



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Ghana: Window Into West African Birding 2017**

Mar 30, 2017 to Apr 18, 2017

Phil Gregory & James Ntakor

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

The favorite birds among our Ghana group this year were varied as might be expected, but Picathartes (Rockfowl) and Egyptian Plover came out on top as always, with Northern Carmine Bee-eater, Standard-winged Nightjar, White-crested Hornbill, Violet Turaco, Yellow Penduline-Tit, and Cassin's Honeyguide also scoring highly -- there were some difficult choices amongst so many great birds!

Sakumono Lagoon late in the afternoon on arrival day was as ever quite rewarding, albeit very green and overgrown this year with a lot of late rainfall making things very verdant here, and few terns or shorebirds in evidence. Senegal Thick-knees showed very well, and a flyover of a flock of Collared Pratincoles was nice. Unexpected birds were a flock of Yellow-crowned Bishops that had several breeding-plumage males, a great view of Yellow-crowned Gonolek, African Swamphen, and Black Coucal, whilst Little Rush-Warbler heard singing well was a big surprise, very far west for this species.

Shai Hills is always a good introduction to Ghanaian birding, with nice looks at the Senegal trio of Batis, Parrot, and Eremomela, our first Blue-bellied Rollers, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Vieillot's and Bearded barbets, very obliging Mocking Cliff-chats this year, a lovely African Hobby, and brief looks at Violet Turaco.



*White-necked Rockfowl, or Picathartes, is always the hoped-for highlight of this tour...and we had great looks again this year! Photo by guide Phil Gregory.*

We went over to the far east of the country towards Togo this year, crossing the Volga River and birding Kalakpa National Park, which proved quite hard going. Good birds included Ahanta Francolin, Spotted Honeyguide, Pied-winged Swallow, Red-cheeked Wattle-eye, Forest Robin, and Black-shouldered Nightjar singing very well but hard to see, and rained off next night with a ferocious storm that we narrowly avoided getting caught in! It was an interesting diversion, but we will revert to Ankasa next year now that the logistics have been sorted out and the camping is no more!

Kakum National Park and the surrounding area is an important part of the tour, and this year we were quite lucky that the walkway had reopened after being damaged in the same storm we met at Kalakpa, with many trees down both at Kakum and Abrafo. Star birds from this area included Akun Eagle Owls, Brown Nightjar, White-crested, Brown-cheeked, Piping, and Black-casqued hornbills, Black, Cassin's, and Sabine's spinetails, Rosy Bee-eater, Violet-backed Hyliota, Johanna's, Tiny, Olive-bellied, and Superb sunbirds, and Rock Pratincole at the customary site.

The Picathartes day was rewarding, as again this year we accessed a new site at a slightly lower and closer location on the same escarpment. The reward came within five minutes, with a fine bird hopping in and then sitting on a vine for the next 45 minutes, with a second bird appearing later for fantastic views of this iconic species. We actually got to Kumasi in time to see the evening flyover of thousands of Straw-colored Fruit-bats, quite a spectacle and one we usually miss as we get in too late.

Mole came next and this is a very different part of the tour, coming into the much drier Sudan savanna zone. Star birds included White-throated Francolin, Forbes's Plover, Bruce's Green-Pigeon, Sun Lark, a bonus Rufous-rumped Lark, Standard-winged Nightjar male, Grayish Eagle-Owl and African Scops-Owl, Pygmy and Beautiful sunbirds, White-crowned Robin-Chat, Lavender Waxbill, and Fine-spotted, Brown-backed, and African Gray woodpeckers. Elephants are always a great addition, and Patas Monkey was a nice sighting.

Heading north we did well in the heat at Nasia Pond, with Black-faced Quailfinch, African Silverbill, Moustached Grass-Warbler, and Black-backed Cisticola. The stop at Tongo Hills was as always rewarding albeit hot this year, with Fox Kestrel, Spotted Thick-knee, a roosting Grayish Eagle-Owl, Mocking Cliff-chat, Gosling's Bunting, and eventually Rock Cisticola.

The Egyptian Plover requires a several-hour bumpy ride out to the Volga tributaries on the Burkina Faso border, and this year we saw some seven birds very nicely. Northern Carmine Bee-eater was a pleasing addition, as was Chestnut-bellied Starling, Speckle-fronted and White-billed buffalo-weavers, whilst Doug and I ticked off Burkina Faso by taking a short dugout ride over to the peninsula that is in that country -- my Burkinabe list stands at 16 now!

Tono Dam was relatively quiet this year but always turns up something notable, this year it being Yellow Penduline-Tit. Four-banded Sandgrouse was nice too, and lots of Pygmy Sunbirds.

Heading south once again we scored Zebra (Orange) Waxbill at Nasia en route. Next day at Bobiri was very overcast and quiet, and with a big open-air Eastern church ceremony going on, so birding was tougher than usual. Long-tailed Hawk was the great prize however, our first for some 3 years, and Blue Cuckooshrike finally put in an appearance.

This year we had extra time at Atewa, with a walk up to around 1500 ft (550 m) being very successful, with great looks at the much-desired Blue-moustached Bee-eater, plus Sharpe's Apalis, Willcocks's Honeyguide, Crested Malimbe, and Kemp's Longbill. Two evening forays got most of us a Fraser's Eagle-Owl, plus a mystery owl call that might be Sandy Scops-Owl, which awaits further research.

This was again a fun trip, with a very congenial group who made things entertaining. Our best wishes go to Marie who injured her hip in a fall at Bolgatanga and had to be medevaced out, with Andrew from Ashanti taking remarkably good care of her in a difficult situation. Our thanks to him and Ashanti African Safaris, and also to Sharon and Karen and the Field Guides office staff who quickly stepped up to the plate and expedited matters. Having some good spotters and good company made for a very fine 2017 trip. James and Andrew from Ashanti African Safaris did their customary excellent job, and Anim was a very good driver over some very long days. Thanks also to Sharon at FG HQ for good logistical support; it all worked nicely. I look forward to sharing future birding trips with you all at some point. Safe travels, good health, and happy birding!

Phil in Accra / Dubai / Sydney and Kuranda

Itinerary:

Thu 30 March -- Arrival day for most

Fri 31 March -- Birding at Sakumono in the afternoon

Sat 1 Apr -- Shai Hills

Sun 2 Apr -- Kpong Marsh, Volga River bridge, Ho town then Kalakpa NP pm.

Mon 3 Apr-- Kalakpa Forest trail, then again pm before departing ahead of a huge storm.

Tue 4 April -- Ho to Accra, then Winneba Lagoon, Mankessim Pond and farmbush near Jukwa, overnight at Rainforest Lodge for 4 nights.

Wed 5 Apr -- Antikwaa / Twifo Praso in the morning, Abrafo Pm

Thu 6 Apr -- Kakum NP morning and again late afternoon

Fri 7 Apr -- Bekawopa farmbush and Abrafo FR, pm Kakum hornbill overlook

Sat 8 Apr -- Stingless Bee Road at Jukwa / Assin Foso / Bankro / Kumasi

Sun 9 Apr -- Kumasi / Kintampo / Mole NP

Mon 10 Apr -- Mole NP Samole Loop and waterhole in the morning, Brugbani Loop and Haraba pond in the afternoon

Tue 11 Apr -- Mole Airstrip / Mognori R / Road near Larabanga and airstrip late afternoon and dusk

Wed 12 Apr -- Mole / Tamale / Nasia Pond / Tongo Hills / Bolgatanga

Thu 13 Apr -- White Volta at Sapeliga; afternoon at Tono Dam

Fri 14 Apr -- Bolgatanga / Nasia Pond / Kumasi

Sat 15 Apr -- Bobiri in the morning, dull and overcast with too many churchgoers; afternoon in Atewa farm bush

Sun 16 April Atewa forest trail to 550 m, pm farmbush near Linda Dor then nearby at the Fraser's Eagle-Owl site.

Mon 17 Apr -- Atewa forest trail / Accra and flights home

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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*) – Seen at Sakumono, Mole and Nasia Pond, with a good count of 89 at Mole on Apr. 9. Ducks in general were very scarce this trip.

### Numididae (Guineafowl)

**HELMETED GUINEAFOWL (WEST AFRICAN)** (*Numida meleagris galeatus*) – Great views of the taxon *galeatus* in Mole, and I finally got reasonable photos, see the website link.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

**STONE PARTRIDGE** (*Ptilopachus petrosus*) – Noisy at Shai Hills where some of us saw a couple briefly, but surprisingly only heard in Mole this time, usually they are quite confiding there.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

**DOUBLE-SPURRED FRANCOLIN** (*Pternistis bicalcaratus*) – Good views from Sakumono, Shai Hills, Antwikwaa and Mole, plus one in the far north near Bolgatanga.

**AHANTA FRANCOLIN** (*Pternistis achantensis*) – I finally got to see this species, which we have heard on most previous tours without any sightings. One flew by at Kalakpa one afternoon, and next day we tracked some calling birds and got pretty good views of one as a huge storm loomed.

**WHITE-THROATED FRANCOLIN (WHITE-THROATED)** (*Peliperdix albogularis buckleyi*) – Initially heard one afternoon on the Brugbani loop but too late to come in, then next day at Mole Airstrip one obliged by coming in nicely.

Ciconiidae (Storks)

**WOOLLY-NECKED STORK (AFRICAN)** (*Ciconia episcopus microscelis*) – A flock of 17 soaring over near the salt-lick at Mole were by far the largest group I have ever seen of this scarce species.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**LONG-TAILED CORMORANT** (*Microcarbo africanus*) – Small numbers from a few wetland sites starting at Sakumono.

Scopidae (Hamerkop)

**HAMERKOP** (*Scopus umbretta*) – Amazingly few, just a handful of sightings from Mole was basically it.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**GRAY HERON** (*Ardea cinerea*) – A single at Nasia pond was the only record.

**BLACK-HEADED HERON** (*Ardea melanocephala*) – Two flying over at Mole were the sole sighting this trip.

**PURPLE HERON** (*Ardea purpurea*) – Singles from Sakumono, Mole (flying with 2 Black-headed Herons) and Nasia were it for this tour.

**GREAT EGRET (AFRICAN)** (*Ardea alba melanorhynchos*) – 6 at Sakumono and 2 flying over at Mole were all that we saw, amazingly scarce as ever.

**INTERMEDIATE EGRET (YELLOW-BILLED)** (*Mesophoyx intermedia brachyrhyncha*) – 4 birds at Sakumono were the only record. This is split by HBW/BirdLife as Yellow-billed Egret.

**LITTLE EGRET** (*Egretta garzetta*) – Just 2 birds at Sakumono were the only sighting.

**WESTERN REEF-HERON (WESTERN)** (*Egretta gularis gularis*) – None at Sakumono this year, but luckily 2 dark phase birds at Winneba lagoon saved the day!

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Small numbers on almost every day, this is the western nominate taxon which is split by IOC and HBW/BirdLife.

**SQUACCO HERON** (*Ardeola ralloides*) – 15 at Sakumono and 4 at Nasia Pond were the only records.

**STRIATED HERON** (*Butorides striata*) – One from Winneba and then 3 day records of one or 2 from Mole, one bird at the salt lick being very nicely marked.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

**HADADA IBIS** (*Bostrychia hagedash*) – Only seen in Mole as usual where it is very vocal but only occurs in small numbers, max 6 birds in a day.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE** (*Elanus caeruleus*) – Five day records, mostly of singles, starting at Shai Hills and finishing at Tono Dam.

