



Rockjumper Birding Tours

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Ethiopian Endemics II

1st to 19th February 2010



Top 10 Birds (as voted by participants)

- 1) Ruspoli's Turaco
- 2) Abyssinian Long-eared Owl
- 3) Hartlaub's Bustard
- 4) Tied between Spot-breasted Lapwing and Wattled Crane
- 6) Stresemann's Bush Crow
- 7) Tied between Golden-breasted Starling and Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse
- 9) Nile Valley Sunbird
- 10) Bearded Vulture

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Tour Summary

Ethiopia is a fascinating land overrun with bizarre contrasts, both cultural and environmental. It runs on its own calendar and time, harbours some disparate cultural groups, from peaceful to

unashamedly aggressive, and although the popular perception of Ethiopia is that of a dry country, it also harbours large areas of forest – this associated with the significant highland areas that are a characteristic of the “Roof of Africa”. This country is undoubtedly a key stop for any itinerant birder – birds are plentiful and often easy to see, it hosts the second most endemics of any African country, and the scenery is often dramatic. Worryingly however, Ethiopia’s population is growing rapidly – this is very evident when looking at the countryside, which is under heavy pressure – the population is over 85 million, and continues to grow, and as such this may unfortunately become a “see it before it’s gone!” destination. Our “heepopotaaamus” tour was a roaring success, and we recorded a total of 526 species in our allotted 19 days, in the process strolling to a new Rockjumper Ethiopia record! Included in this were an outstanding 51 species of raptor, all the possible endemics save two, and a collection of brilliant mammals.

Starting in Addis Ababa, we visited a succession of Rift Valley lakes and their associated edge and



woodland habitats, which provided a superb introduction to the avifauna of Ethiopia. Some of the top birds we saw included Ferruginous Duck (a rare bird in Ethiopia indeed!), Tufted Duck, Maccoa Duck, African Spoonbill, Black Heron, the first of many Steppe Eagles, Black Crowned Crane, Common Crane, Greater Painted Snipe, Lesser Jacana, Bruce’s Green Pigeon, Black-winged Lovebird, Blue-breasted and Northern Carmine Bee-eaters, stately Abyssinian Ground Hornbill, Abyssinian Wheatear, Blue Rock Thrush, Tacazze Sunbird and Red-throated Pipit, with the only significant mammal being some distant Hippos at lake Ziway. We ended our first day

at our accommodations at Awassa having bagged a number of excellent species!

We began the new day birding the tall woodland and brush that adjoined Lake Awassa, our first target the sneaky Spotted Creeper, and after finding this specialty we proceeded to add more beauties. The large *Acacia*’s were alive with birds, and here we saw Great Reed and Eastern Olivaceous Warblers, Red-faced Crombec, Rufous Chatterer, Thick-billed Raven, Black-eared Wheatear, Crimson-rumped Waxbill, Black-billed Woodhoopoe and Red-throated Wryneck, while waterbirds we saw in the environs of the lake included the peculiar White-backed Duck, beautiful African Pygmy Goose, Temminck’s Stint, Pallas’s, Lesser Black-backed and Black-headed Gull, Blue-headed Coucal and the first of many Guereza Colobus and Grivet Monkey, while overhead an Ayres’s Eagle joined the masses of Marabou Storks and Hooded Vultures which drifted lazily over the town. A raptor watch outside of town yielded Rüppell’s Vulture and Short-toed Snake Eagle, before we continued onward to Wondo Genet.



Wondo Genet is a resort area built around a hot spring in a mountainous area overlooking Lake Awassa. Previously covered in forest, the mountains here have suffered heavily from rampant deforestation, the effect quite visible in the space of a few years (this doesn’t show any sign of abating,



based on the amount of firewood which is disappearing off the mountain). Our time here produced some great birds including Bearded Vulture, White-headed Vulture, Crowned Eagle, Yellow-fronted Parrot, White-cheeked Turaco, African Emerald Cuckoo, Mottled and Alpine Swifts, Banded Barbet, Green-backed Honeybird, Ethiopian Oriole, Sharpe's Starling and the secretive Abyssinian Ground Thrush.

After the degraded woodlands of Wondo, we undertook the lengthy drive to the Bale Mountains National Park. This park covers some fantastic high altitude habitat, and was the centre of our



attention for the following days. The drive to Goba yielded a trio of owls, namely Cape Eagle, African Wood and the highly localised endemic Abyssinian Owl! Aside from these denizens of the night, our driving day yielded some impressive species, including White-collared Pigeon, Spot-breasted Lapwing, Blue-winged Goose, Wattled Ibis, the impressive Mountain Nyala, Menelik's Bushbuck and Bohor Reedbuck. The ascent onto the Sanetti Plateau takes one through a Juniper forest that is home to a number of species and here we saw the

noisy Abyssinian Catbird, Abyssinian Woodpecker, White-backed Black Tit, Brown Woodland Warbler, Cinnamon Bracken Warbler, Montane White-eye and Yellow-crowned Canary. The Sanetti Plateau is an impressive place, and aside from the spectacular scenery and unique wildlife, lays claim to hosting the highest all-weather road in Africa (at an average of 4000 metres above sea level this is quite believable!). Although there are not many birds present on the plateau, the quality is indisputable, and here we saw Moorland Francolin, Chestnut-naped Francolin, Ruddy Shelduck, Golden Eagle, Rouget's Rail, Wattled Crane, Abyssinian Longclaw and Ethiopian Siskin. More visible on the plateau is the presence of a huge rodent population, of which the most impressive is the Giant Root Rat, a bizarre looking creature which forms one of the staples of the Ethiopian Wolf (we enjoyed superb views of both of these interesting mammals!).

While based at Goba, we made a foray out to Sof Omar, which is a valley with an extensive cave system named after a Muslim leader of the same name who took refuge there to escape prosecution. The valley, although hot, was very birdy, and amongst others we saw Egyptian Vulture, Red-bellied Parrot, White-bellied Go-away-bird, Nyanza Swift, African Hawk-Eagle, Northern Red-billed, Northern Yellow-billed and Von der Decken's Hornbills, Brown-backed Honeybird, White-crested Helmetshrike, Acacia Tit, Red-fronted Apalis, Northern Crombec, Bristle-crowned Starling, Common Nightingale, Shining Sunbird, Yellow-spotted Petronia, Red-headed Weaver and one of the key targets, the dainty Salvador's Seedeater, which showed particularly well! Some good mammals were also seen, including Hamadryas Baboon, Salt's Dik-dik and Yellow-spotted and the handsome Black-necked Rock Hyrax. Our journey home produced Somali Crow and Ethiopian Cisticola.



Departing Goba, we travelled to Negele, with one of the major targets of the trip waiting for us!



Driving over the Sanetti, we descended into the seemingly endless Harena Forest, where we saw African Hill Babbler, dainty Abyssinian Crimsonwing, Mountain Buzzard, Black-and-white Mannikin and Yellow-bellied Waxbill, before blazing on to our site for a very special bird. Stopping in the afternoon, we were soon treated to fantastic extended views of Ruspoli's Turaco, one of Ethiopia's most sought-after endemics! Thereafter it was onward to the dusty town of Negele.

A day trip from Negele led us down the Bogol Manyo road. The vegetation here is thorny and quite stunted, and despite the dreariness of the surrounds, recent rain had really done wonders for bird activity in the area! We enjoyed a superb days birding, seeing Eastern Chanting Goshawk, Buff-crested Bustard, Abyssinian Scimitarbill, Black-throated Barbet, Pygmy Batis, Red-naped and Rosy-patched Bushshrike, Three-streaked Tchagra, Pringle's Puffback, Gillett's Lark, Tiny Cisticola, Pale Prinia, Somali Crombec, Northern Grosbeak-Canary, Somali Bunting and White-crowned Starling. After the fantastic woodland birding, we visited the Liben Plains on our return journey to Negele, seeing Temminck's Courser, Kori Bustard, Pectoral-patch Cisticola, Somali Short-toed Lark and the critically endangered Sidamo Lark.



After the "delightful" Green Hotel in Negele, we travelled through the untamed and beautiful dry woodland and savanna en route to Yabello. Along the route, we stopped at the Dawa River and its environs. This was most enjoyable, and we saw White-winged Collared Dove, Ovambo Sparrowhawk, Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird, Black-faced Sandgrouse, the outrageous Golden-breasted Starling, Barred Warbler and Juba Weaver. This area is still refreshingly wild, and in between birding we took some time to inspecting the myriad animal tracks in the sand. Aside from seeing a few shy Warthog, and we saw the tracks of Nile Crocodile, Leopard, Caracal, Striped and Spotted Hyaena, Aardwolf, African Civet, African Wild Cat and Aardvark, quite a collection indeed!

Our time in the south of Ethiopia was very rewarding, and birding the stunning *Acacia* savanna that is replete here yielded impressive results to say the least! Some of the top avians seen here included Vulturine Guinea fowl, Pygmy Falcon, White-bellied Bustard, Donaldson-Smith's Nightjar, Blue-naped Mousebird, Red-fronted and D'Arnaud's Barbet, Eurasian Wryneck, Taita and Somali Fiscal, Stresemann's Bush Crow, Mouse-colored Penduline Tit, Foxy Lark, White-tailed Swallow, Scaly Chatterer, Banded Warbler, Shelley's and Magpie Starlings, Bare-eyed Thrush, Grey-capped and Black-capped Social Weavers, Chestnut Sparrow, Speke's Weaver, Purple Grenadier, Black-cheeked Waxbill, Grey-headed Silverbill, Steel-blue Whydah and on the mammalian front, Lesser Kudu, Günther's Dik-dik, Grant's Gazelle and Gerenuk.

After the delights of the south, we moved onward to the Lake Langano area. The birding here was very good, and we saw Goliath Heron, Collared Pratincole, Bare-faced Go-away-bird, Greyish Eagle Owl, Slender-tailed Nightjar, Black Scimitarbill, Hemprich's Hornbill, Double-toothed Barbet, Greater Honeyguide, Bearded and African Grey Woodpecker, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike, Masked Shrike, White-winged Black Tit, Boran Cisticola, White-rumped Babbler, White-browed and Red-capped Robin-Chats, Green Malkoha, Crested Porcupine and a pod of lazing Hippo! An afternoon sojourn to Lake Abiata was relaxed, and aside from the



spectacular scenery (and wobbly mud!), we saw hordes of Greater and Lesser Flamingo and Western Yellow Wagtail and a pair of Pacific Golden Plover.

From Langano, we drove to Weliso, whence we accessed the hot Gibe Gorge. Despite the slow birding, we did see some quality, including Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, Grasshopper Buzzard (first RBT record for Ethiopia!), the beautiful Black-throated Firefinch, Abyssinian Waxbill, Yellow-rumped Seedeater, Exclamatory Paradise Whydah some more Hippos and a few large Nile Crocodiles.

Awash is a large game reserve to the east of Addis, the most striking feature of which is the Awash Falls. Although the savanna here threatens to have good birding, it was quite tough going! A stop at the Lava flow at Lake Beseka en route to the reserve produced Nile Valley Sunbird, Chestnut-headed Sparrow-Lark, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Blackstart and Sombre Rock Chat, while in the park proper we saw Lappet-faced Vulture, Hartlaub's Bustard, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Woodchat Shrike, Singing Bush Lark, Red-winged Lark, Ashy Cisticola, Straw-tailed Whydah, Bat-eared Fox, Salt's Dik-dik, Soemmerring's Gazelle, Beisa Oryx and some monstrous Leopard Tortoises! A visit to the Bilen Plains produced Somali Ostrich, Arabian Bustard, Eurasian Stone-curlew and huge numbers of Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark interspersed by smaller numbers of Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark. We also saw Golden Jackal and range-restricted Grevy's Zebra here. From the plains, a short drive to Bilen Lodge brought us a few new birds, and during our time here we saw Saddle-billed Stork, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, Yellow-breasted Barbet, Ethiopian Swallow, Black Scrub Robin, African Silverbill and Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse.

