



*The exquisite Braun's Bushshrike was by far the favourite bird of the tour (Mark Van Beirs)*

# ANGOLA

**3 – 21 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**LEADER: MARK VAN BEIRS**

The magnificent Braun's Bushshrike, the unique White-headed Robin-Chat, the captivating Angolan Cave Chat and the alluring Red-crested Turaco were the favourites of our third tour to Angola. Most people and birders have heard about Angola, but know very little about this civil war torn country. The older generation will remember the news about the ever ongoing conflict between the UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola) and the MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola) after the country gained its independence from Portugal in 1974. This civil war was a really messy affair and was complicated by the fact that several factions were aided by the USA, Cuba, the USSR and South Africa in

their geopolitical games. Meanwhile the country was covered with millions of lethal mines till peace finally arrived in 2002 when Jonas Savimbi, the charismatic leader of UNITA was shot. Angola is slowly recovering from this awful period and with its large deposits of oil, gas and diamonds is heavily courted by the Chinese, whose influence is visible all over the country. Although the country has many riches, they are very unevenly distributed and most of the population is still extremely poor. For the international birder Angola holds an interesting range of specialities and a vast array of habitats: from the Namibe desert in the extreme south to the humid lowland forests of the Congo basin in the extreme north with in between vast swathes of miombo woodland. Most of the endemics occur in the escarpment forests and mountain habitats of the central plateau which constitutes the Western Angolan Endemic Bird Area which harbours 13 Restricted Range species (of which 7 are threatened). Conservation is definitely not a priority of the government as we could witness in the ongoing sad destruction of habitats everywhere. Especially the fragile montane forests which are now restricted to just a handful of narrow, steep gullies are highly threatened. Angola is a really beautiful country which holds amazing scenery like the spectacular Tundavala escarpment and the imposing Calandula Falls, one of the largest waterfalls by volume in Africa. For all of us it was very strange to be in Africa and not to see any mammals. We only saw a couple of monkeys and a few squirrels, but we did see quite a bit of bushmeat offered on the roadsides. A very sad situation! Angola is not an easy country to visit, as some nationalities have extremely difficult and costly visa requirements. All participants thoroughly enjoyed the camping, as we were in the hands of a very experienced, helpful and efficient crew. We slept in large tents, had the luxury of a hot water shower and a large chemical toilet and were given great food throughout. Our three 4x4 vehicles coped easily with the sometimes atrocious roads and in contrast to previous tours to this country, we never encountered any real police hassle. Once, a police officer wanted to fine us because we had luggage on the backseat, but luckily, Gonzalo, our Mr Fix-it, managed to talk the officer out of such folly.



*Black Stork and African Harrier-Hawk showed very well at the Tundavala escarpment (Mark Van Beirs)*

Our Angola adventure started in the early morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September at the airport of Lubango, the largest city of southern Angola, positioned at a much-appreciated, cool altitude of 1,760m. While waiting for our transport we picked up Little Swift, African Hoopoe, Northern Fiscal, Pied Crow, Dark-capped Bulbul, Angolan and Pearl-breasted Swallows and Groundscraper Thrush. Soon two 4x4 vehicles appeared and after a bit of essential shopping (beer, wine, water, etc) we drove to the nearby, spectacular Tundavala escarpment. A first quick stop at a viewpoint gave us a rare Black Stork and a pale morph Booted Eagle. The c1,000m high cliffs were truly impressive, but sadly the sky was really hazy and a hard wind was gusting. We drove to the nearby, well-laid out camp and got organized. An impressive bush fire sped past and almost caused some problems, but our very professional camping crew managed very well. Our first exploration led us to the leeside of a nearby gully. The high winds seriously sabotaged our birding and we only managed to find African Harrier-Hawk, Alpine and Bradfield's Swifts, Rock Kestrel, Rock Martin and African and Buffy



Pipits. After a tasty lunch we snoozed a bit and in mid-afternoon resumed our explorations of the rocky outcrops and scenic gorges. The wind had abated a bit, so birds appeared again. The highlight of the day was a magnificent Angolan Cave Chat that showed so very well while singing away perched in the open on a lichen-covered rock. What a cracker! An Augur Buzzard was mobbed by a Lanner Falcon and a pair of smart Carp's Tits showed well. Several singing, well-dressed Short-toed Rock Thrushes were scoped at length and we also found Rufous-naped Lark, Wailing Cisticola and not very cooperative Ludwig's Double-collared and Oustalet's Sunbirds. The day ended with an excellent "braai" (bbq) dinner.