**AFRICAN HARRIER-HAWK** (*Polyboroides typus*) – Eight day records of ones and twos from the forested sites

**PALM-NUT VULTURE** (*Gypohierax angolensis*) – One at Mole and one from Atewa, very few this trip.

**AFRICAN CUCKOO-HAWK** (*Aviceda cuculoides*) – Four day records much to Don's delight, including two at nest at Abrafo, and singles from Shai Hills, Kakum and Bobiri.

**HOODED VULTURE** (*Necrosyrtes monachus*) – Just 6 day records, mostly of 3 or 4 birds, a sad decline from years gone by, and one which seems to be accelerating.

**WHITE-BACKED VULTURE** (*Gyps africanus*) – A single then 2 next day from Mole was it, another species in steep decline.

**BATELEUR** (*Terathopius ecaudatus*) – Four day records, mostly juveniles and all from Mole as usual, where we did see one adult,

**SHORT-TOED SNAKE-EAGLE** (*Circaetus gallicus*) – One atop a power pylon near Kintampo looked good for this species, with a well defined blackish chest and relatively plain whitish underparts. [b]

**WAHLBERG'S EAGLE** (*Hieraetus wahlbergi*) – Just one bird at Kalakpa was the only sighting, a species we rarely see on the tour.

**CASSIN'S HAWK-EAGLE** (*Aquila africana*) – Two singles from Kakum, with very good flight views, this is quite a rare species.

**LIZARD BUZZARD** (*Kaupifalco monogrammicus*) – Four day records, mostly from the Winneba and Kalakpa areas. It is surprisingly scarce in Ghana.

**DARK CHANTING-GOSHAWK** (*Melierax metabates*) – One fine bird at Tongo Hills late one afternoon.

**GABAR GOSHAWK** (*Micronisus gabar*) – A dark morph at Shai Hills, then another grey morph bird at Mole.

**GRASSHOPPER BUZZARD** (*Butastur rufipennis*) – Six day records max. 3 birds starting at Mole, seen very well.

**EURASIAN MARSH-HARRIER** (*Circus aeruginosus*) – One female plumage bird at Nasia Pond was a good find.

**RED-CHESTED GOSHAWK (BANDED)** (*Accipiter toussenelii macroscelides*) – Two calling at Antwikwaa, and then one calling at Atewa, now split from African Goshawk.

**SHIKRA** (*Accipiter badius*) – Two at Shai Hills, then singles from Mole. There is a move to split this African group from the Asian birds, as done by HBW/BirdLife.

**OVAMPO SPARROWHAWK** (*Accipiter ovampensis*) – I'd seen this species once before at Mole so a good view of one at Shai Hills was pleasing, with a second bird with a tail with broad black bars from Mole. New for most folks, it is a low density species.

**LONG-TAILED HAWK** (*Urotriorchis macrourus*) – Two blank years so we were overdue, and sure enough there was a bird calling well at Bobiri which was eventually lured into a flyover. A hard one to get, always a great relief when we find it.

**BLACK KITE (YELLOW-BILLED)** (*Milvus migrans parasitus*) – Seen most days, and a huge tree near Rainforest Lodge had a roost of up to 30 birds which would fly out at dawn and in at dusk. Split by many these days as Yellow-billed Kite, which seems very sensible.

**RED-NECKED BUZZARD** (*Buteo auguralis*) – Four day records, starting at Shai Hills then seen well at Mognori River and Atewa farmbush.

*Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)*

**BLACK CRAKE** (*Zapornia flavirostra*) – Seen at Sakumono, Mankessim Pond and then in Mole.

**AFRICAN SWAMPHEN** (*Porphyrio madagascariensis*) – Two seen well at Sakumono, this green-backed group is now split as African Swamphen. Overall it is scarce in Ghana like many waterbirds.

**EURASIAN MOORHEN** (*Gallinula chloropus*) – Three at Mankessim Pond were the only sighting.

*Sarothruridae (Flufftails)*

**WHITE-SPOTTED FLUFFTAIL** (*Sarothrura pulchra*) – A vocally responsive pair at Stingless Bee Road, with one bird being lured into showing as it ran across the track, quite a performance overall and the sound cut is posted on xeno-canto (XC) and the Internet Bird Collection (IBC). Also heard at several other forest sites.

*Burhinidae (Thick-knees)*

**SENEGAL THICK-KNEE** (*Burhinus senegalensis*) – Great looks and vocals from 9 birds at Sakumono, then again at Mole where they are particularly vocal at dawn, before 2 at Tono Dam.

**SPOTTED THICK-KNEE** (*Burhinus capensis maculosus*) – A surprise find was 2 fine birds at Tongo Hills, where none of us had seen the species previously!

*Pluvianidae (Egyptian Plover)*

**EGYPTIAN PLOVER** (*Pluvianus aegyptius*) – Terrific this year and worth the bumpy ride, we had 7 fine birds on a sand bar in the White Volta.

James saw an adult conceal a chick in the sand, and Doug and I flushed two vocal birds from the Burkina Faso Peninsula we visited. One of the birds of the trip as ever, and an endemic African family.

*Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)*

**BLACK-WINGED STILT** (*Himantopus himantopus*) – 30 at Winneba Lagoon was the only sighting.

*Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)*

**BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER** (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – 2 at Winneba lagoon were the only record.

**SPUR-WINGED LAPWING** (*Vanellus spinosus*) – Six at Sakumono and 4 at Sapeliga were the only ones.

**WATTLED LAPWING** (*Vanellus senegallus*) – 8 day records starting at Sakumono, and with a flock of about a 100 on the river at Sapeliga.

**COMMON RINGED PLOVER** (*Charadrius hiaticula*) – A single at Winneba lagoon was the only record.

**FORBES'S PLOVER** (*Charadrius forbesi*) – Two on the Brugbani Loop late in the afternoon were a great find, this has become harder of late and we worked hard to get them.

*Jacanidae (Jacanas)*

**AFRICAN JACANA** (*Actophilornis africanus*) – Five day records, with 30 at Sakumono, a juv at Mankessim Pond and 10 at Nasia Pond.

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**WHIMBREL** (*Numenius phaeopus*) – 2 at Winneba lagoon were the only record.

**EURASIAN CURLEW** (*Numenius arquata*) – A single at Winneba lagoon was the only record.

**SANDERLING** (*Calidris alba*) – A single at Winneba lagoon was the only record.

**DUNLIN** (*Calidris alpina*) – 2 at Winneba lagoon were the only record.

**COMMON SANDPIPER** (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – Just 4 day records, with 6 at Sakumono the most, and seen in Burkina Faso!

**COMMON GREENSHANK** (*Tringa nebularia*) – 20 at Sakumono, 6 at Winneba and 21 on the Volta at Sapeliga.

**WOOD SANDPIPER** (*Tringa glareola*) – 12 at Sakumono were the only record.

*Glareolidae (Pratincoles and Coursers)*

**COLLARED PRATINCOLE** (*Glareola pratincola*) – 40 calling well over at Sakumono were the only record, though I thought I heard them in Mole late one afternoon.

**ROCK PRATINCOLE (RUFIOUS-NAPED)** (*Glareola nuchalis liberiae*) – 4 at the rocks on the Pra River at Twifo Praso as usual, this is the chestnut collared West African race.

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**BLACK TERN (EURASIAN)** (*Chlidonias niger niger*) – 30 at Sakumono were a nice sight, and the only ones we saw.

**ROYAL TERN (AFRICAN)** (*Thalasseus maximus albididorsalis*) – None at Sakumono, but about 10 fishing off the beach at Winneba gave good views, and this race is about to be split as West African Royal Tern, more closely related to Lesser Crested than to the American Royal Tern..

**SANDWICH TERN** (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) – Two off Sakumono, looking very white in the bright sun.

*Pteroclididae (Sandgrouse)*

**FOUR-BANDED SANDGROUSE** (*Pterocles quadricinctus*) – Nice views of a male and 2 females at Tono Dam, with 5 others flushed up later.

*Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – A few in the urban areas. Birds in the villages look to be the domestic variety rather than feral birds. [1]

**SPECKLED PIGEON** (*Columba guinea guinea*) – A few around Tamale, Tongo Hills, Bolgatanga and Sapeliga, very much a northern species.

**MOURNING COLLARED-DOVE** (*Streptopelia decipiens*) – Several at the Sapeliga site for Egyptian Plover This is a far northern special in Ghana.

**RED-EYED DOVE** (*Streptopelia semitorquata*) – Widespread in small numbers, the cooing call "I am a Red-eyed Dove" is frequently heard.

**VINACEOUS DOVE** (*Streptopelia vinacea*) – Nice looks at Shai Hills, then in Mole, where they looked amazingly pinkish below in the afternoon sun and bore out their name.

**LAUGHING DOVE** (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) – Widespread and seen most days.

**BLACK-BILLED WOOD-DOVE** (*Turtur abyssinicus*) – Good looks at Shai Hills and Winneba, then again in Mole.  
**BLUE-SPOTTED WOOD-DOVE** (*Turtur afer*) – Vocal and heard more than seen, we had singles at Antwikwaa and Stingless Bee Road.  
**TAMBOURINE DOVE** (*Turtur tympanistria*) – Seen briefly at Kakum and Atewa, again more often heard than seen.  
**NAMAQUA DOVE** (*Oena capensis*) – Up to 10 around Nasia, as usual only in the very far north.  
**BRUCE'S GREEN-PIGEON** (*Treron waalia*) – Great views of 5 at Mole, then also seen at Tongo Hills and Tono Dam.  
**AFRICAN GREEN-PIGEON** (*Treron calvus*) – Six day records, all singles except for 6 at Jukwa near Kakum.

#### Musophagidae (Turacos)

**GUINEA TURACO** (*Tauraco persa*) – Glimpsed and heard at Shai Hills, then two seen at Kalakpa, and heard at Kakum on the forest /savanna edge. [E]

**YELLOW-BILLED TURACO** (*Tauraco macrorhynchus*) – A lovely view of one from the Kakum Walkway, and heard daily in this area. [E]

**VIOLET TURACO** (*Musophaga violacea*) – Brief views of 3 singles from Shai Hills, then one perched incongruously on a power line near the Volta Bridge, and giving lovely looks!

**WESTERN PLANTAIN-EATER** (*Crinifer piscator*) – Ten day records, with 3 or 4 each day from Sakumono, Shai Hills and Kalakpa, and then 6 at Mole.

#### Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

**BLACK-THROATED COUCAL** (*Centropus leucogaster*) – One was seen quite well by most at Antwikwaa, not vanishing immediately into a thicket, and it was heard at Kakum and Atewa. This is a major skulker so seeing one well is quite something.

**SENEGAL COUCAL** (*Centropus senegalensis*) – Widespread, the first was at Sakumono and we saw them on many days away from the forest areas.

**BLUE-HEADED COUCAL** (*Centropus monachus*) – Good views at various wetlands starting at Kpong marsh, then Kalakpa, Jukwa and Atewa.

**BLACK COUCAL** (*Centropus grillii*) – One at Sakumono was just my second record there, then we had 2 at Kpong marsh and then one near Linda Dor in the farmbush, an unusually good trip for this species.