Leaving the Awash area we drove to the highland town of Debre Berhan (the main road riddled with roadworks effected by Chinese contractors), which acted as the town we used to access the Jemma Valley. We had an excellent day in this scenic valley, and saw Harwood's and Erckel's Francolins, Black Stork, Osprey, Verreaux's Eagle, Grasshopper Buzzard, Eurasian Crag Martin, Foxy Cisticola, Green-backed Eremomela, White-billed Starling, Rüppell's Black and White-winged Cliff Chats, Speckle-fronted Weaver, Ortolan Bunting and our first sighting of the ridiculous Gelada!



Our last birding foray was to Gemase Geden, and despite the disturbance and noise some local roadworks had brought, we had excellent views of Ankober Serin and saw decent numbers of Gelada. Thereafter it was back to Addis where we ended the tour with a visit to a lovely cultural restaurant. A superb group contribution and the hard work of the drivers combined to make this a fantastic tour, with an impressive list of endemic mammals and birds and a heap of fond memories!

Photo Credits: Ruspoli's Turaco, Black-winged Lovebird, Abyssinian Owl, Ethiopian Wolf, Rosy-patched Bushshrike and Gelada by Matthew Matthiessen; Sanetti Scenery by Rainer Summers.

Annotated List of Birds recorded

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows the IOC 2.3 list of: Gill, F. and Wright, M. Birds of the World: Recommended English Names. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.



Total species recorded: 526 (520 seen and 6 heard only)

E = Endemic to Ethiopia, NE = Near-endemic to Ethiopia.

Ostrich Struthionidae**Somali Ostrich***Struthio molybdophanes*

Scattered individuals were recorded on the Bilen Plains.

Guineafowl Numididae**Helmeted Guineafowl***Numida meleagris*

Good numbers were seen in Awash NP.

NOTE: The nominate N. m. meleagris (Helmeted Guineafowl) which we recorded in Ethiopia, is sometimes regarded as distinct from the western N. m. galeata (West African Guineafowl) and the southern N. m. mitrata (Tufted Guineafowl). Neither IOC nor Clements recognize this split.

Vulturine Guineafowl*Acryllium vulturinum*

A large, gaudy bird, we recorded decent numbers on the road from Negele to Yabello.

Pheasants, Fowl & Allies Phasianidae**Moorland Francolin (NE)***Scleroptila psilolaema*

We had fantastic views of this species on the Sanetti Plateau.

Crested Francolin*Dendroperdix sephaena*

First seen at Sof Omar, we recorded it at various bush sites thereafter.

Scaly Francolin*Pternistis squamatus*

Seen by some at Wondo Genet and later at Bishangari Lodge.

Clapperton's Francolin*Pternistis clappertoni*

Great views were had of this scarce bird at Lake Langan.

Harwood's Francolin (E)*Pternistis harwoodi*

We had lovely views of this sought-after endemic in the Jemma Valley.

Chestnut-naped Francolin (NE)*Pternistis castaneicollis*

Seen very well in the Bale Mountains.

Erckel's Francolin (NE)*Pternistis erckelii*

We recorded this species in the Jemma Valley and at Gemasa Geden.

Yellow-necked Spurfowl*Pternistis leucoscepus*

Seen near Mega and later in Awash NP.

Ducks, Geese & Swans Anatidae**White-faced Whistling Duck***Dendrocygna viduata*

We recorded large numbers in the Rift Valley Lakes.

Fulvous Whistling Duck*Dendrocygna bicolor*

Two birds were seen on Lake Ziway.

White-backed Duck*Thalassornis leuconotus*

A few birds were recorded on Lake Awassa.

Spur-winged Goose*Plectropterus gambensis*

Seen at the Rift Valley lakes.

Knob-billed Duck*Sarkidiornis melanotos*

We saw this species at Lake Awassa.

Blue-winged Goose (E)*Cyanochen cyanoptera*

A smart endemic, it was seen at scattered highland sites, with our initial views in the Bale Mountains.

Egyptian Goose*Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Seen regularly during the trip.

Ruddy Shelduck*Tadorna ferruginea*

A pair was seen on the Sanetti Plateau. This is the only site in Africa where this species breeds.

African Pygmy Goose*Nettapus auritus*

These stunning birds were seen on Lakes Ziway and Awassa.

Yellow-billed Duck*Anas undulata*

Seen on the Rift Valley Lakes, in the Bale Mountains and later in highland areas near Debre Berhan.

Northern Shoveler*Anas clypeata*

We recorded this species at scattered wetland sites throughout the tour.

Northern Pintail*Anas acuta*

Seen on the Rift Valley Lakes and on some small high altitude water bodies.

Garganey*Anas querquedula*

First seen in the Rift Valley lakes in small numbers, with scattered birds seen later in the tour.

Hottentot Teal*Anas hottentota*

A few of these small, dainty ducks were seen in the Rift Valley lakes.

Southern Pochard*Netta erythrophthalma*

Seen in the Rift Valley lakes.

Ferruginous Duck (Pochard)*Aythya nyroca*

Five birds were seen at Lake Bishoftu. Rarely recorded in Ethiopia (we were only the second RBT group to record this species here).

Tufted Duck*Aythya fuligula*

Recorded at Lakes Chelekcheka and Debre Zeit.

Maccoa Duck*Oxyura maccoa*

Our first day produced a single female at our breakfast stop, followed by another bird at Debre Zeit at our lunchtime birding competition.

Grebes Podicipedidae**Little Grebe***Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Recorded at scattered lakes during the tour.

Flamingos Phoenicopteridae**Greater Flamingo***Phoenicopterus roseus*

First seen at Lake Chelekcheka, and later in large numbers on Lake Abiata.

Lesser Flamingo*Phoeniconaias minor*

Large numbers were seen at Lake Abiata.

Storks Ciconiidae**Yellow-billed Stork***Mycteria ibis*

A few scattered birds were recorded during the tour.

Black Stork*Ciconia nigra*

One was seen in the Jemma Valley, with a further bird on a small pan in the highlands near Debre Berhan.

Abdim's Stork*Ciconia abdimii*

Small numbers were seen at scattered locales during the tour.

Woolly-necked Stork*Ciconia episcopus*

Birds were seen at Lake Langano and in the Jemma Valley.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

Flocks were seen in various areas beginning with our drive to Awassa.

Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*

A single was seen at Bilen Lodge.

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumeniferus*

Large numbers were seen, especially in the vicinity of large towns.

Ibises & Spoonbills Threskiornithidae

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Quite commonly seen in the vicinity of wetlands.

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*

Small numbers were seen throughout the tour.

Wattled Ibis (E) *Bostrychia carunculata*

We saw this species on a number of occasions in higher altitude areas of Ethiopia.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Recorded at the Rift Valley lakes.

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*

Around 10 birds were seen on the Rift Valley lakes.

Hérons & Bitterns Ardeidae

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

A single was seen at Debre Zeit.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*

Seen by some at Wondo Genet.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

We recorded this species on the Rift Valley lakes.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

This species was seen quite regularly during the tour.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Recorded at various wetland sites throughout the tour.

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*

Small numbers of this terrestrial hunter were seen during the tour.

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*

The largest heron on earth, it was first seen at Lake Langano.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Seen at Lakes Awassa and Langano.

Western Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Recorded in small numbers at various wetland sites during the tour.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*

Seen at Lake Awassa.

Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca*

One bird was seen at Lake Ziway.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Recorded in small numbers at scattered wetland sites.

Hamerkop Scopidae

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*

Seen at many wetland sites.



Pelicans Pelecanidae

- Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus*
This huge avian was seen at various Rift Valley lakes.
- Pink-backed Pelican** *Pelecanus rufescens*
Small numbers were seen on the Rift Valley lakes.

Cormorants Phalacrocoracidae

- Reed Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax africanus*
Seen at various water bodies on the tour.
- White-breasted Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax lucidus*
We recorded a few at scattered wetland sites.

Anhingas Anhingidae

- African Darter** *Anhinga rufa*
Small numbers were seen during the tour.

Ospreys Pandionidae

- Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*
A single was scoped in the Jemma Valley. Quite an uncommon bird in Ethiopia.

Kites, Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae

- Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*
Small numbers were seen in open country sites throughout Ethiopia.
- Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*
Commonly recorded in Ethiopia.
NOTE: We recorded both the non-breeding Palaearctic migrant Black Kite M. migrans and the Afrotropical migrant Yellow-billed Kite M. m. parasitus during the course of the tour, sometimes split as M. aegyptius, although this split is not recognized by the IOC.
- African Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus vocifer*
Seen at various waterbodies during the tour.
- Bearded Vulture** *Gypaetus barbatus*
This magnificent bird provided superb views while at Wondo Genet, Jemma Valley and around Debre Berhan.
- Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus*
Scattered birds were seen, with our initial sighting being at Sof Omar.
- Hooded Vulture** *Necrosyrtes monachus*
Seen virtually daily, especially in association with human settlements.
- White-backed Vulture** *Gyps africanus*
Seen regularly during the tour, and often in large numbers.
- Rüppell's Vulture** *Gyps rueppellii*
Seen at scattered sites in small numbers.
- White-headed Vulture** *Trogoniceps occipitalis*
This species was seen at Wondo Genet and on the drive from Negele to Yabello.
- Lappet-faced Vulture** *Aegypius tracheliotus*
Sub-Saharan Africa's largest vulture, it was seen in Awash NP and later en route from Gemase Geden to Addis.
- Short-toed Snake Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus*
One bird was seen near Lake Awassa.



- Beudouin's Snake Eagle** *Circaetus beaudouini*
We saw a single bird near the Omo River in Gibe Gorge. The occurrence of this species has not yet been substantiated in Ethiopia.
- Black-chested Snake Eagle** *Circaetus pectoralis*
This species was seen at scattered sites throughout Ethiopia.
- Brown Snake Eagle** *Circaetus cinereus*
We saw this species on a driving day en route to Negele, with a later bird seen near Yabello.
- Bateleur** *Terathopius ecaudatus*
A classic African savanna raptor, we recorded it at scattered savanna sites.
- Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*
Seen at many grassy sites and wetlands during the course of our tour.
- Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus*
Good numbers were seen over grassland during the tour.
- Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*
Recorded over grasslands in the former half of the tour.
- African Harrier-Hawk (Gymnogene)** *Polyboroides typus*
We saw notorious nest raider at scattered sites, including a pair nesting in a fig at Debre Zeit Crater Lake.
- Dark Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax metabates*
The conspicuous "DCG" was seen on a number of occasions during the tour, with good numbers in Awash NP.
- Eastern Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax poliopterus*
We had great views of "ECG's" in southern Ethiopia.
- Gabar Goshawk** *Micronisus gabar*
A single was seen on the Bogol Manyo Road, with a later sighting in the Yabello area.
- African Goshawk** *Accipiter tachiro*
We had superb views of a single bird in the Giber gorge. The bird was of the race *unduliventer*.
- Shikra** *Accipiter badius*
We saw this species in the south of Ethiopia.
- Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter rufiventris*
One bird was seen flying over the Harenna Forest.
- Black Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter melanoleucus*
Recorded over the juniper forest before the ascent of the Sanetti Plateau.
- Grasshopper Buzzard** *Butastur rufipennis*
We enjoyed superb scope views of this species in the Gibe Gorge. This represents the first Rockjumper record for Ethiopia!
- Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*
We had two separate sightings of this species, one at Wondo Genet and the other on a travel day from Goba to Negele.
NOTE: The subspecies which we encountered is the northern breeding B. b. vulpinus, sometimes regarded as a separate species, Steppe Buzzard, from the nominate Common Buzzard and three other incipient groups in eastern Asia. Clements does not as yet recognize any of these splits.
- Mountain Buzzard** *Buteo oreophilus*
Good views were had of a single bird in the Harenna Forest.
NOTE: Most authorities recognize the northern African Mountain Buzzard B. oreophilus as distinct from the southern African endemic Forest Buzzard B. trizonatus. Clements does not recognize this split. These two resident African forms used to be lumped with the Common Buzzard B. buteo.
- Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus*
A few birds were seen at scattered locales during the tour.
- Augur Buzzard** *Buteo augur*



Seen on many occasions during the tour.

