herders insisted he had the bird, and he did (a bit of a surprise--it can be a ploy to become your guide), and we had good looks even though the conditions were awful. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population of under 15,000. [E]

**YELLOW-CROWNED CANARY** (*Serinus flavivertex*) – We saw several flocks in the highlands, perhaps best feeding in the Hagenia trees at Dinsho.

**YELLOW-FRONTED CANARY** (*Serinus mozambicus*) – One or two were in the fruiting figs in the Jemma Valley; not seen by all.

**ABYSSINIAN SISKIN** (*Serinus nigriceps*) – Flocks were in good supply in the highlands this year. a.k.a. Black-headed Siskin. [E]

**AFRICAN CITRIL** (*Serinus citrinelloides*) – Scattered small numbers, e.g. at several Rift Valley lakes.

**REICHENOW'S SEEDEATER** (*Serinus reichenowi*) – Small numbers at several spots, including Yabello and Negele, where several people saw a Yellow-billed (Black) Kite take one.

**YELLOW-RUMPED SERIN** (*Serinus xanthopygius*) – This endemic was seen after lengthy scanning at our hotel at Lalibela (the best place we know for it! We are at the seedeaters' mercy). a.k.a. White-throated Seedeater. [E]

**WHITE-BELLIED CANARY** (*Serinus dorsostriatus*) – A few at Lake Langano and near Yabello.

**YELLOW-THROATED SERIN** (*Serinus flavigula*) – Arriving at Melka Ghebdu in unusually wet conditions, the usual strategy of waiting for them to come to water was going no where, because water was everywhere. Fortunately, the birds were so enthused about conditions that they were singing, and we eventually found a couple that way! Great views of a tough bird. It is considered "Endangered," with a population of under 1,000. [E]

**SALVADORI'S SERIN** (*Serinus xantholaemus*) – Our luck here was perhaps that they had already bred, and were in a nice little family group that had some good food plants along our path. Good views of this localized bird. It is considered "Vulnerable," with a population of under 10,000. [E]

**NORTHERN GROSBEAK-CANARY** (*Serinus donaldsoni*) – A regional specialty; we had good looks at a responsive pair south of Yabello, with a couple more later nearby.

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

**BROWN-RUMPED SEEDEATER** (*Serinus tristriatus*) – Fairly common in the highlands, and often tame in towns. [E]

*Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)*

**SHELLEY'S RUFIOUS SPARROW** (*Passer shelleyi*) – Two near Negele and two more near Yabello.

**SWAINSON'S SPARROW** (*Passer swainsonii*) – Almost daily, missed only in the higher elevations of the Bale Mtns. Part of the Gray-headed Sparrow complex.

**CHESTNUT SPARROW** (*Passer emini*) – We had several flocks around Lake Langanu, some in fairly close to full plumage, and another small flock near Yabello.

**YELLOW-SPOTTED PETRONIA** (*Petronia pyrgita*) – Widespread, but just one or two at a time. *P. p. pyrgita*.

#### *Ploceidae (Weavers and Allies)*

**RED-BILLED BUFFALO-WEAVER** (*Bubalornis niger*) – A few at Awash, some near Negele, and then good looks at Yabello.

**WHITE-HEADED BUFFALO-WEAVER** (*Dinemellia dinemelli*) – A striking bird easily identified from a moving vehicle, and often identified from a moving vehicle in the Rift Valley and environs.

**SPECKLE-FRONTED WEAVER** (*Sporopipes frontalis*) – A few in the Jemma Valley.

**WHITE-BROWED SPARROW-WEAVER** (*Plocepasser mahali*) – Another common bird in the Rift Valley and other lower, drier areas.

**GRAY-HEADED SOCIAL-WEAVER** (*Pseudonigrita arnaudi*) – We found two small colonies near Yabello.

**BLACK-CAPPED SOCIAL-WEAVER** (*Pseudonigrita cabanisi*) – Ditto.

**RED-HEADED WEAVER** (*Anaplectes rubriceps leuconotus*) – A couple at Melka Ghebdu, but no more.

**BAGLAFECHE WEAVER** (*Ploceus baglafaecht*) – Almost daily, in a confusing variety of plumages fitting the subspecies *baglafaecht*, *emini*, and *reichenowi*, and sometimes fitting something in between. Don't wait for a split, but there is something interesting going on here.