**BLUE MALKOHA** (*Ceuthmochares aereus*) – Seen well at Kakum, at Ankasa and Bobiri, now split as Blue Malkoha with the south and eastern African birds as Green Malkoha *C. australis*.

**GREAT SPOTTED CUCKOO** (*Clamator glandarius*) – One in farmbush near Ebekawopa on Apr 7 was a nice addition to the trip.

**LEVAILLANT'S CUCKOO** (*Clamator levaillantii*) – Heard at Kalakpa and then 2 seen in Mole near Zaina Lodge.

**THICK-BILLED CUCKOO (AFRICAN)** (*Pachycoccyx audeberti brazzae*) – This was heard three times at Kalakpa, Mognori and Mole, but must have been flying over as we could not get a response. Shame, this is a hard bird to get. [\*]

**DIDERIC CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx caprius*) – Much less vocal than Klaas's Cuckoo, we saw just a couple of them, including one at Atewa that had a very odd single note vocalization.

**KLAAS'S CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx klaas*) – Very vocal the only cuckoo that we heard on many days, and seen well at several sites.

**AFRICAN EMERALD CUCKOO** (*Chrysococcyx cupreus*) – A female at Kakum, then fine males seen at Mole and then Bobiri.

**OLIVE LONG-TAILED CUCKOO** (*Cercococcyx olivinus*) – Heard at Abrafo forest late one afternoon. [\*]

**BLACK CUCKOO** (*Cuculus clamosus*) – One from Kalakpa was a nice sighting, it was one of the all black birds, not a gabonensis with a red chest.

**RED-CHESTED CUCKOO** (*Cuculus solitarius*) – One calling bird at the Samole loop eventually came in and showed well.

**AFRICAN CUCKOO** (*Cuculus gularis*) – Just one bird this year, seen as we drove into Mole NP.

#### Tytonidae (Barn-Owls)

**BARN OWL (AFRICAN)** (*Tyto alba affinis*) – One flying quite high over the road at Larabanga at the same spot as last year and looking very white below, only my second record from Ghana!

#### Strigidae (Owls)

**SANDY SCOPS-OWL** (*Otus icterorhynchus*) – An owl calling at Atewa at dusk matches the cut from the Chappuis Birds of Africa CD's, but I have some doubts as to what is actually making it, awaits further research. This is potentially a lifer for Phil, but the vocalizations seem little known and with some confusion about what is making what sound. [\*]

**AFRICAN SCOPS-OWL** (*Otus senegalensis*) – A great look at a very responsive bird on the plover loop in Mole, as usual the grayish type with lovely yellow eyes.

**GRAYISH EAGLE-OWL** (*Bubo cinerascens*) – Great views of one spotted by Anim as we drove back to Mole Lodge, then one was around the lodgings at dawn on two days. One roosting in a rock crevice at Tongo Hills was a surprise.

**FRASER'S EAGLE-OWL** (*Bubo poensis*) – Our site from last year came good on the second attempt, though tape response was minimal and very quiet. One bird was seen hanging upside-down in foliage by some of us, very strange.

**AKUN EAGLE-OWL** (*Bubo leucostictus*) – This was a great find at Kakum, with 2 birds perched up near the entrance, the underparts very pale with heavy dark streaks and no barring, and yellow eyes, with rather flattened ear tufts. A third individual was seen briefly, I presume a juvenile. This was just my third record of this rare bird, sorry you did not come this night Rick!

**PEARL-SPOTTED OWLET** (*Glaucidium perlatum*) – A great little bird seen in Mole, being persistently mobbed by assorted passerines including Western Olivaceous Warbler, Variable Sunbird and Western Violet-backed Sunbird!

**RED-CHESTED OWLET (WESTERN)** (*Glaucidium tephronotum tephronotum*) – Heard at Bobiri but sadly not responsive. [\*]

#### Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

**STANDARD-WINGED NIGHTJAR** (*Caprimulgus longipennis*) – Again one of the birds of the trip, we saw a couple of females over the road near Larabanga, then a pair at the airstrip, the male sans standards. This was totally eclipsed later by a male in flight with the standards erect like little pennants over the back, and showing as shadow spots behind. How I'd have liked a flight shot of that!

**BROWN NIGHTJAR** (*Caprimulgus binotatus*) – Great from the walkway with 2 birds calling and one sitting on a sapling for good views in the spotlight. Usually placed in the genus *Veles* as these are quite distinct to other nightjars. [E]

**BLACK-SHOULDERED NIGHTJAR** (*Caprimulgus nigriscapularis*) – Calling well at Kalakpa and seen badly in the spotlight a couple of times, it proved remarkably hard to get onto, and a rematch the following night got cancelled due to a storm.

**LONG-TAILED NIGHTJAR** (*Caprimulgus climacurus*) – Great views on the track coming back from the waterhole at Brugbani, we saw 7 birds and got nice photos of one obliging bird. Also seen at Kalakpa.

*Apodidae (Swifts)*

**MOTTLED SPINETAIL** (*Telacanthura ussheri*) – Nice views of two over the road at Bekawopa.

**BLACK SPINETAIL** (*Telacanthura melanopygia*) – One over the clearing where we were watching for the hornbills late afternoon, a good trip bird. [E]

**SABINE'S SPINETAIL** (*Rhaphidura sabini*) – One at Abrafo then 6 from the Kakum walkway.

**CASSIN'S SPINETAIL** (*Neafrapus cassini*) – One from Kakum walkway, this strange species has an extraordinary tailless shape like a stealth bomber!

**COMMON SWIFT** (*Apus apus*) – 15 going slowly over at Mole Lodge on Apr 11, en route back to Europe, then 10 over Atewa.

**LITTLE SWIFT** (*Apus affinis*) – Widespread, there are often large colonies under road culverts. One was with the Common Swifts at Mole, that would cause a stir if it went with them to Europe!

**WHITE-RUMPED SWIFT** (*Apus caffer*) – One at Antwikwaa, and one at Mole, this is uncommon in Ghana.

**AFRICAN PALM-SWIFT** (*Cypsiurus parvus*) – Widespread in small numbers.

*Phoeniculidae (Woodhoopoes and Scimitar-bills)*

**GREEN WOODHOOPOE** (*Phoeniculus purpureus*) – 3 at Shai Hills, and strangely 2 at the Erata Hotel next day.

**WHITE-HEADED WOODHOOPOE** (*Phoeniculus bollei*) – One over at Kakum walkway was a nice find.

**FOREST WOODHOOPOE** (*Phoeniculus castaneiceps*) – A calling bird at Atewa eventually came in nicely so we could see the chestnut head, this is a tough one to find.

**BLACK SCIMITARBILL** (*Rhinopomastus aterrimus*) – Don saw one in Mole, then a nice one was sat up at Mognori.

*Bucerotidae (Hornbills)*

**RED-BILLED DWARF HORNBILL** (*Lophoceros camurus*) – Sadly only heard this year at Bobiri, and did not come in to check us out. [\*]

**AFRICAN PIED HORNBILL** (*Lophoceros fasciatus*) – The widespread Ghanaian hornbill, seen on 8 days with up to 12 birds, and very vocal. HBW/BirdLife split this into Eastern and Western species.

**AFRICAN GRAY HORNBILL** (*Lophoceros nasutus*) – Seen at Sakumono and Shai Hills, then scattered records from Mole and the north.

**NORTHERN RED-BILLED HORNBILL** (*Tockus erythrorhynchus*) – Seen only in the far north this trip, with a handful at Tono Dam and Sapeliga.

**WHITE-CRESTED HORNBILL** (*Horizocerus albocristatus*) – Seen well at Kakum, I just missed a photo, then seen remarkably well late one afternoon at Atewa with repeated close flight views and a scope view. This is usually a hard bird to see well, and another one that HBW/BirdLife now split into E and W species.

**BLACK-CASQUED HORNBILL** (*Ceratogymna atrata*) – No sign of them from the walkway, but James had a viewpoint where we were lucky enough to get 5 birds come over late in the afternoon. This is by no means guaranteed to be seen these days, all the big hornbills are now rare in Ghana.

**BROWN-CHEEKED HORNBILL** (*Bycanistes cylindricus*) – 4 over at the viewpoint clearing on Apr 7, great to see as this is another rare bird and endemic to the region. Sound cut posted to IBC. [E]

**PIPING HORNBILL** (*Bycanistes fistulator*) – Another one that HBW/BirdLife now split into E and W species, we saw just 4 birds near Abrafo this trip.

*Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)*

**MALACHITE KINGFISHER** (*Corythornis cristatus*) – Four day records of singles, starting at Shai Hills, with one seen at the Volta tributary in Burkina Faso.

**AFRICAN PYGMY-KINGFISHER** (*Ispidina picta*) – Nine day records, starting at Shai Hills, and seen on wires on several occasions, this was a good trip for them.

**CHOCOLATE-BACKED KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon badia*) – A great view of a calling bird from the Kakum Walkway, an elusive forest kingfisher that is always good to see.

**GRAY-HEADED KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon leucocephala*) – Small numbers from Mole, and good views by the Lodge.

**WOODLAND KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon senegalensis*) – Just a few this trip with 6 day records starting at Kalakpa, where the grey headed taxon *fuscipileus* showed well.

**BLUE-BREASTED KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon malimbica*) – Seen at Mole and Mognori, and heard a few times at Shai Hills and Atewa.

**STRIPED KINGFISHER** (*Halcyon chelicuti*) – Heard in Mole, this is rather oddly a scarce bird in Ghana, [\*]

**GIANT KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle maxima*) – One flew through a patch of remnant woodland at Atewa late one afternoon, an unexpected sighting.

**PIED KINGFISHER** (*Ceryle rudis*) – 5 day records, with 3 at Sakumono, and 2 at Nasia and Sapeliga, otherwise singles only.

*Meropidae (Bee-eaters)*

**BLACK BEE-EATER** (*Merops gularis gularis*) – 2 at Antwikwaa, then 1 at Bekawopa and 2 at Abrafo before 2 at Atewa and one higher up there next day. Always a terrific bird.

**BLUE-MOUSTACHED BEE-EATER** (*Merops mentalis*) – One of the great prizes of the trip, our walk up at Atewa got us up to some 1600ft (550m) and we then had two birds there, eventually showing well for all. Yay! Seeing all the bee-eaters remains a live possibility for Rick! [E]

**RED-THROATED BEE-EATER** (*Merops bulocki*) – Common and showy in Mole where it nests, and unexpectedly 4 out at Sapeliga.

**LITTLE BEE-EATER** (*Merops pusillus*) – Four day records, with one at Sakumono, then at Nasia and Atewa.

**SWALLOW-TAILED BEE-EATER** (*Merops hirundineus chrysolaimus*) – One at Shai Hills and then one near Zaina Lodge in Mole.

**WHITE-THROATED BEE-EATER** (*Merops albicollis*) – Small numbers of this intra-African migrant were widespread. We had 13 day records and up to 100 birds in a noisy flock at Atewa.

**EUROPEAN BEE-EATER** (*Merops apiaster*) – Some good looks from Mole, with 10 on one day and 4 at Mognori the next. [b]

**ROSY BEE-EATER** (*Merops malimbicus*) – 15 at Antwikwaa, all flying over, and the only ones we saw. [E]

**NORTHERN CARMINE BEE-EATER** (*Merops nubicus*) – Great views of 2 at Sapeliga farmbrush, with about 30 over the dry lake nearby later. One of the star birds of the tour, great to see them so well.