Lesser Spotted Eagle*Aquila pomarina*

We saw one bird in Awash NP.

Tawny Eagle*Aquila rapax*

Regularly recorded throughout the tour. It was agreed, after some discussion in the office, that the brown Awassa eagle which was initially identified as a Greater Spotted Eagle (*fulvescens*) was in fact a Tawny Eagle (this based on wing shape, which was too narrow for Greater Spotted, as these show very broad wings, and tail length, which was way too long for Greater Spotted which have short, rounded tails).

NOTE: The nominate African Tawny Eagle A. r. rapax may be split from the Asian Tawny Eagle A. r. vindhiana. This split is as yet not recognized by IOC or Clements.

Steppe Eagle*Aquila nipalensis*

We recorded this species on a number of occasions during the tour.

NOTE: The Western Steppe Eagle A. n. orientalis, which we recorded, may be split from the Eastern Steppe Eagle A. n. nipalensis. This split is as yet not recognized by IOC or Clements.

Golden Eagle*Aquila crysaetos*

A pair of this fantastic species were seen in on the Sanetti Plateau.

Verreaux's Eagle*Aquila verreauxii*

Two young birds were seen in the Jemma Valley.

Wahlberg's Eagle*Aquila wahlbergi*

Our best views of a species were of a bird we scoped near Lake Langano.

African Hawk-Eagle*Hieraaetus spilogaster*

This species was well seen at Sof Omar.

Booted Eagle*Hieraaetus pennatus*

Seen near Lake Langano.

Ayres's Hawk-Eagle*Hieraaetus ayresii*

We recorded this species on a few occasions, our first view coming in on the edge of Lake Langano.

Martial Eagle*Polemaetus bellicosus*

Seen on a drive day from Awash to Debre Berhan.

Long-crested Eagle*Lophaetus occipitalis*

A few roadside individuals were recorded during the tour.

Crowned Eagle*Stephanoaetus coronatus*

This stunning raptor was seen at Wondo Genet.

Falcons Falconidae

Pygmy Falcon*Polihierax semitorquatus*

Recorded near Yabello and in the Awash area.

Lesser Kestrel*Falco naumanni*

Decent numbers were seen in the former half of the tour in open country situations.

Common Kestrel*Falco tinnunculus*

This species was seen in small numbers almost on a daily basis.

NOTE: Some authorities split this species into Common Kestrel, F. tinnunculus which we observed (occurring in East and West Africa and the Palaearctic region) and Rock Kestrel, F. rupicolis which occurs in Southern Africa. Clements does not as yet recognize this split, while IOC does.

Fox Kestrel*Falco alopex*

A single bird provided excellent views while in the Gibe Gorge.

Eurasian Hobby*Falco subbuteo*

One was briefly seen at Lake Langano.

Lanner Falcon*Falco biarmicus*

This large, open country raptor was seen on a number of occasions during the tour.



Peregrine Falcon*Falco peregrinus*

One bird was well seen at Lake Bishoftu where we had breakfast on the first day.

Bustards Otidae**Arabian Bustard***Ardeotis arabs*

We saw decent numbers of this species on the Bilen Plains.

Kori Bustard*Ardeotis kori*

This enormous bird was seen on the Liben Plains and in Awash NP.

White-bellied Bustard*Eupodotis senegalensis*

A handsome bird, we recorded it on the road from Negele to Yabello and later in Awash NP.

NOTE: Clements lumps the northern form of White-bellied Bustard E. senegalensis with the Southern African endemic Barrow's or Southern White-bellied Bustard E. barrowi. This treatment is not followed by the IOC and most authorities and they are generally considered two distinct species.

Buff-crested Bustard*Lophotis gindiana*

Seen on the Bogol Manyo road and in the Awash area.

NOTE: This species used to be lumped with the southern Red-crested Bustard E. ruficrista and the western Savile's Bustard E. savilei. All three of these species are now recognized by Clements.

Hartlaub's Bustard*Lissotis hartlaubii*

We had superb views of this species in Awash NP.

Rails, Crakes & Coots Rallidae**Rouget's Rail (E)***Rougetius rougetii*

Very easy to see for a rail, we had great views of this species in the Bale Mountains.

Black Crake*Amaurornis flavirostra*

First seen at Lake Ziway.

African Swamphen*Porphyrio madagascariensis*

Recorded at Lake Awassa and later at Lake Langano.

Common Moorhen*Gallinula chloropus*

Seen at some of the Rift Valley lakes.

Red-knobbed Coot*Fulica cristata*

This avian was seen on Rift Valley lakes as well as some smaller wetlands.

Cranes Gruidae**Black Crowned Crane***Balearica pavonina*

We had good views of this species en route from Addis to Lake Awassa.

Wattled Crane*Grus carunculata*

This huge crane was seen on the Sanetti Plateau.

Common Crane*Grus grus*

Huge numbers were seen at Lake Chelekcheka, with a small near Debre Berhan.

Stone-Curlews & Thick-Knees Burhinidae**Eurasian Stone-curlew (Thick-knee)***Burhinus oediconemus*

One bird was seen on the Bilen Plains. This is the first record of this species in Ethiopia by Rockjumper.

Senegal Thick-knee*Burhinus senegalensis*

This species was seen in the Gibe Gorge and the Jemma Valley.

Stilts & Avocets Recurvirostridae**Black-winged Stilt***Himantopus himantopus*

Recorded at scattered wetland sites throughout the tour.

Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Good numbers were seen on Lake Abiata.

Plovers Charadriidae

Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus*

A handsome bird, it was seen at a number of wetland sites throughout the tour.

Black-winged Lapwing *Vanellus melanopterus*

We saw this species in small groups at scattered upland grassland sites.

Crowned Lapwing *Vanellus coronatus*

Seen fairly regularly in open country sites.

African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus*

We saw this species in Gibe Gorge.

Spot-breasted Lapwing (E) *Vanellus melanocephalus*

This beautiful lapwing was seen in the Bale Mountains, where we saw around 30 birds.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Two birds were seen at Lake Abiata.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

This species was seen on a shallow mudflat at Lake Langanu.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

We got good views of this species at some of the Rift Valley Lakes.

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius*

We saw this species at some of the Rift Valley Lakes.

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris*

A few scattered birds were seen.

Jacanas Jacanidae

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*

Several birds were seen in the wetlands of the Rift Valley Lakes.

Painted Snipes Rostratulidae

Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*

One male was seen at Lake Ziway.

Sandpipers & Snipes Scolopacidae

African Snipe *Gallinago nigripennis*

Seen at Lake Chelekchecka and on the Sanetti Plateau.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

We saw this species at Lake Awassa and later at Lake Langanu.

NOTE: The Old World Common Snipe G. gallinago is now recognized as distinct from the New World Wilson's Snipe G. delicata.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

This species was first seen at Lake Chelecheke and again at Lake Langanu.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Seen on small highland pans near Debre Berhan.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

We saw this species on some of the Rift Valley lakes.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Recorded at scattered wetland sites throughout the tour.



Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
Seen in the former half of the tour, with our first sighting at Lake Awassa.	
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
This species was seen at a few wetland sites.	
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
Seen regularly alongside many rivers and waterbodies.	
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
Small numbers were seen at some of the Rift Valley lakes.	
Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>
First recorded alongside Lake Awassa.	
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>
We saw this species at a number of waterbodies.	

Courasers & Pratincoles Glareolidae

Temminck's Couraser	<i>Cursorius somalensis</i>
A pair of this delicate species were seen on the Liben Plains.	
Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>
Singles were seen at Lake Ziway and later at Lake Langano.	

Gulls, Terns and Skimmers Laridae

Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
We recorded this species at Lake Awassa.	
Grey-hooded Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus</i>
Seen at some of the Rift Valley Lakes.	
Pallas's Gull	<i>Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus</i>
This huge gull was seen at Lake Awassa and later at Lake Abiata.	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>
We saw this avian at Lake Awassa and later at Lake Langano.	
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>
Seen at a few of the Rift Valley.	
White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
A fairly small tern, it was seen on the Rift Valley lakes.	

Sandgrouse Pteroclididae

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles exustus</i>
Seen at a few sites, with our best views being at Awash NP.	
Black-faced Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles decoratus</i>
We saw overflying birds at the Dawa River.	
Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles lichtensteinii</i>
A beautifully patterned bird, we saw it at and near Bilen Lodge.	
<i>NOTE: The nominate African form which we recorded may be regarded as distinct from the Asian P. l. arabicus which would be renamed Close-barred Sandgrouse. Neither IOC nor Clements recognize this split.</i>	

Pigeons & Doves Columbidae

Common Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
A few birds were seen in and around human settlements.	
Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>
Seen almost daily.	
White-collared Pigeon (E)	<i>Columba albitorques</i>



Seen at most high altitude sites, including an unusual sighting at the bottom of the Jemma Valley well below the lower altitude limits stated in the Horn of Africa book.

African Olive Pigeon *Columba arquatrix*

We saw this species in the juniper forest before ascending the Sanetti Plateau.

Lemon Dove *Columba larvata*

After views for some at Wondo Genet we enjoyed great views of this species at Lake Langano.

Dusky Turtle Dove *Streptopelia lugens*

We saw this species fairly frequently at higher altitudes.

White-winged Collared Dove (NE) *Streptopelia reichenowi*

This species was seen near the Dawa River.

Mourning Collared Dove *Streptopelia decipiens*

We saw this species at a number of woodland sites during the tour, beginning with on the first morning at Lake Bishoftu.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*

This species was recorded quite frequently during the tour in areas of woodland.

Ring-necked Dove *Streptopelia capicola*

This species was first encountered at Sof Omar, and was then quite common thereafter.

Vinaceous Dove *Streptopelia vinacea*

We had good views of this species at Gibe Gorge.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

Seen almost daily the tour.

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos*

We recorded this species at Sof Omar and on our travel day from Negele to Yabello.

Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur afer*

Seen at a few scattered woodland sites during the tour.

Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistria*

We saw this species in Harena Forest and later at Lake Langano.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*

This dainty dove was quite common in dry country situations.

Bruce's Green Pigeon *Treron waalia*

We first encountered this lovely bird in fig trees at near Lake Ziway on the first day, and then seen in association with fruiting figs in savanna situations in scattered locales during the tour.

Cockatoos & Parrots Psittacidae

Black-winged Lovebird (E) *Agapornis taranta*

Seen on our first morning at Lake Bishoftu, and then on a number of occasions thereafter.

