

CAMEROON

6 MARCH – 2 APRIL 2011

TOUR REPORT

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Cameroon may not be a tour for those who like their creature comforts but it certainly produces a huge bird list and if one intends to only ever visit one western African country then this is surely an essential destination. Our comprehensive itinerary covers a superb and wide range of the varied habitats that this sprawling country has to offer. Despite unexpectedly missing some species this year, perhaps due to the result of the previous rainy season coming late with the result that everywhere was greener but somehow inexplicably drier we nonetheless amassed an impressive total of 572 species or recognisable forms of which all but 15 were seen.

These included 26 of the regional endemics; Cameroon Olive Pigeon, Bannerman's Turaco, Mountain Saw-wing, Cameroon Montane, Western Mountain, Cameroon Olive and Grey-headed Greenbuls, Alexander's (split from Bocage's) Akalat, Mountain Robin Chat, Cameroon and Bangwa Forest Warblers, Brown-backed Cisticola, Green Longtail, Bamenda Apalis, White-tailed Warbler, Black-capped Woodland Warbler, Banded Wattle-eye, White-throated Mountain Babbler, Cameroon and Ursula's Sunbirds, Mount Cameroon Speirops, Green-breasted and Mount Kupe Bush-shrikes, Yellow-breasted Boubou, Bannerman's Weaver and Shelley's Oliveback. This year we once again found the recently rediscovered Chad Firefinch and the restricted range Rock Firefinch (first discovered in the country in 2005 by Birdquest). We found several Quail-plovers and a male Savile's Bustard in the Waza area as well as a wonderful Green-breasted/African Pitta, Black Guinea fowl and Vermiculated Fishing Owl in Korup National Park. Many other specialities including much-wanted species such as Hartlaub's Duck, African Swallow-tailed Kite, Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, Fox Kestrel, White-throated and Clapperton's Francolins, Egyptian Plover, Grey Pratincole, Forbes's Plover, Four-banded Sandgrouse, Violet Turaco, Fraser's Eagle Owl, Sjöstedt's Owlet, Standard-winged Nightjar, Bates's Swift, Bare-cheeked Trogon, White-bellied Kingfisher, Blue-bellied Roller, Yellow-casqued Hornbill, Western Green Tinkerbird, Bristle-nosed, Vieillot's and Bearded Barbets, African Piculet, Tullberg's, Gabon and Elliot's Woodpeckers, Grey-headed Broadbill, Sun Lark, Square-tailed and Petit's Saw-wings, West African and Forest Swallows, Preuss's Cliff Swallow, Bannerman's and Long-legged Pipits, Sjöstedt's Honeyguide,

Yellow-necked, Xavier's, Eastern Bearded and White Bearded Greenbuls, Lesser Bristlebill, Gabon Forest Robin, White-bellied, Grey-winged and White-crowned Robin Chats, African Scrub Robin, Heuglin's Wheatear, White-fronted Black Chat, White-crowned Cliff Chat, Chattering, Red-pate, Dorst's and Rufous Cisticolas, River Prinia, Cricket Warbler, Red-winged Grey Warbler, Black-collared and Masked Apalises, Oriole Warbler, Fraser's Forest and Yellow-footed Flycatchers, Dusky Crested Flycatcher, Rufous-vented and Bates's Paradise Flycatchers, Black-necked Wattle-eye, West African Batis, Ruwenzori Hill Babbler, Spotted Thrush Babbler, Yellow Penduline Tit, Spotted Creeper, Reichenbach's and Orange-tufted Sunbirds, Forest White-eye, Fiery-breasted Bush-shrike, Mountain Sooty Boubou, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Neumann's, Chestnut-bellied and White-collared Starlings, Rachel's and Red-bellied Malimbés, Red-headed Antpecker, Brown and Dybowski's Twinspots Black-headed Waxbill and White-rumped Seedeater. We did well with mammals too recording 45 species that included great looks at Giraffe, Topi, Roan Antelope and even Serval Cat in Waza National Park and an absolutely amazing and unexpected Leopard in Bénoué National Park.

We began our grand tour of this panhandle of a country in Douala and were met by a blast of hot and humid air as we made our way out through the sweaty and bustling airport. With only a short night to acclimatise we set off the next morning towards the Sanaga River but stopped at a small forest pool on the way which has become a rather well known 'duck pond' in Cameroon as it usually holds at least a few Hartlaub's Ducks. Grey Parrots squawked and whistled overhead and this morning we were very fortunate as there were no less than twelve ducks loafing and swimming around in the pool alongside Little Grebe, Green-backed Heron, African Jacana and an African Darter.

We then continued to the Sanaga River where out on the sandbanks we easily located our target species and were treated to the sight of assembled pretty little Grey Pratincoles, African Skimmers, White-headed Lapwings with their pendulous wattles and fearsome spurs and White-fronted Plovers. We only had a limited time here and the birds were coming thick and fast, as they always tend to do on the first day! Yellow-billed Kites were very common and loitered on the sandbanks as well as on any convenient dead snag. However small numbers of Bates's Swifts fluttering overhead were more unexpected. Colourful Little Bee-eaters, the tiny African Pygmy Kingfisher and the coastal specialist Reichenbach's Sunbird were all seen. Large numbers of Preuss's Cliff Swallows were getting ready to breed under the bridges and culverts alongside Rufous-chested and Lesser Striped Swallows whilst large numbers of migrant Barn Swallows were gathering presumably fattening themselves up for their imminent departure back to Europe. A small colony of Orange Weavers were much enjoyed and also on the river were Long-tailed Cormorant, Little Egret and Blue-headed Wagtail. A scrubby remnant patch of forest where Speckled, Yellow-throated and Red-rumped Tinkerbirds pooped and trilled held an amazing selection of birds that included large White-thighed Hornbills, a pair of shaggy crowned but flighty White-crested Hornbills, a pretty Gabon Forest Robin, obliging White-browed Forest Flycatchers, Little, Slender-billed, Spotted, Icterine and Red-tailed Greenbuls as well as Tambourine Dove, African Emerald Cuckoo, Buff-spotted Woodpecker, Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher, Western Olive, Green-throated and Olive-bellied Sunbirds, Pied Crow, Vieillot's Black and Village Weavers, pretty Orange-cheeked Waxbills and Bronze Mannikin. As we were about to leave we discovered a pair of dapper Black Bee-eaters on the roadside wires, which was a wonderful way to end the morning.

We then retraced our steps back to Douala taking in a Long-legged Pipit along the way as well as numerous Western Cattle Egrets, Red-eyed Doves, Little Swift, Woodland Kingfisher, African Pied and Piping Hornbills, Common Bulbul and Northern Grey-headed Sparrow. Trying to avoid the horrendous traffic jams we squeezed our way through the city and onto Limbe situated on the shores of the Atlantic

Ocean in the shadow of Mount Cameroon where we spent a few hours in the Botanical Gardens. Sadly there were virtually no flowers to be found and the usual selection of sunbirds was completely absent and we only found Green-headed and Splendid Sunbirds. This was the first sign of the influence that the changing weather patterns were going to have on the tour. Bizarre Speckled Mousebirds were fun to watch, the enormous Giant Kingfisher flew down the river ahead of us where unobtrusive Cassin's Flycatchers were seen and we had great looks at some striking Western Bluebills and pretty African Blue Flycatchers. Other species here included Western Reef Egret, African Harrier Hawk, Common Sandpiper, African Green Pigeon, Blue-spotted Wood Dove, African Palm Swift, Cardinal Woodpecker, African Thrush, Chattering Cisticola, excitable White-chinned Prinias, Grey-backed Camaroptera, Green Crombec, Spotted Flycatcher, African and Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatchers, Common Wattle-eye, Black-necked Weaver and Black-crowned Waxbill.

Our night was spent in Buea in the shadow of the ever-rising Mount Cameroon. The true height of the mountain is argued to lie between 4,040 and 4,095 metres and is actually thought to be increasing every year. We set off at first light for the climb up the famous 'Guinness track', the location of an annual race to and from the summit that is normally completed in something like four and a half hours! All we had to do was merely stagger to the tree line at about 2,000 metres where the endemic Mount Cameroon Speirops occurs. We wended our way through the fields, bracken and tall stands of Elephant Grass that cover the lower slopes taking in excitable Brown-backed (split from Chubb's) Cisticolas, Petit's Saw-wing, Whinchat and Mackinnon's Shrike and listened to a distant Red-chested Flufftail. As we climbed slowly higher and higher the path entered the sadly degraded forest and new birds began to appear. We scanned through for the Cameroon Olive Pigeon but drew a blank faring rather better with a nice flock of graceful endemic Mountain Saw-wings low over the treetops whilst in the skies above were European Honey Buzzard, Eurasian Marsh Harrier, Red-necked Buzzard and even a pair of Peregrine Falcons. Obliging Mountain Robin Chats put on a good show, Forest White-eyes were abundant and as we climbed higher endemic Western Mountain and a few Cameroon Montane Greenbuls gradually replaced the common Little Greenbuls. Regional endemics such as the unassuming Green Longtail, Cameroon Sunbird, endearing Shelley's Olivebacks and the brightly coloured and totally stunning Yellow-breasted Boubou were all very easy to see here and we even saw a pair of charming Black-capped Woodland Warblers. The Cameroon Forest (split from Evergreen Forest) Warbler proved easy to get to grips with and everyone saw it well with the first try! All the time Naked-faced Barbets squealed from the fruiting trees and Yellow-rumped Tinkerbirds 'pooped' and Western Green Tinkerbirds stuttered their staccato cries. African Hill Babblers were common, chunky Oriole Finches and Yellow-billed Turacos were impressive finds, White-bellied Crested Flycatchers flitted through the lush undergrowth and Elliot's Woodpecker put in an appearance. Other species noted included Scaly Francolin, White-throated Bee-eater, Tree Pipit, African Stonechat, chirpy Grey Apalises, Wood Warbler, Garden Warbler, Green Hylia, African Dusky Flycatcher, Northern Double-collared and Sunbird, Waller's Starling, Black-billed and Dark-backed Weavers, Yellow Bishop and Thick-billed Seedeater. We eventually reached the tree line and after a short wait we finally encountered our quarry, the charming Mount Cameroon Speirops and we were treated to some very close views. Ultimately a Cameroon Olive Pigeon that crashed noisily out of the trees as we began the descent was a most welcome find. The loose rocks along the pathway made the descent somewhat treacherous and we reached the bottom weary and tired but very satisfied with our successful day. We then had to drive back to Douala and arrived at our hotel somewhat late.

Douala airport is not a comfortable place to spend any length of time at all and so we were all overjoyed when the check-in and departure of our plane to the north early the next morning went without any hitch or delay. The plane took us from the dripping humidity of the coastal forest zone to the searing heat of

the north at Garoua but the route took us via Yaoundé and Ndjamena in Chad thus making the journey tiresomely long. We were greeted by a blast of hot air that was so dry that any sweat that dared to break through the skin had little chance of remaining there for long! We transferred to our air-conditioned minibus, enjoyed an early lunch at a nearby hotel and then having driven on a much improved and repaired road we found ourselves some three and a half hours later at Maroua just in time for some very late afternoon birding. Around the town we found a large flock of strange Piapiacs, Rose-ringed Parakeet and a pair of dapper Red-necked Falcons before the sun set.

The cool of the morning in the far north does not last long but the first hours of daylight are essential for notching up some quality birds. Huge ghostly rocky inselbergs loomed out of the flat landscape and we spent some time birding around these enormous piled heaps of giant boulders where Cinnamon-breasted Rock Buntings were common and we soon found some perky Rock-loving Cisticolas, African Scrub Robin and garrulous Stone Partridges scampered over the rocks like little bantams as the much-wanted Fox Kestrel drifted overhead. Senegal Batis and pretty Red-cheeked Cordon-bleus enchanted and ultimately to everyone's great pleasure we watched a pair of Rock Firefinches, a species previously only known from Nigeria but confirmed in Cameroon for the first time by Birdquest in 2005. Other birds in the area included Laughing Dove, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Rock Martin, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Northern Crombec, Common Whitethroat, Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Greater Blue-eared Starling, Speckle-fronted Weaver, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow Weaver and Little and Vitelline Masked Weavers.

The day was heating up quickly and we had been told that the road north of Maroua had worsened considerably over the past year so we decided to try to make as many birding stops as we could en route to Waza to avoid constantly retracing our steps along what indeed turned out to be an appalling road. At our next stop we set off on a walkabout hoping to flush one of the most wanted species of the tour; the bizarre and remarkably little known Quail-plover. At this time of year the air is normally full of sand and dust blown from the Sahara by the Harmattan winds that prevail but this year we had piercing blue skies and the sun beat down on us mercilessly and temperatures rose to over 40° C. In order to see this highly desirable species we needed to cover much ground in the hope of ultimately flushing this tiny bird. We set off in an organised line through the bush and luckily soon came across our target species and managed to obtain excellent flight views of no less than five individuals that flapped away looking half lark and half quail but the birds simply would not allow themselves to be seen on the ground. The morning was passing by quickly and whilst we hunted in vain for Cricket Warbler, another target species we were compensated with views of some elegant African Swallow-tailed Kites that glided overhead with Black-shouldered Kite nearby for comparison. Also overhead we spotted a pale phase Booted Eagle whilst elsewhere a pair of White-bellied Bustards was flushed, wide-eyed Black-headed Lapwings scurried away and Chestnut-bellied Starlings were common. Brightly coloured Little Green Bee-eaters perched out in the open, Black Scrub Robins cocked and fanned their tails everywhere and Green-winged Pytilias were easy to see. Red-pate Cisticolas were common and other species included Crested Lark, Chestnut-backed Sparrow Lark, Ethiopian Swallow, Northern Wheatear, Pygmy Sunbird, Southern Grey Shrike and Black-crowned Tchagra. Finally we had to admit defeat with the mid-day sun sizzling fearsomely overhead and we retired to the shade of a local bar for a good lunch where strangely enough for a predominantly Muslim population, only beers and no soft drinks at all were on sale!

The final stop of the day involved another walkabout but the afternoon is always quiet in this part of the country so we set out to try to flush another specialty of the area, the elusive Savile's Bustard. We needed to cover a large area of open country in order to find this bird but we ultimately proved successful and had some good flight views as it disappeared into the distance. Seeing the bird on the ground in this

country is not easy. Abyssinian Rollers shone out in glorious *Technicolor* in the late afternoon and skulking but intensely coloured Yellow-crowned Gonolek were admired as noisy Brown Babblers squabbled in the thickets. The remarkable Long-tailed Glossy Starling was seen and the few other new additions to the list included Gabar Goshawk, Wahlberg's Eagle, Helmeted Guineafowl, Green Wood-hoopoe, Central African Hoopoe and Northern Red-billed and African Grey Hornbills. We arrived at the Campement de Waza, as it was getting dark.

We woke to another clear morning and were greeted by the resident Barn Owls that frequent the camp. Waza National Park has a mean annual rainfall that varies from between 550 and 750 mm that usually only falls between June and September. Therefore we were here in one of the driest months when temperatures can be expected to reach 45°C and much animal activity occurs around the artificial waterholes. Travelling from one such oasis to the next, with Clapperton's Francolins scurrying from the roadsides, was the order of the day, and at each stop thousands upon thousands of birds greeted us. In such parched conditions the lure of water is strong and the swirling flocks of Red-billed Queleas, Bush Petronias and Northern Red Bishops were simply overwhelming at times. Smaller numbers of Cut-throat, African Silverbill, Black-rumped Waxbill and White-rumped Seedeater were also present. This was also a great opportunity to get to know your doves as Speckled Pigeon, Namaqua, Vinaceous, European Turtle, African Mourning and African Collared Doves filled the trees eventually coming down to drink alongside Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse. Some beautiful Black Crowned Cranes, Squacco, Grey and Black-headed Herons, African Openbill and Marabou, Woolly-necked and White Storks loitered by pools where Sacred Ibis, Knob-billed Duck, Little Stint, Spur-winged Lapwing and Malachite Kingfisher could also be found and everywhere there was a sense of ebb and flow as species after species having rested or quenched their thirst then moved on thus presenting an ever-changing tableau. Visiting hirundines included Common Sand Martin and West African Swallow. Sadly it seemed that numbers of raptors that are usually always well represented in the park were substantially down on previous years. As seems to be the worrying trend in other parts of Africa these days vulture numbers were also very low and only a few Rüppell's Griffon Vultures, Egyptian and Lappet-faced Vultures were seen although a Eurasian Griffon Vulture put in a surprise appearance. Pallid and Montagu's Harriers skimmed low over the bushes in search of tasty morsels and this year we also found Dark Chanting Goshawk, Grasshopper Buzzard, Tawny and Long-crested Eagles and Common Kestrel. Elsewhere Northern Anteater Chats were perhaps rather less exciting lifers and we also found Palearctic migrants such as Isabelline Wheatear, Ashy-headed Wagtail, Western Olivaceous Warbler and Masked and Woodchat Shrikes. In the bushes comical Blue-naped Mousebirds clung spread-eagled to the vegetation, the dowdy River Prinia was easy to see and we also noted Senegal Coucal, Northern Carmine Bee-eater, Beautiful Sunbird and Red-billed Firefinch. This year mammals were worryingly scarce but we had some close encounters with the beautiful West African Giraffe (with attendant Yellow-billed Oxpeckers) and also saw Roan Antelope and Topi well. At dusk we watched Four-banded Sandgrouse coming into drink followed closely by some Long-tailed Nightjars leaving their day roost. Despite the dry conditions we had done well and this whole experience was surely as much about the overwhelming Sahelian spectacle as it was about ticking off some memorable life birds!

Our remaining time in the Waza area was spent searching for the remaining specialities and in particular Cricket Warbler and Little Grey Woodpecker. These birds certainly did not come easy as we trekked over large areas of open country and we never did find the woodpecker. However in the process we obtained amazing views of Quail-plover on the ground and we enjoyed prolonged looks at it quietly performing its strange hesitant, bobbing, chameleon-like walk in full view for as long as we wished. At the eleventh hour a delightful Cricket Warbler popped into view (a species first discovered in Cameroon by Birdquest

in 1995). During our walks we also saw Black Wood-hoopoes probing the branches of the sparse trees, the attractive Vieillot's Barbet finally showed well to all and White-billed Buffalo Weaver and both Yellow-bellied and Senegal Eremomelas were seen albeit at separate sites.

It was time to head back south to Garoua for a short overnight stay as we were to leave very early the next morning in order to get to Poli. The reason for our visit was because of the rediscovery three years previously of the little known Chad Firefinch in Cameroon. At the time we had been the first group in to the area to see this species and we were hoping to repeat our success this year. Unfortunately the site is in a mining area and special permission is needed to visit but fortunately this was granted again this year.

We bounced up a mountainside in a 4X4 clinging on for dear life, as some sections are particularly steep. At the top we found that a lot of clearance had taken place with much of the grassy woodland cut down and there was virtually no bird activity at all. However after a short time the distinctive dry trills of the firefinches were heard and we were soon watching a small family group exhibiting a whole range of plumages from juveniles, females, moulting males and even a full plumaged male. Handsome White-crowned Cliff Chats, Dybowski's Twinspot, Lavender Waxbills and West African Seedeater were most welcome finds and although our time at this interesting location was both short and our access restricted we also found pretty Red-throated Bee-eaters and the magnificently grotesque Bearded Barbet. A Willcocks's Honeyguide was holding territory and we also noted Bateleur, Bruce's Green Pigeon, Black-billed Wood Dove, colourful Grey-headed Kingfisher, Familiar Chat, Northern Black Flycatcher, Pale Flycatcher, Yellow White-eye, African Golden Oriole, Purple Glossy Starling, Black-winged Red Bishop and Yellow-fronted Canary. We then returned to the lower surrounding countryside where tail-wagging Yellow-billed Shrikes and Yellow-throated Longclaw were found and Heuglin's Wheatears posed nicely. A selection of cisticolas included Dorst's, Croaking, Singing and Zitting Cisticola.