Coraciidae (Rollers)

**ABYSSINIAN ROLLER** (*Coracias abyssinicus*) – Small numbers of this beautiful bird from Mole and the far north.

**RUFIOUS-CROWNED ROLLER** (*Coracias naevius*) – Just two singles from Mole and then Sapeliga, it is always quite scarce.

**BLUE-BELLIED ROLLER** (*Coracias cyanogaster*) – Seen at Shai Hills, then several from Kalakpa and 2 singles from Mole. [E]

**BROAD-BILLED ROLLER** (*Eurystomus glaucurus*) – 5 day records with 2 at Kalakpa and up to 6 per day in Mole.

**BLUE-THROATED ROLLER** (*Eurystomus gularis*) – Seen around Kakum with up to 3 birds, and then one at Bobiri.

Lybiidae (African Barbets)

**YELLOW-BILLED BARBET** (*Trachyphonus purpuratus*) – Seen very well from Kakum Walkway.

**BRISTLE-NOSED BARBET** (*Gymnobucco peli*) – 6 at Antwikwaa, the bristle nose showing well, and 10 from Atewa.

**NAKED-FACED BARBET** (*Gymnobucco calvus*) – 3 from Antwikwaa, then a nest hole with a juvenile poking its head out to be fed by the parents at Atewa farmbrush. The nasal calls of *Gymnobucco* barbets were also heard at the main forest sites but both are very similar.

**SPECKLED TINKERBIRD** (*Pogoniulus scolopaceus*) – Seen well at Antwikwaa, Kakum and Atewa, with 3 birds lined up in a row one afternoon in the farmbrush there.

**RED-RUMPED TINKERBIRD** (*Pogoniulus atroflavus*) – A nice one from Antwikwaa and then briefly at Atewa.

**YELLOW-THROATED TINKERBIRD** (*Pogoniulus subsulphureus*) – Seen well at Antwikwaa, this taxon lacks a yellow throat.

**YELLOW-RUMPED TINKERBIRD** (*Pogoniulus bilineatus*) – Seen very well at Kalakpa, much more often heard than seen.

**YELLOW-FRONTED TINKERBIRD** (*Pogoniulus chrysoconus*) – 6 at Shai Hills, they seemed to be all over the place there this year, then again later in Mole.

**YELLOW-SPOTTED BARBET** (*Buccanodon duchaillui*) – A good look at one at Kakum, we usually see one each trip!

**HAIRY-BREASTED BARBET (HAIRY-BREASTED)** (*Tricholaema hirsuta hirsuta*) – Heard at Kakum, then a good view of one at Bobiri, these dark-throated Western birds are very different to the Ugandan ones and Sinclair splits them.

**VEILLOT'S BARBET** (*Lybius vieilloti*) – Seen very well at Shai Hills, Tono Dam and Atewa. [E]

**DOUBLE-TOOTHED BARBET** (*Lybius bidentatus*) – One at the Erata Hotel again this year, then 2 in the farmbrush near Linda Dor.

**BEARDED BARBET** (*Lybius dubius*) – Seen very nicely at Shai Hills and then several times in Mole.

Indicatoridae (Honeyguides)

**CASSIN'S HONEYGUIDE** (*Prodotiscus insignis*) – Seen by a few at Kakum and Atewa very briefly, then a much more co-operative bird at Atewa next day that we all got onto. Often now called Cassin's Honeybird.

**WILLCOCKS'S HONEYGUIDE** (*Indicator willcocksi*) – One from Atewa, calling and a brief recording made, then remarkably well spotted by James for great scope views. An elusive and little-known bird.

**THICK-BILLED HONEYGUIDE** (*Indicator conirostris*) – At least two were coming to honeycomb spilt by the track at Abrafo and gave great views. These birds had the dark underparts typical of this species, but I think they are simply the wet forest version of Lesser Honeyguide as structure and calls seem identical. Another was seen later at Atewa.

**LESSER HONEYGUIDE** (*Indicator minor*) – Two seen in the farmbrush near Mole airstrip, with the paler underparts typical of the dry country birds. I think this and Thick-billed Honeyguide are due to be lumped as they are so similar.

**SPOTTED HONEYGUIDE** (*Indicator maculatus*) – One in the forest at Kalakpa showed well in the scope.

**GREATER HONEYGUIDE** (*Indicator indicator*) – One juvenile in the bushes in the rocks at Tongo Hills was a surprise.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

**FINE-SPOTTED WOODPECKER** (*Campethera punctuligera*) – Good views of 2 by Mole airstrip, by no means easy to find on the tour.

**GOLDEN-TAILED WOODPECKER (STREAK-BACKED)** (*Campethera abingoni chrysurus*) – One fine male at the salt lick in Mole was only my second record from Ghana.

**LITTLE GREEN WOODPECKER** (*Campethera maculosa*) – Two from Kakum Walkway showed quite well. [E]

**BUFF-SPOTTED WOODPECKER** (*Campethera nivosus nivosus*) – Heard at Kakum and was I think glimpsed by some at Atewa.

**CARDINAL WOODPECKER** (*Dendropicos fuscescens lafresnayi*) – For the third year running we only heard this species at Shai Hills, it was very close this year but we still failed to see it! [\*]

**MELANCHOLY WOODPECKER** (*Dendropicos lugubris*) – There was a distant flyby at Antwikwaa, maybe Don got onto it? I saw a dot flying away, a pity as we usually see them here. [E]

**FIRE-BELLIED WOODPECKER** (*Dendropicos pyrrhogaster*) – Very good at Kakum and Abrafo this year, and then again at Atewa. [E]

**AFRICAN GRAY WOODPECKER (GRAY)** (*Dendropicos goertae goertae*) – Seen well from the lookout at Mole Lodge and down on the Samole loop.

**BROWN-BACKED WOODPECKER** (*Dendropicos obsoletus obsoletus*) – Two birds in the farmbrush at Mole airstrip were a good trip addition.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

**EURASIAN KESTREL (RUFESCENT)** (*Falco tinnunculus rufescens*) – 3 around Tema, then a couple near Accra later and one near Kumasi.

**FOX KESTREL** (*Falco alopex*) – 4 birds at Tongo Hills, soaring quite high up so the long tails and rusty underparts showed well, a speciality of this site.

**GRAY KESTREL** (*Falco ardosiaceus*) – 6 day records from Kalakpa, then Mole and Sapeliga.

**AFRICAN HOBBY** (*Falco cuvierii*) – A great look at one at Shai Hills, often quite a hard species to get but this area does seem good for them.

**LANNER FALCON** (*Falco biarmicus*) – One from Shai Hills and one from Kalakpa was it this tour.

Psittaculidae (Old World Parrots)

**ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET** (*Psittacula krameri*) – 4 at the Samole loop, a northern special in Ghana.

**RED-HEADED LOVEBIRD** (*Agapornis pullarius pullarius*) – This was a lucky find at a fruiting fig at Mognori, where there were about 6 birds, with scope views of males, a female and an immature.

Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots)

**RED-FRONTED PARROT** (*Poicephalus gulielmi*) – 8 flying over at Antwikwaa were the only ones of the trip.

**SENEGAL PARROT** (*Poicephalus senegalus*) – Good looks at Shai Hills, then at Kalakpa and finally Samole loop in Mole.

*Calyptomenidae (African and Green Broadbills)*

**RUFOS-SIDED BROADBILL** (*Smithornis rufolateralis*) – A wonderful view of one in display in a forest remnant near Abrafo, jumping up and doing the short whirring circular flight, I just wish I had brought my camera!

*Platysteiridae (Wattle-eyes and Batises)*

**BROWN-THROATED WATTLE-EYE** (*Platysteira cyanea*) – Two along the Abrafo road, and again in Mole NP.

**WEST AFRICAN WATTLE-EYE** (*Platysteira hormophora*) – A female briefly at Kakum and another was seen by most at Atewa; this is a split from what was Chestnut Wattle-eye. [E]

**RED-CHEEKED WATTLE-EYE** (*Platysteira blissetti*) – A bird along the forest trail at Kalakpa showed for a few, and another flew across a couple of times as we were luring in the White-spotted Flufftail. This is always a very tricky species to see well. [E]

**SENEGAL BATIS** (*Batis senegalensis*) – One at Shai Hills, then nice looks from Mole on several occasions. [E]

**WEST AFRICAN BATIS** (*Batis occulta*) – A male came in quietly at one point along the upper track at Atewa, but I think it was the only one to see it, a pity as this is a hard species to get. [E]

*Vangidae (Vangas, Helmetshrikes, and Allies)*

**WHITE HELMETSHRIKE (LONG-CRESTED)** (*Prionops plumatus plumatus*) – Great look at Shai Hills, then a party of 6 up at Sapeliga in the dry thorn-scrub there.

**RED-BILLED HELMETSHRIKE** (*Prionops caniceps*) – Regrettably this was heard only from Bobiri, and showed no interest in playback. [\*]

**AFRICAN SHRIKE-FLYCATCHER** (*Megabyas flammulatus flammulatus*) – A fine male at the Kakum Walkway.

**BLACK-AND-WHITE SHRIKE-FLYCATCHER** (*Bias musicus musicus*) – A male was at Antwikwaa, then we had two females at Atewa farmbush, a very striking species. I'd like to revert to the old name of Vanga Flycatcher, especially as the bird has now been reclassified amongst the Vangidae.

*Malaconotidae (Bushshrikes and Allies)*

**BRUBRU** (*Nilaus afer afer*) – One eventually and briefly at Mole Lodge viewpoint, after it was heard earlier along the Samole loop.

**NORTHERN PUFFBACK** (*Dryoscopus gambensis gambensis*) – Seen at Shai hills and Mole.

**SABINE'S PUFFBACK** (*Dryoscopus sabini*) – A good view of one from the Kakum Walkway.

**MARSH TCHAGRA (MARSH)** (*Tchagra minutus minutus*) – Great views in the farmbush at Jukwa late one afternoon.

**BLACK-CROWNED TCHAGRA (BLACK-CROWNED)** (*Tchagra senegalus senegalus*) – A few sightings from Shai Hills and Mole.

**BROWN-CROWNED TCHAGRA** (*Tchagra australis ussheri*) – Only heard along Stingless Bee Road at Jukwa, a much scarcer bird than its sibling. [\*]

**YELLOW-CROWNED GONOLEK** (*Laniarius barbarus*) – This amazing looking red and black bushshrike with the yellow cap was seen nicely at Sakumono, Shai Hills, Kalakpa and Mole. Their duets are a common sound of the dry country.

**SULPHUR-BREASTED BUSHSHRIKE** (*Telophorus sulfureopectus*) – One seen well at Kalakpa and heard at Mognori.

**GRAY-HEADED BUSHSHRIKE** (*Malaconotus blanchoti*) – Also seen at Kalakpa, and some saw another in Mole.

*Campephagidae (Cuckooshrikes)*

**WHITE-BREASTED CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Coracina pectoralis*) – Two day records from Mole, with 4 along the Brugbani loop and then 2 next day at the salt lick, an uncommon bird.

**RED-SHOULDERED CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Campephaga phoenicea*) – Great views of two scarlet shouldered males at the Samole loop.