Red-bellied Parrot *Poicephalus rufiventris*

A dry country inhabitant. First seen at Sof Omar, with further sightings near Negele and Yabello.

Yellow-fronted Parrot (E) *Poicephalus flavifrons*

We had lovely scope views of this species at Wondo Genet, with further sightings in the Juniper forest en route to the Sanetti Plateau.

Turacos Musophagidae

White-cheeked Turaco (NE) *Tauraco leucotis*

This species was seen on a number of occasions, with our initial sighting at Wondo Genet, followed by more at the Juniper forests in Bale Mountain NP and in mid altitude.

Ruspoli's Turaco (E) *Tauraco ruspolii*

Voted bird of the trip! We enjoyed fantastic extended views of a handful of birds en route to Negele.



Bare-faced Go-away-bird*Corythaixoides personatus*

We saw this species at Lake Langano.

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

Seen at many savanna localities during the tour.

Eastern Plantain-eater*Crinifer zonurus*This one was seen in the Gibe Gorge in tall *Acacia* trees near the Omo River.**Cuckoos Cuculidae****Blue-headed Coucal***Centropus monachus*

This large coucal was seen at Lake Awassa.

White-browed Coucal*Centropus superciliosus*

Seen in Awash NP.

NOTE: Although some authorities previously split the southern dark-browed Burchell's Coucal C. burchelli from the northerly White-browed Coucal C. superciliosus which we recorded in Ethiopia, this treatment is not followed by the IOC.

Green Malkoha*Ceuthmochares australis*

We had superb views of this little recorded species at Lake Langano. These tours were the first RBT ones to record this species in Ethiopia.

Klaas's Cuckoo*Chrysococcyx klaas*

Heard at Lake Langano.

African Emerald Cuckoo*Chrysococcyx cupreus*

We had fantastic views of this forest jewel at Wondo Genet. Further birds were heard in the Harenna Forest, with the call here differing from that of birds in southern and east Africa.

Red-chested Cuckoo*Cuculus solitarius*

Seen in the Harenna Forest.

Owls Strigidae**African Scops Owl***Otus senegalensis*

This tiny owl was seen en route to Negele, where we had great views.

Cape Eagle-Owl*Bubo capensis*

Our drive to Goba produced a close-up view of this beautiful bird.

Greyish Eagle-Owl*Bubo cinerascens*

A pair were seen at Lake Langano, with a further bird recorded in Awash NP.

Verreaux's Eagle-Owl*Bubo lacteus*

Seen by some en route to Negele.

African Wood Owl*Strix woodfordii*

A single bird was scoped in the Bale Mountains NP.

Pearl-spotted Owlet*Glaucidium perlatum*

Recorded at Sof Omar.

Abyssinian Owl*Asio abyssinicus*

We were most fortunate to see two birds in the Bale Mountains NP. These birds were chicks, with one having almost attained full adult plumage.

Nightjars Caprimulgidae**Donaldson-Smith's Nightjar***Caprimulgus donaldsoni*

Four birds were seen on a nightdrive south of Yabello.

Montane Nightjar*Caprimulgus poliocephalus*

Heard in the Jemma Valley.

Freckled Nightjar*Caprimulgus tristigma*

Heard at Lake Langano.

Slender-tailed Nightjar*Caprimulgus clarus*

We had fantastic views of three roosting birds at Lake Langano.

Swifts Apodidae**African Palm Swift***Cypsiurus parvus*

Seen near Lake Beseka and in Awash NP.

Alpine Swift*Tachymarptis melba*

This massive swift was seen at Wondo Genet, Sof Omar, the Bale Mountains NP and in the Jemma Valley.

Mottled Swift*Tachymarptis aequatorialis*

Another large swift, it was first seen at Wondo Genet, with further scattered sightings thereafter.

Common Swift*Apus apus*

Seen between Awassa and Wondo Genet.

Nyanza Swift*Apus niansae*

We recorded this species at Sof Omar and in the Jemma Valley.

Little Swift*Apus affinis*

This avian was seen in the Jemma Valley in a mixed swift/hirundine flock.

Mousebirds Coliidae**Speckled Mousebird***Colius striatus*

We saw this species quite frequently during the tour.

Blue-naped Mousebird*Urocolius macrourus*

Seen en route from Negele to Yabello, as well in the Awash area.

Trogon Trogonidae**Narina Trogon***Apaloderma narina*

We had superb views of this species in the Harena Forest and at Lake Langano.

Rollers Coraciidae**Purple Roller***Coracias naevius*

Seen at a number of savanna sites during the tour.

Lilac-breasted Roller*Coracias caudatus*

Quite a widespread savanna species, which we saw a number of times and especially on travel days.

NOTE: The subspecies which we recorded in Ethiopia, C. c. lorti might be split as Blue-breasted Roller which would become an Ethiopian near-endemic, based upon coloration of the breast and crown and an isolated population.

Abyssinian Roller*Coracias abyssinicus*

Seen on a number of occasions, with good views in the Awash area.

Broad-billed Roller*Eurystomus glaucurus*

We saw this species in fig forest at Lake Langano.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae**Grey-headed Kingfisher***Halcyon leucocephala*

One was seen at Lake Awassa, with another sighted in the Gibe Gorge.

Striped Kingfisher*Halcyon chelicuti*

Seen on the first day in savanna, with further sightings at Lake Langano and in Awash NP.

Woodland Kingfisher*Halcyon senegalensis*

Recorded in scattered woodland and savanna sites during the tour.



African Pygmy Kingfisher*Ispidina picta*

A tiny bird, it was first recorded at Sof Omar, with further sightings in woodland later in the tour.

Malachite Kingfisher*Alcedo cristata*

A jewel of the waterways, we enjoyed fantastic views of this species at Lake Awassa.

Giant Kingfisher*Megaceryle maxima*

We saw this, the world's largest "typical" kingfisher in the Jemma Valley.

Pied Kingfisher*Ceryle rudis*

Seen at scattered waterbodies during the tour, where it was usually fairly common.

Bee-Eaters Meropidae**Little Bee-eater***Merops pusillus*

We saw this species predominately in lower altitude savanna sites. It is generally smaller and lacks the small white cheek patch and broad blue forehead of the following species.

Blue-breasted Bee-eater*Merops variegates*

A stunning bird, it was seen quite regularly during the tour (most frequently in upland woodland sites).

NOTE: The Ethiopian form M. v. lafresnayii, is considered by several authorities to form a distinct species, called Abyssinian Bee-eater, based on size, coloration, habitat differences, and this combined with the fact that this subspecies is restricted to the highlands of Ethiopia and the Boma Hills in Sudan. It would therefore be an Ethiopian near-endemic if full species status is awarded. This enigmatic race has in the past been lumped with Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater M. oreobates.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater*Merops persicus*

A few birds showed well at Bilen Lodge.

Northern Carmine Bee-eater*Merops nubicus*

We saw scattered birds during the tour, usually in open savanna sites.

Hoopoes Upupidae**Eurasian Hoopoe***Upupa epops*

This good-looking bird, with a striking wing pattern, was observed almost daily.

NOTE: IOC recognizes three species (African U. africana, Eurasian U. epops and Madagascar U. marginata). Clements only recognizes the Eurasian and Malagasy forms. A fourth is sometimes recognized (but not by IOC), West/Central African U. senegalensis. We only recorded the nominate Palearctic migrant form U. e. epops.

Wood Hoopoes Phoeniculidae**Black-billed Wood Hoopoe (NE)***Phoeniculus somaliensis*

Seen at scattered woodland sites, with our first sighting coming in at Lake Langano.

Black Scimitarbill*Rhinopomastus aterrimus*

We had good views of this species at Lake Langano.

Abyssinian Scimitarbill*Rhinopomastus minor*

This species was first seen on the Bogol Manyo Road, with further sightings in the south of the country.

Hornbills Bucerotidae**Hemprich's Hornbill***Tockus hemprichii*

We recorded this species en route to Negele, with further sightings at Lake Langano and the Jemma Valley.

African Grey Hornbill*Tockus nasutus*

Scattered birds were recorded in drier savanna areas of Ethiopia.

Northern Red-billed Hornbill*Tockus erythrorhynchus*

Commonly recorded in savanna at lower elevations.



NOTE: Some authorities (including the IOC) have split the Red-billed Hornbill complex into five species. Clements does not recognize these splits as yet.

Northern Yellow-billed Hornbill *Tockus flavirostris*
Small numbers were seen at dry country sites. We initially saw it at Sof Omar.

Von der Decken's Hornbill *Tockus deckeni*
This species (also a dry country species) was seen on a number of occasions, with our first sighting at Sof Omar.

Silvery-cheeked Hornbill *Bycanistes brevis*
This large hornbill was seen on a number of occasions, generally at higher altitude sites. Initially seen in Awassa town.

Ground Hornbills Bucorvidae

Abyssinian Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus abyssinicus*
A magnificent bird, it was seen at scattered locales after our lovely sighting on the first day en route from Addis to Awassa.

African Barbets Lybiidae

Red-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus pusillus*
Scattered birds were recorded, with our initial sighting at near Lake Ziway.

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus*
Seen in the Bale Mountains NP.

Red-fronted Barbet *Tricholaema diademata*
We had good views of this one near Yabello and Lake Langano.

Black-throated Barbet *Tricholaema melanocephala*
A dry country bird, it was first seen in on the Bogol Manyo road, with further sightings on our drive from Negele to Yabello.

NOTE: The Serengeti and northern Tanzanian form of this barbet, *T. m. flavibuccalis* is sometimes considered a different species (Yellow-cheeked Barbet) from the nominate form which we recorded in Ethiopia, although this is not followed by the IOC nor Clements.

Banded Barbet (NE) *Lybius undatus*
A smart bird, we recorded it at scattered sites during the tour.

Black-billed Barbet *Lybius guifsobalito*
We recorded small numbers of this handsome bird at a number of sites.

Double-toothed Barbet *Lybius bidentatus*
This large, colourful bird was seen at Lake Langano.

Red-and-yellow Barbet *Trachyphonus erythrocephalus*
Seen by some en route to Negele.

Yellow-breasted Barbet *Trachyphonus margaritatus*
Great views were had at Bilen Lodge.

D'Arnaud's Barbet *Trachyphonus darnaudii*
We saw this species in the Yabello area.

Honeyguides Indicatoridae

Green-backed Honeybird *Prodotiscus zambesiae*
We enjoyed fantastic views of this species near Wondo Genet.

Brown-backed Honeybird *Prodotiscus regulus*
A single bird was seen at Sof Omar.

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*

Although first seen at Wondo Genet, it was most easily seen in the fig forest at Lake Langano.

Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator*



Seen well at Lake Langano.

Woodpeckers Picidae

Eurasian Wryneck

Jynx torquilla

We had good views of a single of this species in the Yabello area.

Red-throated Wryneck

Jynx ruficollis

We had great views of this species at Lake Awassa and at Lake Langano.

Nubian Woodpecker

Campethera nubica

Quite common in woodland sites throughout the tour.

Abyssinian Woodpecker (E)

Dendropicos abyssinicus

We had superb views of this species in the Juniper forest en route to the Sanetti Plateau.

Cardinal Woodpecker

Dendropicos fuscescens

This small woodpecker species was seen on a few occasions in woodland, our initial sighting being near Lake Langano.

Bearded Woodpecker

Dendropicos namaquus

We had good views of this species at Lake Langano.

African Grey Woodpecker

Dendropicos goertae

We had great views of this species at Lake Langano.