We drove further south into Bénoué National Park and were treated to some good looks at the exquisite Blue-bellied Roller and extremely excited to see a Leopard that was as surprised to see us as we were to see it. Although startled it kept stopping in its tracks to glare at us and even came back towards us at one point. Sadly we were all so involved in watching this marvellous creature that all the cameras were momentarily forgotten! We arrived at the Campement Buflé Noir in the late afternoon and were pleased to find the place in an even more healthy state than last visit! The bukurus had been re-painted with efficient air conditioners installed and it was really much more comfortable than it has been in years. As dusk fell the little African Scops Owls started their purring calls and it wasn't long before we had one firmly in our sight. Even a nocturnal Fine-spotted Woodpecker was caught in the torch beam!

Numbers of mammals seen during this visit were as in Waza noticeably lower but fortunately most of the birds continued to oblige and it must be said that some very pleasant hours were spent walking the drying river bed amongst the company of sublime Egyptian Plovers and snorting hippos.

The next morning we were up early and whilst dodging Tsetse flies and sweat bees in the dry woodlands we located a male White-throated Francolin that was calling loudly amongst the more numerous Double-spurred Francolins. Early rains had forced a bright green flush of growth in the park and after the dust of the far north conditions here were somewhat more pleasant. Brightly coloured Senegal Parrots and Violet-backed Starlings were a feature of this bush country. The spectacular and prehistoric looking Abyssinian Ground Hornbill stalked through the grasses. A pair of Red-winged Warblers allowed some good views, a Brubru sounded out its 'half time whistle' cry, silvery White-breasted Cuckoo-shrikes and attractive Yellow-bellied Hyliotas were seen, but the star birds were probably a juvenile Ovambo

Sparrowhawk, White-fronted Black Chat, the diminutive Yellow Penduline Tit and Brown-rumped Bunting. We also noted Shikra, African Cuckoo, Striped Kingfisher, Grey Woodpecker, Short-winged and Rufous Cisticolas, Willow Warbler, Lead-coloured and Pied Flycatchers, Northern Puffback, Tropical Boubou and Fork-tailed Drongo. The morning was getting very hot and sticky and our bites were getting itchier and we headed back for lunch taking in a pair of White-headed Vultures that soared overhead.

In the afternoon we went down by the river and as the hot afternoon sun began to fall in the sky we sought the shelter of patches of shade in a tranquil riverine setting where we had some wonderful encounters with Egyptian Plovers as well as Beaudouin's and Western Banded Snake Eagles, Three-banded Plover, Green and Wood Sandpipers and Wire-tailed and Grey-rumped Swallows. Hamerkops and Hadada Ibises moved from one shady bank to another where dowdy Swamp Flycatchers sallied back and forth alongside a colourful Blue-breasted Kingfisher and striking Pied Kingfishers. European Reed and Great Reed Warbler both frequented the banks. Charming and excitable Red-winged Grey Warblers showed well and Black-headed Gonolek and both Snowy-crowned and White-crowned Robin Chats brightened up the day. The strange Oriole Warbler or Moho sang loudly from the thick riverine vegetation that also provided ample cover for noisy Blackcap Babblers and Western Grey Plantain-eater and Violet Turacos were also seen.

We stayed with this habitat the following morning and starting before first light we managed to see a juvenile Pel's Fishing Owl that was calling and also Freckled Nightjar. As the day dawned we continued to add species such as the superb White-crested Turaco and also Black-crowned Night Heron, Grey Kestrel, White-rumped Swift, African Pied Wagtail, Red-faced Cisticola, White-shouldered Black Tit, Western Violet-backed Sunbird, Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike, Black-headed Weaver, Bar-breasted and Black-bellied Firefinches.

Leaving Bénoué National Park behind us we continued further south noting the Brown Snake Eagles that favour the electricity pylons in this area and up the twisting hairpin-bend road past the corpses of numerous trucks and lorries to the 'cooler' heights of the Adamawa Plateau and Ngaoundéré where we paused briefly for lunch before continuing to Ngaoundaba Ranch for some initial exploration of the scrubby country which was showing much regeneration of vegetation due to the wetter season and the fact that no fires had yet ravaged the countryside. Another Ovambo Sparrowhawk, this time an adult was a good sighting quickly followed by a smart male Red-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike. A roosting male Standard-winged Nightjar was discovered during the day and we were able to marvel at its spectacular but strange, feathered appendages. Later we also found a female. Now yellow-vented Dark-capped Bulbuls had replaced the white-vented birds elsewhere. Lizard Buzzard was seen and in one of the dark vegetated gullies secretive Grey-winged Robin Chats were glimpsed.

Once again this year Ngaoundaba Ranch was closed and we were forced to stay in Ngaoundéré. In fact what has happened is that the construction team building the new road linking the north and the south have hired the ranch as a construction site camp even building what amounts to a small village on the property. They are set to be there for at least the rest of this year and the effect on the landscape at this normally peaceful location has been immense particularly as they were also quarrying from the area. The added disturbance with garbage piled up and destruction of habitat was one thing but also trails had fallen into disrepair and it was sad to see the change. We had to commute to the ranch area every day, which meant a minimum 45-minute journey each way and hence very long days.

At what was once a more idyllic location, the ranch guesthouse overlooks an attractive crater lake surrounded by rolling grassy hills and beautiful gallery forest that is home to some stunning birds. Early next morning we began our exploration of the area and wandered down to the lakeside. Normally each night hundreds of egrets, cormorants, ibises, weavers and starlings come into roost on an island in the middle of the lake but the egrets were virtually absent again this year with only small numbers of Western Great Egrets and Sacred Ibises seen. However the starlings and weavers were present and as they left the roost we ticked off Splendid and Bronze-tailed Glossy Starlings although getting views of the localised White-collared Starling took a little more time but by the end of our stay everyone had succeeded and they seemed to be present in good numbers this year. On the lake there were Purple Heron, Spur-winged Goose, an African Water Rail and Common Moorhen. Black Crakes scuttled over the lily pads and even three Hartlaub's Ducks showed well, however the Greater Swamp Warblers spent most of their time buried in the rushes. Our first rather overdue Palm-nut Vulture was seen and a lone Broad-billed Roller hawked for insects.

Our two days at Ngaoundaba were spent walking in various directions around the grounds in search of some very special birds. In the galleries we heard the impressively loud gong-like song of Spotted Thrush Babblers only once or twice and actually seeing them this year was not easy. Indeed it wasn't until the last morning that we managed to obtain brief views. Leafloves were very noisy and thus much in evidence but as their name suggests weren't always easy to see amongst the dense foliage however we did obtain some excellent views of one group in particular. Fortunately the endemic Bamenda Apalis proved easy to see this year but unusually seemed to favour the interior of the galleries rather than the edge. Some stunning long-tailed black-and-white morph African Paradise Flycatchers were a joy to watch whilst the loud rhythmic cries of Oriole Warblers (or Moho) were there to break the silence of these woodlands and at last we all finally set eyes upon one. White-spotted Flufftails were heard calling and some of us managed to see a male as it sneaked back and forth. Also judged to be a highlight of our stay here were the fantastic Ross's Turacos that displayed their marvellous colours so well and whose raucous calls were a constant companion during our walks. Another spectacular find was a Greyish Eagle Owl in broad daylight that had attracted the fury of a number of small birds. In the damp thickets and gallery forests, we also found Red-headed Lovebird, Levaillant's Cuckoo, Yellowbill, Yellow-throated Leaflove, African Moustached Warbler, Whistling Cisticola, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Square-tailed Drongo, Baglafaecht Weaver and Brown Twinspot.

The open bush around the ranch stretches for miles and during our convoluted, meandering forays cross-country we came upon Pearl-spotted Owlet, Horus Swift, Greater and Lesser Honeyguides, Variable and Copper Sunbirds and Grey-headed Bush-shrike. An obliging Sun Lark was much appreciated and other species included a family of Eurasian Golden Oriole and flocks of Red-headed Quelea. As dusk fell a female Pennant-winged Nightjar was seen.

Due to an early morning flight to the south we had to cut our time at Ngaoundaba slightly short and we returned to Garoua for an overnight stay. On the way we stopped at a lake that we scanned relentlessly for Lesser Jacana but without success. However, we did manage to find White-faced Whistling Duck, Garganey, Whiskered Tern, Winding Cisticola and Marsh Widowbird but perhaps the best 'lake' bird was a super juvenile Lesser Moorhen that Phil found for us during the stop.

The next day we caught the plane (remarkably punctual!) south to Yaoundé for a two nights stay. The ever-growing capital is set amongst rolling hills within the forest zone. There is not much to recommend the sprawling city to the birder but during our time here we managed to find some exciting species in the

rapidly disappearing forests on the city outskirts. The stay didn't start particularly well as we spent the afternoon waiting patiently at a Red-headed Picathartes nest site hoping that the birds would come to roost but they never did. Little was seen that afternoon because of our vigil. A Banded Prinia greeted us on arrival and as dusk fell there were fluttering Sabine's and bat-like Cassin's Spinetails, European Swift and Square-tailed Saw-wing in the skies above our heads.

The next day we visited two potential picathartes sites but once again we drew a blank. Some chose to visit the rocks in the morning specifically to look for that bird and some of us opted for general birding, which in actual fact turned out to be extremely profitable. We climbed up through some farmbrush that held both noisy Yellow-throated Nicator (which we never did see) and the poorly named Yellow-necked or Falkenstein's Greenbul and managed two sightings of Red-bellied Malimbe, all species at the edge of their range. A colony of tufted Grey-throated Barbets live in the dead trees here and they were seen frequently throughout the morning. The rocky outcrops obviously made good nesting locations for Forest Swallows because we saw them repeatedly during the morning. Simple Leaflove, Little Grey, Ansorge's, Golden and Honeyguide Greenbuls were all added to the growing greenbul list, Grey Longbill was somewhat easy to see for a change, a colourful Bates's Paradise Flycatcher was seen and both Pink-footed and Black-shouldered Puffbacks were obviously holding territory as the males dashed around inflating their backs so that they looked like little pom-poms. A female Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike was a welcome find as was a soaring Cassin's Hawk Eagle just before we departed. Other birds that were seen during the morning included Klaas's Cuckoo, Buff-throated Apalis, Yellow-browed Camaroptera, Green and Collared Sunbirds, White-breasted Negrofinch, Common Waxbill and Black-and-white Mannikin. In the afternoon we returned to the site of yesterday's vigil and this time the welcoming committee included the unassuming Little Grey Flycatcher and the charming Chestnut-capped Flycatcher. Sadly the picathartes never made the rendezvous.

Another spot near Yaoundé visited the following morning gave us some added bonuses with ridiculously 'horned' Bristle-nosed Barbets feeding in a fruiting tree alongside Cameroon Sombre and Yellow-whiskered Greenbuls. Some Swamp Palm Bulbuls cackled at each other whilst high in the canopy a male West African Batis piped out his repetitive song. Didric Cuckoo, Chestnut Wattle-eye and Superb Sunbird were also present. We left the Yaoundé area heading for Bamenda in Anglophone Cameroon and at an appropriate river crossing we found some glittering White-throated Blue Swallows. Above our hotel in Bamenda we scoped some Neumann's Starlings on the cliff face as a rather dull afternoon drew to a close.

Our first day in the Bamenda area was spent exploring a patch of remnant forest that has been protected for centuries by the local Fon and his community. The forest itself cloaks a steep hillside and although it is small it is still magnificent and in it cling for survival some of the avian jewels of the Cameroonian crown of endemism. No sooner had we embarked on our walk than we were watching a bright yellow Bannerman's Weaver in the farmbrush along the way. Inside the forest we found the dapper endemic Banded Wattle-eye sporting intensely red wattles and it was interesting to find Common Wattle-eye here also - surely a pitfall for the unwary! Further on we heard the mechanical noise of the African Broadbill and a responsive bird quickly shot into view. From deep inside the forest we could hear the raucous guttural cries of turacos so we climbed onwards and upwards until with a flash of red and green through the treetops a Bannerman's Turaco bounced into view and then just remained on his perch posing for us nicely for a long period of time. Although we had heard them earlier in the tour we now finally managed to see the attractive Yellow-spotted Barbet. There was Black-throated Apalis high in the canopy and pretty Black-collared Apalises in the undergrowth. Ruwenzori (recently re-split from African) Hill Babbler

showed well and we also saw the rather drab Cameroon Olive Greenbul. Sadly we only heard the agitated alarm call of a Green-breasted Bush-shrike.

By now it was mid day and with the birding activity at a lull we moved on in the afternoon to the more open grasslands where an attractive vista of rolling grasslands, rocky escarpments and patches of gallery forest laid out before us proved to be a pleasant place to spend the rest of the day. Here the localised Bannerman's Pipit gave us the run around until we all had seen it well, some Blue-breasted Bee-eaters and Red-rumped Swallows obliged but shortly after this a storm that had been brewing finally exploded onto us drenching many to the skin as we had gone some way from the car and the day was brought to a premature end.

The following day produced a cool morning. We spent our time at a small crater lake that held an African Black Duck. On the forested crater sides we quickly renewed our acquaintance with the marvellous Bannerman's Turaco, Bannerman's Weaver and Banded Wattle-eye! A super male Orange-tufted Sunbird was most welcome, a pair of Cassin's Honeybirds was something of a surprise and both Common Fiscal and Brown-capped Weavers were seen. A few African Black and Mottled Swifts appeared and out on the open grasslands we found Pectoral-patch Cisticola. Up to this time we had been struggling to see the regional endemic, Bangwa Forest Warbler but here we discovered a responsive bird that allowed us all views. We then bade our farewells to the members of the group who were returning home that day and a smaller intrepid band of travellers journeyed on to Nyasoso at the foot of Mount Kupe.

The Mount Kupe part of the tour, based at Nyasoso, was an altogether different experience. Here there were people, noise and the excitement of village life. We were immediately made to feel at home as we were being accommodated for six nights in the home of a most hospitable local family who did their best to make us welcome and comfortable.

Climbing up the mountain was a strenuous exercise that left everyone lighter and hopefully fitter by the end of the stay, but the rewards were great and we were all eager to try and track down the mountain's special inhabitants. Our first day was spent in the farmbush and forests on the lower slopes. As dawn broke we headed past the gurgling cries of Greater Swamp Warblers and the bouncing song of Little Rush Warbler and through the school compound with its Splendid Sunbirds and estrildid flocks. The farmbush held Blue-headed Coucal and as we entered the 'nature trail' a superb juvenile Red-chested (split from African) Goshawk was studied. Inside what was once the 'forest' it was disappointing to see that more trees had been cleared to extend a large farm along the 'nature trail'. Last year we were told that the man responsible would be sent to prison but this was clearly not the case as there were people working the farm during our visit. However the damage has now been done and sadly the nature trail area is a much poorer place with trees felled right up to what used to be a picathartes nest site. More worrying is that the trees are being cut down in the water catchment area and within the boundary of the 'protected' forest. It remains to be seen what will happen. Despite the destruction there were still birds to be seen and the highlight had to be a magnificent Fiery-breasted Bush-shrike that responded aggressively to playback showing itself well in the now sparse vegetation. A male Tiny Sunbird allowed great views and several tiny Tit-hylas (arguably Africa's smallest bird) showed well. There were also delightful Black-capped Apalises and a spiky-crested Black-and-white Flycatcher. A Common Cuckoo was seen and we also had views of Olive-green Camaroptera, Rufous-crowned Eremomela and Sooty Flycatcher. We returned to the farmbush in the afternoon but it was very quiet and we only added Rufous Flycatcher Thrush, Purple-headed Glossy Starling and a flock of Narrow-tailed Starlings at the end of the day.

The next day we began our assault of Mt Kupe itself but took it very slowly up Max's trail, as there was much to see on the way and a lot of time was spent birding the highly productive farmbrush. At the forest edge startlingly coloured Green and Yellow-billed Turacos were admired and a Yellow-billed Barbet was seen flying from its song post into denser cover. Both Gabon and Green-backed Woodpeckers were seen; Petit's Cuckoo-shrike and a dapper male Shrike Flycatcher showed well wiggling his tail from side to side. Furtive Black-faced Rufous Warblers crept through the undergrowth as we struggled up to higher levels along the slippery trail. Stopping for regular 'breathers' we continued to add birds and special mention must be made of the endearing female Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye who had made her nest virtually on the path itself but bravely sat tight whenever we passed. Higher up we managed to get some great views of the diminutive Ursula's Sunbird but it was higher still that the greatest rewards came. We struggled onwards and upwards to the saddle where the beautiful forest with the strange pendulous stemmed flowers of the peculiar shrub *Cephaelis densinervia* and tall trees dripping with mossy lianas was impressive but eerily quiet. The recent storms had wreaked a great deal of destruction on the mountain and numerous trees had come down flooding the dark liana draped interior with light. The strange White-tailed Warblers squealed at us from the gloomy tangles, a juvenile Grey-headed Broadbill allowed prolonged looks and finally we heard the eerie hoots of a bush-shrike floating through the forest and after some neck-breaking effort we were feasting our eyes on this heavy-billed 'gladiator' and there was the prize of a fine Green-breasted Bush-shrike glaring down at us from high above our heads in the canopy.

We were up very early and enjoyed views of a Fraser's Eagle Owl that showed well just before dawn. We broke our explorations of Mt Kupe by visiting the nearby Bakossi Mountains over the next two days. We were aiming to visit the village of Kodmin and the journey normally only takes about an hour. This year however the road was in a sad and sorry state and a vehicle blocked our way. We found another route but the journey took us a fearful five hours and most of the time we were driving along footpaths and motorbike trails! The advantage of visiting Kodmin lies in the fact that the village is already at the altitude preferred by many of the special birds that we previously needed to climb the steep slopes of Mt Kupe for and so by driving to Kodmin the difficult climb up is avoided although it must be remembered that the steep paths at Kodmin then of course only lead down and they need to be re-climbed! We discovered the first record of Mount Kupe Bush-shrike at Kodmin in 2002 and this now seems to be a reasonably reliable site for this elusive species as well as Green-breasted Bush-shrike. We had no problems with the village community this year although a little time was needed in order to sort out the arrangements. Unfortunately land ownership and access isn't that simple in parts of Cameroon so that one cannot freely wander about and the chiefs, councils and local gods all have to be appeased mainly by beer, whisky, cola nuts and ultimately money. However finally the settlement was reached and we were allowed to enter the forest.

Initially the path leads through bracken-covered hillsides where we saw species such as Fan-tailed Grassbird. However it was inside the forest that we spent the most time trying to track down a bird party or better still a Mount Kupe Bush-shrike or even another Green-breasted Bush-shrike. As with everywhere in this hilly region the terrain often presents more problems in seeing the birds than the birds themselves! Steep, densely vegetated valleys and narrow trails do not make it easy for groups of people to get onto birds. Once again this year we were fortunate enough to see the desirable Mount Kupe Bush-shrike and hear its grating calls echoing through the forest. The bird responded aggressively crashing in above our heads but gradually became more and more elusive. During our two days spent in these forests we had some marvellous views of the regionally endemic White-throated Mountain Babblers and very attractive tail-pumping Grey-headed Greenbuls. We also obtained some excellent views of a couple of Bar-tailed Trogons and several White-bellied Robin Chats. Some large and busy flocks held Tullberg's Woodpecker, Grey Cuckoo-shrike and Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher. Both Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo

and Grey-chested Illadopsis were only glimpsed by some of us but we all saw Masked Apalis and had some excellent looks at displaying Bocage's Bush-shrikes. A Mountain Wagtail was seen during one of the journeys at a river crossing.