**LITTLE WEAVER** (*Ploceus luteolus*) – Only at a few spots, best seen being fed at Lake Langanu!

**SPECTACLED WEAVER** (*Ploceus ocularis*) – Seen three times, usually quickly.

**LESSER MASKED-WEAVER** (*Ploceus intermedius*) – Scarce, with a couple at Lake Langanu, and a few more near Yabello.

**VITELLINE MASKED-WEAVER** (*Ploceus vitellinus*) – Also scarce, with one en route to Negele, and a few near Yabello.

**RUEPPELL'S WEAVER** (*Ploceus galbula*) – Common in the first half of the tour, mostly in the "northern Rift" part of the route, e.g. Awash N.P.

**SPEKE'S WEAVER** (*Ploceus spekei*) – A couple near Negele were followed by a small colony that continues across the street from our hotel in Yabello (and searches the hotel for insects that were attracted to lights during the night).

**VILLAGE WEAVER** (*Ploceus cucullatus*) – We saw some large colonies full of vibrant activity, e.g., at Awash N.P. and Lake Langanu. a.k.a. Black-headed Weaver.

**SALVADORI'S WEAVER** (*Ploceus dichrocephalus*) – A specialty of the region. We used last year's spot (thanks, Merid) near Negele, and found several flocks, with good views until they all disappeared! a.k.a. Juba Weaver.

**CHESTNUT WEAVER** (*Ploceus rubiginosus*) – Just a few of this highly mobile species, mostly not in good plumage.

**RED-BILLED QUELEA** (*Quelea quelea*) – Flocks were seen crossing the road in the Bilen/Awash area, but relatively few were ever around where we were birding, and were not in breeding plumage.

**ORANGE BISHOP** (*Euplectes franciscanus*) – A small flock probably of this species was at Bilen Lodge, and then Bart spotted a male in breeding plumage at Lake Hawassa. a.k.a. Northern Red Bishop.

**YELLOW BISHOP** (*Euplectes capensis*) – Several encounters with small flocks all in basic plumage.

**WHITE-WINGED WIDOWBIRD** (*Euplectes albonotatus*) – Just a couple seen distantly near Yabello.

**RED-COLLARED WIDOWBIRD** (*Euplectes ardens*) – Nice views on the slopes of the Jemma Valley, including several showing moderate amounts of breeding plumage.

**GROSBEAK WEAVER** (*Amblyospiza albifrons*) – Seen by part of the group along the promenade at Lake Hawassa.

#### *Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)*

**YELLOW-BELLIED WAXBILL** (*Coccyzygia quartinia*) – Good views of a small flock in disturbed forest above Goba, and a couple more at Lalibela.

**CRIMSON-RUMPED WAXBILL** (*Estrilda rhodopyga*) – Small numbers were at lower elevation sites.

**COMMON WAXBILL** (*Estrilda astrild*) – Seen twice.

**RED-RUMPED WAXBILL** (*Estrilda charmosyna*) – Larry spotted two in arid scrub south of Yabello. a.k.a. Black-cheeked Waxbill.

**RED-CHEEKED CORDONBLEU** (*Uraeginthus bengalus*) – Fairly common and widespread.

**PURPLE GRENADIER** (*Granatina ianthinogaster*) – Seen by part of the group at Melka Ghebdu (a part of Ethiopia from which not well known) and again south of Yabello.

**RED-BILLED FIREFINCH** (*Lagonosticta senegala*) – Widespread in small numbers.

**CUT-THROAT** (*Amadina fasciata*) – A couple of small flocks were enjoyed at Awash N.P., and two more were seen briefly near Negele.

**AFRICAN QUAILFINCH** (*Ortygospiza fuscocrissa*) – A small flock flushed from a drainage line north of Addis Ababa; views were very brief, and close to 'leader only.'

**BRONZE MANNIKIN** (*Spermestes cucullatus*) – A few small flocks.

**AFRICAN SILVERBILL** (*Euodice cantans*) – For part of the group at Awash N.P.

#### *Viduidae (Indigobirds)*

**PIN-TAILED WHYDAH** (*Vidua macroura*) – A series of mostly quick encounters and most were not in fine plumage, although a couple birds with tails were seen later in the trip.

**STRAW-TAILED WHYDAH** (*Vidua fischeri*) – Tonya spotted a male in pretty good plumage south of Yabello.

**VILLAGE INDIGOBIRD** (*Vidua chalybeata*) – One male in breeding plumage was seen at Melka Ghebdu; females and/or basic-plumaged males were seen at a couple of other spots.