*The glorious Angolan Cave Chat performed splendidly (Mark Van Beirs)*

A pre breakfast stroll along the escarpment gave us fantastic, prolonged views of a pair of delightful, ever so elegant Angolan Cave Chats. The wind had totally dropped, so the birds were active and showy and performed very well as they hopped about on the nearby rocky promontories. Golden and much cherished moments! A pair of displaying Peregrines were showing off their flight prowess along the high cliffs and also posed beautifully for exquisite scope views. Flocks of Alpine and Bradfield's Swifts were swirling about and an African Harrier-Hawk exhibited its red flushed face. We checked out a steep, well-vegetated gully and the nearby open grasslands where Sabota Lark, lots of Rock Martins, Greater Striped Swallow, African Yellow Warbler, Pale-winged Starling and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting were found. A Wing-snapping (or Ayres's) Cisticola took to the air near our camp. After a scrumptious breakfast we drove to lower elevations and explored a narrow stream, an area of scrubby growth and a patch of woodland dominated by fig trees. We had a great time observing subtly-plumaged, endemic Angolan Slaty Flycatchers, an attractive male Ludwig's Double-collared Sunbird and a pair of Black-faced Canaries. Other new birds for the trip included Red-eyed and Ring-necked Doves, White-rumped Swift, some elegant Red-faced Mousebirds, Little Bee-

eater, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, a pair of gaudy Black-collared Barbets, Lesser and Greater Honeyguides, Black-backed Puffback, Black-headed Oriole, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, Grey-rumped and Lesser Striped Swallows, Grey-backed Camaroptera, Cape and Violet-backed Starlings, White-browed Robin-Chat, African Stonechat, Variable Sunbird and Yellow-fronted and Yellow-crowned Canaries. An artificial dam held a flock of Red-billed Teal, several Little Grebes, a pair of Hadada Ibises, Grey Heron and Common Sandpiper. After lunch we relaxed a bit in camp and enjoyed the efficient shower facilities. Once the heat had become bearable again we explored another rocky gully that produced Klaas's Cuckoo, African Dusky Flycatcher, some very smart Angolan Waxbills and a write-in Ashy Tit. We waited till dusk in a scenic rocky area, but sadly only heard a couple of Freckled Nightjars in the distance. Maybe the rather cold evening kept them inactive. Dinner under a starry sky was a splendid affair again.



*Tundavala also produced the endemic Angolan Slaty Flycatcher and the tiny Wing-snapping Cisticola (Mark Van Beirs)*

At dawn we were overlooking the dramatic scenery provided by the high cliffs of the Lepe Escarpment, situated a fair distance to the south. The edge of a scrubby field held Emerald-spotted Wood Dove, Black-crowned Tchagra, Green-winged Pytilia and Blue and very smart Violet-eared Waxbills. We made several stops along the descending, winding road and picked up goodies like Crowned Hornbill, Swamp Boubou, Village Weaver and Cape Wagtail. We heard the distinctive calls of Grey-striped Francolin emanating from the bushy slopes, but never close enough, sadly. A group of Gentle Monkeys was feeding in the valley below us and we scoped a cracking Schalow's Turaco. Lower down, we explored a dry riverbed amidst acacia woodland where birds kept appearing at a fast rate. A pair of imposing Verreaux's Eagles sailed over, Rüppell's Parrots played hide and seek, both Pririt and Angolan Batises showed, several fabulous, angry-looking White-tailed Shrikes performed splendidly, a pair of Bare-cheeked Babblers appeared briefly and several delicate Rufous-tailed Palm Thrushes foraged quietly in the undergrowth. We also added Lizard Buzzard, Laughing Dove, Grey Go-away-bird, Striped Kingfisher, Common Scimitarbill, Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill, Cardinal Woodpecker, Orange-breasted Bushshrike, Fork-tailed Drongo, African Red-eyed Bulbul, Long-billed Crombec, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Meves's Starling, Yellow-billed Oxpecker, Purple-banded and White-bellied Sunbirds, Southern Grey-headed Sparrow, Yellow-throated Petronia, Southern Masked and Holub's Golden Weavers and Red-billed Quelea to the list. Further west the landscape gradually became drier and drier and along the road we observed a lovely Pale Chanting Goshawk. The scrub around a scenic kopje gave us Acacia Pied Barbet, Black-chested Prinia, Kalahari Scrub Robin, Chat Flycatcher and a pair of smart, vocal Bokmakieries. We stopped for lunch in the shade provided by large fig trees in a wide, dry riverbed where African Mourning Dove, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Cape Sparrow and