NOTE: The form we saw is split by some authorities (such as Clements) and is known as Grey-headed Woodpecker D. spodocephalus. IOC does however not follow this treatment, and "lumps" it within the Grey Woodpecker D. goertae complex.

Wattle-Eyes & Batises Platysteiridae

Grey-headed Batis

Batis orientalis

First seen at Sof Omar, and later at a number of dry country sites.

Western Black-headed Batis

Batis minor

Seen at some of the moister sites (such as in woodland around the Rift Valley lakes), with our first sighting being near Lake Ziway.

Pygmy Batis

Batis perkeo

We saw this species on the Bogol Manyo road and in the south near Yabello.

Brown-throated Wattle-eye

Platysteira cyanea

Seen at Lake Awassa and later at Lake Langano.

Helmetsrikes Prionopidae

White-crested Helmetshrike

Prionops plumatus

Seen at Sof Omar and on the road from Negele to Yabello.

Bushshrikes Malaconotidae

Grey-headed Bushshrike

Malaconotus blanchoti

Heard while at Sof Omar.

Orange-breasted Bushshrike

Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus

Seen at Sof Omar, and later in the Yabello area and around Lake Langano.

Rosy-patched Bushshrike

Rhodophoneus cruentus

A dry country bird, it was initially seen on the Bogol Manyo road, where we had superb views of this species.

Three-streaked Tchagra

Tchagra jamesi

Quite a smart bird, we saw three birds on the Bogol Manyo road.

Black-crowned Tchagra

Tchagra senegalus

Seen by some on a travel day to Negele, with close-ups in the Jemma Valley.



Northern Puffback *Dryoscopus gambensis*

This species was seen at Lakes Awassa and Langanu.

Pringle's Puffback *Dryoscopus pringlii*

A small puffback, we enjoyed superb views while on the Bogol Manyo road.

Slate-colored Boubou *Laniarius funebris*

Seen regularly in dry country sites.

Red-naped Bushshrike (NE) *Laniarius ruficeps*

We had great views of this species on the Bogol Manyo road.

Tropical Boubou *Laniarius aethiopicus*

Seen quite regularly during the tour.

NOTE: This species is sometimes split as Ethiopian Boubou L. aethiopicus. IOC does not as yet follow this split.

Brubru *Nilaus afer*

Seen in the south on the Negele – Yabello road, and thereafter in the Awash area.

NOTE: This previously monotypic genus might be split 4 ways: Northern Brubru N. afer, Black-browed Brubru N. nigritemporalis, Angola Brubru N. affinis and Southern Brubru N. brubru. Only the Northern Brubru occurs in Ethiopia. IOC does not recognize these splits.

Cuckooshrikes Campephagidae**Grey Cuckooshrike** *Coracina caesia*

Recorded at Wondo Genet and later in the Harena Forest.

Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike *Campephaga phoenicea*

We had some superb views of this species at Lake Langanu. One male had a patch of yellow in the red shoulder patch, while another showed a fairly large spot of yellow on the shoulder patch.

Shrikes Laniidae**Northern White-crowned Shrike** *Eurocephalus rueppelli*

First seen at Sof Omar, it was quite common at savanna sites throughout the tour.

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*

First seen on the Bogol Manyo road, we saw scattered birds at various savanna sites.

NOTE: This complex which used to be lumped with Red-backed Shrike L. collurio is being considered for a further 3-way split. The western L. i. phoenicuroides (Red-tailed Shrike) group and the nominate Isabelline Shrike group have both been recorded in Ethiopia. The L. i. speculigerus (Daurian Shrike) group are extra-limital. Clements does not as yet recognize the three-way split of the L. isabellinus group but does recognize the split from the Red-backed Shrike L. collurio group.

Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis*

We saw the race *aucheri* in Awash NP.

NOTE: This complex which used to be lumped with Northern Shrike L. excubitor is being considered for further splitting. These splits would include the nominate Southern Grey Shrike and the migrant Steppe Grey Shrike (L. pallidirostris). Clements recognizes the split from Northern Shrike but not the further splits of the Southern Grey Shrike group.

Steppe Grey Shrike *Lanius pallidirostris*

Seen at Bilen Lodge by some.

Grey-backed Fiscal *Lanius excubitoroides*

Birds were seen at scattered open country savanna sites during the tour.

Taita Fiscal *Lanius dorsalis*

This species was seen on our drive from Negele to Yabello.

Somali Fiscal *Lanius somalicus*

We observed small numbers of this species on our Negele – Yabello drive, and in the Awash area.

Common Fiscal *Lanius collaris*

Seen regularly in open country.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*

We saw this beautiful shrike in Awash NP.

Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus*

A particularly handsome shrike (maybe the most beautiful *Lanius* shrike which we recorded), we had great views while at Lake Langanano.

Figbirds & Orioles Oriolidae

Ethiopian Oriole (E) *Oriolus monacha*

A noisy endemic, we saw it on a number of occasions, with our first sighting at Wondo Genet.

Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus larvatus*

Seen at Sof and Omar Yabello.

Drongos Dicruridae

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*

Commonly recorded during the tour.

Monarchs Monarchidae

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis*

This delightful species was seen on most days of the tour.

NOTE: The northern races of this widespread African species which include the nominate form are likely to be separated from the southern races which would become Grey-headed Paradise-Flycatcher T. plumbeiceps. The subspecies which we recorded in Ethiopia is T. v. ferreti which would fall within the northern African Paradise-Flycatcher complex T. viridis if the group were to be split. Beside plumage and distributional differences, only the northern forms display polymorphism in males and we observed an example of this phenomenon in Ethiopia. Neither IOC nor Clements recognize this split.

Crows & Jays Corvidae

Stresemann's Bush Crow (E) *Zavattariornis stresemanni*

We enjoyed superb views of this species en route from Negele to Yabello, as well as in the vicinity of Yabello. This species has a small global distribution and is restricted to a section of savanna in southern Ethiopia that falls under the Somali-Masai biome. Although this biome stretches into northern Kenya, certain subtle environmental differences result in this species being completely restricted to Ethiopia.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

Seen en route from Wondo Genet to Goba, and on the Sanetti Plateau.

Cape Crow *Corvus capensis*

We encountered this species on a number of occasions in highland areas of Ethiopia.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*

Commonly recorded on the tour.

Somali Crow (NE) *Corvus edithae*

First recorded between Goba and Sof Omar, we recorded scattered birds in the south of the country.

NOTE: IOC and Clements recognize the split of Somali Crow C. edithae from Brown-necked Raven C. ruficollis. This species is considered distinct based on habitat, distribution (it is an Ethiopian near-endemic), plumage, physiology, call and behavior. It is known to hybridize with Pied Crow C. albus.

Fan-tailed Raven *Corvus rhipidurus*

Seen quite frequently during the tour.

Thick-billed Raven (E) *Corvus crassirostris*

Possessing an outrageous bill, we recorded first recorded it at Awassa, whereafter it was seen quite regularly in upland areas.

Tits & Chickadees Paridae



White-winged Black Tit *Parus leucomelas*

We had good views of this species at Lake Langano.

White-backed Black Tit (E) *Parus leuconotus*

Great views were had in the juniper forest near Goba, with a later sighting in the Haremma Forest.

Acacia (Somali) Tit *Parus thruppi*

Our first sighting was at Sof Omar, with later sightings in Acacia savanna en route to and around Yabello.

Penduline Tits Remizidae**Mouse-colored Penduline Tit** *Anthoscopus musculus*

This miniscule bird (one of Africa's smallest) was seen near Yabello and in Awash NP.

Larks Alaudidae**Singing Bush Lark** *Mirafra cantillans*

We saw this species in Awash NP.

Red-winged Lark *Mirafra hypermetra*

This large lark was well seen in Awash NP.

Gillett's Lark (NE) *Mirafra gilletti*

Seen on the Bogol Manyo road, on the Negele – Yabello road and in Awash NP.

Sidamo Lark (E) *Heteromirafra sidamoensis*

We enjoyed superb views of one of this critically endangered species on the Liben Plains. Frighteningly, its entire range is estimated at a miniscule 35km², with Birdlife International estimating the population to consist of less than 250 adult birds! Unfortunately this species is precariously perched on the cusp of extinction, and could gain the unenviable reputation of being the first mainland Africa bird to suffer this fate.

Foxy Lark *Mirafra alopex*

This species was well seen near Yabello.

NOTE: This species has now been split from Fawn-colored Lark C. africanoides and is recognized as a full species by Clements.

Erlanger's Lark (E) *Calandrella erlangeri*

We recorded a few scattered birds in short, highland grassland en route to Goba and near Debre Berhan.

NOTE: Clements has given C. erlangeri of central Ethiopia full species status. The Blanford's/Erlanger's Lark complex was originally lumped within the Red-capped Lark complex C. cinerea, which itself was lumped within the Greater Short-toed Lark complex C. brachydactyla! Long live the days of splitting!

Somali Short-toed Lark (NE) *Calandrella somalica*

Our time on the Liben Plains resulted in a lovely sighting of this species.

Thekla Lark *Galerida theklae*

First seen en route to Goba, we recorded this species in a few highland grassland sites.

Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix leucotis*

Maximum numbers were recorded on the Bilen Plains, where we encountered several large flocks.

Chestnut-headed Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix signatus*

We had lovely views of this species near Lake Beseka and in Awash NP.

Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix nigriceps*

Excellent views were had of this species. Our 2010 RBT tours were the first tours to record this species, which is usually distributed north-west of where we found it on the Bilen Plains.

Bulbuls Pycnonotidae**Common Bulbul** *Pycnonotus barbatus*

Seen in the vicinity of the Rift Valley lakes, where it was common.



Somali Bulbul (NE) *Pycnonotus somaliensis*

We saw this species in the general Awash area.

Dodson's Bulbul (NE) *Pycnonotus dodsoni*

This species was recorded in the dry southern areas of Ethiopia.

Dark-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus tricolor*

Recorded in the vicinity of Goba.

Northern Brownbul *Phyllastrephus strepitans*

We saw this species at Sof Omar.

Swallows & Martins Hirundinidae**Black Saw-wing** *Psalidoprocne pristoptera*

This avian was seen over the forest at Wondo Genet.

NOTE: The Black Sawwing P. pristoptera complex was split into 8 full species which caused extreme confusion with regard to their distributions and field identification. However, all authorities including IOC and Clements have now accepted one species.

Brown-throated Martin *Riparia paludicola*

Decent numbers were seen over the Rift Valley lakes.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

We saw this species near some of the Rift Valley lakes (e.g. Lake Ziway).

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Seen almost daily, and often in large numbers.

NOTE: This cosmopolitan species complex is likely to be split based on the Old World nominate form and its congeners which would become Eurasian Swallow H. rustica and the New World Barn Swallow H. erythrogaster. Further splitting within the group may also be done e.g. the distinctive H. r. savignii which breeds in the Nile Valley and would be named Egyptian Swallow. We only recorded representatives of the Palearctic migrant Barn/Eurasian Swallow. Neither IOC nor Clements recognize any of these splits.

Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo aethiopica*

Perched birds at Bilen Lodge provided superb views.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*

Small numbers were seen, usually in association with water.

NOTE: This species complex could be split based on the African nominate form that would become African Wire-tailed Swallow and the Asian Wire-tailed Swallow that would be H. filifera. Neither IOC nor Clements recognize this split.

White-tailed Swallow (E) *Hirundo megaensis*

We enjoyed close-up views of perched birds near Yabello.

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris*

Our best views of this species were at the Jemma Valley, where we spent a good period of time observing them as they flew low over our heads.