Our last day on Mount Kupe was spent trying to see our missing species. We started well with a skulking Lühder's Bush-shrike that was persuaded to leave its hiding place. A little further on we glimpsed a Red-faced Crimsonwing, a Yellow-footed Flycatcher sat out in the open and a Western Black-headed Oriole showed well in the canopy. We also managed to set eyes on a Blackcap Illadopsis and some Black-necked Wattle-eyes that dashed to and fro posing briefly every now and then. A Many-coloured Bush-shrike was heard calling persistently and after some time spent luring it in the bird finally showed itself well for a short while only to disappear back into hiding again. Once again we saw the hyliotas that appear to show the field characters of Southern Hyliota rather than the Yellow-bellied that had 'officially' been recorded from the mountain up until our visit in 2005 when we started looking at these birds with a more critical eye. There is one specimen of a Southern Hyliota collected by Serle in 1965 from the nearby Rumpi Hills and this has always remained a bit of a puzzle. However, the *slatini* rain forest population of 'Southern Hyliota' ranges from just a little further east and reaches as far as Kenya's Kakamega Forest and the Angolan scarp forests and there are surely closer links with this form and the recently split Usambara Hyliota from Tanzania rather than the miombo dwelling races of Southern Hyliota. These hyliotas were sharing the same tree with a pair of glorious Preuss's Golden-backed Weavers. A large bird party kept us occupied for some time and it contained a range of species from the tiny African Piculet to Brown-chested Alethe and both Pale-breasted and Brown Illadopsises. Higher up the mountain and after what had been up till now a frustrating lack of response, Alexander's (split from Bocage's) Akalat ultimately proved easy to see and Mountain Sooty Boubous also showed somewhat better. The day ended in a torrential downpour and we slid back down the mountain.

It was time to move on to our final destination and we bade a fond farewell to our gracious hosts and embarked on a long and tedious journey over some terrible and then not so terrible roads that ultimately led us to the small town of Mundemba on a route that is notorious for claiming many a vehicle during the rainy season. We travelled on with the cries of "white-man, white-man" ringing in our ears but the journey was pretty much uneventful bird-wise although a mid afternoon birding stop in the quiet humid forest secondary growth did produce a super Streaky-throated (split from Hairy-breasted) Barbet. We finally reached Mundemba in time to organise porters, cooks and a supply of beer for our three nights camping inside Korup National Park. The cultivated areas around the hotel didn't look particularly inspiring but the fields held a small group of intensely coloured Black-headed Waxbills and somewhat surprisingly a Forbes's Plover was seen flying over.

The following morning we found ourselves at the foot of the impressive suspension bridge spanning the Mana River. Some solid concrete steps now replace the once rickety wooden ladder thus making the experience of crossing the river somewhat less hair-raising although when wet a few slippery planks here and there still test the grip on your walking boots! From here we watched small numbers of Rock Pratincoles either loafing around on the rocks below or hawking for insects. However parrots were mysteriously absent and the hoped for morning flight of large hornbills was also lacking and as things were really rather quiet it seemed best to begin our walk. As we moved through the forest, we were accompanied by the sound of enormous Black-casqued and Yellow-casqued Hornbills as they moved from tree to tree, the buzzing whirr of their wings slicing the silence of the forest. Getting a view of them through the high, dense canopy however was a task in itself! We pressed on stopping for anything of interest en route as one does on these occasions. The sounds of a bird party including some Xavier's Greenbuls and Lesser Bristlebill welcomed us into the gloom and from this point on a thick wall of primary rainforest engulfed our party as we slipped inside the dark green mass of vegetation and began

trekking along narrow trails between tall solid tree trunks and looped and tangled lianas, heading to our base camp some eight kilometres away.

It was however an enormous surprise when for the second year running the distinctive call of a Pitta reached our ears. Terrified that we might frighten the bird away we inched as silently as we could off the path towards the source of the sound. Gradually we got closer and closer and several birds appeared to be displaying around us but we could see none of them! Unfortunately our movements must have disturbed the bird and there was nothing but silence for some time. We waited patiently and after some tentative playback the birds responded again and this time much closer. In another second or two one had flown in on the ground directly in front of us only a matter of a few metres away and there it stayed for a while, walking on the ground and stopping to preen and look all around for the supposed intruder. This was certainly an amazing start to our Korup experience and a wonderful sight but for the tickers perhaps a more difficult decision as although the call matched Green-breasted Pitta the breast colour was more of an in-between shade more akin to African Pitta. There are many taxonomists who argue that the pittas should be one species and we were certainly in the known 'hybrid' zone. However the voice was definitely of the forest dwelling Green-breasted Pitta and the birds only responded to this call. Maybe some taxonomic adjustments and re-evaluations are called for?

Although the day started well it ended badly. The weather was hot and humid and the skies unbelievably clear and blue – rather abnormal for this time of year and frustrating as we had suffered so much rain at Nyasoso. Nonetheless we visited the picathartes site hoping that the birds would still come in to roost. We entered the sheltered outcrop of giant boulders, actually a pile of monolithic, gneiss rocks where a few pairs of rockfowl are known to nest. What with the somewhat surreal light that filtered down through the massive trees and seeped past the sepulchral stones that towered above our heads, the feeling here under these ancient boulders lent a mystical, almost spiritual feel to our vigil. However despite trying for three consecutive evenings we never did see the birds and had we stayed a fourth day we later found out we still would not have seen them. Whether it was the fault of the weather is unclear. Perhaps the birds are no longer tolerating the disturbance caused by numbers of hopeful birders visiting the nest site and have changed their habits and only time will now tell. Some recompense came later that night with great scope views of one of a pair of the resident Vermiculated Fishing Owls captured magically in the torch beam. So upset was the pair that they continued to call all night long.

The next three days were spent working some of the forest trails as there were still many other species for us left to find and we quickly discovered that forest birding here is definitely not easy and were soon coping with the frustrations of catching (or perhaps missing) furtive shadowy shapes that slipped away before we had hardly even registered their presence! However, these occasions of hair-tearing and teeth-gnashing frustration were surely offset by the joys of seeing an Sjöstedt's Owlet in broad daylight puffing out its throat with every croaking hoot and a Black Guinea fowl walking down the path ahead of us with its bald red head glowing like a beacon! Near the camp we heard the calls of Nkulengu Rail but as usual we would have no luck seeing that particular species. We did far better after hearing a Bare-cheeked Trogon and some careful stalking also enabled us to see this stunning creature well. Bird parties held species such as Blue Cuckoo-shrike, White-tailed Ant Thrush, Dusky Crested Flycatcher, Fraser's Sunbird, Shining Drongo Blue-billed Malimbe and Red-headed Antpecker with two separate families of glorious Rachel's Malimbés shining out in the gloom of the forest and watched for as long as we pleased. Greenbul flocks yielded Red-tailed Bristlebill, White-bearded and Eastern Bearded Greenbuls and Sjöstedt's Honeyguide Greenbul. Bright-eyed Red-billed Dwarf Hornbills dashing back and forth above our heads. A Blue-headed Wood Dove responded well to playback and posed briefly for us on an exposed branch. We watched Crested Malimbés building their nests and enjoyed watching a superb male Rufous-sided Broadbill that twirled around like a mechanical toy in the forest half-light. An ant

swarm allowed us amazing views of so many Fire-crested Alethes, the brown-throated *iboensis* form of Brown Illadopsises were seen, a very responsive White-spotted Flufftail was whistled in and a White-bellied Kingfisher flew past us along a forest stream.

A visit to Rengo Rock allowed us to climb up above the canopy of the forest from where the views were awe inspiring and we saw a Blue-headed Bee-eater zap past as well as many European Bee-eaters presumably migrating back to Europe. Elsewhere we glimpsed a Chocolate-backed Kingfisher piping its far-reaching cry into the extensive forest, saw Chestnut-breasted Negrofinch and heard Drill that did not sound too far away but sadly we never saw them.

We returned back to the hotel in Mundemba to clean and organise ourselves for the long drive back to Douala. There was just enough time for some early morning birding stops the next day and we still managed to add a last minute flurry of species. An African Finfoot was watched swimming up a river, Western Nicator, Blue-throated Brown Sunbird and Red-vented Malimbés were in the treetops. The magnificent Great Blue Turaco showed incredibly well and the final new bird of the trip was a Pin-tailed Whydah. What a wonderful way to end this splendidly diverse tour!

Although perhaps not an 'easy' destination, Cameroon is probably the 'ultimate' western African country to visit and our 29 days tour had taken us virtually the entire length of the country, through all the major habitats and had surrendered many of the best birds that the country has to offer. From Mount Cameroon itself to the Sahel spectacle, the rare endemics of the Adamawa Plateau and Bamenda Highlands and finally the rich lowland and Montane forests of the southwest, we had surely sampled a wide range of habitats and some beautiful scenery as well! The infrastructure in the country seems at best fragile and if Cameroon turns out to be yet another African country forced off of the ecotourist/birding map of destinations then it will be a very great loss indeed.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

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

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

The most recent standard work on the country referred to in the Tour Report is "The birds of Cameroon; An annotated check-list" by M. Louette published in 1981 by Paleis der Acadamiën, Brussels but is now out of print and somewhat out of date. The birds of Waza are covered by an article "The birds of Waza-Logone area, Far North Province, Cameroon" by P. Scholte, S. de Kort and M. van Weerd published in 'Malimbus 21 (1) March 1999'. The most recent checklist of birds for Mount Kupe is "The Birds of Mount Kupe, southwest Cameroon" by Christopher G. R. Bowden published in 'Malimbus' number 23 (2001) and for Korup (1993) is by Paul Rodewald and Arthur Green.

PODICIPEDIDAE

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*: One was seen on the 'duck pond' near Douala and about six on Lake Awing and a couple on route to Mundemba.

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Long-tailed Cormorant *Phalacrocorax africanus*: Also known as Reed Cormorant this species was easy to see at the Sanaga River and Limbe Botanical Gardens with more on Dang Lake, Ngaoundaba and along the Mana River in Korup NP.

ANHINGIDAE

African Darter *Anhinga rufa*: One was seen on the 'duck pond' near Douala.

ARDEIDAE

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*: Just one was seen flying overhead in Bénoué National Park. Louette suggests that this is not a breeding bird in Cameroon and these are Palearctic migrants.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*: Small numbers were seen in Waza and at Dang Lake. Both Palearctic migrants and resident birds are known to occur. The name 'squacco' is derived from a purely local Italian name. In the absence of a native name, Willughby noted c. 1672 "*Ardea quam Sguacco vocant in Vallibus dictis Malalbergi*"; this he had from the Renaissance encyclopaedist Ulisse Androvandi (*Ornithologia* 1599-1603). Ray (*The Ornithology of Francis Willughby* Translated into English, and enlarged by J. Ray, 1678) and translated it as "the Heron which they call Sguacco in the Valleys of Malalbergo". Hill (*A General Natural History* 1748-52) erroneously spelt the name 'squacco'. Latham (*General Synopsis of Birds* 1781-5) took over this misspelling and added 'Heron'. The original name 'sguacco' supposedly imitates the husky call.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*: A common and widespread species but numbers were surprisingly low for the fourth year running at the Ngaoundaba roost this year. It now seems this lake is not the safe haven that it once was as roosting birds here generally seem to have been declining for some time now.

Green-backed Heron *Butorides striata*: Also known as Striated Heron, one at the 'duck pond', at least three in Bénoué National Park and another as we left Mundemba.

Western Reef Egret *Egretta gularis*: Two birds were seen at Limbe.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*: Small numbers were seen at Sanaga River and a singleton en route to Waza.

Western Great Egret *Egretta alba*: Around 30 birds were at Ngaoundaba. Recent DNA work suggests that this species shows a closer link with *Ardea* than *Egretta*. It is therefore sometimes placed in *Ardea* but more frequently in *Casmerodius*.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*: Singletons were seen at Dang Lake and Ngaoundaba.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*: Just one sighting in Waza National Park.

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*: Most common in Waza but even so numbers were still down this year.

SCOPIIDAE

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*: Small numbers of this peculiar bird were seen but mainly in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

CICONIIDAE

African Openbill Stork *Anastomus lamelligerus*: Good numbers and probably hundreds were seen in the Waza area. The favourite food of this species is the apple snail (*Pila*). The curious shape bill is adapted not as once thought as a 'nutcracker'. Instead, the upper mandible is used to hold the shell against the ground (usually underwater). The razor-sharp tip of the lower mandible is then eased under the snail's operculum, cutting the strong columellar muscle as it does so and hence enabling the extraction of the nutritious meat.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*: Small numbers of this mainly dry season visitor were seen in Waza National Park.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*: Astonishingly large numbers of these Palearctic migrants were seen in Waza National Park.

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumeniferus*: Small numbers were seen in Waza National Park and included one on its nest with a well-grown youngster. The name is early 19th century French derived from the Arabic *murabit* or holy man, the stork being regarded as holy.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*: This noisy bird was seen in Bénoué National Park and also at Ngaoundaba. The name is an onomatopoeic rendering of the call.

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*: Two were seen in Waza National Park and nine were counted in the Ngaoundaba roost. This species was revered and even mummified by the ancient Egyptians as the incarnation of Thoth, the god of wisdom and knowledge.

ANATIDAE

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*: Just ten were seen on Dang Lake.

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis*: A pair at Ngaoundaba and at least 100 on Dang Lake.

Hartlaub's Duck *Pteronetta hartlaubii*: This forest duck is always a popular tick of the trip. We managed to find 12 on the 'duck pond' near Douala and we all had good views. Another three were seen at Ngaoundaba. Gustav Hartlaub (1814-1900) was a German physician and collector with a specialist interest in East African Birds. He became Honorary Supervisor of the Zoological Collection of the Bremen Natural History Society Museum. The species was previously classified as 'Near Threatened' in Birdlife International's *Threatened Birds of the World*. Hunting and pollution appear to be the major threats but the species has now been removed from their list.

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*: A female was seen in Waza National Park.

African Black Duck *Anas sparsa*: A male was scoped on Lake Awing.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*: Nine of these Palearctic migrants were at Dang Lake.

ACCIPITRIDAE

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*: Singletons of these Palearctic migrants were seen flying over Mount Cameroon, Mount Kupe and Korup.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*: Widespread sightings in the north of this familiar roadside species.

African Swallow-tailed Kite *Chelictinia riocourii*: Also known as Scissor-tailed Kite, small numbers of these delightful raptors were seen well in the far north. The species breeds in the Sahel zone during the rains.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*: An adult of this Palearctic migrant was seen in Waza National Park.

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius*: An abundant species seen throughout the tour. The form concerned is *parasitus* that was previously lumped in Black Kite *M. migrans* however recent DNA analysis suggests that it is a distinct species and some argue that the African forms are actually more closely related to Red Kite *M. milvus*. To add to the complexity of the problem, northern and southern populations of Yellow-billed Kite may in turn prove to be specifically distinct from each other.

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer* (NL): Hilary saw one in Bénoué National Park. Its yodelling call must be one of the most evocative sounds of Africa.

Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis*: Widespread sightings of small numbers throughout the forest zone. Also known as Vulturine Fish Eagle, this raptor, more closely related to the fish eagles than vultures is predominantly vegetarian!

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*: Only two were seen in Waza National Park, where the population was supposed to have been on the increase but there certainly now seems to be no recent evidence for this. Indeed, generally vulture numbers were significantly down once again this year.

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*: Small numbers were seen in the north. Eastern and southern African populations have been treated as a separate race *N. m. pileatus* but differences are clinal being small in west to large in south and the species is perhaps best considered monotypic.

Rüppell's Griffon Vulture *Gyps rueppellii*: Numbers were again low this year in Waza National Park with only three seen. However this species is still apparently far more common than African White-backed Vulture *contra* Louette. Wilhelm Peter Eduard Simon Rüppell (1794-1884) was a German explorer, cartographer and zoologist, best known for ornithological discoveries in Ethiopia and the interior of northeast Africa.

Eurasian Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*: One was seen in Waza National Park on 11/4. We saw what was apparently the first documented record for the country on 11/4/06. The contrasting fortunes of this species of vulture definitely seems to be on the up with ever increasing numbers moving south into Africa.

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotus*: Four of these huge vultures were seen well in Waza National Park. Sometimes placed in the genus *Aegyptius* it is classed as 'Vulnerable' in Birdlife International's *Threatened Birds of the World* with a total population of less than 8,500 birds. Populations of northern forms have been treated as a separate race, *nubicus* or else placed in the nominate race. However, variation appears to be simply individual and/or clinal and the forms are best merged together. The species is often considered monotypic. A lappet is a little flap and refers to the folds of skin on the sides of the head and neck.

White-headed Vulture *Trigonoceps occipitalis*: A pair was seen over Bénoué National Park.

- Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*: A juvenile allowed good looks in Bénoué National Park. Beaudouin was a French collector employed by the Verreaux family and he was known to be collecting in what is now Guinea-Bissau around about 1862.
- Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*: Commonly seen from Poli to Ngaoundaba.
- Western Banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinerascens*: Two were seen in Bénoué National Park and another was at Ngaoundaba.
- Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*: A poor showing with just a juvenile seen at Poli with another in Bénoué National Park. The name means 'juggler' in French and refers to the balancing mode of flight employed by this distinctive and spectacular birds! The Bateleur is also the magician or 'wand-user' of the Tarot Cards.
- African Harrier Hawk *Polyboroides typus*: Widespread sightings of this common and distinctive raptor. Two races occur in the dry season. The nominate race is a migrant from east Africa. The smaller, darker resident race *pectoralis* is restricted to the forests and galleries.
- Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*: Although some of the harriers seen had to go unidentified we saw two fine males of this handsome raptor in the far north. This Palearctic migrant is classed as 'Near-threatened' in Birdlife International's *Threatened Birds of the World*. It is threatened by the destruction of its steppe grassland habitat of its breeding grounds. Pesticide use in Africa may also be a problem.
- Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*: This Palearctic migrant was far more common than the previous harrier in the far north. George Montagu (1735-1815) was a British soldier and Natural Historian who after being court-marshalled from the Wiltshire militia subsequently dedicated his life to his mistress and ornithology. He collected the harrier in 1803 near his Devonshire home.
- Eurasian Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*: This Palearctic migrant was seen at widespread localities in the north and again in the Bamenda area.
- Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar*: This fierce little raptor was best seen in Waza National Park where numbers seemed very low. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Melierax*. In this case the word Gabar is derived from two French words *garde* (guard) and *barré* (barred).
- Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates*: An incredibly poor showing with only two seen in the Waza area.
- Red-chested Goshawk *Accipiter toussenelii*: Several sightings in the forest zone at Kupe and Korup and easiest to find at dawn when the birds display noisily over their territories. Taxonomy of the African Goshawk complex is controversial and the form concerned is often lumped in *A. tachiro*. Alternatively, Red-chested Goshawk is sometimes split into two species, West African Goshawk *A. macroscelides* and Red-chested Goshawk *A. toussenelii*. However, our birds occur on the edge of the intergradation zone between *macroscelides* and *toussenelii* and it is possible that at least some of our birds were intermediate between the forms. However the voices of all those heard was most similar to *macroscelides*.
- Shikra *Accipiter badius*: Singletons were seen in Bénoué National Park and at Garoua.
- Ovambo Sparrowhawk *Accipiter ovampensis*: A juvenile seen in Bénoué National Park and an adult circling over Ngaoundaba. Ovamboland is now part of northern Namibia and southern Angola.
- Grasshopper Buzzard *Butastur rufipennis*: Widespread sightings of this handsome raptor in north and once again numbers seemed unusually low. Always worth seeing in flight when the rufous primaries are visible.
- Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*: Seen at Ngaoundaba and again travelling to and from Korup.