Pale-winged Starling added spice to our sandwiches. A walk in the semi desert was quite successful as several species of lark performed well. Spike-heeled, Sabota, Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark and a single Benguela Long-billed Lark could be studied in detail through the scope. A family party of Double-banded Coursers provided great entertainment and we also stumbled upon a pair of Namaqua Sandgrouse and several ghostly Tractrac Chats. On the drive back a stately Ludwig's Bustard, Mountain Wheatear and Southern Fiscal provided a fitting end to a great day.



*The marvellous White-tailed Shrike looks like a giant batis (Mark Van Beirs)*

Next morning, after packing up our gear, we strolled around the nearby kopjes and had another look at the spectacular Tundavala viewpoint, while the crew was breaking up camp and storing everything away in our three vehicles. A male Oustalet's Sunbird showed very well allowing us to discern his orange pectoral tufts. A Rockrunner was singing its oriole-like tune and was scoped at close range to everyone's satisfaction. A Striped Pipit obliged beautifully at the other side of a woody gully. We also had amazing looks at a posing tiny Wing-snapping Cisticola. A pair of Rock Kestrels was displaying and mating on a nearby rocky outcrop, we heard the duetting of Hartlaub's Spurfowl and the resident Angolan Cave Chats waved us farewell. We drove to nearby Lubango, where we stocked up, enjoyed a tasty icecream and soon we were driving

northwest along an unexpectedly level road. We travelled for most of the day and short stops gave us Black-winged and Yellow-billed Kites, Damara Red-billed and Crowned Hornbills and Scarlet-chested Sunbird. We got caught for speeding, but our smoothly-operating Mr fix-it talked the police out of fining us. All of us, even the passengers, would have had to pay a fine... Angolan logic...? In late afternoon we found a camping spot in a patch of thorny forest where we watched an angry-looking Pearl-spotted Owlet and a striking Rüppell's Parrot.

The hills surrounding our campsite were dotted with impressive, fat-trunked baobabs (Monkey Bread Trees) and on our early morning walk we found several interesting birds. Best of all were the numerous, endemic Red-backed Mousebirds that were foraging in the thickets. They showed off their brown (not red) backs and were often accompanied by well-groomed Red-faced Mousebirds. For several group members this was the final species of the small (just 6 taxa) Mousebird family (Coliidae), one of just a handful of bird families that are endemic to subsaharan Africa. We also noted Damara Red-billed Hornbill, Brown-crowned Tchagra, White-browed and Miombo Scrub Robins, Marico Sunbird and White-browed Sparrow-Weaver. Rainer managed to photograph an enchanting Lesser Elephant Shrew in a shady patch. We had heard the distinctive duetting of Hartlaub's Spurfowls at dawn, but try as we may, nothing more was ever recorded of these retiring birds. After packing up we drove to the rather unsavoury coastal town of Lobito, where the salt pans held an excellent variety of waterbirds. Pride of place went to the numerous Lesser and the much less common Greater Flamingos that allowed rather close approach. Several squadrons of bulky Great White Pelicans flew in and we also found Kelp Gull and Royal Tern next to more widespread species like Cape Teal (with ducklings), African Spoonbill, Black-crowned Night Heron, Western Cattle Egret, Purple Heron, Great and Little Egrets, Black Heron, Reed and White-breasted Cormorants, African Darter, Black Crake, Common Moorhen, Water Thick-knee, Black-winged Stilt, Common Ringed, Kittlitz's and Three-banded Plovers, Whimbrel, Marsh Sandpiper, Common Greenshank, Little Stint, Grey-headed Gull, Caspian Tern and Namaqua Dove. After a bit of shopping we headed east and in a valley cloaked in dense scrub we munched our sandwiches and added the skulking, endemic Pale-olive Greenbul to our tally. Palm-nut Vulture, Long-crested Eagle and African Palm Swift entertained us on the afternoon drive to our campsite at the base of 2,620m high Mount Moco, the highest mountain in Angola. We arrived in the early evening and setting up camp in the dark at the edge of a village went very efficiently.