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula*

Recorded at a few scattered sites, including alongside the previous species while in the Jemma Valley.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Seen on a travel day from Wondo Genet to Goba, and later in the Jemma Valley.

Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica*

We had good views of this species in the Yabello area.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

Seen in the Awash area, and later in the Jemma Valley.

NOTE: The resident H. d. melanocrissus which we recorded may be considered a distinct species; Black-vented Swallow, which would become an Ethiopian endemic. IOC does not as yet recognize this split. Further extra-limital splits are likely within this wide-ranging species complex.

Leaf Warblers & Allies Phylloscopidae

Brown Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus umbrovirens*

We had superb views of this species in the Juniper Forest near Goba.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Seen at Lake Awassa.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Recorded at a range of woodland sites throughout the tour.

NOTE: Most authorities including (IOC and Clements) have split the Chiffchaff complex into 4 full species.

Reed Warblers & Allies Phylloscopidae

Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris*

At least three birds were seen in the reeds and vegetation at Lake Awassa.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

We had superb views of this large warbler at Lake Awassa.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

A few birds were seen at Lake Awassa.

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

This species was recorded at Lake Awassa.

Dark-capped Yellow Warbler *Iduna natalensis*

We saw this species during our lunch stop between Yabello and Lake Langano.

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna pallida*

This avian was recorded at scattered woodland sites beginning with sightings at Lake Awassa.

NOTE: IOC and Clements have split Olivaceous Warbler into two species namely, Eastern Olivaceous I. pallida and Western Olivaceous I. opaca.

Grassbirds & Allies Megaluridae

Cinnamon Bracken Warbler *Bradypterus cinnamomeus*

Heard more than seen, some saw this species in the Juniper forest near Goba.

Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae

Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops*

This noisy species was seen at Lake Awassa.

Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans*

Seen in the Jemma Valley.

Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana*

We recorded this species on the Negele-Yabello road, in the Yabello area and at Lake Langano.

Boran Cisticola (NE) *Cisticola bodessa*

This species was seen at Lake Langano.

Ashy Cisticola *Cisticola cinereolus*

We had great views of this species in Awash NP.

Ethiopian Cisticola (E) *Cisticola lugubris*

Seen at scattered upland sites in Ethiopia (our first views were near Goba).

NOTE: IOC have split the Winding Cisticola complex into five species (Winding C. marginatus, Coastal C. haematocephalus, Luapula C. luapula, Rufous-winged C. galactotes and Ethiopian C. lugubris). Clements does not recognize any of these species.

Tiny Cisticola *Cisticola nana*

This small Cisticola (as the name suggests!) was seen on the Bogol Manyo Road and near Yabello.

Foxy Cisticola *Cisticola troglodytes*

Two birds provided good views in the Jemma Valley.

Pectoral-patch Cisticola *Cisticola brunnescens*

We recorded this species on the Liben Plains.



Tawny-flanked Prinia*Prinia subflava*

First seen in scrubby vegetation en route to Lake Awassa from Addis, it was then seen at scattered locales thereafter.

Pale Prinia*Prinia somalica*

Recorded in the dry southern areas of the tour, with our first sighting in the Bogol Manyo road.

Buff-bellied Warbler*Phyllolais pulchella*

We saw this species in *Acacia* trees at many lower elevation sites beginning at Lake Awassa.

Yellow-breasted Apalis*Apalis flavida*

Seen at few savanna sites beginning with at Sof Omar.

NOTE: This widespread polytypic African species may to be split into two species. The form we saw is sometimes split as Brown-tailed Apalis A. viridiceps. IOC does not accept this split.

Red-fronted Apalis*Urorhipis rufifrons*

A smart bird, it was seen at Sof Omar and on the Bogol Manyo road.

Grey-backed Camaroptera*Camaroptera brevicaudata*

We saw this species on a number of occasions at scattered woodland sites throughout the tour.

NOTE: IOC splits this species into Grey-backed Camaroptera (the birds we saw) and Green-backed Camaroptera C. brachyura. Clements does not as yet follow this split.

Grey Wren-Warbler*Calamonastes simplex*

Seen at a few dry country savanna sites, with our first sightings at Sof Omar.

Yellow-bellied Eremomela*Eremomela icteropygialis*

We recorded it quite frequently at dry country sites throughout the tour.

Green-backed Eremomela*Eremomela canescens*

A beautiful bird, we had superb views of this one in the Jemma Valley.

Family Uncertain Incertae Sedis**Moustached Grass Warbler***Melocichla mentalis*

A single bird was heard by some in the near the Omo River in Gibe Gorge.

Northern Crombec*Sylvietta brachyura*

Recorded at a range of dry country sites during the tour. We saw birds of the distinctive *leucopsis* race.

Red-faced Crombec*Sylvietta whytii*

This species was seen at Lake Awassa, around Yabello and at Lake Langano.

Somali Crombec (NE)*Sylvietta isabellina*

Our best views of this species were on the Bogol Manyo road.

Babblers & Parrotbills Timaliidae**African Hill Babbler***Pseudoalcippe abyssinica*

We had great views of this species in the Harenna Forest and at Lake Langano.

Scaly Chatterer (NE)*Turdoides aylmeri*

This shy species was seen near Yabello, where seven birds eventually showed very well. A very tough bird which is infrequently recorded (our sighting was the third for RBT in Ethiopia).

Rufous Chatterer*Turdoides rubiginosa*

Small groups were seen at scattered savanna sites (first recorded at Lake Awassa).

White-rumped Babbler (NE)*Turdoides leucopygia*

Our best views of this species were at Lake Langano.

Abysinian Catbird (E)*Parophasma galinieri*

This noisy endemic showed well in the Juniper forest near Goba.

Old World Warblers Sylviidae

Eurasian Blackcap*Sylvia atricapilla*

This migrant was seen at scattered locales during the tour.

Barred Warbler*Sylvia nisoria*

A shy bird, it was seen in thick scrub near the Dawa River.

Lesser Whitethroat*Sylvia curruca*

We saw this species at a number of wooded sites during the tour.

Common Whitethroat*Sylvia communis*

This species was seen on the Bogol Manyo Road and near Yabello.

Brown Parisoma*Sylvia lugens*

Recorded in *Acacia abyssinica* trees en route from Yabello to Lake Langano. This species is, for some reason very closely associated with this *Acacia* species.

Banded Parisoma*Parisoma boehmi*

We saw this noisy species on the Negele-Yabello road, and later in the Yabello area.

White-eyes Zosteropidae**Abyssinian White-eye***Zosterops abyssinicus*

This drier country species was seen in small numbers at most lower-lying sites.

NOTE: Some authorities split this complex into 2 full species, namely Abyssinian White-eye Z. abyssinicus and the Kenyan and Tanzanian form Z. flavilateralis. Neither IOC nor Clements recognize this split as of yet.

Montane White-eye (NE)*Zosterops poliogastrus*

We saw this species at high altitude sites around Wondo Genet and Goba.

NOTE: Some authorities split this complex into 6 full species. Clements does not as yet recognize any of these splits.

Treecreepers Certhiidae**Spotted Creeper***Salpornis spilonotus*

This species provided superb views around Lake Awassa.

Starlings Sturnidae**Wattled Starling***Creatophora cinerea*

We saw this nomadic species on a few occasions, beginning with a small flock at Lake Ziway.

Greater Blue-eared Starling*Lamprotornis chalybaeus*

Associated with savanna, it was seen almost daily.

Rüppell's Starling*Lamprotornis purpuroptera*

This species was seen quite regularly during the tour, beginning with sightings on the first day.

Golden-breasted Starling*Lamprotornis regius*

First seen by some en route from Goba to Negele, thereafter it was seen near the Dawa River and in the Yabello area. An incredibly good looking bird; possibly the best looking starling?

Superb Starling*Lamprotornis superbus*

A common savanna starling that was seen regularly during the tour.

Shelley's Starling*Lamprotornis shelleyi*

We saw this species in dry woodland in the south of Ethiopia.

White-crowned Starling (NE)*Lamprotornis albicapillus*

A few flocks were seen in the dry southern savanna areas, with the first birds seen on the Bogol Manyo road.

Violet-backed Starling*Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*

Seen on a travel day from Goba to Sanetti, and later in the vicinity of Lake Langano.

Red-winged Starling*Onychognathus morio*

We recorded this species at Wondo Genet and at Sof Omar, with further birds seen on our travel day from Langano to Weliso.



Slender-billed Starling*Onychognathus tenuirostris*

Recorded at a number of forest sites beginning with Wondo Genet.

Bristle-crowned Starling*Onychognathus salvadorii*

This huge starling was seen at Sof Omar and en route between Negele and Yabello.

White-billed Starling (E)*Onychognathus albirostris*

We saw this species in the Jemma Valley and at Gemase Geden.

Sharpe's Starling*Poeyoptera sharpii*

A smart bird, it was seen at Wondo Genet and in the Harenna Forest.

Magpie Starling*Speculipastor bicolor*

We saw small numbers of this species between Negele and Yabello. This species possesses an outrageously red eye!

Oxpeckers Buphagidae**Red-billed Oxpecker***Buphagus erythrorhynchus*

We saw this game and livestock associated species on a number of occasions (the general lack of large game meant we saw all our birds on livestock).

Thrushes Turdidae**Abyssinian Ground Thrush***Zoothera piaggiae*

Seen very well at Wondo Genet and in the Juniper forest near Goba.

Groundscraper Thrush*Psophocichla litsitsirupa*

Recorded at a number of upland grassland sites, where it was not uncommon.

*NOTE: This subspecies of Groundscraper Thrush P. l. simensis is considered a distinct species by some authorities and would therefore become a further Ethiopian endemic. This split is based on distribution (P. l. simensis forms an isolated population far to the north of the nominate form), habitat (high altitude grasslands versus wooded Southern savannas of the nominate), plumage and vocal differences. IOC and Clements does not as yet recognize this split.***African Thrush***Turdus pelios*

Seen at scattered woodland sites, with our initial sighting of this species at Debre Zeit Crater lake alongside Abyssinian Thrush.

Bare-eyed Thrush*Turdus tephronotus*

We had great views of this species on the Negele-Yabello road and in the Yabello area.

Abyssinian Thrush*Turdus abyssinicus*

This species was seen at a number of higher altitude sites (it was for instance very common in the Juniper forest near Goba).

*NOTE: The Olive Thrush complex has been split by the IOC into five species. Clements does not as yet recognize any of these splits, some of which are already well accepted e.g. Taita Thrush T. helleri.***Chats, Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae****Common Nightingale***Luscinia megarhynchos*

This skulky species eventually showed well at Sof Omar, with a further bird heard in dense scrub in Gibe Gorge.

Rüppell's Robin-Chat (NE)*Cossypha semirufa*

Seen on a number of occasions in high altitude sites, with our first sighting en route to Goba.

White-browed Robin-Chat*Cossypha heuglini*

We were very fortunate to see this species at Lake Langano. Not recorded very frequently by RBT in Ethiopia, and although superficially very similar in appearance to the previous species, it is distinguishable by call (very different!) and by altitudinal range.

Red-capped Robin-Chat*Cossypha natalensis*

This species was seen at Lake Langano. Not seen very often in Ethiopia.

Snow-crowned Robin-Chat*Cossypha niveicapilla*

Heard, some seeing the briefest of flashes as the bird darted through the bushes near the Omo River.

Spotted Palm Thrush *Cichladusa guttata*

This delightful songster was seen on the Negele-Yabello road and in the Yabello area.

White-browed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas leucophrys*

We saw this species at a few dry *Acacia* sites, beginning with the Bogol Manyo road.