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## **MAMMALS**

**BLACK-FACED VERVET MONKEY** (*Cercopithecus aethiops*) – We have enough trouble keeping up with bird taxonomy. If split, we saw *C.*

aethiops, more generally known as Grivet, with Black-faced Vervet best used for *C. pygerythrus*. In any event, monkeys of this type were routinely seen during our travels.

**HAMADRYAS BABOON** (*Papio hamadryas*) – Thanks perhaps to an ongoing construction stoppage, a troop has become beggars along the highway north of Awash, and we had excellent views during a delay. A specialty of the Horn of Africa region.

**OLIVE BABOON** (*Papio anubis*) – This widespread baboon was common at Awash, and others were seen at several spots, including in Bale Mtns. N.P.

**GELADA** (*Theropithecus gelada*) – Our first views were in the fog of the Ankober Serin escarpment, but two days later we enjoyed some better views of a troop Jane spotted along the rim of the Jemma Valley. The long hair and bright patches of skin make for a striking appearance. [E]

**MANTLED GUEREZA** (*Colobus guereza*) – First seen at Awash, with more in the Haremma Forest and at Wondo Genet. a.k.a. Black-and-white Colobus.

**CAPE HARE** (*Lepus capensis*) – A couple of sightings.

**STARCK'S HARE** (*Lepus starcki*) – For some folks on the Sanetti Plateau. [E]

**UNSTRIPED GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Xerus rutilus*) – A few along the way.

**STRIPED GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Xerus erythropus*) – For part of the group en route to Negele.

**ETHIOPIAN MOLE-RAT** (*Tachyoryctes macrocephalus*) – Brief views for a few people; good views are rare, and even partial views are more likely on sunnier days than we had. [E]

**SIMIEN FOX (ETHIOPIAN WOLF)** (*Canis simensis*) – We had several excellent encounters, most memorably the one that was working on the carcass of a horse, and eventually trotted up the road carrying something disgusting. This highly endangered mammal is always a thrill, and we were glad to have multiple sightings. [E]

**COMMON JACKAL** (*Canis aureus*) – At least three sightings, always just by parts of the group.

**ROCK HYRAX** (*Procavia capensis*) – Nice views on several occasions, starting on the Ankober escarpment and continuing to the yard list of our hotel at Lalibela.

**BURCHELL'S ZEBRA** (*Equus burchelli*) – Several at the Yabello Wildlife Area.

**WARTHOG** (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*) – Bilen Lodge, Awash N.P., and in the meadows around Dinsho.

**HIPPOTAMUS** (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) – At Lake Hawassa, at least for Tonya and probably others, from our hotel grounds.

**MOUNTAIN NYALA** (*Tragelaphus buxtoni*) – Several herds, plus several fine males, in the safety of the Bale Mtns. N.P. HQ. [E]

**MENELICK'S BUSHBUCK** (*Tragelaphus scriptus meneliki*) – Ditto; several of this dark bushbuck around Dinsho. It is increasingly split.

**LESSER KUDU** (*Tragelaphus imberbis*) – More than normal at Awash N.P., mostly quick views, but several with nice horns.

**BOHOR REEDBUCK** (*Redunca redunca*) – One in Bale Mtns. N.P.

**BEISA ORYX** (*Oryx beisa*) – Some of these magnificent animals are hanging on in the underprotected reserves of the Awash area. Some nice views.

**KLIPSPRINGER** (*Oreotragus oreotragus*) – One distant Klipspringer on the Fantalle lava flows.

**SALT'S DIK-DIK** (*Madoqua saltiana*) – Daily in the Bilen Lodge and Awash N.P. areas.

**GUENTHER'S DIK-DIK** (*Madoqua guentheri*) – A few in acacia scrub south of Yabello; nice telescope views of a pair.

**SOEMMERING'S GAZELLE** (*Gazella soemmerringi*) – A few near Bilen and only one in Awash N.P.; numbers have declined in the absence of serious protection of local reserves.

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

We saw many, many rodents. More interesting than the ones that chewed any food left in our rooms at Awash, 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 a spiny mouse (*Acomys*) at Bilen Lodge 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, and that we were also seeing grass rats (*Arvicanthis*), but we really don't know.

Even worse is a squirrel question, like whether we saw a *Paraxerus* at Hawassa, in which case is it introduced there?

Nile Crocodile (Jemma Valley, Awash N.P., Genale River tributary)

Nile (Water) Monitor (Lake Ziway)

Tropical House Gecko

Green-headed Tree Agama and Agama sp.

Leopard Tortoise (including some large ones in Awash N.P.)

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**Totals for the tour: 436 bird taxa and 25 mammal taxa**