- Red-necked Buzzard *Buteo auguralis*: Widespread sightings of this attractive raptor with a red tail.
- Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*: Numbers of this variably plumaged eagle were well down in Waza National Park with just four individuals seen.
- Wahlberg's Eagle *Aquila wahlbergi*: Singletons of these small eagles were seen at Waza and Ngaoundaba. This species is sometimes placed in the genus *Hieraaetus*. Johan August Wahlberg (1810-1856) was a Swedish collector who was unfortunately killed by a wounded African Elephant at Lake Ngami in Bechuanaland.
- Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*: Two sightings of this Palearctic migrant near Maroua and again in the Bamenda area.
- Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis*: A few very widespread sightings throughout the tour of this raptor with a very special hair-do.
- Cassin's Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus africanus*: A very good sighting of a flying bird near Yaoundé. John Cassin (1813-69) was an American businessman and renowned systematic ornithologist. He became curator of ornithology and Vice-President of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences.
- Crowned Eagle *Stephanoaetus coronatus* (H): This magnificent large eagle was only heard displaying over Kodmin.

FALCONIDAE

- Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*: The distinctive smaller, dark resident race *rufescens* was seen well in the Bamenda area and small numbers of presumably Palearctic migrants of the nominate race in the north.
- Fox Kestrel *Falco alopex*: This very special falcon was only seen near Maroua.
- Grey Kestrel *Falco ardosiaceus*: Singletons were seen in Bénoué National Park and en route to Bamenda.
- Red-necked Falcon *Falco chicquera*: A pair of these attractive little falcons was seen at Maroua.
- Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*: Sightings of this large falcon at Maroua and on the journeys back to Garoua and to Bamenda.
- Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*: A pair of the smaller resident race *minor* was seen on Mount Cameroon.

PHASIANIDAE

- Stone Partridge *Ptilopachus petrosus*: We had a number of opportunities to see these 'rock chickens' well in the north. These are now placed in the New World Quails, Odontophoridae.
- White-throated Francolin *Francolinus albogularis*: We had absolutely superb views of a pair of this wonderfully marked and somewhat localised francolin in Bénoué National Park. A proposed reorganization of *Francolinus* places this species in the genus *Peliperdix*.
- Scaly Francolin *Francolinus squamatus*: This secretive but nocturnally noisy francolin was flushed on Mount Cameroon and Mount Kupe and heard this year at a number of widespread locations as far north as Bénoué National Park where its presence in the riverine forest there is somewhat surprising. A proposed reorganization of *Francolinus* places this species in the genus *Pternistis*.
- Double-spurred Francolin *Francolinus bicalcaratus*: This large francolin was easily seen in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba. A proposed reorganization of *Francolinus* places this species in the genus *Pternistis*.
- Clapperton's Francolin *Francolinus clappertoni*: Common and easy to see in the Waza area where it replaces the previous species. A proposed reorganization of *Francolinus* places this species in the genus *Pternistis*. Hugh Clapperton was a member of the 1823 expedition to chart the

course of the Niger River. A “fiery, one-handed adventurer” he eventually died in Niger of fever and dysentery in 1827.

NUMIDIDAE

[This family is sometimes lumped in Phasianidae.]

Black Guinea fowl *Agelastes niger*: This species went some of the way to compensate for our lack of success with the picathartes as we first encountered a group at the rocks but they flushed before we could see them well and so imagine our joy when we discovered one walking along the track ahead of us so that good views were had by all.

Helmeted Guinea fowl *Numida meleagris*: Hundreds and hundreds of the distinctive West African race *galeata* in Waza National Park. This form has historically been treated as a separate species (West African Guinea fowl) by some taxonomists but it supposedly intergrades with the nominate race in Cameroon.

TURNICIDAE

Quail-plover *Ortyxelos meiffrenii*: An absolute ‘must-see’ bird. The species is a unique and notoriously elusive little bird that looks like a cross between a lark, a quail and a wader. During our bush-bashes across country, we first came across five very flighty birds but finally we encountered a confiding individual that we were able to watch for as long as we wished. We are keeping a good track record with this species and have not yet missed it on any of our Cameroon tours.

RALLIDAE

Nkulengu Rail *Himantornis haematopus* (H): Heard just before dawn in Korup National Park. According to local legend, the bird was a spirit that supposedly once left the forest and sunburnt its legs whilst mating with a chicken that it had fallen in love with. The rail returned to its hiding place in a foul mood. Its cry is supposedly complaining that “My feet became red; I married a chicken!”

White-spotted Flufftail *Sarothrura pulchra*: This tiny little crane was first seen at Ngaoundaba but the views that we obtained in Korup National Park were much improved.

Buff-spotted Flufftail *Sarothrura elegans* (H): Heard at Kodmin but in a place where we had little chance of seeing it.

Red-chested Flufftail *Sarothrura rufa* (H): Heard on Mount Cameroon but too far away even to hope to see it.

African Water Rail *Rallus caerulescens*: Only one was seen well this year at Ngaoundaba. First recorded in Cameroon as recently as 1979 in the Bamenda area and then in 1994 at Ngaoundaba, this would appear to be an isolated population.

Black Crane *Amaurornis flavirostris*: A crane that is easy to see for a change and watched trotting about in the open at Ngaoundaba.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*: One at Ngaoundaba and a pair at Lake Awing.

Lesser Moorhen *Gallinula angulata*: Phil did well to find a juvenile at Dang Lake and we all got scope views of this intra-African migrant.

GRUIDAE

Black Crowned Crane *Balearica pavonina*: A somewhat better year for numbers of this beautiful bird in Waza National Park with at least 200 birds seen. These magnificent creatures create a particularly awesome sight and sound and a highlight of our visit was the sight of this

beautiful bird on the dry dusty plains of Waza. Now threatened and verging on extinction in many parts of its range it is classified as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International. The population is thought to number no more than 70,000 mature individuals and is decreasing rapidly. Our birds were of the nominate race with a population of perhaps no more than 15,000 birds. Waza represents one of the species strongholds although there does seem to have been a constant and significant decline in numbers in recent years and the main threats are drought and wetland drainage.

HELIORNITHIDAE

African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis*: Great scope views were had of one as we left Mundemba. It was a female and hence impossible to tell if it was of the dark-breasted race *camerunensis*. However as dark-breasted males occur next to pale-breasted birds of the nominate race in this area it has been suggested that they are simply colour morphs of the same form.

OTIDIDAE

Savile's Bustard *Eupodotis savilei*: A male was flushed but gave great flight views as it passed by us in the Waza area on 10/3. This appears to be the eighth record for the country and was exactly where we had found it the previous three tours. The first few records for the country were from similar areas between 1994-96. Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Vesey Savile (1873 –1947) was a British soldier serving in Sudan from 1901 where he also became a provincial governor. Rear-Admiral Herbert Lynes (the 'cisticola' man) described the bird!

White-bellied Bustard *Eupodotis senegalensis*: Five birds were flushed in the Mora area.

JACANIDAE

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*: Widespread sightings but particularly numerous on Dang Lake.

BURHINIDAE

Senegal Thick-knee *Burhinus senegalensis* (H): Heard only in Bénoué National Park.

PLUVIANIDAE

[Borrow & Demey lump this family in Glareolidae.]

Egyptian Plover *Pluvianus aegyptius*: A bird of the highest class and always a pleasure to watch! We enjoyed superb and prolonged views of at least ten birds in Bénoué National Park. The species alternative name of 'Crocodile Bird' dates back to some misinformation given by Herodotus (the Dorian Greek historian) who claimed that the bird entered the open mouths of crocodiles in order to clean their teeth. However this claim has apparently never been authenticated!

GLAREOLIDAE

Rock Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis*: No more than six of the white-collared nominate race were on the Mana River in Korup National Park.

Grey Pratincole *Glareola cinerea*: Many of these delightful pratincoles were scoped on the sandbanks of the Sanaga River.

CHARADRIIDAE

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris*: Good views in Bénoué National Park where this attractive plover was easy to see along the river.

Forbes's Plover *Charadrius forbesi*: A surprise sighting was of one flying over Mundemba! William Alexander Forbes (1855-1883) was a British zoologist who collected in West Africa in 1882 where he died on the Upper Niger River.

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus*: One was seen on the sandbanks of the Sanaga River.

White-headed Lapwing *Vanellus albiceps*: These wonderful birds with their truly pendulous yellow wattles and wicked spurs were much enjoyed at the Sanaga River, in Bénoué National Park and on the Mana River in Korup National Park.

Black-headed Lapwing *Vanellus tectus*: A striking species with its spiky crest and easy to see in the far north.

Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus*: Easily seen in Waza and Bénoué National Parks.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen in Waza National Park.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*: Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants were seen en route to Waza and in Bénoué National Park.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*: Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants were seen in the Waza area and Dang Lake.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*: Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants were seen in Limbe Botanic Gardens, in Bénoué National Park and on the Mana River in Korup National Park.

STERNIDAE

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*: One was seen on Dang Lake on 17/3. There are very few documented records from this area.

RYNCHOPIDAE

African Skimmer *Rynchops flavirostris*: A great showing with at least 150 scoped on the Sanaga River. This strange bird is classified as 'Near-threatened' in Birdlife International's *Threatened Birds of the World*. The population is thought to number between 15,000-25,000 and is thought to be declining throughout its range being threatened by human activities, hydroelectric developments and pollution.

PTEROCLIDAE

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus*: Reasonable numbers were seen in and around Waza National Park.

Four-banded Sandgrouse *Pterocles quadricinctus*: A great showing this year with close views of birds in Waza and also seen in Bénoué National Park.

COLUMBIDAE

African Green Pigeon *Treron calvus*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour except in the far north.

Bruce's Green Pigeon *Treron waalia*: Just small numbers seen from Poli to Ngaoundaba. James Bruce was a Scottish explorer interested in birds. He had discovered the source of the Blue Nile at Lake Tana in Ethiopia.

Blue-headed Wood Dove *Turtur brehmeri*: This secretive forest dove was seen in Korup.

Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistris*: Widespread sightings in appropriate habitat usually just flying by throughout the tour. The name refers to the bouncing rhythm of its call.

Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur afer*: Plenty of opportunities to get good views in the south.

- Black-billed Wood Dove *Turtur abyssinicus*: Replaces the previous species in the drier north with some overlap in Bénoué National Park.
- Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*: Numbers were well down in the far north. Namaqualand is part of southern Namibia and coastal southwest South Africa.
- Cameroon Olive Pigeon *Columba sjostedti*: This regional endemic was seen on Mount Cameroon but only in flight.
- Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea*: This colourful pigeon was easy to see in the north.
- Rock Dove *Columba livia*: Feral or 'table' birds only.
- Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*: Widespread sightings but absent from the far north. This bird sings, "I am a Red-eyed Dove".
- African Mourning Dove *Streptopelia decipiens*: Small numbers were seen in the Waza area.
- Vinaceous Dove *Streptopelia vinacea*: Abundant in Waza National Park and extremely common throughout the north.
- African Collared Dove *Streptopelia roseogrisea*: This dove was easy to see in Waza National Park. The alternative name of Rose-grey Dove is far more aesthetically pleasing.
- European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*: Reasonable numbers of this Palearctic migrant were seen in and around Waza National Park.
- Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*: A common and widespread dove throughout the north.

PSITTACIDAE

- Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus*: Small numbers were seen this year with flight views only of the red-tailed nominate race at widespread locations in the forest zone.
- Senegal Parrot *Poicephalus senegalus*: Small numbers of this colourful parrot were seen in Bénoué National Park and Ngaoundaba.
- Red-headed Lovebird *Agapornis pullarius*: At least eight were seen well at Ngaoundaba.
- Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*: Small numbers were seen in the far north. This is the same species that has become a common feral bird in England.

MUSOPHAGIDAE

- Great Blue Turaco *Corythaëola cristata*: These impressive top-knotted birds played hard to get but were finally seen well as we left Mundemba.
- Green Turaco *Tauraco persa*: Seen well on Mount Kupe and in the Bakossi Mountains. The feathers of turacos possess two copper pigments, red turacin and green turacoverdin that are unique in the avian world and are responsible for producing the bright red and green colours in their plumage. Contrary to popular belief these pigments are only soluble in alkali and not water.
- Yellow-billed Turaco *Tauraco macrorhynchus*: Excellent looks at this colourful bird on the slopes of Mount Cameroon, Mount Kupe and Korup National Park. The race concerned is *verreauxii* with its red-tipped crest.
- White-crested Turaco *Tauraco leucolophus*: Great looks at this stunning turaco in Bénoué National Park and again at Ngaoundaba.
- Bannerman's Turaco *Tauraco bannermani*: Without doubt the biggest rarity of the bunch, and we had some great views of it in the Bamenda area. The species survival depends upon the protection of the remaining forest on Mt Oku, which only covers about 100 square kilometres. This Cameroon endemic is now severely threatened and is classed as 'Endangered' in Birdlife International's *Threatened Birds of the World*. It is thought that there are only 1,000 - 1,500 pairs in the Kilum-Ijim forests and that the total population lies somewhere between 2,500 - 10,000 birds. David Armitage Bannerman (1886-1979) was a

staff member of British Museum (Natural History) and author of the important work *Birds of Tropical West Africa*.

Violet Turaco *Musophaga violacea*: Difficult to see this year in Bénoué National Park and it was only Phil who managed to set eyes on calling birds.

Ross's Turaco *Musophaga rossae*: Another brightly coloured species that showed well at Ngaoundaba. Cameroon is the only country where this and the latter species meet. Lady Ann Ross (1817-57) was the wife of Rear-Admiral Sir James Clark Ross the discoverer of the Magnetic North Pole. She somehow came into possession of a live specimen of the bird from somewhere in West Africa whilst she was stationed on St Helena. She sent a drawing of it and some moulted feathers to John Gould who duly named the turaco after her.

Western Grey Plantain-eater *Crinifer piscator*: This rather dowdy, shaggy-crested cousin of the turacos was seen well in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba. Ironically, the species is not known to actually eat plantains in the wild!

CUCULIDAE

Levaillant's Cuckoo *Oxylophus levaillantii*: Just one individual was seen at Ngaoundaba. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Clamator* and is known to parasitize babblers. François Levaillant (1753 -1824), a great French taxidermist, collector and ornithologist who had a specialist interest in the birds of southern Africa. Levaillant's reputation is somewhat marred as he was proved to be something of a 'stringer' inventing not only new species but even the journeys on which he claimed to have found them!

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen on Mount Kupe.

Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus* (H): Heard on Mount Kupe and at Korup.

African Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis*: This intra-African migrant was seen in Bénoué National Park and in the Bamenda area. It is known to parasitize Fork-tailed Drongo.

Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx olivinus*: Nik was the only one to see this bird at Kodmin. The hosts of this cuckoo remain unknown but possibly include Pale-breasted Illadopsis and Rufous Flycatcher Thrush.

African Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus*: This is arguably the most beautiful cuckoo in the world. We first encountered it at the Sanaga River but it was more in evidence at Mount Kupe. This species is known to parasitize bulbuls, illadopsises, flycatchers, sunbirds and weavers.

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas*: Often heard but first seen near Yaoundé. Supposedly named by Levaillant after his servant whose wife, Narina (the name he dedicated to a most beautiful trogon), also just happened to be Levaillant's mistress! This species is known to parasitize various small, insectivorous passerines, mainly warblers and sunbirds.

Didric Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius*: Seen near Yaoundé and at Mount Kupe. This species parasitizes mainly weavers. The name is an onomatopoeic rendering of the call.

Yellowbill *Ceuthmochares aereus*: Also known as Blue Malkoha, we all had good looks at this African malkoha in Korup and Mount Kupe.

CENTROPIDIDAE

[This family is often lumped in Cuculidae.]

Black-throated Coucal *Centropus leucogaster* (H): Rather silent this year but birds were heard at Mount Kupe and in Korup National Park.

Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis*: Widespread sightings in the north.

Blue-headed Coucal *Centropus monachus*: We finally managed some good views of this large coucal during the extension.

TYTONIDAE

Western Barn Owl *Tyto alba*: This widely distributed species was easy to see in the camp at Waza and we also had good daytime roadside views as we drove towards Garoua.

STRIGIDAE

African Scops Owl *Otus senegalensis*: Excellent views at dusk in Bénoué National Park.

Greyish Eagle Owl *Bubo cinerascens*: Excellent views of one in daylight at Ngaoundaba.

Fraser's Eagle Owl *Bubo poensis*: One was seen well at night at Mount Kupe. Louis Fraser (1819-1866) was a British museum man, naturalist, explorer, author and member of the infamous ill-fated Niger River Expedition of 1841-42. He also collected specimens from Fernando Po (Bioko) and was eventually appointed British Consul at Ovidah in West Africa.

Pel's Fishing Owl *Scotopelia peli*: A begging juvenile was seen at night in Bénoué National Park but all too far away to see. Hendrik Severinus Pel (1818-76) was a Dutch amateur naturalist and Governor of the Gold Coast. Bonaparte described the owl in 1850.

Vermiculated Fishing Owl *Scotopelia bouvieri*: This species was discovered around Rengo Camp just under eight years ago and the pair was still present for our visit. We had excellent views of them at the camp and long may they continue to reign!

Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum*: This fierce-looking diurnal owl with eyes in the back of its head was seen well at Ngaoundaba.

Sjöstedt's Owlet *Glaucidium sjostedti*: Also known as Chestnut-backed Owlet, we were lucky enough to have daytime views in Korup of this superbly marked forest owl. This was certainly a most memorable bird. Bror Yngve Sjöstedt (1866-1948) was a Swedish entomologist and ornithologist who collected in Cameroon.

CAPRIMULGIDAE

Long-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus climacurus*: A good showing this year with some marvellously long-tailed males seen well in the Waza area and again at Ngaoundaba.

Freckled Nightjar *Caprimulgus tristigma*: One was seen in Bénoué National Park.

Standard-winged Nightjar *Macrodipteryx longipennis*: We were treated to some wonderful views of a roosting male and female during daylight hours at Ngaoundaba. The male complete with magnificent standards was unforgettable.

Pennant-winged Nightjar *Macrodipteryx vexillarius*: A female of this intra-African migrant was seen at dusk at Ngaoundaba.

APODIDAE

Sabine's Spinetail *Rhaphidura sabini*: Seen well near Yaoundé and over Korup. Edward Sabine (1788-1883) was an English scientist mainly interested in terrestrial magnetism and astronomy. He collected the spinetail and the puffback; both named after him, in Sierra Leone and donated them to the British Museum where J. E. Gray officially described the specimens.

Cassin's Spinetail *Neafrapus cassini*: Two were seen flying ahead of rain near Yaoundé.

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

African Black Swift *Apus barbatus*: Small numbers were seen at Lake Awing.

European Swift *Apus apus*: Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants were seen as we journeyed through the forest zone.

Bates's Swift *Apus batesi*: Several of these small black swifts were seen well at the Sanaga River. George Latimer Bates (1863-1940) was a British naturalist who worked in West Africa, especially

Cameroon between 1895 and 1931. He was author of *Handbook of the Birds of West Africa* published in 1930.

White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer*: Just two were seen in Bénoué National Park.

Horus Swift *Apus horus*: Two were seen at Ngaoundaba. The name Horus was applied to a number of Egyptian sky gods and were usually depicted as falcons or falcon-headed men.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*: This swift was very common and familiar sight, often associated with bridges or concrete.

Mottled Swift *Tachymarptis aequatorialis*: About six were seen at Lake Awing.

COLIIDAE

Blue-naped Mousebird *Urocolius macrourus*: Several sightings of this strange creature in the far north. These unique birds are of ancient lineage and belong to the Coliiformes, the only order that is endemic to the Afrotropics.

Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus*: All sightings were from the Adamawa Plateau spreading south to Mount Kupe.

TROGONIDAE

Bar-tailed Trogon *Apaloderma vittatum*: We had some great sightings of this beautiful bird at Kodmin.

Narina's Trogon *Apaloderma narina* (H): Heard only on Mount Kupe. This species is supposedly named after Levillant's beautiful Hottentot mistress.

Bare-cheeked Trogon *Apaloderma aequatoriale*: A calling bird in Korup was tracked through the forest and eventually we managed to get great views of a super male with its bulging yellow cheeks.