NOTE: This widespread African complex is being reviewed for a 3-way split, the Southern African C. l. leucophrys group would become White-browed Scrub-Robin, the Central African C. l. zambesiana would be Red-backed Scrub-Robin and the Northern African C. l. leucoptera would become White-winged Scrub-Robin. The latter is the form we recorded in Ethiopia. Clements does not as yet recognize these splits.

Black Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas podobe*

A very smart bird, we had superb views of this species near Bilen Lodge.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

We saw small numbers of this species at random woodland sites. Does a characteristic tail wag.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

A single bird was viewed near Awash at the larva flow.

African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

We saw this species at a few high altitude grasslands.

NOTE: Although IOC and Clements recognize the split of African S. torquatus and European S. rubicola Stonechats, the form we recorded in the highlands of Ethiopia S. t. albofasciata is considered for further separation as Ethiopian Stonechat and would then become an Ethiopian near-endemic. Neither IOC nor Clements recognize this split.

Red-breasted (Botta's) Wheatear *Oenanthe bottae*

Seen on a number of occasions in higher altitude grassland.

NOTE: This African and Arabian complex is treated as two species by IOC, Heuglin's Wheatear O. heuglini of the Sahelian zone of Africa and Red-breasted Wheatear O. bottae, which is resident in Ethiopia and Arabia and is the form which we recorded. This split is not as yet recognized by Clements.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*

We recorded this species quite regularly during the tour.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

We had great views of this species near Goba.

NOTE: The North-West African race may be split off as Black-throated Wheatear O. seebohmi (although this is not yet ratified by the IOC). The Palearctic migrant forms which we recorded would remain within the nominate group.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka*

Seen quite regularly during the tour.

Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica*

We enjoyed great initial views of this species at Lake Awassa.

Abyssinian Wheatear *Oenanthe lugubris*

This species was seen at Lake Bishoftu, Lake Langano and in the Jemma Valley.

Familiar Chat *Cercomela familiaris*

Observed in Gibe Gorge and in the Jemma Valley.

Brown-tailed Rock Chat *Cercomela scotocerca*

We saw this one at Sof Omar and near the Dawa River.

Sombre Rock Chat (NE) *Cercomela dubia*

Although not the brightest bird, we had very good views of this localized species on the lava fields near Awash.

Blackstart *Cercomela melanura*

We saw this one on the lava fields near Awash, where it was far more common than the previous species.

Moorland Chat (NE) *Cercomela sordida*

Common in high altitude grasslands.

Rüppell's Black Chat (E) *Myrmecocichla melaena*

Seen in the Jemma Valley and at Gemase Geden.



Mocking Cliff Chat*Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris*

We saw this bird at Lake Langanu and in the Jemma Valley.

NOTE: White-crowned Cliff-Chat, T. coronata of West Africa is considered by IOC as a full species. Clements does not recognize this species as yet.

White-winged Cliff Chat (E)*Thamnolaea semirufa*

A smart bird, it was seen in the Jemma Valley.

Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush*Monticola saxatilis*

We saw this species at a few sites beginning with Sof Omar.

Little Rock Thrush*Monticola rufocinereus*

This species showed very well at Lake Langanu.

Blue Rock Thrush*Monticola solitarius*

A beautiful bird, we saw it at Lake Bishoftu, in the Jemma Valley and at Gemase Geden.

Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher (E)*Dioptrornis chocolatinus*

Seen at a few wooded highland sites, beginning with at Wondo Genet.

Northern Black Flycatcher*Melaenornis edolioides*

We saw this species at a number of woodland sites throughout the tour.

Pale Flycatcher*Bradornis pallidus*

This species was seen in Gibe Gorge in tall woodland.

Ethiopian Grey Flycatcher (NE)*Bradornis pumilus*

Seen quite frequently in dry country situations.

NOTE: This is a recent split from African Grey Flycatcher B. microhynchus.

Spotted Flycatcher*Muscicapa striata*

A Palearctic migrant, it was recorded in Gibe gorge.

African Dusky Flycatcher*Muscicapa adusta*

This species was seen in a number of forested sites on the tour.

Grey Tit-Flycatcher*Myioparus plumbeus*

A single was seen in Gibe Gorge.

Sunbirds Nectariniidae**Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird***Anthreptes orientalis*

Recorded at the Dawa River and in the Yabello area.

Collared Sunbird*Hedydipna collaris*

This species was seen on Dawa River and at Lake Langanu.

Nile Valley Sunbird*Hedydipna metallica*

A lovely bird, we saw it in the Awash area, with our first sighting at the lava field at Lake Beseka.

Scarlet-chested Sunbird*Chalcomitra senegalensis*

Seen at scattered sites in Ethiopia, with the firsts birds seen at Lake Bishoftu on the first morning.

Hunter's Sunbird*Chalcomitra hunteri*

The dry country equivalent of the previous species, we saw it on the Bogol Manyo road and in the Negele-Yabello area.

Tacazze Sunbird*Nectarinia tacazze*

Seen at a number of upland sites in Ethiopia.

Beautiful Sunbird*Cinnyris pulchellus*

We saw this avian near the Rift Valley lakes and around Awash NP.

Marico Sunbird*Cinnyris mariquensis*

A dry woodland species, it was seen in the Negele-Yabello area and later around Lake Langanu.

NOTE: Some authorities split this complex into 2 full species. The subspecies C. m. osiris which we recorded in Ethiopia would become Swahili Sunbird as opposed to the nominate form which would remain as Marico Sunbird. Neither Clements nor IOC recognize this split.

Shining Sunbird*Cinnyris habessinicus*

This species was first seen at Sof Omar, where we enjoyed fantastic views. Recorded at scattered dry woodland sites thereafter.

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus*

Seen on a number of occasions on the tour.

NOTE: We recorded the white-bellied race which may be split as White-bellied Sunbird. Neither IOC nor Clements recognize this split.

Old World Sparrows Passeridae

White-browed Sparrow-Weaver *Plocepasser mahali*

Seen on a number of occasions, their untidy grass nests were often an indicator of their presence.

Grey-capped Social Weaver *Pseudonigrita arnaudi*

This species was seen on the Negele-Yabello road and in the Yabello area.

Black-capped Social Weaver *Pseudonigrita cabanisi*

Also seen in the Negele-Yabello road and in the Yabello area.

Shelley's Sparrow *Passer shelleyi*

We saw it on the drive from Negele to Yabello, and then in Yabello area.

Swainson's Sparrow (NE) *Passer swainsonii*

Seen virtually daily.

NOTE: The Grey-headed Sparrow complex has been split into 5 full species that are fully recognized by IOC and Clements.

Chestnut Sparrow *Passer eminibey*

A smart bird, we had lovely views of this species near Yabello.

Bush Petronia *Gymnoris dentate*

We saw this species in the Gibe Gorge, Awash NP and in the Jemma Valley.

Yellow-spotted Petronia *Gymnoris pyrgita*

Seen at Sof Omar, on the Bogol Manyo road and in the Yabello area.

Weavers & Widowbirds Ploceidae

Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger*

This bird was seen in the Awash area.

NOTE: This species complex might be split into two, the nominate group would become Southern Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver and the form which we recorded in Ethiopia would become Northern Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver B. intermedius. Neither IOC nor Clements recognize this split.

White-headed Buffalo Weaver *Dinemellia dinemelli*

Seen at a number of dry country sites, where it was common.

Speckle-fronted Weaver *Sporopipes frontalis*

We found a small group of birds in the Jemma Valley.

Thick-billed Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons*

We saw a single bird at Lake Langano.

Baglafaecht Weaver *Ploceus baglafaecht*

This species was seen at range of sites throughout the tour.

NOTE: This polytypic species complex has been considered for multi-species splitting. We recorded two distinct subspecies which stand a good possibility of full species recognition: the nominate Baglafaecht Weaver P. b. baglafaecht was recorded around Addis Ababa and other higher altitude sites, and "Emin's" Weaver P. b. emini was recorded through-out the Rift Valley e.g. Awassa. IOC and Clements do not recognize these splits.

Little Weaver *Ploceus luteolus*

Good views were had of this species at Lake Awassa.

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis*

Seen at Lake Awassa and later at Lake Langano.

Rüppell's Weaver *Ploceus galbula*

This species was seen at a number of Rift Valley sites.



- Lesser Masked Weaver** *Ploceus intermedius*
We saw this bird at the Dawa River and Awash NP (its pale iris and grey legs were distinguishing features).
- Vitelline Masked Weaver** *Ploceus vitellinus*
This species was seen at a few dry country sites, with our first sighting in *Acacia* savanna en route from Negele to Yabello.
- Speke's Weaver** *Ploceus spekei*
Good views were had of this species at Yabello.
- Village Weaver** *Ploceus cucullatus*
Seen at Lakes Awassa and Langano and in the Jemma Valley.
- Juba Weaver (NE)** *Ploceus dicrocephalus*
We recorded this scarce species at the Dawa River in southern Ethiopia.
- Red-headed Weaver** *Anaplectes melanotis*
We had superb views of this species at Sof Omar, with further sightings en route to Negele and at Lake Langano.
NOTE: This species complex might be split into two, the southern nominate group would remain Red-headed Weaver and the northern black-faced form which we recorded in Ethiopia would become Red-winged Weaver A. leuconotos. Neither IOC nor Clements recognize this split.
- Red-billed Quelea** *Quelea quelea*
Seen at a few scattered savanna sites. The world's most populous bird!
- Black Bishop** *Euplectes gierowii*
A flock of non-breeding birds was seen in the Jemma Valley.
- Black-winged Red Bishop** *Euplectes hordeaceus*
We saw this species in the Gibe Gorge.
- Northern Red Bishop** *Euplectes franciscanus*
Recorded at some of the Rift Valley sites and in the Awash area.
- White-winged Widowbird** *Euplectes albonotatus*
Good views were had of this species at Lake Langano.
- Red-collared Widowbird** *Euplectes ardens*
This species was seen in the Jemma Valley.

Waxbills, Munias & Allies Estrildidae

- Green-winged Pytilia** *Pytilia melba*
We saw this species in *Acacia* scrub in Awash NP.
- Cut-throat Finch** *Amadina fasciata*
A smart bird, we saw this species at scattered savanna sites beginning with near Lake Ziway.
- Abyssinian Crimsonwing** *Cryptospiza salvadorii*
We enjoyed fantastic views of this species in Harena Forest.
- Bar-breasted Firefinch** *Lagonosticta rufopicta*
Seen in the Gibe Gorge.
- Red-billed Firefinch** *Lagonosticta senegala*
Has a large range in Africa, we saw it at a number of woodland and savanna sites on the tour.
- African Firefinch** *Lagonosticta rubricate*
We saw this species in thick roadside undergrowth in Gibe Gorge.
- Black-throated Firefinch (NE)** *Lagonosticta larvata*
A beautiful bird, we enjoyed superb views of this species in Gibe Gorge.
- Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu** *Uraeginthus bengalus*
This avian was seen at scattered savanna sites throughout Ethiopia.
- Purple Grenadier** *Uraeginthus ianthinogaster*



Quite a beautiful species, we saw it on the Negele to Yabello road, in the Yabello area and in Awash NP.

Yellow-bellied Waxbill *Estrilda quartinia*

Our best views of this species were in the Hareenna Forest, where this species was fairly common.

Abbyssinian Waxbill (NE) *Estrilda ochrogaster*

We had good views of this species in Gibe Gorge.

NOTE: This is a recent split from Fawn-breasted Waxbill Estrilda paludicola.