**PURPLE-THROATED CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Campephaga quiscalina*) – Two out along the road to Abrafo, and a female at Atewa.

**BLUE CUCKOOSHRIKE** (*Cyanograucalus azureus*) – Only seen late this trip, with a very vocal and showy male at Bobiri, though we did hear it at Kakum.

*Laniidae (Shrikes)*

**NORTHERN FISCAL** (*Lanius humeralis*) – A few sightings from the coastal areas starting at Jukwa, it is strangely localized in Ghana.

**YELLOW-BILLED SHRIKE** (*Corvinella corvina*) – Some good views in the south starting at Sakumono, with sightings also from Mole and Sapeliga.

*Oriolidae (Old World Orioles)*

**AFRICAN GOLDEN ORIOLE** (*Oriolus auratus*) – Three birds in the Mognori area were a useful trip tick.

**WESTERN BLACK-HEADED ORIOLE** (*Oriolus brachyrynchus*) – Seen at Atewa on both days.

**BLACK-WINGED ORIOLE** (*Oriolus nigripennis*) – Good view from Kakum and again at Bobiri, this one lacks the white patch on the closed wing. [E]

*Dicruridae (Drongos)*

**SQUARE-TAILED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus ludwigii*) – One was heard along the Mognori River at Mole, a specialist of this kind of habitat. [\*]

**SHINING DRONGO** (*Dicrurus atripennis*) – Brief looks from Atewa in a mixed flock, this is often hard to see well and is a West African endemic. [E]

**FORK-TAILED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus adsimilis*) – A few from the drier areas, it was very sparse again this trip and the maximum we saw was 3.

**VELVET-MANTLED DRONGO** (*Dicrurus modestus*) – The drongo of the wetter forests, seen well at Kakum, Bobiri and Atewa. There was a nest at Kakum.

*Monarchidae (Monarch Flycatchers)*

**BLUE-HEADED CRESTED-FLYCATCHER** (*Trochocercus nitens*) – Calling well close by at Atewa on some 3 occasions, and seen by a few, it is always a very skulking species. Sound cut posted to IBC.

**BLACK-HEADED PARADISE-FLYCATCHER (RED-BELLIED)** (*Terpsiphone rufiventer nigriceps*) – Seen at Kalakpa, Kakum, and then at Atewa. Poorly named as most Paradise-flycatchers have black heads, Red-bellied is far better.

**AFRICAN PARADISE-FLYCATCHER** (*Terpsiphone viridis ferreti*) – Seen in Mole where a white morph bird showed briefly, and again at Bobiri.

*Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)*



**PIAPIAC** (*Ptilostomus afer*) – Seven day records, the most near Shai Hills and again in Mole and at Tono Dam.

**PIED CROW** (*Corvus albus*) – Widespread and seen most days, but no big numbers.

*Picathartidae (Rockfowl)*

**WHITE-NECKED ROCKFOWL** (*Picathartes gymnocephalus*) – We went once again to the new and more accessible site this year, with two mud nests on the rock overhang, and had to wait just 5 minutes before a *Picathartes* bounded in and then sat on vine for the next 45 minutes. Another bird bounded in later and fussed about on the rocks, giving great looks. There were some nice photos and videos taken and this was as always a huge highlight of the trip. [E]

*Nicatoridae (Nicators)*

**WESTERN NICATOR** (*Nicator chloris*) – Much in demand and heard at several sites before we eventually got a nice view of one at Stingless Bee Road, it's placed in an endemic African family now. Another was seen later at Atewa by many.

*Alaudidae (Larks)*

**RUFOUS-RUMPED LARK** (*Pinarocorys erythropygia*) – A good find at one of the laterite pans near Brugbani, this is an irruptive visitor and this is only the second time we have seen it on the tour.

**SUN LARK** (*Galerida modesta*) – Six birds on the laterite pans at Brugbani, which were quite well vegetated this year.

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) – Seen pretty much throughout but only in small numbers. [b]

**RED-CHESTED SWALLOW** (*Hirundo lucida lucida*) – Seen by Larabanga mosque as usual, then 2 next day en route to Sapeliga. [E]

**ETHIOPIAN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo aethiopica aethiopica*) – One at Sakumono, then seen at Kalakpa, Antwikwaa and Abrafo.

**WHITE-THROATED BLUE SWALLOW** (*Hirundo nigrita*) – This is one snazzy bird which we only see at the site at the Pra River, where there were just two birds this year.

**WIRE-TAILED SWALLOW** (*Hirundo smithii smithii*) – Just a couple of sightings from Mole and then at Nasia.

**PIED-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Hirundo leucosoma*) – Two near the Volga River Bridge, then 5 in Kalakpa next day before 4 seen up at Mole, a good tour for them and they seem to be becoming a bit more widespread.

**LESSER STRIPED-SWALLOW** (*Cecropis abyssinica*) – Amazingly few this year, only 2 seen at the Volga River bridge then 2 near Ebekawopa.

**RUFOUS-CHESTED SWALLOW** (*Cecropis semirufa gordonii*) – 3 near Ebekawopa and a single at Atewa were the only sightings. A low density species, we usually see this (and Mosque Swallow) just a couple of times each trip.

**MOSQUE SWALLOW** (*Cecropis senegalensis*) – 4 at the Jukwa farm bush were the only sighting.

**PREUSS'S SWALLOW** (*Petrochelidon preussi*) – 4 near Kpong marsh, then about 80 at a culvert near the Pra River, and a couple at the Ebekawopa turnoff. [E]

**COMMON HOUSE-MARTIN** (*Delichon urbicum*) – One over at Mole Lodge, an uncommon migrant. [b]

**SQUARE-TAILED SAWWING** (*Psalidoprocne nitens*) – We finally got 6 at Atewa on the last day, with a good view of this small forest swallow. [E]

**FANTI SAWWING** (*Psalidoprocne obscura*) – Seen at Antwikwaa and Kakum, just 4 birds each time. This was Wayne's 5000th species but he kept it very quiet..... [E]

*Stenostiridae (Fairy Flycatchers)*

**AFRICAN BLUE-FLYCATCHER** (*Elminia longicauda*) – Nice look of 2 at the Mognori River.

*Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)*

**WHITE-SHOULDERED BLACK-TIT** (*Melaniparus guineensis*) – Good views a couple of times, with one at Shai Hills and one in Mole, we could see the yellow eye nicely.

*Remizidae (Penduline-Tits)*

**YELLOW PENDULINE-TIT** (*Anthoscopus parvulus senegalensis*) – Great views of 3 feeding in a thorn bush at Tono Dam were a new Ghana bird for me and only the third sighting by James; I taped them and have posted it to IBC and XC, I had not seen this bird since Sokoto Nigeria in 1979! Tono Dam always turns up something unexpected.

**FOREST PENDULINE-TIT** (*Anthoscopus flavifrons waldroneae*) – A nest was seen at Antwikwaa but unfortunately there was no sign of the birds! [N]

*Certhiidae (Treecreepers)*

**AFRICAN SPOTTED-CREEPER** (*Salpornis salvadori*) – One Rick was really after and it came good en route to Brugbani, with 2 birds being seen feeding in the dry woodland. This is often now places in its own family the Salpornithidae too, a good bird to get.

*Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)*

**SLENDER-BILLED GREENBUL** (*Stelgidillas gracilirostris*) – A couple at Kakum, oddly scarce this trip.

**GOLDEN GREENBUL** (*Calyptocichla serinus*) – A nice look at Antwikwaa and some saw it as Bobiri. [E]

**RED-TAILED BRISTLEBILL** (*Bleda syndactylus*) – Heard at Atewa. [\*]

**GREEN-TAILED BRISTLEBILL** (*Bleda eximius*) – Heard at Kakum. [E]

**GRAY-HEADED BRISTLEBILL** (*Bleda canicapillus*) – Seen along Stingless Bee Road and heard at Kakum and Atewa. All this genus are hard to see well. [E]

**SIMPLE GREENBUL** (*Chlorocichla simplex*) – Hard to see well, but eventually sighted at Kakum, Stingless Bee Road and Atewa.

**HONEYGUIDE GREENBUL** (*Baeopogon indicator*) – Heard at Kalakpa and seen at Kakum, can be a tricky one to get.

**YELLOW-THROATED GREENBUL** (*Atimastillas flavicollis*) – 2 at Shai Hills were the only sighting.

**SPOTTED GREENBUL** (*Ixonotus guttatus*) – An interesting sighting at Kakum was some 17 in a flock keeping quite low down, we saw them from the walkway and were looking down on them for once. Low density and easily missed.

**SWAMP GREENBUL** (*Thescelocichla leucopleura*) – Heard and seen briefly at both Kalakpa and Antwikwaa, often called Swamp Palm Bulbul as palms are a major habitat for this species.

**RED-TAILED GREENBUL** (*Criniger calurus*) – Absurdly, we only got this on the very last day at Atewa, it is usually one of the commonest of the greenbuls.

**WESTERN BEARDED-GREENBUL** (*Criniger barbatus*) – Heard at Atewa and Phil saw one at Abrafo. [E]

**GRAY GREENBUL** (*Eurillas gracilis*) – 2 Little Gray Greenbul were seen at Antwikwaa.

**ANSORGE'S GREENBUL** (*Eurillas ansorgei*) – Two seen at Kakum, another small nondescript greenbul but with gingery flanks.

**PLAIN GREENBUL** (*Eurillas curvirostris*) – Heard at Kakum, and one was actually seen quite well at Atewa on the last day, not that there is much to see on it, it is aptly named.

**YELLOW-WHISKERED GREENBUL** (*Eurillas latirostris*) – Heard at Kalakpa and Atewa, often hard to see. [\*]

**LITTLE GREENBUL** (*Eurillas virens*) – Heard more than seen in the wet forests, we did get a sighting at Antwikwaa.

**LEAF-LOVE** (*Phyllastrephus scandens*) – Regrettably only heard late in the afternoon at Kalakpa, and was not tape responsive. I had the same trouble at Semliki in Uganda! [\*]

**ICTERINE GREENBUL** (*Phyllastrephus icterinus*) – One was seen well at Kakum, really bright yellow below.

**WHITE-THROATED GREENBUL** (*Phyllastrephus albigularis*) – As usual, heard only, this time at Kalakpa, it is another very skulking bird. [\*]

**COMMON BULBUL** (*Pycnonotus barbatus*) – Seen on every day of the trip bar one.

#### Macrosphenidae (African Warblers)

**GREEN CROMBEC** (*Sylvietta virens flaviventris*) – Vocal at the rainforest sites and seen well at Kalakpa, Antwikwaa and Atewa.

**NORTHERN CROMBEC** (*Sylvietta brachyura brachyura*) – One at Sakumono was a surprise, then seen at Shai Hills and Mole.

**MOUSTACHED GRASS-WARBLER** (*Melocichla mentalis mentalis*) – One at Kalakpa, then seen well at Nasia Pond, foraging on the ground like a bristlebird.

**KEMP'S LONGBILL** (*Macrosphenus kempii*) – Eventually nailed at Atewa with one singing well skulking in a tall vine tangle there. [E]

**GRAY LONGBILL** (*Macrosphenus concolor*) – Common by voice in the forest areas and seen well at Kakum and Atewa.

**GREEN HYLIA** (*Hylia prasina*) – Another one that is common by voice, it showed very nicely at Antwikwaa.

**TIT-HYLIA** (*Pholidornis rufiae*) – A good trip for this species, with 4 at Antwikwaa, then 4 at Kakum and finally 4 at Atewa, presumably family groups. This is the race ussheri.