ALCEDINIDAE

[Sibley and Monroe place the *Halcyon* kingfishers in the family, Halcyonidae and the *Megaceryle* and *Ceryle* kingfishers in the family, Cerylidae.]

Chocolate-backed Kingfisher *Halcyon badia*: Often heard but eventually we managed to entice this much-wanted kingfisher into view from the tops of those tall trees in Korup.

Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala*: This species retreats north with the onset of the rains. All of our sightings of this attractive kingfisher were from Bénoué to Bamenda.

Blue-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon malimbica*: Brightly coloured birds showed well in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis*: This species was encountered regularly on journeys in the forest zone.

Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti*: Small numbers were seen in the north.

African Dwarf Kingfisher *Ceyx lecontei* (H): Heard near Yaoundé and in Korup. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Ispidina*.

African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ceyx pictus*: A number of good sightings from the south of the country. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Ispidina*.

White-bellied Kingfisher *Alcedo leucogaster*: One heard at the picathartes site near Yaoundé was only seen by Magnus. The voice was also noted in Korup National Park. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Corythornis*.

Malachite Kingfisher *Alcedo cristata*: Just a few widespread sightings of this little jewel. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Corythornis*. The name derives (via Latin and French) from the Greek *molochitis* meaning "mallow-green stone".

Shining-blue Kingfisher *Alcedo quadibrachys* (NL): Jean-Francois saw one at the 'duck pond'.

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima*: Sightings of this heavyweight kingfisher in Limbe Botanical Gardens and Bénoué National Park.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*: Always a pleasure to see this striking kingfisher. Our very few widespread sightings were in Bénoué National Park, Dang Lake and Korup National Park.

MEROPIDAE

Blue-headed Bee-eater *Merops muelleri*: Nik saw one in Korup National Park disappearing fast over Rengo Rock.

Black Bee-eater *Merops gularis*: A pair of these mouth-watering bee-eaters was much admired on the Sanaga River.

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

Blue-breasted Bee-eater *Merops variegatus*: Seen well in the Bamenda area and at Kodmin. The alternative name of White-cheeked Bee-eater perhaps highlights the better identification feature.

Red-throated Bee-eater *Merops bulocki*: This stunning jewel of a bird was common, colourful and very easy to see at Poli and in Bénoué National Park.

White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis*: Good numbers of these intra-African migrants were a joy to watch at numerous localities in the forest zone. Those 'wintering' in the rain forest move north in June to their breeding grounds in the Sahel.

Little Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*: The striking and intensely coloured race *viridissimus* was easily seen in Waza National Park and the surrounding countryside.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*: A surprising sight was a flock of at least 40 of these Palearctic migrants moving over Rengo Rock in Korup National Park.

Northern Carmine Bee-eater *Merops nubicus*: Small numbers were seen in the far north of this bird with its superb and unique colour scheme.

CORACIIDAE

Blue-bellied Roller *Coracias cyanogaster*: Just one of these stunning rollers was seen in Bénoué National Park.

Abyssinian Roller *Coracias abyssinicus*: Very common in Waza and the far north. Some really intensely gorgeous colours and wonderful tails adorn this beautiful bird.

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*: Singletons of this colourful roller were seen at Ngaoundaba and en route to Bamenda. Individuals seen distantly in Korup National Park could have been either this species or Blue-throated Roller *Eurystomus gularis*.

PHOENICULIDAE

Green Wood-hoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus*: Sightings of small numbers were scattered through the north.

RHINOPOMASTIDAE

[Sibley and Monroe treat the genus *Rhinopomastus* as a separate family, Rhinopomastidae but this treatment does not seem to have been widely accepted.]

Black Wood-hoopoe *Rhinopomastus aterrimus*: A pair was seen in the Waza area and heard at Ngaoundaba. The species is alternatively placed either in the genus *Phoeniculus* or *Scoptelus*. Sibley and Monroe treat the genus *Rhinopomastus* as a separate family, *Rhinopomastidae* and these are usually referred to as 'scimitar-bills'.

UPUPIDAE

Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*: At least one of these Palearctic migrants was identified in Waza National Park.

Central African Hoopoe *Upupa senegalensis*: Hoopoe taxonomy is presently under debate with some authorities splitting the complex into as many as four species. This form is contentious and has been placed with either Eurasian Hoopoe *U. epops* or African Hoopoe *U. africana*. We only recorded some of the more brightly coloured birds of the resident race *senegalensis* in the far north.

BUCEROTIDAE

White-crested Hornbill *Tropicranus albocristatus*: Pairs were seen at the Sanaga River and in the Yaoundé area and one was encountered in Korup so we had rather good looks at this striking bird with its long tail and bushy crest.

Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill *Tockus camurus*: With patience we managed some good views of some responsive birds in Korup.

Northern Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus erythrorhynchus*: This hornbill was commonly seen in the Waza area.

African Pied Hornbill *Tockus fasciatus*: Small numbers of this common hornbill were seen in the forested areas of the south.

African Grey Hornbill *Tockus nasutus*: A commonly encountered bird in small numbers throughout the north.

Piping Hornbill *Bycanistes fistulator*: A small hornbill that was common and easy to see in Korup and noted on the various journeys in the south. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Ceratogymna*.

White-thighed Hornbill *Bycanistes albotibialis*: Three birds were seen at the Sanaga River and a singleton in Korup National Park. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Ceratogymna*.

Black-casqued Hornbill *Ceratogymna atrata* (H): Sadly only heard in Korup mainly because the forest canopy was so thick!

Yellow-casqued Hornbill *Ceratogymna elata*: A feature of the forest in Korup was the amazing sound of the whirring wings of this and the previous species as they glided overhead. We were lucky enough to at least get flight views of this huge bird. The species is classified as 'Near-threatened' in Birdlife International's *Threatened Birds of the World*. Hunting is thought to be the worst threat to the species survival.

LYBIIDAE

[Borrow & Demey and other authors lump the African barbets in Capitonidae.]

Grey-throated Barbet *Gymnobucco bonapartei*: A good number of the dark-eyed nominate race were seen around Yaoundé.

Bristle-nosed Barbet *Gymnobucco peli*: A colony of these bizarre 'punkish' birds were much enjoyed near Yaoundé.

Naked-faced Barbet *Gymnobucco calvus*: Easy to see as we climbed Mount Cameroon with more on Mount Kupe and in Korup National Park.

Speckled Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus scolopaceus*: The more yellow-speckled race *flavisquamatus* of this forest species was seen well on Mount Kupe and in Korup National Park.

Western Green Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus coryphaeus*: This pretty little tinkerbird was seen on Mount Cameroon and heard in the Bamenda Highlands. It was sadly only heard on Mount Kupe.

Red-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus atroflavus* (H): We often heard emitting its series of single regular 'poops' on Mount Kupe and in Korup National Park but not one single bird could be enticed into view.

Yellow-throated Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus subsulphureus*: This tinkerbird with the fast succession of 'poops' was often heard and first seen well at the Sanaga River.

Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus*: This look-alike tinkerbird with a slower paced rhythm to the previous species allowed us some good views firstly on Mount Cameroon.

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus*: A few sightings were obtained in the north.

Yellow-spotted Barbet *Buccanodon duchaillui*: This strikingly patterned barbet with the 'snoring' cry was seen well at several forested localities in the south.

Streaky-throated Barbet *Tricholaema flavipunctata*: Seen at Kodmin and en route to Mundemba. This form is part of the Hairy-breasted Barbet *T. hirsuta* complex of which it has been suggested that it should be split into as many as three species. There are both vocal and plumage differences to support this. On the other hand, there is also extensive intergradation between the races.

Vieillot's Barbet *Lybius vieilloti*: Small numbers of this attractive barbet were seen in the north. Louis Jean Pierre Vieillot (1748-1831) was a French businessman forced to take refuge in the United States during the French Revolution and because of slave rebellions on San Domingo where he had his business in the spice trade. He had a consuming passion for ornithology dedicating his life to it.

Bearded Barbet *Lybius dubius*: We enjoyed good views of this monstrous beast in Bénoué National Park.

Yellow-billed Barbet *Trachylaemus purpuratus*: Often heard, this most impressive barbet was seen on Mount Kupe. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Trachyphonus*. However, those very social barbets both look, sound and act differently to the present species.

INDICATORIDAE

Cassin's Honeybird *Prodotiscus insignis*: A pair was seen at Lake Awing. The species is known to parasitize flycatchers, warblers, sunbirds and probably white-eyes.

Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator*: One was seen but flying away fast at Ngaoundaba. The species is known to parasitize at least 39 different hole-nesting species.

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*: Two were seen at Ngaoundaba. The species is known to parasitize kingfishers, bee-eaters, barbets, woodpeckers, swallows, starlings and petronias.

Willcocks's Honeyguide *Indicator willcocksii*: We had some excellent looks at one individual at Poli. The host species are still unknown but probably includes Speckled Tinkerbird. General Sir James Willcocks (1847-1926) commanded the expedition to suppress the Ashanti rebellion of 1900.

PICIDAE

African Piculet *Sasia africana*: We had several chances to get good looks at this diminutive woodpecker on Mount Kupe.

Fine-spotted Woodpecker *Campethera punctuligera*: This handsome woodpecker was seen well in the Waza area and in Bénoué National Park.

Green-backed Woodpecker *Campethera cailliautii*: A male of the race *permista* with barred underparts was seen on Mount Kupe.

Tullberg's Woodpecker *Campethera tullbergi*: Sightings were obtained at Kodmin. The East African form is sometimes split as Fine-banded Woodpecker *C. taeniolaema* leaving the present form a monotypic species. Tycho Fredrik Hugo Tullberg (1842-1920) was a Swedish Zoologist.

Buff-spotted Woodpecker *Campethera nivosus*: One of these dumpy little woodpeckers was seen at the Sanaga River and two more were in Korup National Park.

Gabon Woodpecker *Dendropicos gabonensis*: Heard several times but just one sighting of the rather variable race *reichenowi* on Mount Kupe. This form is intermediate (and hence problematic) between *gabonensis* and the western form *lugubris* that is sometimes split off as a separate species, Melancholy Woodpecker.

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens*: Widespread sightings in appropriate habitat throughout the tour.

Elliot's Woodpecker *Dendropicos elliotii*: Excellent views of the montane form *johnstoni* on Mount Cameroon and again on Mount Kupe and at Kodmin. This recognisable form has historically been treated as a separate species, Johnston's Woodpecker. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Mesopicos*. Daniel Giraud Elliot (1835-1915) was an American Curator of Zoology at the Field Museum in Chicago and one of the founders of the AOU. Sir Harry Hamilton Johnston (1858-1927) standing at five feet tall and known as the 'Tiny Giant' was an English explorer, artist and discoverer of the Okapi. He travelled widely in tropical Africa through many countries including Cameroon.

Grey Woodpecker *Dendropicos goertae*: We had several opportunities to see this one well in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Mesopicos*.

EURYLAIMIDAE

African Broadbill *Smithornis capensis*: Great looks at one in the Bamenda Highlands.

Grey-headed Broadbill *Smithornis sharpei*: Excellent views of a juvenile were obtained on Mount Kupe but displaying birds were totally silent this year.

Rufous-sided Broadbill *Smithornis rufolateralis*: We all got great views of a fine male in Korup watched performing its incredible twirling display and looking like some strange clockwork toy!

PITTIDAE

African/Green-breasted Pitta *Pitta angolensis/reichenowi*: One of the most amazing sightings of the tour was of this beautiful bird in Korup National Park on 29/3. This follows on from our sighting last year when we primarily identified the bird as Green-breasted Pitta based on the deeper flatter sound it made compared with African Pitta. However the birds in Korup do not have a deep green breast and pure white throat as in extreme examples of *reichenowi* and in colouration appear more like African Pitta *P. angolensis* here represented by the race *pulih*. Our birds may in fact be hybrids but these Cameroonian 'forest' birds sound like and respond to *reichenowi* and not *longipennis*. Unfortunately the voice of the race *pulih* is not well known and recent evidence suggests that the breast and throat colour in *reichenowi* might be a variable feature. Some taxonomists argue that there is only one species of pitta in Africa and that *reichenowi* should be lumped in African Pitta *P. angolensis*. However as there are vocal differences perhaps closer examination of supposed 'hybrids' between *reichenowi* and the race *pulih* of African Pitta *P. angolensis* is called for particularly as the voice of Green-breasted Pitta from Uganda is now very well known. This year it took some time before we could actually see one of at least three displaying birds but after a long game of hide-and-seek a bird was persuaded to fly in and it landed almost at our feet for some amazing views.

ALAUDIDAE

Sun Lark *Galerida modesta*: Great views of one at Ngaoundaba.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*: Small numbers were seen in the Mora area.

Chestnut-backed Sparrow Lark *Eremopterix leucotis*: This handsome lark was very common in the Waza area.

HIRUNDINIDAE

Square-tailed Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne nitens*: Small numbers were seen near Yaoundé and en route to Mount Kupe.

Petit's Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne petiti*: Particularly common at Ngaoundaba, in the Yaoundé area and Bamenda areas, Mount Kupe and in the Bakossi Mountains. Saw-wing taxonomy is very controversial but perhaps surprisingly the tendency is to lump rather than split. The form we encountered is often lumped in Black Saw-wing *P. pristopectera*. Louis Petit (1856-1943) was a French naturalist collecting in Angola between 1876 and 1884.

Mountain Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne fuliginosa*: A small number were seen well on Mount Cameroon. This species is endemic to the Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands.

Common Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*: Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants were seen on the move through the Waza area and a single bird was seen in Bénoué National Park.

Grey-rumped Swallow *Pseudhirundo griseopyga*: Small numbers were seen in Bénoué National Park.

Rufous-chested Swallow *Hirundo semirufa*: Small numbers were seen at the Sanaga River and Mundemba. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Cecropis*.

Lesser Striped Swallow *Hirundo abyssinica*: The local race *maxima* is a handsome heavily streaked bird, common and easily seen throughout the south. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Cecropis*.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*: Just two individuals of the race *kumboensis* were seen in the Bamenda Highlands. It makes little sense for this resident highland form to be lumped with *H. daurica* particularly if the following form is treated as a separate species. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Cecropis*.

West African Swallow *Hirundo domicella*: Singletons of this pale resident form of Red-rumped Swallow were seen at Waza. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Cecropis*.

Forest Swallow *Hirundo fuliginosa*: Small numbers were seen at the picathartes site near Yaoundé and again on Mount Kupe. It can be very difficult to separate from Square-tailed Saw-wing but is perhaps best told by its flight action. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Petrochelidon*.

Preuss's Cliff Swallow *Hirundo preussi*: First seen on the Sanaga River and then as far north as Bénoué National Park. This species seems to get more common every year. It is definitely very partial to bridges and can even be found breeding under the smallest culverts. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Petrochelidon*. Paul Preuss (1861-1926) was a Polish-born German naturalist who collected in West Africa between 1886-98. He was responsible for constructing the botanical gardens at Limbe (formerly Victoria) in 1901.

Rock Martin *Hirundo fuligula*: Sightings of small numbers near Maroua, the Sanaga River and in the Bamenda highlands. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Ptyonoprogne*.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*: Small numbers were seen in Bénoué National Park and at Dang Lake.

White-throated Blue Swallow *Hirundo nigrita*: Small numbers of these glossy swallows were seen on the Sanaga River.

Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo aethiopica*: Common and easily seen in the far north. The continued presence around the school buildings at Nyasoso on 22/3 was noted. The species was first noted by us in 2005 and appeared to be the first records for the area, representing an extension of range.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*: Palearctic migrants were seen throughout the country but were most common in the south.

MOTACILLIDAE

Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava*: The various forms that make up the 'Yellow Wagtail complex' have always been the subjects of much debate. Latest taxonomic decisions based on the phylogenetic species concept re-split some races into full species. In line with this, the most widespread species of this Palearctic migrant we saw was Blue-headed Wagtail *M. (f.) flava*.

Ashy-headed Wagtail *Motacilla (flava) cinereocapilla*: Two males were seen well in Waza National Park. The form is usually considered a race of Yellow Wagtail *M. flava*.

Mountain Wagtail *Motacilla clara*: Two of these graceful birds were seen en route to Kodmin.

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*: We all were obtained good views in Bénoué National Park.

Bannerman's Pipit *Anthus bannermani*: After some chasing around we had wonderful looks at one in the Bamenda Highlands.

Long-legged Pipit *Anthus pallidiventris*: This species is apparently extending its range westwards and we had sightings in the Douala area and en route back from Mundemba.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*: These Palearctic migrants were seen on Mount Cameroon, at Ngaoundaba and in the Bamenda area.

Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus*: Singletons were seen at Poli and also Dang Lake.

CAMPEPHAGIDAE

Red-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga phoenicea*: A male was seen at Ngaoundaba and a female in the Yaoundé area.

Petit's Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga petiti*: Several good sightings were obtained on Mount Kupe.

Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga quiscalina*: A female was seen in the Yaoundé area.

Grey Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga caesia*: Small numbers were recorded from the Bamenda Highlands and Kodmin.

White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina pectoralis*: These sleek, silvery birds were seen in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

Blue Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina azurea*: This 'must-see' bird obliged in Korup National Park.

PYCNONOTIDAE

Cameroon Montane Greenbul *Andropadus montanus*: This rather secretive greenbul was seen on Mount Cameroon, in the Bamenda Highlands and at Kodmin. Endemic to the Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands, this species is classed as 'Near-threatened' in Birdlife International's *Threatened Birds of the World* with habitat loss cited as the main threat.

Western Mountain Greenbul *Andropadus tephrolaemus*: A common and attractive montane greenbul. This is another Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands endemic.

Little Greenbul *Andropadus virens*: This widespread, nondescript but noisy bird was first seen well on Mount Cameroon.

Little Grey Greenbul *Andropadus gracilis*: Good sightings from the Yaoundé area and Korup National Park.

Ansorge's Greenbul *Andropadus ansorgei*: Small numbers were seen well in the Yaoundé area and again in Korup National Park. Dr William John Ansorge (1850-1913) was an English explorer who collected in Africa.

Cameroon Sombre Greenbul *Andropadus curvirostris*: Sightings of this nondescript bird with the apt alternative name of Plain Greenbul in the Yaoundé area and on Mount Kupe.