Crimson-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda rhodopyga*

First seen at Lake Awassa.

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*

This species (similar to the last) was also seen at Lake Awassa.

Black-cheeked Waxbill *Estrilda chamosyna*

We had superb views of a few birds in the Yabello area.

African Silverbill *Lonchura cantans*

Seen at Lake Bishoftu, with a later sighting of a pair on a nest at Bilen Lodge.

Grey-headed Silverbill *Odontospiza griseicapilla*

We enjoyed superb views of this species nest building near Yabello.

Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura cucullata*

This species was sighted at scattered localities throughout the tour.

Black-and-white Mannikin *Lonchura bicolor*

We saw a few birds in a tall tree in the Hareenna Forest.

Indigobirds & Whydahs Viduidae

Village Indigobird *Vidua chalybeata*

This species was seen at a few savanna localities during the tour.

Note: This extremely confusing species complex is in consideration for a multi-species split. The form which we recorded in Ethiopia V. c. ultramarina would become Purple Indigobird as opposed to the nominate V. c. chalybeata Green Indigobird of West Africa and the southern V. c. amauropteryx or South African Indigobird. IOC and Clements do not recognize these splits.

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*

First seen at Awassa, with small numbers seen thereafter.

Steel-blue Whydah *Vidua hypocherina*

We were most fortunate to see this sought-after species near Yabello.

Straw-tailed Whydah *Vidua fischeri*

A few birds were seen in Awash NP.

Exclamatory Paradise Whydah *Vidua interjecta*

We recorded a single specimen in the Gibe Gorge which allowed for extended scope views.

Wagtails & Pipits Motacillidae

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Good numbers were seen on the tour, especially in the Rift Valley lakes (large numbers were seen at Lake Abiata). Some of the beautiful race *feldegg* were also seen on a few occasions.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

We recorded a few scattered birds during the tour in wetland situations.

Mountain Wagtail *Motacilla clara*

An inhabitant of clear, upland streams, we had good views of this species at Wondo Genet.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Small numbers were seen at scattered sites, often in the vicinity of water.

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*

Recorded in Gibe Gorge, at Awash Falls and in the Jemma Valley.



- Abyssinian Longclaw (E)** *Macronyx flavicollis*
Great views were had of this species on an alpine meadow on the Sanetti Plateau.
- African Pipit** *Anthus cinnamomeus*
Our best views of this species was on an upland grassland en route to Goba from Wondo Genet.
- Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris*
Seen in Awash NP.
- Long-billed Pipit** *Anthus similes*
This inhabitant of rocky areas was seen in the Jemma Valley and at Gemase Geden.
- Plain-backed Pipit** *Anthus leucophrys*
Seen on the Liben Plains.
NOTE: A. l. goodsoni of central and SW Kenya may be split off from the nominate group A. leucophrys. The Ethiopian races we recorded would probably remain within the nominate complex. Neither IOC nor Clements recognize this split.
- Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*
We enjoyed good views of this heavily patterned bird near the Omo River.
- Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*
Seen on grassland in the vicinity of, with our first sighting at Lake Ziway.

Finches Fringillidae

- Yellow-crowned Canary** *Serinus flavivertex*
We saw this bird in the Juniper forest near Goba.
- Ethiopian Siskin (E)** *Serinus nigriceps*
A smart bird, it was seen regularly in high altitude areas.
- African Citril (NE)** *Crithagra citrinelloides*
Many birds were seen at scattered locations throughout the tour.
NOTE: This complex is now treated as three full species by IOC: Southern Citril, S. hypostictus, the central Western Citril S. frontalis and African Citril S. citrinelloides.
- Yellow-rumped Seedeater (NE)** *Crithagra xanthopygia*
We had good views of this species in the Gibe Gorge.
- Reichenow's Seedeater** *Crithagra reichenowi*
Small numbers were seen at a few savanna woodland sites in the south.
- Salvadori's Seedeater (E)** *Crithagra xantholaema*
We enjoyed superb views of this species at Sof Omar, with a further sighting on the Bogol Manyo road.
- Yellow-fronted Canary** *Crithagra mozambica*
Seen in Gibe Gorge.
- Northern Grosbeak-Canary (NE)** *Crithagra donaldsoni*
This bird was recorded on the Bogol Manyo road and in the Yabello area.
- White-bellied Canary** *Crithagra dorsostriata*
Recorded in the Yabello area.
- Brown-rumped Seedeater (NE)** *Crithagra tristriata*
Seen on a number of occasions in high altitude areas.
- Ankober Serin (E)** *Crithagra ankoberensis*
A few birds were seen at Gemase Geden.
- Streaky Seedeater** *Crithagra striolata*
Quite common in high altitude areas.

Buntings & Allies Emberizidae

- Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana*
This species was seen in the Jemma Valley.
- Cinnamon-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza tahapisi*



Recorded in the Jemma Valley.

Somali Bunting*Emberiza poliopleura*

We saw this species on a number of occasions in the dry southern savanna areas.

Annotated List of Mammals recorded

Note: Names and taxonomical order of the land mammals follow that of "The Kingdon Field Guide to African Mammals"; additional names are given in parenthesis and are likely to appear in other popular field guides.

Total species recorded: 42**Baboons & Monkeys Cercopithecidae****Guereza Colobus***Colobus guereza*

A very smart monkey, it was seen at scattered forest sites.

Sacred (Hamadryas) Baboon*Papio hamadryas*

We had superb views of this species at Sof Omar.

Olive (Anubis) Baboon*Papio anubis*

Often encountered in large troops, we saw them a number of times on the tour.

Gelada*Theropithecus gelada*

Certainly one of the top mammals of the tour, we saw them in the Jemma Valley and at Gemase Geden.

Grivet Monkey*Cercopithecus aethiops*

Seen at a number of localities, with our first encounters at Awassa.

Vervet Monkey*Cercopithecus pygerythrus*

We saw these monkeys at Sof Omar.

Galagos Galagonidae**Senegal Galago***Galago senegalensis*

A galago, thought to represent this species was seen en route to Negele.

Hares & Rabbits Leporidae**Cape Hare***Lepus capensis*

This large hare was seen in Awash NP and the Bilen Plains.

Scrub Hare*Lepus saxatilis*

Seen near Yabello and in the Awash area.

NOTE: The subspecies which was encountered in Ethiopia is L. fagani which is often regarded as a different species; Abyssinian or Ethiopian Hare.

Starck's Hare*Lepus starcki*

We had superb views of this species on the Sanetti Plateau, with later sightings near Debre Berhan.

Squirrels Sciuridae**Unstriped Ground Squirrel***Xerus rutilus*

First seen in the Sof Omar area, we later had quite good numbers in the Negele-Yabello region.

Striped Ground Squirrel*Euxerus erythropus*

Some saw this species en route to Negele from Goba.

Gambian Sun Squirrel*Heliosciurus gambianus*

Seen in forest at Wando Genet

Porcupines Hystricidae

Crested Porcupine*Hystrix cristata*

We had lovely daytime views of a pair at Lake Langano.

Rats & Mice Cricetidae & Muridae**Giant Root Rat***Tachyoryctes macrocephalus*

A strange creature, we observed a number of them on the Sanetti Plateau. Often seen as they peered out of their burrows.

Blick's (Unstriped) Grass Rat*Arvicanthis blicki*

A number of rodents, presumed to represent this species were seen on the Sanetti Plateau. Identification of the rodents on the plateau is notoriously difficult, however this is supposedly the most frequently recorded species.

Dogs & Allies Canidae**Common (Golden) Jackal***Canis aureus*

Our best view of this species was of a howling individual on the Bilen Plain.

Black-backed Jackal*Canis mesomelas*

Seen on a driving day from Negele to Yabello, with great views in Awash NP.

Ethiopian Wolf (E)*Canis simensis*

Supposedly the rarest canid on earth (with a population estimated at around 500 animals), we had a few excellent views of this handsome beast on the Sanetti Plateau.

NOTE: Latest genetic evidence indicates they are most closely related to the Eurasian Wolf (C. lupus).

Bat-eared Fox*Otocyon megalotis*

We saw this species in Awash NP.

Mongoose Herpestriidae**White-tailed Mongoose***Ichneumia albicauda*

Seen on some of our pre-sunrise drives, and on a nightdrive in Awash NP.

Hyaenas Hyaenidae**Spotted Hyaena***Crocuta crocuta*

We recorded this fascinating mammal near Yabello and in the Bilen Lodge area.

Aardwolf Protelinae**Aardwolf***Proteles cristata*

A lovely creature, the "earth wolf" was seen by some in Awash NP.

Genets & Civets Viverridae**Common Genet***Genetta genetta*

Seen on a few nightdrives, firstly near Yabello, and later in Awash NP.

Aardvark Orycteropodidae**Aardvark***Orycteropus afer*

Some were fortunate enough to see this most sought-after mammal en route to Weliso from Lake Langano.

Hyraxes Procavidae**Ethiopian Rock Hyrax (NE)***Procavia habessinica*

This species was seen en route to Bale Mountains NP, at Lake Langano and at Gemase Geden.



Black-necked Rock Hyrax*Procavia johnsoni*

A really good looking “dassie”, we saw this species at Sof Omar.

Yellow-spotted Hyrax*Heterohyrax brucei*

We had good views of this species at Sof Omar.

Horses Equidae**Grevy's Zebra***Equus grevyi*

A few were seen on the Bilen Plains.

Hippopotamus Hippopotamidae**Hippopotamus***Hippopotamus amphibious*

The “river horse” was seen at Lake Ziway, in the Omo River in Gibe Gorge and at Lake Langano.

Pigs Suidae**Common Warthog***Phacochoerus africanus*

Warties were seen at scattered sites during the tour.

Antelope & Allies Bovidae**Menelik's Bushbuck***Tragelaphus scriptus meneliki*

We had superb views of this animal in the Bale Mountains.

Mountain Nyala (E)*Tragelaphus buxtoni*

Quite a hefty antelope, we had stunning views while in the Bale Mountains.

Lesser Kudu*Tragelaphus imberbis*

Animals were seen in the Yabello area, and later in Awash NP.

Bush (Common/Grey) Duiker*Sylvicapra grimmia*

Seen near the Sanetti and near Yabello.

Klipspringer*Oreotragus oreotragus*

This nimble antelope was seen on the Sanetti Plateau.

Salt's Dik-dik*Madoqua saltiana*

We saw this species at Sof Omar and in the Awash NP.

Günther's Dik-dik*Madoqua guentheri*

Seen between Negele and Yabello, where it was common.

Bohor Reedbuck*Redunca redunca*

We saw this species close to Dinsho in the Bale Mountains.

Grant's Gazelle*Gazella granti*A few animals were seen between Negele and Yabello in an open area with large scattered *Acacia's*.**Soemmerring's Gazelle (NE)***Gazella soemmerringi*

We saw these in Awash NP.

Gerenuk*Litocranius walleri*

These long-necked antelope were seen between Negele and Yabello.

Beisa Oryx*Oryx beisa*

Decent numbers were seen in the Awash area.

Reptiles**Leopard Tortoise***Geochelone pardalis*

We saw a few enormous individuals in the Awash area.

Tropical House Gecko*Hemidactylus mabouia*

Often seen on our accommodations at night.

Striped Skink

Mabuya striata

Seen in the Lake Langano area.

Blue-headed Tree Agama

Agama atricollis

Seen at a few scattered locales, such as near the Rift Valley lakes and Bogol Manyo area.

Nile Crocodile

Crocodylus niloticus

Seen in the Gibe Gorge and in the Jemma Valley.

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