#### Cettiidae (Bush-Warblers and Allies)

**CHESTNUT-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Erythrocerus mccallii*) – Seen briefly at Kakum, then much better at Atewa.

#### Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)

**WILLOW WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) – 2 at Shai Hills, then scattered sightings from Mole, max. 3 birds. [b]

**WOOD WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*) – A couple seen in Kakum, best at the Lodge viewpoint. [b]

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

**WESTERN OLIVACEOUS WARBLER** (*Iduna opaca*) – One mobbing the Pearl-spotted Owlet was my first in Ghana, and identified on range from Eastern Olivaceous. Not heard to call. [b]

**MELODIOUS WARBLER** (*Hippolais polyglotta*) – One from Shai Hills, then another at the Mole Lodge viewpoint and one at Samole loop, more than usual. [b]

**GREAT REED-WARBLER** (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*) – We heard what sounded like this species at Sakumono, then a large *Acrocephalus* in the fringing vegetation at Mole waterhole was presumably this species. A new Ghana bird for me. [b]

#### Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

**LITTLE RUSH-WARBLER** (*Bradypterus baboecala*) – Calling well at Sakumono, the first time I have heard it here and a Ghana tick for me, this is perhaps the westernmost population. [\*]

#### Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and Allies)

**BLACK-CAPPED APALIS (BLACK-CAPPED)** (*Apalis nigriceps nigriceps*) – Calling well at Atewa and most folks got looks at them, whilst I managed a good tape.

**YELLOW-BREASTED APALIS (YELLOW-BREASTED)** (*Apalis flavida caniceps*) – 3 birds seen well at the Mognori River.

**SHARPE'S APALIS** (*Apalis sharpii*) – Heard at Kakum, then finally nailed on the very last morning at Atewa with a good view of a male and what looked like a young bird. [E]

**GREEN-BACKED CAMAROPTERA (GRAY-BACKED)** (*Camaroptera brachyura brevicaudata*) – Common by voice and seen at Shai Hills, Kalakpa, Antwikwaa etc.

**YELLOW-BROWED CAMAROPTERA** (*Camaroptera superciliaris*) – This attractive and vocal rainforest Camaroptera showed nicely at Kakum and Atewa.

**OLIVE-GREEN CAMAROPTERA** (*Camaroptera chloronota*) – The other vocal rainforest Camaroptera, heard at all the forest sites with its loud and persistent ringing call, and seen at Kakum and Bobiri.

**RED-FACED CISTICOLA (RED-FACED)** (*Cisticola erythropus erythropus*) – Widespread and often heard, and seen at Antwikwaa and Mole.

**SINGING CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola cantans swanzii*) – Heard at Kalakpa and Tono Dam but not seen this trip [\*]

**WHISTLING CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola lateralis lateralis*) – Widespread and often heard, we saw them well at Kalakpa, near Kakum and then at the farmbrush at Atewa.

**ROCK-LOVING CISTICOLA (ROCK-LOVING)** (*Cisticola aberrans admiralis*) – Eventually seen nicely at Tongo Hills in good light late afternoon, the only site we have for it.

**WINDING CISTICOLA (WINDING)** (*Cisticola galactotes amphilectus*) – The common *Cisticola* of the wet grasslands and reedbeds, we saw them at Sakumono and Nasia.

**CROAKING CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola natalensis strangei*) – Just two at Shai Hills this trip, unusually few sightings.

**SIFFLING CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola brachypterus brachypterus*) – The tiny, nondescript Shortwing *Cisticola* was seen at Nasia and Sapeliga.

**RUFOUS CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola rufus*) – This has become regular in Mole and we saw them well here, though quite how you tell them from Dorst's remains a bit of a puzzle to me.

**ZITTING CISTICOLA (AFRICAN)** (*Cisticola juncidis uropygialis*) – Heard at Winneba only. [\*]

**BLACK-BACKED CISTICOLA** (*Cisticola eximius*) – Nasia Pond has become a good site for this scarce species, and we lured one in for great looks and even photos this year. Photo now on the IBC site.

**ORIOLE WARBLER** (*Hypergerus atriceps*) – Eventually good at the salt-lick in Mole, they were curiously quiet at other sites and hid away at Mognori despite being noisy there.

**TAWNY-FLANKED PRINIA** (*Prinia subflava*) – Commonly heard in the drier country, and seen well at Shai Hills and Tono Dam.

**RED-WINGED PRINIA** (*Prinia erythroptera erythroptera*) – 4 birds at the Jukwa farmbrush showed well, a family group.

**SENEGAL EREMOMELA** (*Eremomela pusilla*) – An usually good trip for them, seen at Shai Hills, Kalakpa, Mole, Tongo Hills, Nasia and Tono Dam.

**RUFOUS-CROWNED EREMOMELA** (*Eremomela badiceps fantiensis*) – 4 at Kakum late one afternoon, and a good catch up for Rick with a couple at Atewa on the last morning.

#### Zosteropidae (White-eyes, Yuhinas, and Allies)

**AFRICAN YELLOW WHITE-EYE (AFRICAN YELLOW)** (*Zosterops senegalensis senegalensis*) – Seen at Rainforest Lodge and Mole, also at Atewa. Likely to be broken up into several species based on genetic data, this is the nominate race.

#### Pellorneidae (Ground Babblers and Allies)

**BROWN ILLADOPSIS (BROWN)** (*Illadopsis fulvescens gularis*) – Heard at Atewa. [\*]

**BLACKCAP ILLADOPSIS (WESTERN)** (*Illadopsis cleaveri cleaveri*) – Heard at Abrafo and Atewa, I still have just one sighting of this species so it's one I really want to track down. [E\*]

**PUVEL'S ILLADOPSIS** (*Illadopsis puveli puveli*) – Vocal and showed well in a thicket en route to Abrafo.

#### Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes and Allies)

**BLACKCAP BABBLER** (*Turdoides reinwardtii*) – Hard this year, only at Mognori where only a few folks saw it, though it was very vocal. [E]

**BROWN BABBLER** (*Turdoides plebejus*) – 7 at Sakumono, and 6 at Mole airstrip.

**CAPUCHIN BABBLER** (*Turdoides atripennis*) – Heard rather distantly at Kalakpa and could not be lured in. [\*]

#### Hylotiidae (Hyliotas)

**VIOLET-BACKED HYLIOA** (*Hyliota violacea nehrkorni*) – Poor views from Kakum, but a good view of one from Atewa on the last morning, and an endemic family too so an important bird to get.

#### Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

**LITTLE FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa epulata*) – 1 with a nest at Kakum, seen from the walkway, and another at Bobiri. Usually known as Little Gray Flycatcher.

**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa striata*) – Small numbers in Shai Hills and Mole- I am now on the look out for the newly split Mediterranean Flycatcher too! [b]

**SWAMP FLYCATCHER** (*Muscicapa aquatica aquatica*) – A couple at Mole waterhole and then at Mognori, this nominate race lacks the clear breast band of the Uganda birds.

**USSHER'S FLYCATCHER** (*Bradornis ussheri*) – 5 at Antwikwaa, showing very nicely, and 2 at Kakum. [E]

**DUSKY-BLUE FLYCATCHER** (*Bradornis comitatus aximensis*) – Seen en route to Abrafo and then at Atewa. Photo of 3 birds lined up is on the IBC site.

**PALE FLYCATCHER** (*Agricola pallidus*) – Seen in near Abrafo, then at Mole and Atewa farmbrush.

**AFRICAN FOREST-FLYCATCHER (WESTERN)** (*Fraseria ocreata prosphora*) – One singing really well at Atewa but stayed out of sight, then another next day which was much more obliging.

**GRAY TIT-FLYCATCHER** (*Fraseria plumbea*) – Seen well at Shai Hills, and heard at Mole.

**ASHY FLYCATCHER** (*Fraseria caerulescens nigrorum*) – One from the Kakum Walkway, I am always surprised to see this species in rainforest as it's a savanna bird in Zambia.

**NORTHERN BLACK-FLYCATCHER** (*Melaenornis edolioides edolioides*) – Very showy in Mole every day.

**FIRE-CRESTED ALETHE (WHITE-TAILED)** (*Alethe diademata diademata*) – Finally came good at Atewa with most of us getting great views of 2 birds. Usually split as White-tailed Alethe. [E]

**BLUE-SHOULDERED ROBIN-CHAT** (*Cossypha cyanocampter*) – Heard deep in a thicket along Stingless Bee Road, always a hard bird to see. [\*]

**SNOWY-CROWNED ROBIN-CHAT** (*Cossypha niveicapilla*) – Quite vocal, most folks got one from Kalakpa, Ebekawopa farmbrush or Mole.

**WHITE-CROWNED ROBIN-CHAT** (*Cossypha albicapillus*) – Very good looks at this large species in the riparian thicket at Mognori, the white crown is heavily mottled with dark.

**FOREST ROBIN (WESTERN)** (*Stiphornis erythrothorax erythrothorax*) – This showed very well at Kalakpa and is supposedly some new taxon called dahomeyensis. The taxonomy of this group is debatable and up to 5 species have been recognised, the PSC people claiming 3 from Ghana alone. Unfortunately I don't seem to have taped it, which was a lost opportunity.

**EUROPEAN PIED FLYCATCHER** (*Ficedula hypoleuca*) – A fine breeding dress male at Shai Hills, then small numbers in Mole, always worth a careful look for Atlas Flycatcher. [b]

**WHINCHAT** (*Saxicola rubetra*) – One at Jukwa farmbrush and one in Mole. [b]

**MOCKING CLIFF-CHAT** (*Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris coronata*) – Two females and male showed really well at Shai Hills for once, they can be hard here, then a pair were at Tono Hills. This is the White-crowned form, formerly split.

#### Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

**FINSCH'S FLYCATCHER-THRUSH** (*Neocossyphus finschii*) – One at Atewa sat up well, and called nicely. [E]

**WHITE-TAILED ANT-THRUSH** (*Neocossyphus poensis*) – Heard at Kakum. [\*]

**AFRICAN THRUSH** (*Turdus pelios*) – Good views at the Erata Hotel, then at Kalakpa and at Mole and Atewa.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

**VIOLET-BACKED STARLING** (*Cinnyricinclus leucogaster leucogaster*) – Seen well in Mole with a male and female both times.

**CHESTNUT-WINGED STARLING** (*Onychognathus fulgidus*) – I missed some at Stingless Bee Road, but luckily we got a flock of about 10 feeding at a fruiting tree along the track at Atewa.

**NARROW-TAILED STARLING** (*Poeoptera lugubris*) – One good flyby at Antwikwaa, quite a hard species to get on this tour,

**COPPER-TAILED STARLING** (*Hylopsar cupreocauda*) – 6 at Antwikwaa and a couple at Kakum, not a common bird. [E]

**LONG-TAILED GLOSSY STARLING** (*Lamprotornis caudatus*) – Some folks saw near Sakumono, then we had a few sightings from Mole and then at Sapeliga. By no means a common species, but a spectacular one.