- Slender-billed Greenbul *Andropadus gracilirostris*: We managed a number of good sightings at the Sanaga River and in the Yaoundé area.
- Yellow-whiskered Greenbul *Andropadus latirostris*: Like so many other species, this common bird was heard far more often than it was seen in the Yaoundé area and Korup.
- Golden Greenbul *Calyptocichla serina*: Singletons were seen in the Yaoundé area, Mount Kupe and Korup.
- Honeyguide Greenbul *Baeopogon indicator*: Several were seen in the Yaoundé area and on Mount Kupe.
- Sjöstedt's Honeyguide Greenbul *Baeopogon clamans*: A flighty individual was seen in Korup National Park.
- Spotted Greenbul *Ixonotus guttatus*: We encountered flocks of this most attractive wing-flicking greenbul along the Sanaga River, in the Yaoundé area and in Korup.
- Yellow-necked Greenbul *Chlorocichla falkensteini*: Also known as Falkenstein's Greenbul, two were seen in the Yaoundé area.
- Simple Leaflove *Chlorocichla simplex*: Heard more often than seen but some of the group obtained views in the Yaoundé area.
- Yellow-throated Leaflove *Chlorocichla flavicollis*: The white-throated race *soror* was heard in the Bamenda Highlands and *simplicicolor* (often merged with *soror*) seen at Ngaoundaba. In Bénoué National Park we heard the yellow-throated nominate race.
- Swamp Palm Bulbul *Thescelocichla leucopleura*: Great looks at this showy species on the outskirts of Yaoundé.
- Leaflove *Pyrrhurus scandens*: Very vocal at Ngaoundaba this year which meant that we had numerous opportunities to see this one but were often foiled with them very much living up to their name.
- Cameroon Olive Greenbul *Phyllastrephus poensis*: We saw this unassuming regional endemic in the Bamenda Highlands and Mount Kupe and Kodmin.
- Icterine Greenbul *Phyllastrephus icterinus*: A common bird first seen at the Sanaga River and very easy to see in Korup, seemingly present in every bird party.
- Xavier's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus xavieri*: This larger version of the previous species was seen well in Korup. Xavier Dybowski was a French explorer who collected in the Congo during 1891-2. It is not clear as to whether or not he is the same person, or perhaps the brother of Jan Dybowski (1856-1928) who has the twinspace named after him.
- Grey-headed Greenbul *Phyllastrephus poliocephalus*: An attractive, large, showy, montane greenbul seen well at Kodmin and on Mount Kupe. Another Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands endemic classed as 'Near-threatened' in Birdlife International's *Threatened Birds of the World*. It is threatened by habitat loss.
- Red-tailed Bristlebill *Bleda syndactylus*: Often a skulker we managed to get some views of this handsome bird in Korup.
- Lesser Bristlebill *Bleda notata*: A common bird in Korup although this attractive greenbul was more often heard than seen. This cryptic species was previously mistakenly lumped with Green-tailed Bristlebill *B. eximius* but the bill structure and calls are different. Indeed it is probably more closely related to Grey-headed Bristlebill *B. canicapilla*.
- Eastern Bearded Greenbul *Criniger chloronotus*: The large one with the spiky white throat and greyish underparts in Korup.
- Red-tailed Greenbul *Criniger calurus*: The smaller greenbul with a bright white puffy throat at the Sanaga River and in Korup and probably indistinguishable in the field from the following species except by voice.

White-bearded Greenbul *Criniger ndussumensis*: This look-alike species was seen and more importantly heard in Korup this year.

Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*: An abundant species everywhere except actually inside the closed forest of Korup National Park and Mount Kupe. Work done on the bulbuls by Hall & Moreau has been inconclusive. Some authorities argue that the complex be split into several species. If we follow this then we saw two races of Common Bulbul *P. barbatus*, which were the white-vented birds at many localities involving the races *inornatus* in the north and *gabonensis* in the south as well as the following 'species'.

Dark-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus tricolor*: The yellow-vented birds seen well at Ngaoundaba then become Dark-capped Bulbul *P. t. tricolor*.

NICATORIDAE

[This newly created family is sequenced between Panuridae and Alaudidae according to Clements and other authors.]

Western Nicator *Nicator chloris*: A skulking bird with a loud song and finally seen well near Mundemba. The nicators have also been placed with the bush shrikes but DNA evidence suggests that they be more closely linked with the bulbuls. The name *Nicator* is derived from Greek and can be interpreted as 'conquerer'.

Yellow-throated Nicator *Nicator vireo* (H): Heard only in the Yaoundé area.

TURDIDAE

[Some taxonomists place all the following species, except for those in the genera *Neocossyphus*, *Stizorhina*, *Alethe*, *Pseudaethe*, *Zoothera* and *Turdus* in the family Muscicapidae.]

Gabon Forest Robin *Stiphornis gabonensis*: Most of us had good looks at the Sanaga River. The birds in Korup are problematic to my eye and show olive upperparts more typically associated with the form *erythrothorax* that is sometimes split as a separate species, Western Forest Robin *Stiphornis erythrothorax*. However, the splitting and describing of 'new' species from this variable complex (both song and plumage) seems to be getting out of hand and it is perhaps best recommended that the forms be treated as a single species (Forest Robin *S. erythrothorax*) for the time being until the entire complex can be properly evaluated.

Alexander's Akalat *Sheppardia poensis*: After a long search we had great views of this secretive bird at Kodmin and on Mount Kupe. This form is often lumped in Bocage's Akalat *S. bocagei* and the species sometimes placed in the genus *Cossypha* however there are both vocal and habitat preference differences. Boyd Alexander (1873-1910) was a British Army Officer, African explorer and a superb field-ornithologist. Alexander collected the type specimen of *poensis* from Bioko in 1903. Serle collected the type specimen of the race we saw from Mt Kupe in 1949.

White-bellied Robin Chat *Cossyphicula roberti*: Good views were obtained at Kodmin and on Mount Kupe. The song is rather different from that of the East African populations and it would be interesting to know if a cryptic species was involved here. This species is sometimes placed in the genus *Cossypha*.

Mountain Robin Chat *Cossypha isabellae*: We had great views of the darker nominate race on Mount Cameroon where the birds were confiding and easy to see. A single bird of the race *batesi* was seen at Lake Awing.

Grey-winged Robin Chat *Cossypha polioptera*: We only managed to glimpse this pretty bird at Ngaoundaba. Recent DNA analysis suggests that this species is better placed in the genus *Sheppardia* with the akalats.

- Snowy-crowned Robin Chat *Cossypha niveicapilla*: This colourful species was seen well in Bénoué National Park.
- White-crowned Robin Chat *Cossypha albicapilla*: The distinctive race *giffardi* has a predominantly dark crown. First seen in Bénoué National Park but more confiding and showy birds were seen well at Ngaoundaba.
- Fire-crested Alethe *Alethe castanea*: Seen very well attending the ant swarms in Korup. The form concerned is sometimes lumped in White-tailed Alethe *A. diademata* with the name Fire-crested Alethe being used for the enlarged species. According to recent DNA analysis, this species pair remains the only representatives of the genus *Alethe* contra Sinclair & Ryan's *Birds of Africa South of the Sahara* that incorrectly places them in the genus *Pseudalethe*.
- Brown-chested Alethe *Alethe poliocephala*: One was seen on Mount Kupe. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Pseudalethe*.
- White-tailed Ant Thrush *Neocossyphus poensis*: Several individuals of this often rather active species were seen in Korup.
- Rufous Flycatcher Thrush *Stizorhina fraseri*: Often heard and seen well in the Yaoundé area, on Mount Kupe and in Korup. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Neocossyphus* but these bird's structure and behaviour is quite different from those ant thrushes.
- African Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas minor*: Small numbers were seen well in the far north.
- Black Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas podobe*: A very distinctive Sahelian species with a tremendous tail and easy to see in the extreme north.
- African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*: The striking race *salax* was very common on Mount Cameroon and also in the Bamenda area and at Kodmin. The African resident forms are now considered to be a separate species, African Stonechat *S. torquatus* (sometimes incorrectly named *S. axillaris*). The European Common Stonechat is then renamed *S. rubicola* because the type specimen described by Linnaeus in 1758 came from the Cape of Good Hope of all places! According to recent scientific studies, it has been found that the 'African' stonechats have a lower metabolic rate than their European relatives and therefore lead a slower, less hectic and more laid back life style more suited to the tropics!
- Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*: Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants were encountered at widespread localities throughout the tour.
- Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*: Small numbers of this Palearctic migrant were seen in the far north.
- Heuglin's Wheatear *Oenanthe heuglini*: Small numbers were seen in and around Poli. Theodor von Heuglin (1824-76) was a German explorer and ornithologist with a specialist interest in African birds.
- Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen in Waza National Park on 11/3. There are few documented records of this species in Cameroon. The name refers to a dirty yellowish buff colour and according to modern myth could refer to two separate women with similar fixations. The most recent would be Isabella, Archduchess of Austria (1566-1633). Her husband Albert VII laid siege to Ostend in 1601 and Isabella who expected a quick victory vowed not to change her underwear until the city was won. This would have all been so well and good if the siege hadn't lasted for over three years! The earlier Isabella I of Castile (1451-1504) was a victim of an eight-month long siege of Granada in 1491-2 and she, also is said to have vowed not to change her knickers during this time!
- Familiar Chat *Cercomela familiaris*: Also known as Red-tailed Chat, it was easy to see at Poli and in Bénoué National Park.

Northern Anteater Chat *Myrmecocichla aethiops*: A group of about 15 individuals was seen together in the Waza area!

White-fronted Black Chat *Myrmecocichla albifrons*: Two males and a female allowed us all good views in Bénoué National Park.

White-crowned Cliff Chat *Myrmecocichla coronata*: This beautiful chat was seen well at Poli.

Crossley's Ground Thrush *Zoothera crossleyi* (H): A beautiful songster the singing birds remained firmly hidden behind the dense forest vegetation on Mount Kupe and at Kodmin. Classified as 'Near-threatened' in Birdlife International's *Threatened Birds of the World*, the species is threatened by habitat loss in its small and fragmented range. It is a mystery actually who this Crossley was or whether several members of the same family were involved. However there was certainly a Crossley collecting in Cameroon and Madagascar in the 1870's.

African Thrush *Turdus pelios*: A common and widespread species only absent in the extreme north. The widespread race is *saturatus* is replaced by *nigrilorum* above 500m on Mount Cameroon. We saw large numbers of this latter and less colourful form on Mt Cameroon. It has been considered by some authorities to represent a race of Olive Thrush *T. olivaceus* or even a separate species in itself.

SYLVIIDAE

[Recent genetic evidence place the genera *Melocichla*, *Macrosphenus* and *Sylvietta* in the family Macrosphenidae. The genus *Hylia* is placed in the family Cettidae. The genus *Phylloscopus* is placed in the family Phylloscopidae. The genera *Acrocephalus*, *Iduna* and *Hippolais* are placed in the family Acrocephalidae. The genera *Bradypterus* and *Schoenicola* are placed in the family Locustellidae. The genera *Cisticola*, *Prinia*, *Schistolais*, *Heliolais*, *Urolais*, *Oreolais*, *Drymocichla*, *Spiloptila*, *Apalis*, *Hypergerus*, *Camaroptera*, *Bathmocercus*, *Poliolais* and *Eremomela* are placed in the family Cisticolidae. The genus *Hyliota* is placed in the family Hyliotidae.]

Little Rush Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala* (H): We simply just could not see a singing bird at Nyasoso. It has been noticed recently that the western forms of this species have a rather different song to those in the east and may therefore represent separate species.

Cameroon Forest Warbler *Bradypterus lopezi*: Two were seen on Mt Cameroon and we stopped trying to see more once everyone had seen the bird well. There has long been much discussion concerning the montane *Bradypterus* warblers in Cameroon. Borrow & Demey and *Birds of Africa* include the form concerned in Evergreen Forest Warbler *B. mariae* using the name *B. lopezi* for the enlarged species. Other authorities take the extreme of lumping it with Barratt's Warbler *B. barratti*. For example, Mackworth, Praed and Grant as recently as 1973 were of the opinion that two species occurred on Mount Cameroon, Barratt's Scrub Warbler *B. barratti youngi* up to 1,800 metres and Cameroon Mountain Warbler *B. camerunensis* above this at the tree line around 2,000 metres. However this extreme latter taxonomy does not seem to have been widely accepted. If split this form becomes a Cameroon and Bioko endemic.

Bangwa Forest Warbler *Bradypterus bangwaensis*: Although very few birds were singing this year in the Bamenda Highlands this skulking warbler was seen well by all at the end of our stay. There has been much long discussion concerning the montane *Bradypterus* warblers in Cameroon. Historically this form has been incorrectly classed as a race of Cinnamon Bracken Warbler *B. cinnamomeus*. However, its song is very similar, if not often identical to the Evergreen Forest Warbler *B. lopezi* complex and not to *cinnamomeus*. *Birds of Africa* includes the form concerned in the present species; other authorities take the extremes of lumping it either with Barratt's Warbler *B. barratti* or Evergreen Forest Warbler *B. lopezi*. The species is a Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands endemic that Birdlife International's *Threatened Birds*

of the World classifies as 'Near-threatened'. The Bangwa people are part of the Bamileke group of tribes dwelling in the Bamenda Highlands.

Black-faced Rufous Warbler *Bathmocercus rufus*: This skulking bird was often heard on Mount Kupe and at Kodmin but they were also seen well.

African Moustached Warbler *Melocichla mentalis*: One was seen well in Bénoué National Park.

Fan-tailed Grassbird *Schoenicola brevirostris*: Also known as Fan-tailed or Broad-tailed Warbler, we had great views of one at Kodmin.

European Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen in Bénoué National Park.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*: Following on from last years sighting strangely once again one of these Palearctic migrants allowed very good views in Bénoué National Park on 14/3. There do not appear to be any previously documented records for the park before these records.

Greater Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus rufescens*: This large and nondescript warbler was seen at Ngaoundaba and again at Nyasoso.

Western Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais opaca*: Individuals of these Palearctic migrants were identified at Garoua and in the Waza area. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Iduna*.

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida*: Two of these smaller tail-pumping birds were seen in Maroua. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Iduna*.

Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops*: Its strident song was often heard and it was seen in Bénoué National Park and at Nyasoso.

Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans*: One was seen at Poli.

Whistling Cisticola *Cisticola lateralis*: One was seen well at Ngaoundaba and heard near Yaoundé and en route to Bamenda.

Chattering Cisticola *Cisticola anonymus*: The common cisticola throughout the forest zone during this tour.

Brown-backed Cisticola *Cisticola discolor*: A montane species and a Cameroonian, and Nigerian highlands endemic that has a comical and lively display. It was easy to see on Mount Cameroon, in the Bamenda area and at Kodmin.

Rock-loving Cisticola *Cisticola aberrans*: Great views of this distinctive cisticola running around on the rocks near Maroua.

Winding Cisticola *Cisticola marginatus*: One was seen at Dang Lake.

Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis*: These heavyweight streaky cisticolas were seen at Poli and in Bénoué National Park.

Red-pate Cisticola *Cisticola ruficeps*: This well-marked cisticola was very common and easy to see in the far north.

Dorst's Cisticola *Cisticola guinea*: We saw a bird in streaky non-breeding plumage at Poli but in Bénoué National Park one was already in plain breeding plumage. This recently described form looks similar to the preceding species in its breeding plumage but the songs are very different. Although the bird was first described in 1991 it now appears that it is synonymous with a form already described as *C. ruficeps guinea*. The species should be now renamed *Cisticola guinea* as *dorsti* is a synonym. Professor Dr Jean Dorst (1924-2001) was a French ornithologist and head of the Laboratoire de Zoologie of the French Natural History Museum.

Short-winged Cisticola *Cisticola brachypterus*: This unassuming cisticola was seen in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

Rufous Cisticola *Cisticola rufus*: Several good sightings in Bénoué National Park.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*: One was seen at Poli.

Pectoral-patch Cisticola *Cisticola brunnescens*: Small numbers of this tiny cisticola were seen in the Bamenda Highlands.

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

River Prinia *Prinia fluviatilis*: From the vocal evidence of singing birds, it would appear that this is in fact the most common prinia on the Waza floodplain. It is not clear how P. Scholte *et al* could have missed it during their survey.

Banded Prinia *Prinia bairdii*: Noisy individuals of this strikingly attractive warbler near Yaoundé and at Mount Kupe and Kodmin.

Red-winged Warbler *Heliolais erythroptera*: One was seen well in Bénoué National Park. This species is sometimes placed in the genus *Prinia*.

Green Longtail *Urolais epichlora*: This montane species that is endemic to Bioko and the Cameroon and Nigerian highlands was seen well on Mount Cameroon, in the Bamenda Highlands and on Mount Kupe and Kodmin.

Cricket Warbler *Spiloptila clamans*: It took a lot of searching in the heat but we finally got wonderful looks at this dainty little warbler in the Mora area at the same site where Birdquest found the first records for the country in December 1995. The male was singing and apparently territorial and it seems that the species is well established now in this area.

White-chinned Prinia *Schistolais leucopogon*: These attractive little prinia-like birds were first seen in Limbe Botanical Gardens. In the past, it has been placed in the genus *Prinia*.

Red-winged Grey Warbler *Drymocichla incana*: A charming little, sociable warbler seen well in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

Black-collared Apalis *Apalis pulchra*: Although they were somewhat stubborn to start with we finally had some fabulous views of these confiding warblers in the Bamenda area, holding their tails high and wiggling them about in comical clockwork movements. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Oreolais*.

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida*: Only discovered in Cameroon during the 1980's, we heard it in Bénoué National Park and saw it at Ngaoundaba.

Masked Apalis *Apalis binotata*: A male was seen at Kodmin.

Black-throated Apalis *Apalis jacksoni*: First seen in the Bamenda area, we had more chances to get good views of this attractive warbler on Mount Kupe and at Kodmin.

Black-capped Apalis *Apalis nigriceps*: We had great views of this pretty warbler on Mount Kupe.

Buff-throated Apalis *Apalis rufogularis*: Several were seen near Yaoundé and a male came down to eye level from the canopy. The bird is named after the female plumage.

Bamenda Apalis *Apalis bamendae*: This endemic was easy to see at Ngaoundaba, this year and we also heard it in the Bamenda Highlands. Once classified as 'Vulnerable' by Birdlife International it has now been found at several new sites and is more common than was once thought and has been officially removed from the threatened list.

Grey Apalis *Apalis cinerea*: Seen on Mount Cameroon, in the Bamenda highlands, Mount Kupe and Kodmin.

White-tailed Warbler *Poliolais lopezi*: One was found high on Mount Kupe and more were seen at Kodmin. This strange little bird is sometimes thought to show affinities to the tailorbirds, however its nest is not stitched. It is endemic to Bioko and the Cameroon and Nigerian highlands.

Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brachyura*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

Yellow-browed Camaroptera *Camaroptera supercilialis*: More often heard than seen but we did get some good views in the Yaoundé area and en route to Kodmin.

- Olive-green Camaroptera *Camaroptera chloronota*: Often heard but this lover of the densest undergrowth was also coaxed into view on several occasions.
- Yellow Longbill *Macrosphenus flavicans*: Always in the middle of the thickest vine tangles but individuals were seen on Mount Kupe.
- Grey Longbill *Macrosphenus concolor*: This sibling vine-tangle loving species was also very vocal and seen near Yaoundé and on Mount Kupe but only heard in Korup.
- Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis*: One was seen in the Mora area.
- Senegal Eremomela *Eremomela pusilla*: An attractive and colourful little warbler seen well throughout the north.
- Rufous-crowned Eremomela *Eremomela badiceps*: This charming little warbler was seen well on Mount Kupe and near Mundemba.
- Northern Crombec *Sylvietta brachyura*: Sightings of this 'nuthatch-warbler' throughout the north.
- Green Crombec *Sylvietta virens*: Often heard in the south we actually only saw them in Limbe Botanic Gardens and on Mount Kupe.
- Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*: Sightings of this Palearctic migrant in Bénoué National Park, Ngaoundaba and the Bamenda Highlands.
- Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*: These Palearctic migrants were seen on Mount Cameroon, in the Yaoundé area, on Mount Kupe and near Mundemba.
- Black-capped Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus herberti*: A cute little warbler and seen well on Mount Cameroon, Mount Kupe and Kodmin. The species is endemic to Bioko and the Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands.
- Oriole Warbler *Hypergerus atriceps*: Also known as Moho, we heard its loud song in Bénoué National Park and had excellent views of this strange and beautiful bird at Ngaoundaba. This species is placed *incertae sedis*, as its affinities are unclear. It has a warbler song, a sunbird-like nest and a babbler-shaped body.
- Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*: This Palearctic migrant was seen on Mount Cameroon and at Ngaoundaba.
- Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*: Good numbers of this Palearctic migrant in the north.
- Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* (NL): One of these Palearctic migrants was seen by some of the group at Maroua.
- Yellow-bellied Hyliota *Hyliota flavigaster*: Nice views of four of these attractive birds in Bénoué National Park. Taxonomists are unsure as to whether these unusual birds are warblers, flycatchers or wattle-eyes and they are now usually separated in their own family.
- Southern Hyliota *Hyliota australis*: The hyliotas seen well on Mount Kupe appear to be this species rather than the previously officially recorded Yellow-bellied Hyliota *H. flavigaster*. A specimen of Southern Hyliota *H. australis* was collected in the nearby Rumpi Hills in 1965 and the identity of these rain forest hyliotas on Mt Kupe has perhaps never really been critically looked at. The population is presumably the same as the Southern Hyliota *H. a. slatini* that ranges from northeast DRC to Kakamega Forest in Kenya. Elsewhere *australis* is typically a miombo species and it is possible that a cryptic species is involved. Perhaps it is time for a critical reappraisal of this taxon?
- Green Hylia *Hylia prasina*: These were common birds in the forest zone although their familiar ringing call was heard far more often than the bird was seen!

MUSCICAPIDAE

- White-browed Forest Flycatcher *Fraseria cinerascens*: Excellent views at the Sanaga River and heard every morning around our camp in Korup but usually invisible.

- Northern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis edoloides*: Widespread sightings from Poli to Bamenda.
- Pale Flycatcher *Melaenornis pallidus*: Seen well at Poli and at Ngaoundaba. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Bradornis*.
- Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*: Sightings of these Palearctic migrants were obtained in Limbe Botanical Gardens.
- Swamp Flycatcher *Muscicapa aquatica*: Small numbers of these rather nondescript flycatchers were seen in Bénoué National Park.
- Cassin's Flycatcher *Muscicapa cassini*: Super views of three birds in Limbe Botanical Gardens, in the Bakossi Mountains, near Mundemba and also along the Mana River in Korup National Park. John Cassin (1813-1869) was an American businessman and renowned systematic ornithologist. He was also curator of ornithology and Vice-President of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences.
- African Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta*: These dumpy little flycatchers were easily seen in montane areas.
- Little Grey Flycatcher *Muscicapa epulata*: Excellent close views in the Yaoundé area.
- Yellow-footed Flycatcher *Muscicapa sethsmithi*: A poor showing for this delightful little flycatcher with bright yellow legs and feet that seem to glow. We only saw one but extremely well on Mount Kupe.
- Sooty Flycatcher *Muscicapa infuscata*: These thickset little flycatchers look more like small hirundines perched out on exposed branches. We saw them on Mount Kupe and as we came back from Mundemba.
- Lead-coloured Flycatcher *Myioparus plumbeus*: This 'tit-flycatcher' was seen in Bénoué National Park.
- Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*: A number of these Palearctic migrants were seen in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba. Most looked decidedly scruffy!

MONARCHIDAE

- [Recent genetic evidence places the genus *Erythrocerus* with the bush warblers in the family Cettiidae and the genus *Elminia* with the fairy flycatchers in the family Stenostiridae.]
- Chestnut-capped Flycatcher *Erythrocerus mccallii*: This charming little bird with its bright rufous tail was seen well near Yaoundé.
- African Blue Flycatcher *Elminia longicauda*: A common and delightful bird seen well everywhere except in the far north.
- Dusky Crested Flycatcher *Elminia nigromitrata*: The complex song full of mimicry from this furtive monarch was heard on Mount Kupe where we also glimpsed the bird that was later seen well in Korup National Park.
- White-bellied Crested Flycatcher *Elminia albiventris*: Another charming species seen well on Mount Cameroon, in the Bamenda Highlands, on Mount Kupe and at Kodmin.
- Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher *Trochocercus nitens*: This normally skulking flycatcher was comparatively easy to see on this tour at Kodmin and in Korup National Park.
- African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis*: Widespread sightings except in the far north with some really beautiful black and white morph males also seen.
- Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone rufocinerea* (NL): Jean-Francois saw one individual in Limbe Botanic Gardens.
- Bates's Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone batesi*: First seen near Yaoundé we went on to see more on Mount Kupe.
- Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone rufiventer*: The very attractive grey-backed race *neumanni* was easily seen both on Mount Kupe and in Korup.

PLATYSTEIRIDAE

- Shrike Flycatcher *Megabyas flammulatus*: A male seen on Mount Kupe was our only record. The somewhat comical, continuous circling motion made by the birds tail is an identification giveaway when seen high up in the canopy.
- Black-and-white Flycatcher *Bias musicus*: A really poor show with just one female of this 'Vanga Flycatcher' was seen on Mount Kupe. The species is noted for their amazing spiky crest and strange butterfly-like display flights.
- Chestnut Wattle-eye *Dyaphorophyia castanea*: Seen well around Yaoundé, on Mount Kupe and in Korup National Park. This is a species that is named after the female and these wattle-eyes are sometimes placed in the genus *Platysteira*.
- Black-necked Wattle-eye *Dyaphorophyia chalybea*: After a bit of a struggle we all had views of this active little bird on Mount Kupe.
- Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye *Dyaphorophyia concreta*: Super views of this intensely coloured and simply stunning bird in Korup and on Mount Kupe where we were treated to incredible views of a female sat tight on her nest that had been constructed in the open and right next to the main path.
- Common Wattle-eye *Platysteira cyanea*: We had a number of chances to get good views of this attractive species.
- Banded Wattle-eye *Platysteira laticincta*: We had great views of this endangered species at two localities in the Bamenda area. Some authorities lump this species with Black-throated Wattle-eye *P. peltata*. If kept separate it becomes a Cameroon endemic. Classified as 'Endangered' by BirdLife International, its habitat was reduced by half in the period between 1965-1985 and the species is now restricted to an area no bigger than 500 square kilometres. The total population is estimated to be between 2,500 - 10,000 birds.
- Senegal Batis *Batis senegalensis*: A pair near Maroua and small numbers of these dapper little birds were also seen in Bénoué National Park.
- West African Batis *Batis occulta*: Several sightings of birds but always high in the canopy near Yaoundé and on Mount Kupe.

TIMALIIDAE

[Recent genetic evidence places the genera *Ptyrticus* and *Illadopsis* with the fulvetas and ground babblers in the family Pellorneidae. The genera *Kupeornis* and *Turdoides* are placed with the laughingthrushes in the family Leiothrichidae. The genus *Pseudoalcippe* is placed in the family Sylviidae. The genus *Kakamega* has been placed with the sugarbirds in the family Promeropidae.]

- Pale-breasted Illadopsis *Illadopsis rufipennis*: First seen on Mount Kupe but surely one of the most regularly seen illadopsises in Korup.
- Brown Illadopsis *Illadopsis fulvescens*: We saw the brown-throated race *iboensis* in Korup that has been treated in the past as part of a separate species, Moloney's Illadopsis *Trichastoma moloneyanum*. In the past experiments with these birds have shown little interest in playback of 'normal' brown illadopsis but responded aggressively to their own voices. Perhaps there was something to be recommended by that split after all? We also saw a regular' Brown Illadopsis of the nominate race on Mount Kupe. Sir Cornelius Alfred Moloney (1848-1913) was a British civil servant working in The Gambia and Nigeria in the late 1800's.
- Blackcap Illadopsis *Illadopsis cleaveri*: Singletons were seen on Mount Kupe and in Korup.
- Grey-chested Illadopsis *Kakamega poliothorax*: Also known as Grey-chested Babbler, this notorious skulker was often heard but only glimpsed by Nik at Kodmin.

African Hill Babbler *Pseudoalcippe abyssinica*: The grey-headed race *monachus* was seen well on Mount Cameroon. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Illadopsis*.

Ruwenzori Hill Babbler *Pseudoalcippe atriceps*: The attractive black-headed birds we saw in the Bamenda Highlands are sometimes lumped in African Hill Babbler *P. abyssinica*.

Spotted Thrush Babbler *Ptyrticus turdinus*: A wonderful bird with an unforgettable song that gave us a lot of trouble this year and was only seen briefly at Ngaoundaba.

Brown Babbler *Turdoides plebejus*: These garrulous birds were seen well throughout the north.

Blackcap Babbler *Turdoides reinwardtii*: Noisy, albeit very skulking groups were seen in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

White-throated Mountain Babbler *Kupeornis gilberti*: Another highlight of the tour was seeing these marvellous creatures at Kodmin. Although very active, we were treated to some amazingly good views of these inquisitive birds inspecting each mossy limb for food. BirdLife International classifies this Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands endemic as 'Endangered' because its high montane primary forest habitat is constantly under threat. The Bakossi Mountains form a stronghold for the species and the world population is thought to number between 10,000-20,000. Dr William Serle who was a doctor in the British Colonial Service first described the species in 1949. The generic name describes the collecting locality and Gilbert Nkwocha was Serle's collector and skinner.

PARIDAE

White-shouldered Black Tit *Parus guineensis*: A poor showing with just one sighting in Bénoué National Park.

REMIZIDAE

[Recent genetic places the genus *Pholidornis* with the bush warblers in the family Cettidae.]

Yellow Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus parvulus*: One of these localised birds showed well in Bénoué National Park. This tiny bird appears to be remarkably difficult to see in this country and is seldom recorded on tours however we are meeting with it more regularly at this particular locality.

Tit-hylia *Pholidornis rushiae*: Three of these diminutive birds were seen well on Mount Kupe. This species lays claim (along with Mouse-coloured Penduline Tit) as being the smallest bird in Africa!

NECTARINIIDAE

Western Violet-backed Sunbird *Anthreptes longuemarei*: Small numbers of this warbler-like sunbird in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

Green Sunbird *Anthreptes rectirostris*: Seen in the forests on the outskirts of Yaoundé and again on Mount Kupe and Korup. The form concerned is *tephrolaema* that has historically been treated as a separate species, Grey-chinned Sunbird.

Fraser's Sunbird *Deleornis fraseri*: A very common and easily seen sunbird in Korup that with its long and fairly straight bill looks more like a warbler than a sunbird. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Anthreptes*.

Reichenbach's Sunbird *Anabathmis reichenbachii*: Small numbers were seen at the Sanaga River and in Limbe Botanical Gardens. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*. Heinrich Gottlieb Ludwig Reichenbach (1793-1879) was an important German systematist and Director of the Dresden Natural History Museum.

- Green-headed Sunbird *Cyanomitra verticalis*: Widespread sightings of the confusingly blue-headed race *cycanocephala* were obtained from Limbe Botanical Gardens Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.
- Blue-throated Brown Sunbird *Cyanomitra cyano-laema*: A poor showing with just one male seen near Mundemba. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.
- Cameroon Sunbird *Cyanomitra oritis*: First seen on Mount Cameroon we then managed more in the Bamenda Highlands, on Mount Kupe and at Kodmin. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia* and is endemic to Bioko and the Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands.
- Western Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra obscura*: This commonly seen forest sunbird was formerly lumped in Olive Sunbird *Nectarinia olivacea*. However, it now seems that this recent split has been pronounced invalid.
- Green-throated Sunbird *Chalcomitra rubescens*: This dark sunbird was commonly seen throughout the forest zone. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.
- Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis*: Commonly seen in the north. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.
- Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris*: A few were seen around Yaoundé, on Mount Kupe and Kodmin. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Anthreptes*.
- Pygmy Sunbird *Hedydipna platura*: We had many chances to see this spectacular little bird (including some fine breeding plumage males) well in the north where it seemed to be very common. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Anthreptes*.
- Olive-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris chloropygius*: This colourful sunbird was easy to see at the Sanaga River, in Limbe Botanical Gardens and around Yaoundé. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.
- Tiny Sunbird *Cinnyris minullus*: Good views of males on Mount Kupe. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.
- Northern Double-collared Sunbird *Cinnyris reichenowi*: The highland forest counterpart of the previous species. It was first seen on Mount Cameroon and then in the Bamenda Highlands, on Mount Kupe and at Kodmin. However numbers seemed to be down this year. The species was formerly known as *Nectarinia preussi*.
- Beautiful Sunbird *Cinnyris pulchellus*: Seen throughout the north but it was most common in Bénoué National Park where some males were in fine breeding plumage. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.
- Orange-tufted Sunbird *Cinnyris bouvieri*: Numbers were substantially down but we did obtain some excellent views of a male at Lake Awing and again at Kodmin. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.
- Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus*: Easy to see this year at Ngaoundaba. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.
- Superb Sunbird *Cinnyris superbus*: Some good looks at this stunning heavyweight sunbird around Yaoundé and on Mount Kupe.
- Splendid Sunbird *Cinnyris coccinigaster*: Our first sighting of this colourful species was in Limbe Botanical Gardens but it was also easy to see at Ngaoundaba, the Bamenda Highlands and Nyasoso. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.
- Ursula's Sunbird *Cinnyris ursulae*: Just three sightings of this diminutive sunbird at Kodmin and on Mt Kupe. Endemic to Bioko and the Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands the species is classified as 'Near-threatened' by BirdLife International. The population is unknown but the main threat to this unassuming species is through habitat loss. Ursula Davies was the niece of

the British explorer Captain Boyd Alexander who described and named the sunbird. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.

Copper Sunbird *Cinnyris cupreus*: A poor showing with just a few birds seen at Ngaoundaba. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.

ZOSTEROPIDAE

Yellow White-eye *Zosterops senegalensis*: Easy to see in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

Forest White-eye *Zosterops stenocricotus*: The birds seen on Mount Cameroon, in the Bamenda highlands, Mount Kupe and at Kodmin were attributable to the form *stenocricotus* which has a noticeably different song to Yellow White-eye *Z. senegalensis* from which this cryptic form has been split.

Mount Cameroon Speirops *Speirops melanocephalus*: We had a long climb to the tree line but we were all rewarded with some excellent views of this interesting bird on top of Mount Cameroon. BirdLife International classes this Cameroon endemic as 'Vulnerable'. The population is thought to number between 10,000-20,000. Habitat loss through burning and deforestation undertaken by hunters and farmers on the mountain is one of the biggest threats.

LANIIDAE

Common Fiscal *Lanius collaris*: Small numbers were seen on the Adamawa Plateau and in the Bamenda highlands.

Mackinnon's Shrike *Lanius mackinnoni*: A highland bird here on the westernmost limit of its range. We managed sightings on Mount Cameroon, in the Bamenda Highlands and at Kodmin. Archibald Donald Mackinnon (1864-1937) was a Scottish medical officer serving in Uganda and later director of Transport there. Sharpe described the bird from a specimen collected by Jackson in Kenya.

Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus*: Three of these Palearctic migrants were seen in the Waza area.

Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis*: Two were seen in the Mora area.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*: A very poor showing of this Palearctic migrant with only two seen in Waza National Park.

Yellow-billed Shrike *Corvinella corvina*: This large shrike was seen well in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba. It typically goes around in noisy tail-wagging gangs!

MALACONOTIDAE

Fiery-breasted Bush-shrike *Malaconotus cruentus*: A very showy bird was seen very well on Mount Kupe. These brightly coloured beasts are often incredibly difficult to see as they always kept to the thickest clumps of vegetation.

Grey-headed Bush-shrike *Malaconotus blanchoti*: Excellent views of this large bush-shrike at Ngaoundaba.

Green-breasted Bush-shrike *Malaconotus gladiator*: This heavyweight, regional endemic bush-shrike was heard in the Bamenda highlands and at Kodmin but seen on Mount Kupe. BirdLife International classes this Cameroon endemic as 'Vulnerable'. With a population of between 2,500-9,999 individuals habitat loss is the most obvious threat.

Mount Kupe Bush-shrike *Malaconotus kupeensis*: A lucky year as we saw a pair without too much effort at Kodmin! Birdquest had found a dead bird caught in a snare in 2002 at Kodmin, which at the time was a new site for the species and this locality now seems to be a fairly reliable but certainly not guaranteed place to see this once almost mythical bird. BirdLife International classes this Cameroon endemic as 'Endangered'. The population is estimated to be between

50-249 individuals and habitat loss is the most obvious threat. This species is endemic to Cameroon.

Many-coloured Bush-shrike *Malaconotus multicolor*: This variably plumaged species was persuaded to show itself on Mount Kupe and we managed to get views of a brightly coloured orange male.

Bocage's Bush-shrike *Malaconotus bocagei*: Seen incredibly well at Kodmin where a trio were watched displaying to each other. José Vicenta Barboza du Bocage (1823-1907) was Portuguese and Director of the National Zoological Museum of Lisbon and had a specialist interest in the birds of Angola.

Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike *Malaconotus sulfureopectus*: Good views in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis* (H): Heard only in the Yaoundé area.

Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegala*: Widespread sightings in the north.

Pink-footed Puffback *Dryoscopus angolensis*: A particularly good showing this year with exceptional views of displaying birds in the Yaoundé area, Mount Kupe and Kodmin.

Black-shouldered Puffback *Dryoscopus senegalensis*: Seen well in the forests around Yaoundé and again on Mount Kupe and at Kodmin.

Northern Puffback *Dryoscopus gambensis*: Good views were obtained in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

Mountain Sooty Boubou *Laniarius poensis*: Noisy, skulking, black birds heard at Kodmin and seen on Mount Kupe.

Lühder's Bush-shrike *Laniarius luehderi*: Great views on Mount Kupe. W Lühder (1847-1873) was a German naturalist who collected in Cameroon in 1872.

Tropical Boubou *Laniarius major*: More often heard than seen in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba. The old name of Bell-shrike seemed most appropriate. Recent DNA work on the *Laniarius* bush-shrikes splits *L. aethiopicus* into four species; Ethiopian Boubou *L. aethiopicus*, Tropical Boubou *L. major*, East Coast Boubou *L. sublacteus* and extralimital Erlanger's Boubou *L. erlangeri*. The paper *Phylogeny of Laniarius: Molecular data reveal L. liberatus synonymous with L. erlangeri and "plumage colouration" as unreliable morphological characters for defining species and species groups* by B. Nguembock, J. Fjeldsa, A. Couloux and E. Pasquet is published in *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution*.

Yellow-crowned Gonolek *Laniarius barbarus*: A stunning colour scheme. Several skulking birds were finally seen well in the Waza area.

Black-headed Gonolek *Laniarius erythrogaster*: This intensely coloured shrike was seen in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

Yellow-breasted Boubou *Laniarius atroflavus*: Yet another glorious, colourful bush-shrike endemic to the Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands that was easy to see on Mount Cameroon and in the Bamenda highlands.

Brubru *Nilais afer*: Our only sightings were all in Bénoué National Park.

PRIONOPIDAE

White Helmet-shrike *Prionops plumatus*: Great views of the short-crested form at Ngaoundaba.

ORIOLIDAE

Black-winged Oriole *Oriolus nigripennis*: Heard in the forests on the outskirts of Yaoundé and seen on Mount Kupe and at Kodmin.

Western Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus brachyrhynchus*: The white spot at the base of the primaries identified this one on Mount Kupe and Korup.

- African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus*: Some fine sightings in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.
- Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*: Small numbers of this Palearctic migrant were seen at Ngaoundaba.

DICRURIDAE

- Square-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus ludwigii*: Several individuals of the race *sharpei* were seen at Ngaoundaba. This form, known as Sharpe's Drongo has a squarer tail and a duller, more violet gloss and may be well worthy of specific status. Richard Bowdler Sharpe (1847-1909) was an English ornithologist and curator of the British Museum bird collection. He conceived the idea of the British Ornithologists' Club.
- Shining Drongo *Dicrurus atripennis*: Usually seen accompanying bird parties inside forest in Korup.
- Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*: A common savannah species seen in the north.
- Velvet-mantled Drongo *Dicrurus coracinus*: Inexplicably scarce with singletons on the outskirts of Yaoundé and near Mundemba.

CORVIDAE

- Pied Crow *Corvus albus*: Common and widespread anywhere outside of the closed forest.
- Piapiac *Ptilostomus afer*: We saw this pugnacious-looking bird well both in Maroua and around Ngaoundaba. The name is supposedly an onomatopoeic rendering of the call.