**SPLENDID STARLING** (*Lamprotornis splendidus*) – Odd sightings from Kalakpa, Kakum and then Atewa.

**CHESTNUT-BELLIED STARLING** (*Lamprotornis pulcher*) – A northern special, seen nicely at Sapeliga where one was sat up by a Northern Carmine Bee-eater, then just 2 at Tono Dam, always a good site for them.

**LESSER BLUE-EARED STARLING (LESSER)** (*Lamprotornis chloropterus chloropterus*) – The subject of some debate when 2 were perched up by Zaina Lodge at Mole late one afternoon, the slender bill, yellow eye, delicate build and wing/tail structure indicating this species and not Bronze-tailed.

**PURPLE STARLING** (*Lamprotornis purpureus*) – Six day records, with a few in the coastal regions then some at Mole and Tono Dam.

Buphagidae (Oxpeckers)

**YELLOW-BILLED OXPECKER** (*Buphagus africanus africanus*) – Four seen really well on the cattle at Nasia Pond, an uncommon and declining bird as cattle get dipped more often and ticks become scarce. Endemic African family too

Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

**FRASER'S SUNBIRD** (*Deleornis fraseri*) – 2 seen at Abrafo then a couple of singles from Atewa, an odd sunbird with a straight bill.

**WESTERN VIOLET-BACKED SUNBIRD (NORTHERN)** (*Anthreptes longuemarei longuemarei*) – Two birds in Mole were surprise, not a species we often see on the tour. One was mobbing the Pearl-spotted Owlet.

**SEIMUND'S SUNBIRD** (*Anthreptes seimundi kruensis*) – Quite common in Kakum, formerly known as Little Green Sunbird which kind of sums it up. Also seen at Atewa.

**GREEN SUNBIRD (YELLOW-THROATED)** (*Anthreptes rectirostris rectirostris*) – One from Antwikwaa and a couple from Kakum.

**COLLARED SUNBIRD** (*Hedydipna collaris subcollaris*) – The common small sunbird, with six day records from Kakum, Bobiri and Atewa.

**PYGMY SUNBIRD** (*Hedydipna platura*) – 3 from Mole, 1 at Tongo Hills and up to 6 at Tono Dam, though none were in full long-tailed plumage.

**GREEN-HEADED SUNBIRD (GREEN-HEADED)** (*Cyanomitra verticalis verticalis*) – A female at Kalakpa and then seen at Abrafo and Kakum.

**BLUE-THROATED BROWN SUNBIRD** (*Cyanomitra cyanolaema magnirostrata*) – Two at Kakum and several at Atewa, a quite big long billed species with a dry Peltops-like call.

**WESTERN OLIVE SUNBIRD** (*Cyanomitra obscura guineensis*) – Quite often heard in the rainforest zone, and seen at Antwikwaa and Bobiri. Common but hard to see!

**BUFF-THROATED SUNBIRD** (*Chalcomitra adelberti adelberti*) – Just two singles from Kakum, a low density and quite elusive bird.

**SCARLET-CHESTED SUNBIRD** (*Chalcomitra senegalensis senegalensis*) – Seen well at Mole and Tono Dam, the male is a striking bird.

**OLIVE-BELLIED SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris chloropygius kemp*) – One was seen at Antwikwaa, then a fine male at Stingless Bee Road.

**TINY SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris minullus*) – Two records from Kakum this trip.

**BEAUTIFUL SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris pulchellus*) – Seen very nicely in Mole, but only small numbers, also at Tono Dam.

**SPLENDID SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris coccinigastrus*) – A male at Shai Hills, then several in Kalakpa. [E]

**JOHANNA'S SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris johannae fasciatus*) – A female at Antwikwaa and a brief look at a couple of males at Ebekawopa/Abrafo.

**SUPERB SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris superbus ashantiensis*) – A female at Shai Hills, then seen later at Antwikwaa and Kakum. A large and long-billed species.

**VARIABLE SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris venustus*) – One male in Kakum mobbing the Pearl-spotted Owlet was of the pale yellow-bellied nominate race, and was my first sighting from Ghana where it is curiously sparse.

**COPPER SUNBIRD** (*Cinnyris cupreus cupreus*) – Seen at Sakumono, Shai Hills and Kalakpa this trip.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

**AFRICAN PIED WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla aguimp*) – Six day records of ones and twos in towns, they always seem very local in Ghana.

**TREE PIPIT** (*Anthus trivialis*) – Two at Shai Hills were a good find of an uncommon bird here. [b]

**YELLOW-THROATED LONGCLAW** (*Macronyx croceus*) – Heard at Sakumono, then 2 at Shai Hills and 2 flushed by the cattle at Nasia Pond.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

**GOSLING'S BUNTING** (*Emberiza goslingi*) – We got it as usual at Tongo Hills with up to 6 birds. It is a split from Cinnamon-breasted Bunting. [E]

**BROWN-RUMPED BUNTING** (*Emberiza affinis*) – Two birds seen well by Mole Airstrip, singing nicely.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

**YELLOW-FRONTED CANARY** (*Serinus mozambicus*) – A few in Mole by the Lodge, then a scattering from the north starting at Nasia Pond.

**STREAKY-HEADED SEEDEATER (WEST AFRICAN)** (*Serinus gularis canicapilla*) – One by Mole Airstrip was a surprise, a species I'd only seen once before, a pity it did not linger for longer scope views. Split by the IOC as West African Seedeater.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

**NORTHERN GRAY-HEADED SPARROW** (*Passer griseus*) – Widespread in small numbers in the drier country and seen most days of the tour.

**BUSH PETRONIA** (*Petronia dentata*) – A couple e in Mole, and 6 at Nasia Pond. Not sure what those very plain headed looking things were at Nasia, I am sure they were not young Petronias however.....

Ploceidae (Weavers and Allies)

**WHITE-BILLED BUFFALO-WEAVER** (*Bubalornis albirostris*) – This seems to be colonizing the north as we had several encounters near Sapeliga and saw a nest colony there, it used to be hard to find.

- SPECKLE-FRONTED WEAVER** (*Sporopipes frontalis frontalis*) – Two in the dry bush near Sapeliga were a good find.
- CHESTNUT-CROWNED SPARROW-WEAVER** (*Plocepasser superciliosus*) – Seen very well at Mole Airstrip then by Mole Lodge, an uncommon species.
- RED-VENTED MALIMBE** (*Malimbus scutatus*) – Two seen well at Kakum, an Upper Guinea endemic too. [E]
- BLUE-BILLED MALIMBE** (*Malimbus nitens*) – Most folks saw 2 at Kakum but I was distracted and dipped.
- CRESTED MALIMBE** (*Malimbus malimbicus*) – One at Atewa farmbush on both days, always an elusive species.
- RED-HEADED MALIMBE** (*Malimbus rubricollis*) – Three day records from Kakum and Bobiri, max. 5 birds.
- LITTLE WEAVER** (*Ploceus luteolus*) – Two plus a nest at Mognori River, then up to 6 near Mole Lodge.
- BLACK-NECKED WEAVER (OLIVE-BACKED)** (*Ploceus nigricollis brachypterus*) – Just 3 day records of 2 birds each time, starting at Shai Hills, then Kalakpa and Kakum.
- HEUGLIN'S MASKED-WEAVER** (*Ploceus heuglini*) – Great scope views of a female at the salt lick in Mole, with the pale eye and pinkish legs that distinguish it.
- VEILLOT'S WEAVER (CHESTNUT-AND-BLACK)** (*Ploceus nigerrimus castaneofuscus*) – Five day records, this very distinctive West African race was seen at Kakum, Antikwaa, Ankasa, Bobiri and Atewa, with several large nesting colonies. I am surprised this has not yet been split as it's so unlike the East African all black birds.
- VILLAGE WEAVER (BLACK-HEADED)** (*Ploceus cucullatus cucullatus*) – The default weaver, widespread in small numbers even in the north. This race has a quite distinctive male plumage with chestnut on the back, and I am sure several species will be split out eventually.
- BLACK-HEADED WEAVER** (*Ploceus melanocephalus capitalis*) – A single non-breeding bird seen in Mole, the rather rusty buff chest is a useful character.
- YELLOW-MANTLED WEAVER** (*Ploceus tricolor*) – Two at Kakum included a juvenile being fed by an adult, then a couple at Atewa and Bobiri. One of the scarcer weavers and very much a forest bird.
- MAXWELL'S BLACK WEAVER (WHITE-NAPED)** (*Ploceus albinucha albinucha*) – Five day records, max. 10 birds, with poor views from Kakum, then some really close ones at Atewa, seeing the white eye and even the pale nape on some.
- PREUSS'S WEAVER** (*Ploceus preussi*) – Two seen from Kakum walkway, a useful pick up of a very scarce species. [E]
- RED-HEADED QUELEA** (*Quelea erythropus*) – 4 at Atewa with some males coming into red-headed dress, then scope views of a couple of non-breeding birds at Linda Dor farmbush, one with a red dot on the cheeks!
- RED-BILLED QUELEA** (*Quelea quelea*) – Groups of 4 and then 6 at Nasia Pond were the only sightings.
- NORTHERN RED BISHOP** (*Euplectes franciscanus*) – Some of the small non-breeding dress bishops with the small bills at Jukwa, Nasia and Tono were this species.
- BLACK-WINGED BISHOP** (*Euplectes hordeaceus*) – Just a couple on non-breeding dress birds near Linda Dor were the only sighting, a much larger species than Northern Red Bishop.
- YELLOW-CROWNED BISHOP** (*Euplectes afer afer*) – 20 at Sakumono were a good find, including a couple of males in fine breeding plumage.
- YELLOW-MANTLED WIDOWBIRD (YELLOW-MANTLED)** (*Euplectes macroura macroura*) – Seen at Kalakpa, Antwikwaa and near Atewa, all non-breeding.
- GROSBEAK WEAVER** (*Amblyospiza albifrons capitala*) – A flock of 3 over at the farmbush near Linda Dor, with 10 similarly later.