STURNIDAE

- Narrow-tailed Starling *Poeoptera lugubris*: Flocks were regularly seen in the late afternoon flying to roost in the Nyasoso area.
- Waller's Starling *Onychognathus walleri*: First seen on Mount Cameroon with more in the Bamenda highlands and Kodmin. Gerald Waller was an English naturalist collecting in East Africa in the late 1800's.
- Neumann's Starling *Onychognathus neumanni*: Two were seen above our hotel in Bamenda. Oskar Rudolph Neumann (1867-1946) was a German ornithologist who collected throughout Africa in the late 1800's.
- Purple-headed Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis purpureiceps*: Small numbers were seen on Mount Kupe.
- Purple Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis purpureus*: Very common in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba. This species was the one with a big eye and a short tail.
- Bronze-tailed Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis chalcurus*: Smaller numbers were identified at Ngaoundaba. This species was the one with a good mask and a purple tail.
- Greater Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chalybaeus*: This large starling was very common in the north.
- Lesser Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chloropterus*: At least three were seen at Ngaoundaba but this species is easily overlooked amongst the hoards of other starlings.
- Splendid Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis splendidus*: This large starling was easy to identify and was seen from Ngaoundaba, the Yaoundé area and Bamenda highlands.
- Long-tailed Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis caudatus*: Some splendid tails were much admired in the extreme north.
- Chestnut-bellied Starling *Lamprotornis pulcher*: A common and very familiar starling of the far north. This species is sometimes placed in the genus *Spreo*.
- White-collared Starling *Grafisia torquata*: This striking localised starling that looks rather like a Ring Ouzel proved easy to see this year with good numbers at Ngaoundaba.

Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*: Good numbers of this glittering starling were seen at Ngaoundaba.

BUPHAGIDAE

Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus africanus*: Only small numbers were seen in Waza this year. More were seen at Ngaoundaba and in the Bamenda Highlands. The oxpeckers are sometimes placed in the family *Sturnidae*.

PASSERIDAE

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

Bush Petronia *Petronia dentata*: A very common species throughout the north. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Gymnoris*.

PLOCEIDAE

White-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis albirostris*: The trees bearing the amazing structures of their clumsy communal stick nests are a most characteristic part of the landscape in the extreme north. However only relatively small numbers of the actual birds were seen.

Speckle-fronted Weaver *Sporopipes frontalis*: A pretty little bird that was common and easy to see in the far north.

Chestnut-crowned Sparrow Weaver *Plocepasser superciliosus*: Small numbers were seen in the Mora area and again in Bénoué National Park.

Baglafaecht Weaver *Ploceus baglafaecht*: Small numbers of the form *neumanni* were seen at Ngaoundaba and in the Bamenda highlands.

Bannerman's Weaver *Ploceus bannermani*: We had excellent views of this Cameroon and Nigerian highlands endemic in the Bamenda highlands. BirdLife International classes this Cameroon endemic as 'Vulnerable' and understandably so as considering the pressures of the human population on the area. Its population is thought to number less than 10,000.

Little Weaver *Ploceus luteolus*: This small weaver was easy to see in the north but only in low numbers.

Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis*: Two races occur with intergrades. The black-backed nominate race was widespread with the green-backed *brachypterus* (sometimes known as Swainson's Weaver) seen in Limbe Botanical Gardens and on Mount Kupe and in Mundemba.

Black-billed Weaver *Ploceus melanogaster*: A few of these striking weavers were seen on Mount Cameroon and at Kodmin. The English name is puzzling and surely a mistake or misspelling as it should probably be "Black-bellied" thus reflecting the scientific name.

Orange Weaver *Ploceus aurantius*: A small colony was seen on the Sanaga River.

Vitelline Masked Weaver *Ploceus vitellinus*: Non-breeding birds were identified in the far north. Vitelline pertains to the yolk of an egg and presumably refers to the yellow colour of the bird.

Vieillot's Black Weaver *Ploceus nigerrimus*: A commonly encountered bird usually seen in large colonies and flocks in the forest zone.

Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*: An abundant species, often in large colonies, except in the Waza area where it was absent.

Black-headed Weaver *Ploceus melanocephalus*: Birds in non-breeding plumage of the distinctive race *capitalis* also known as Yellow-collared Weaver were seen in Bénoué National Park.

Dark-backed Weaver *Ploceus bicolor*: Perhaps better known as Forest Weaver, the race *tephronotus* was seen well on Mount Cameroon, Mount Kupe and at Kodmin. It forms part of the distinctive group known as Grey-backed Weaver *P. amaurocephalus*.

- Brown-capped Weaver *Ploceus insignis*: A family group was seen at Lake Awing with a singleton at Kodmin where they were watched inspecting the mossy boughs of the trees like creepers.
- Preuss's Golden-backed Weaver *Ploceus preussi*: A stunning pair of this localised species was found on Mount Kupe.
- Blue-billed Malimbe *Malimbus nitens*: Also known as Gray's Malimbe, this forest weaver was regularly seen in Korup. John Edward Gray (1800-75) was a British ornithologist and entomologist.
- Crested Malimbe *Malimbus malimbicus*: Small numbers were seen in Korup National Park.
- Red-vented Malimbe *Malimbus scutatus*: Super views of a group located as we left Mundemba.
- Rachel's Malimbe *Malimbus racheliae*: Small numbers of these glorious malimbés were seen well by all in Korup. What a stunning bird this is and so thought John Cassin who named it after his daughter!
- Red-bellied Malimbe *Malimbus erythrogaster*: Two were seen well in the Yaoundé area.
- Red-headed Quelea *Quelea erythropis*: Small flocks of females and non-breeding plumaged males were seen at Ngaoundaba.
- Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*: Thousands of non-breeding plumaged birds were seen in swirling flocks in the far north all forming part of the great Sahelian spectacle.
- Black-winged Red Bishop *Euplectes hordeaceus*: Non-breeding plumaged birds were identified in the Poli area and in Bénoué National Park.
- Northern Red Bishop *Euplectes franciscanus*: Hundreds upon hundreds of non-breeding plumaged birds were seen in Waza.
- Yellow Bishop *Euplectes capensis*: Small numbers of non-breeding plumaged birds were seen on Mount Cameroon and in the Bamenda Highlands.
- Marsh Widowbird *Euplectes humeralis*: A flock of five, the males in non-breeding plumage was seen at Dang Lake.

ESTRILDIDAE

- Red-headed (Woodhouse's) Antpecker *Parmoptila woodhousei*: Chris saw one of these strange aberrant finches at Kodmin and we found another in Korup.
- Grey-crowned Negrofinch *Nigrita canicapilla*: We had many chances to get good looks of this attractive finch in the forest zone.
- Chestnut-breasted Negrofinch *Nigrita bicolor*: One was seen well at the Sanaga River and we had several sightings on Mount Kupe.
- White-breasted Negrofinch *Nigrita fusconota*: This atypical negrofinch was seen well near Yaoundé and near Mundemba.
- Shelley's Oliveback *Nesocharis shelleyi*: Everyone had fantastic close views on Mount Cameroon of this most charming Cameroon and Bioko endemic and more were seen in the Bamenda Highlands. George Ernest Shelley (1840-1910) was an English ornithologist related to the famous poet and an authority on sunbirds. He travelled in Africa and had a specialist interest in the continent.
- Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba*: A pretty estrildid, also known as Melba Finch, with good numbers seen in the far north.
- Red-faced Crimsonwing *Cryptospiza reichenovii*: Nik saw a male on Mount Cameroon and a female on Mount Kupe.
- Western Bluebill *Spermophaga haematina*: We first had some superb looks at four birds in Limbe Botanical Gardens with more in the Kupe area and Korup.
- Brown Twinspot *Clytospiza monteiri*: At Ngaoundaba we were treated to some fine views of several of these birds.

Dybowski's Twinspot *Euschistospiza dybowskii*: First seen at Poli and again at Ngaoundaba so that everybody managed to get some good views of this stunning but often-elusive little estrildid. Jan Dybowski (1856-1928) was a French botanist and African explorer leading expeditions to Congo and Chad.

Bar-breasted Firefinch *Lagonosticta rufopicta*: Small numbers were seen well in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala*: Only seen in the Waza area and Bénoué National Park.

Black-bellied Firefinch *Lagonosticta rara*: Excellent views of this colourful firefinch in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

Chad Firefinch *Lagonosticta umbrinodorsalis*: Also known as Reichenow's Firefinch, Nigel Voaden had rediscovered this species in Cameroon in the Poli area in 2009 and we are very grateful to him for organising access to the site in order to see this little-known species. We saw a number of birds in all plumages from juvenile to adult male. The species has historically been lumped with Jameson's Firefinch *L. rhodopareia*. Anton Reichenow (1847-1941) was the German son-in-law of Jean Cabanis and was a leading authority on the birds of Africa. He became curator of birds at the Berlin Museum in 1894.

Rock Firefinch *Lagonosticta sanguinodorsalis*: At least two pairs were seen well in the Maroua area. Previously thought to be a Nigerian endemic, Birdquest first confirmed the species presence in Cameroon at this same site in 2005.

Lavender Waxbill *Estrilda caerulescens*: A pair was seen well at Poli.

Orange-cheeked Waxbill *Estrilda melpoda*: This attractive finch was seen well at widespread sites throughout the tour.

Black-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda troglodytes*: This super little finch was common in the Waza area.

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*: Most commonly seen in the Bamenda Highlands.

Black-crowned Waxbill *Estrilda nonnula*: A common and delightful species seen well at many localities in the southern half of the country.

Black-headed Waxbill *Estrilda atricapilla*: Great views of a small flock at Mundemba.

Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus bengalus*: This became a familiar species and was extremely common and widespread throughout the north.

African Silverbill *Euodice cantans*: Common and easy to see in the Waza area. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Lonchura*.

Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullata*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Lonchura*.

Black-and-white Mannikin *Spermestes bicolor*: We had many chances to see this species well throughout the forest zone. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Lonchura*.

Cut-throat *Amadina fasciata*: Some good sightings in the Waza area of this real 'Sweeney Todd' of a bird!

VIDUIDAE

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*: A male was seen as we left Mundemba. The species parasitizes Orange-cheeked and Common Waxbills.

FRINGILLIDAE

White-rumped Seedeater *Serinus leucopygius*: Small numbers were seen in the Waza area and it's not always so easy to see the white rumps!

Yellow-fronted Canary *Serinus mozambicus*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

West African Seedeater *Serinus canicapillus*: Two were seen well at Poli and another in Bénoué National Park.

Thick-billed Seedeater *Serinus burtoni*: Singletons were seen on Mount Cameroon and in the Bamenda highlands.

Oriole Finch *Linurgus olivaceus*: Excellent views of this chunky finch on Mount Cameroon.

EMBERIZIDAE

Cinnamon-breasted Rock Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi*: Seen well near Maroua where they were unusually abundant.

Brown-rumped Bunting *Emberiza affinis*: Great looks at this handsome bunting in Bénoué National Park.

MAMMALS

Chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes* (H): Heard on Mount Kupe but we had no chance of seeing them. However, it was very pleasing to know that these animals were there.

Preuss's Red Colobus *Piliocolobus preussi*: Small numbers of this very localised regional endemic were seen in Korup National Park.

Guereza Colobus *Colobus guereza*: Small numbers were seen in Bénoué National Park.

Olive Baboon *Papio anubis*: Seen at various localities in the north.

Drill *Mandrillus leucophaeus* (H): Seemingly quite close but sadly only heard by us in Korup although our local guide glimpsed two!

Patas Monkey *Cercopithecus patas*: This handsome, terrestrial primate was common in the Waza area.

Tantalus Monkey *Cercopithecus tantalus*: Small numbers were seen in the north.

Mona Monkey *Cercopithecus mona* (H): Only heard on Mount Kupe and in Korup.

Putty-nosed Monkey *Cercopithecus nictitans*: Seen on Mount Kupe but only heard in Korup.

Red-eared Monkey *Cercopithecus erythrotis* (H): Heard only in Korup.

Straw-coloured Fruit Bat *Eidolon helvum*: Hundreds were seen in Bamenda.

Epauletted Fruit Bat *Epomophorus* sp.: The unidentified 'clinking' fruit bats seen and heard in the north were either *E. gambianus* or *labiatus*.

Hammer Bat *Hypsignathus monstrosus* (H): Heard on Mount Kupe.

Scrub Hare *Lepus saxatilis*: A few were seen in the north.

Striped Ground Squirrel *Euxerus erythropus*: Small numbers were seen in the Waza area.

African Pygmy Squirrel *Myosciurus pumilio*: One of these tiny little squirrels was seen on Mount Kupe.

Fire-footed Rope Squirrel *Funisciurus pyrropus* (H): Heard in Korup.

Red-cheeked Rope Squirrel *Funisciurus leucogenys*: One was seen in Korup.

Lady Burton's Rope Squirrel *Funisciurus isabella*: One was seen on Mount Cameroon.

Cooper's Mountain Squirrel *Paraxerus cooperi*: A few were seen in the Bamenda Highlands.

Green Squirrel *Paraxerus poensis*: Sightings on Mount Cameroon and Korup.

Gambian Sun Squirrel *Heliosciurus gambianus*: Sightings at Ngaoundaba and Mount Kupe.

Red-legged Sun Squirrel *Heliosciurus rufobrachium*: Sightings in Limbe Botanical Gardens and the Bamenda Highlands.

African Giant Squirrel *Protoxerus stangeri*: Seen well in the Yaoundé area, Bamenda Highlands and in Korup.

Beecroft's Anomalure *Anomalurus beecrofti*: An individual seen at dusk in Korup National Park was judged to be this species.

Peters's Hump-nosed Mouse *Hybomys univittatus* (NL): Seen by Jean-Francois foraging in the leaf litter during the day on Mt Cameroon.

Common Jackal *Canis aureus*: Just one was seen in Waza National Park.

Sand Fox *Vulpes pallida*: One was seen at night at Waza.

Banded Mongoose *Mungos mungo*: A band on the run was seen in Waza.

African Palm Civet *Nandinia binotata* (H): Heard in Korup.

Serval Cat *Felis serval*: A melanistic individual was seen at night at Waza.

Leopard *Panthera pardus*: An incredible sighting of one in the late afternoon close by our vehicle in Bénoué National Park and good views were had by all.

Black-necked Rock Hyrax *Procavia johnstoni*: Easy to see on the rocks near Maroua.

Western Tree Hyrax *Dendrohyrax dorsalis* (H): Heard at night in Korup.

Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius*: Small numbers were seen wallowing in the river in Bénoué National Park.

Common Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus*: Just one was seen in Waza National Park.

West African Giraffe *Giraffa (camelopardalis) peralta*: Small numbers of these elegant creatures in Waza National Park with a maximum count of ten in one day. We also saw one in Bénoué National Park. The race concerned is *peralta*. Recent genetic evidence suggests that there may be as many as six species of Giraffe. Our animals represented West African Giraffe *G. peralta*.

Bushbuck *Tragelaphus scriptus*: Small numbers were seen in Bénoué National Park.

Blue Duiker *Cephalophus monticola* (NL): Some of the group were fortunate to see an individual in Korup.

Red-flanked Duiker *Cephalophus rufilatus*: Small numbers were seen in Bénoué National Park.

Waterbuck *Kobus ellipsiprymnus*: Two were seen in Bénoué National Park.

Kob *Kobus kob*: Numbers were low again this year in Waza and in Bénoué National Parks.

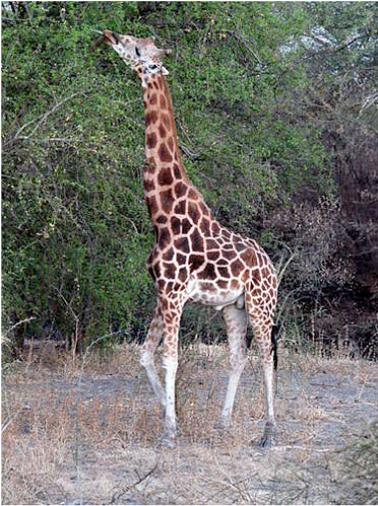
Red-fronted Gazelle *Gazella rufifrons* (NL): One sighting of a skittish animal in Waza National Park. Kingdon treats this form as the same species as Thomson's Gazelle of East Africa.

Topi *Damaliscus lunatus*: Numbers were dramatically down with perhaps no more than 14 seen in Waza National Park.

Roan Antelope *Hippotragus equinus*: Very low numbers with just seven in Waza National Park.



(Left to right) **Abyssinian Roller** (*Coracias abyssinicus*), **African Swallow-tailed Kite** (*Chelictinia riocourii*), **Quail Plover** (*Ortyxelos meiffrenii*), **Chestnut-backed Sparrow Lark** (*Eremopterix leucotis*), **White-rumped Seedeater** (*Serinus leucopygius*), **Clapperton's Francolin** (*Francolinus clappertoni*).



(Left to right) **West African Giraffe** (*Camelopardalis peralta*), **Vinaceous Dove** (*Streptopelia vinacea*). **African Collared Dove** (*Streptopelia roseogrisea*), **Blue-headed Wagtail** (*Motacilla flava*), **Black-headed Heron** (*Ardea melanocephala*), **Black Crowned Crane** (*Balearica pavonina*).



(Left to right) **White Stork** (*Ciconia ciconia*), **Greater Blue-eared Starling** (*Lamprotornis chalybaeus*), **Red-necked Falcon** (*Falco chicquera*), **Lappet-faced & Hooded Vultures** (*Torgos tracheliotus* & *Necrosyrtes monachus*), **Cinnamon-breasted Rock Bunting** (*Emberiza tahapisi*) **Red-throated Bee-eater** (*Merops bulocki*).



(Left to right) **African Scops Owl** (*Otus scops*), **Egyptian Plover** (*Pluvianus aegyptius*), **Common Wattle-eye** (*Platysteira cyanea*), **Brown-rumped Bunting** (*Emberiza affinis*), **Dorst's Cisticola** (*Cisticola guinea*), **White-throated Francolin** (*Francolin albogularis*)



(Left to right) **Pearl-spotted Owlet** (*Glaucidium perlatum*), **White-collared Starling** (*Grafisia torquata*), **Sun Lark** (*Galerida modesta*), **Greyish Eagle Owl** (*Bubo cinerascens*), **Speckled Mousebird** (*Colius striatus*), **Red-headed Lovebird** (*Agapornis pullarius*).



(Left to right) **Mountain Saw-wing** (*Psalidoprocne fuliginosa*), **Brown-backed Cisticola** (*Cisticola discolor*), **Black-crowned Waxbill** (*Estrilda nonnula*), **African Stonechat** (*Saxicola torquatus*), **Shelley's Oliveback** (*Nesocharis shelleyi*), **African Dusky Flycatcher** (*Muscicapa adusta*).



(Left to right) **Bannerman's Pipit** (*Anthus bannermani*), **Bannerman's Weaver** (*Ploceus bannermani*), **Bannerman's Turaco** (*Tauraco bannermani*), **African Green Pigeon** (*Treron calvus*), **Western Bluebill** (*Spermophaga haematina*), **Chattering Cisticola** (*Cisticola anonymus*).



(Left to right) **Rock Pratincole** (*Glareola nuchalis*), **Grey-headed Barbet** (*Gymnobucco bonapartei*), **Naked-faced Barbet** (*Gymnobucco calvus*), **Rufous-sided Broadbill** (*Smithornis rufolateralis*), **Grey-headed Broadbill** (*Smithornis sharpei*), **Streaky-throated Barbet** (*Tricholaema flavipunctata*).



(Left to right) **White-throated Bee-eater** (*Merops albicollis*), **Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye** (*Dyaphorophya concreta*), **White-bellied Robin Chat** (*Cossyphicula roberti*), **Black Bee-eater** (*Merops gularis*), **Rachel's Malimbe** (*Malimbus racheliae*), **Fire-crested Alethe** (*Alethe castanea*).



(Left to right) **Speckled Tinkerbird** (*Pogoniulus scolopaceus*), **Buff-throated Apalis** (*Apalis rufogularis*), **Imperial Forester** (*Euphaedra imperialis*), **Crested Malimbe** (*Malimbus malimbicus*), **Blue Cuckoo-shrike** (*Coracina azurea*), **Cameroon Pygmy Chameleon** (*Rhampholeon spectrum*).

(All photos taken on this tour by Nik Borrow)