#### Estrildidae (Waxbills and Allies)

- GRAY-HEADED NIGRITA** (*Nigrita canicapillus*) – Common at all the forest sites by voice, and seen well at Kakum and Atewa.
- CHESTNUT-BREASTED NIGRITA** (*Nigrita bicolor*) – 3 at Kakum Park HQ, then singles at Abrafo and Atewa, this is an elusive low density bird.
- WHITE-BREASTED NIGRITA** (*Nigrita fusconotus*) – Seen at Antwikwaa and Kakum, only a single each time.
- LAVENDER WAXBILL** (*Estrilda caerulescens*) – Two seen well at Mole, a great spot to get this rather difficult and attractive species.
- ORANGE-CHEEKED WAXBILL** (*Estrilda melpoda*) – 7 day records but hard to see well, we got the best views in Mole and at Atewa farmbush, max. 6 birds.
- BLACK-RUMPED WAXBILL** (*Estrilda troglodytes*) – First near Mole NP, then 5 at Nasia Pond.
- WESTERN BLUEBILL** (*Spermophaga haematina*) – Elusive this trip, with just a brief skulking bird at Antwikwaa. [E]
- BLACK-BELLIED SEEDCRACKER** (*Pyrenestes ostrinus*) – One flew over along Stingless Bee Road, quite a tough bird to get, a pity it did not show better.
- RED-CHEEKED CORDONBLEU** (*Uraeginthus bengalus*) – Small numbers at Mole and Tono Dam.
- RED-BILLED FIREFINCH** (*Lagonosticta senegala*) – A widespread firefinch, first near Rainforest Lodge, then a few at Nasia and Mole.
- BAR-BREASTED FIREFINCH** (*Lagonosticta rufopicta*) – First seen at Kpong Marsh and at Kalakpa, then at Bekawopa farmbush.
- BLACK-BELLIED FIREFINCH** (*Lagonosticta rara forbesi*) – Seen on two days at Mole, with a male at the Samole loop and then a pair at the salt lick next day. Scarce.
- AFRICAN FIREFINCH** (*Lagonosticta rubricata*) – Two seen well at the Jukwa farmbush, and then one from Atewa later, an uncommon bird.
- ZEBRA WAXBILL** (*Sporaeginthus subflavus*) – Just 8 at Nasia Pond on the second visit, elusive and hard to pick up, sorry Rick. More often called Orange or Orange-breasted Waxbill as it's bright orange below, and Zebra Waxbill gets confused with Zebra Finch from Australia which also goes by this name of Zebra Waxbill.
- BLACK-FACED QUAILFINCH** (*Ortygospiza atricollis atricollis*) – Seen at Nasia on both visits, where very vocal, and we got a scope looks at them on the ground where they are amazingly hard to see. Sadly all 3 quailfinch species have been lumped by the IOC.
- BRONZE MANNIKIN** (*Spermestes cucullata*) – Widespread in the more open country.
- BLACK-AND-WHITE MANNIKIN** (*Spermestes bicolor*) – A few at Antwikwaa, Ebekawopa and Atewa.
- MAGPIE MANNIKIN** (*Spermestes fringilloides*) – A small flock at the turnoff to Abrafo at Zebilla, and then one at Atewa farmbush, an uncommon species.
- AFRICAN SILVERBILL** (*Euodice cantans*) – One at Nasia Pond, then a small flock of 8 at the Egyptian Plover site, which Doug and I also ticked in Burkina Faso on our brief foray there!

#### Viduidae (Indigobirds)

**PIN-TAILED WHYDAH** (*Vidua macroura*) – Very few, with a couple of good plumaged males only.

**WILSON'S INDIGOBIRD** (*Vidua wilsoni*) – A single male with pinkish legs and white bill plus brown wing patch was at Kpong marsh, along with a couple of females. We seldom see any breeding dress indigobirds at this time of year. The host species for this parasitic bird was also present, the Brown-breasted Firefinch.

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## MAMMALS

**HEDGEHOG SP.** (*Erinaceus frontalis*) – A very fine African Hedgehog was in the track at Mole airstrip one night, and curled up for good looks.

**STRAW-COLORED FRUIT BAT** (*Eidolon helvum*) – Thousands of them were streaming over Kumasi at dusk, quite an impressive spectacle, usually we get in too late to see it.

**GAMBIAN EPAULETED FRUIT BAT** (*Epomophorus gambianus*) – The little colony is still in the shady trees at the lunch time hotel in Tamale, it is one strange looking beast. Also seen at Mole, where they have a single quite loud note given at dusk, which I will try and record next year!

**PRINCE DEMIDOFF'S BUSHBABY** (*Galago demidoff*) – Heard briefly at Kakum as we were walking out after dark. [\*]

**LESSER WHITE-NOSED GUENON** (*Cercopithecus petaurista*) – A small group of about 6 were seen from the Kakum walkway late in the afternoon. [E]

**GREEN MONKEY** (*Cercopithecus sabaeus*) – This is the vervet-type monkey we saw at Shai Hills, also known as Callitrix Monkey.

**GUENON SP.** (*Cercopithecus tantalus*) – The pale Vervets we see at Mole are this one, called the Tantalus Monkey these days.

**PATAS MONKEY** (*Erythrocebus patas*) – A great small troupe in Mole, one of the less common species and showed very nicely on the Samole Loop.

**OLIVE BABOON** (*Papio anubis*) – Common at Shai Hills where they have unfortunately learned to beg for bread from the passing cars. Hardly any in Mole this time, I don't know why!

**OLIVE COLOBUS** (*Procolobus verus*) – Some saw this briefly at Kakum. [E]

**SCRUB HARE** (*Lepus saxatilis*) – One startled up near Sapeliga. I wonder what the 3 terrifying truck loads of heavily armed hunters that we encountered on the road near Tamale would make of this? About 150 armed guys running loose through the bush makes me shudder and must devastate the local fauna.

**STRIPED GROUND SQUIRREL** (*Xerus erythropus*) – Singles seen in Kalakpa and Mole.

**KINTAMBO ROPE SQUIRREL** (*Funisciurus substriatus*) – Two in the dense thicket at the Mognori River, a very localised endemic species. [E]

**FIRE-FOOTED ROPE SQUIRREL** (*Funisciurus pyrropus*) – A great view of one in the farmbrush at Atewa, running along a huge fallen tree trunk out in the devastation of the galamsey or gold mining workings. Also heard in the forest there, rope squirrels are not easy to see well.

**GAMBIAN SUN SQUIRREL** (*Heliosciurus gambianus*) – Seen at Kalakpa and Atewa.

**RED-LEGGED SUN SQUIRREL** (*Heliosciurus rufobrachium*) – Seen at Kakum.

**PEL'S FLYING SQUIRREL** (*Anomalurus peli*) – Seen at the Kakum Walkway, where some even got to see one glide to another tree; I was at the back so only saw one in a cleft in the trunk, this animal is not actually a squirrel but an Anomalure, and in its own family. [E]

**AFRICAN ELEPHANT** (*Loxodonta africana*) – Three near Zaina Lodge at Mole included one tusked animal. The guard reckons there are over 400 in the park but I wonder how much impact poaching is having, and they don't seem to have any recent census.

**WESTERN TREE HYRAX** (*Dendrohyrax dorsalis*) – Once again heard only, at Kakum and Atewa, where I heard one in daylight too. James almost got a vocal close one for us but it went quiet just as we got there, so I still have yet to see this species here. [\*]

**WARTHOG** (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*) – Small numbers of these endearingly ugly beasts were seen at Mole.

**BUSHBUCK** (*Tragelaphus scriptus*) – Just a handful from Mole, though one female was browsing right by us at the viewpoint at the lodge one morning.

**DEFASSA WATERBUCK** (*Kobus defassa*) – A handful of this handsome antelope were seen at Mole, fewer than normal this year.

**KOB** (*Kobus kob*) – Small numbers at Mole.

## Herps

**RED-HEADED ROCK AGAMA** (*Agama agama*) – Seen on most days, but few in the rich orange-headed breeding dress this year, most seemed to be very pale headed.

**NILE CROCODILE** (*Crocodylus niloticus*) – A couple in the waterhole at Mole.

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

### HERPS

African Helmeted Turtle (*Pelomedusa subrufa*) was seen at Kalakpa and presumably the same thing at Mole Waterhole.

Two other freshwater turtles of some description were seen at Kalakpa, species uncertain.

Nile Monitor (*Varanus niloticus*) was seen by the track at Bonkro.

Spitting Cobra (*Naja* sp) One was seen on the track in Mole

### BUTTERFLIES

This list covers a few of the butterflies seen on our Ghana tour. They were identified mainly by Andrew, our local butterfly expert, and also by using Torben Larsen's excellent two-volume book, "Butterflies of West Africa" (Apollo Books, 2005). The Ghana butterfly list is over 1000 species (many with wonderful names too, see below!). Bobiri alone has 423+, with Atewa similar, so this is a great tour if you like butterflies as well as birds.

**CITRUS SWALLOWTAIL** (*Papilio demodocus*)—Kakum

**MOCKER SWALLOWTAIL** (*Papilio dardanus*)

BROAD-BANDED GREEN SWALLOWTAIL (*Papilio chrapkowskoides*)

YELLOW GLIDER (*Cymothoe egesta*) Atewa, a spectacular species of the forest edge.

WHITE-BANDED CASTOR (*Ariadne albifascia*) Seen at Bobiri

AFRICAN LEAF BUTTERFLY (*Precis tugela*)

PURPLE ORANGE-TIP (*Colotis ione*) Shai Hills

COMMON TIGER (*Danaus chrysippus*)- This common butterfly is the West African equivalent of the Monarch. Seen in most places, most days, though never in large numbers.

BLUE TIGER (*Tirumala petiverana*) Seen at Antikwaa.

AFRICAN EMIGRANT (*Catopsilia florella*)—This common species is the only large, completely white butterfly in Ghana, and we saw it from Accra to Bolgatanga, though it was never numerous.

COMMON GRASS YELLOW (*Eurema hecabe*)—Another widespread species, this was the small, low-flying yellow with the black forewing tips.

FOREST GRASS YELLOW (*Eurema senegalensis*) Common in the forests

STRIPED SKIPPER

PIRATE (*Catacroptera cloanthe*) A monotypic genus, and this would have been a new species for Andrew- I photographed it as we were coming out from the Picathartes site!

UNIFORM BUSH BROWN (*Bicyclis uniformis*)

FOREST MOTHER-OF-PEARL (*Protophormia parhassus*)—I think this butterfly wins the longest name contest. It is another spectacular species, a large, whitish butterfly with the angular wings that would perch up about eye-level or above along the forest trails. Larsen says that wrapping a white handkerchief around a pebble and tossing it up in the air can lure them down to investigate.

DARK BLUE PANSY (*Junonia oenone*)—This is the handsome butterfly with the bold purplish blue patches in the hindwing that perched for us in multiple roadside locales. This genus of butterflies is closely related to the American Buckeyes.

YELLOW PANSY (*Eudaemonia argus*) was the spectacular very long tailed silk moth we saw at Kalakaua, a very odd looking creature indeed. hierta) Seen at Mole

WESTERN FAIRY PLAYBOY (*Paradeudorix eleala*)—This was the “Playboy” on the road at Bobiri, with the brilliant blue upperside.

BLUE DIADEM (*Hypolimnias salmactis*)—A large, beautiful butterfly seen in multiple locations.

GUINEAFOWL (*Hamanumida daedalus*) Just like its avian namesake, spotted with white.

EUDAEMONIA ARGUS was the spectacular, very long-tailed silk moth we saw at Kalakaua, a very odd-looking creature indeed.

Large Emperor Scorpion (*Pandinus imperator*) One was in track at Kalakpa as we fled the storm, one of the largest of the family too.

Recommendations

I recommend the xeno-canto (XC) website which is a fantastic archive of bird sounds of most of the species in the world, freely downloadable. I usually publish significant cuts from my tours here as it is a valuable research tool for anyone interested.

The Internet Bird Collection (IBC) run by Lynx Edicions (of Handbook of Birds of the World) is another wonderful free access site, you just have to register, and can then view thousands of videos, photos and sound recordings, with many of them from my tours. Again, it is an invaluable research site.

I also recommend the IOC World Checklist of Birds, a free access downloadable Excel file of all the world's species which is updated every 4 months or so. This is the one I use for my own checklists as it is the most current and has a progressive outlook on taxonomy and names. You can find them at [worldbirdnames.org](http://worldbirdnames.org) or google IOC (but NOT the olympics stuff!)

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**Totals for the tour: 417 bird taxa and 23 mammal taxa**