*Endemic Red-backed Mousebirds were not uncommon in baobab woodland near Lobito (Mark Van Beirs)*





*We found Bocage's Akalat (Mark Van Beirs) and Schalow's Turaco (tour participant Rainer Seifert) in forest remnants on Mount Moco*

Next morning we explored the nearby slopes of Mount Moco, where some tiny remnants of miombo and montane forest survive. The once proud forests of Mount Moco have all been cut down and most of the original habitat has been converted to birdless, grassy expanses. A couple of remaining, narrow bushy gullies held marvels like Schalow's Turaco, Western Tinkerbird, showy Bocage's Akalats and rather skulking Dusky Twinspots. Two very nice Verreaux's Eagles sailed past and a patch of nice miombo woodland – product of a South African conservation program! - yielded a cracking, rarely-seen Black-collared Bulbul next to Rufous-bellied Tit, Green-capped Eremomela and Miombo Rock Thrush. African Hoopoe, Olive Woodpecker, Tropical Boubou, Black Saw-wing, Black-throated Wattle-eye, White-tailed Blue Flycatcher, Grey Apalis, Ashy Flycatcher, Familiar Chat, Bronzy Sunbird and Yellow Bishop also gave act of presence. We paused for a while in the middle of the day and in the afternoon wandered over the grasslands and fallow fields at the base of the mountain, where we found several beautifully singing Angolan Larks and where we flushed a Red-necked Spurfowl.



*The impressive Verreaux's Eagle and the dainty Green-capped Eremomela were seen well at Mount Moco (Mark Van Beirs)*

Hours before dawn, several eager Birdquesters were hiking towards one of the larger patches of remaining montane forest high on Mount Moco, but our local guide took us on a wrong trail, which made us lose some precious time. We only arrived at the sad bit of left over forest in the middle of the morning, after a rather

tough slog. Only the steep flanks of a deep gully held some trees and undergrowth, where several montane specialities still manage to eke out a perilous living. We heard several Swierstra's Francolins and glimpsed one as it flew a short distance, but that was it. We made our way into the dense bracken growth along the steep slope on several occasions and patient waiting about resulted in sightings of Margaret's (or Mrs Boulton's) Batis, a splendid, well-performing Gorgeous (Perrin's) Bushshrike, a showy Evergreen Forest Warbler and a pair of African Hill Babblers. It was so depressing to see fires being lit at the edges of even these tiny forest remnants. Our return walk through the grasslands was enlivened by Sooty Chat, Mountain Wheatear and Plain-backed Pipit. A smart Black-and-rufous Swallow was briefly seen hunting over the montane grasslands. Mike and Linda had remained in the camp area and managed to observe a Finsch's Francolin being attacked by a hungry Rock Kestrel. Just before dusk an African Marsh Harrier was seen quartering over the nearby fields.



*Angola Lark (Mark Van Beirs) and Red-capped Lark (tour participant Charles Davies) showed in the grasslands at the foot of Mt Moco*

On our final morning at Mount Moco we walked along a track through the almost bare foothills to try to pin down Finsch's Francolin for all of us. We heard our quarry in the distance, but that was it. We had great looks at a hunting African Marsh Harrier and also found Red-necked Buzzard, Angola and Red-capped Larks, a male Amethyst Sunbird and a Long-billed Pipit. In mid-morning we started to drive to distant Kumbira Forest. On the long and rather uneventful journey we noted Bateleur, Tawny Eagle and a Shikra. In late afternoon we arrived at the famous football pitch situated within the farmbrush/forest mosaic that is Kumbira Forest. We set up camp, had a delicious dinner and eagerly waited for what dawn would bring.



*The Bateleur is a splendid bird of prey (Mark Van Beirs); Capped Wheatears were nesting near our Mount Moco camp (tour participant Charles Davies)*





*The colourful Red-crested Turaco was one of the most wanted birds of the tour (tour participant Charles Davies)*

A whole day wandering about in the mixed farmbrush and forest patches of the Kumbira area gave us a very respectful list of goodies. It was quite birdy and rewarding once the morning mist had disappeared and allowed us to see more than just dark shapes. The bird of the day was undoubtedly the exquisite, endemic Red-crested Turaco and although it proved quite flighty and shy, we eventually obtained great looks at its red crest, glossy green plumage and bright red wing patches. For some it was the final member of the very special Turaco family (Musophagidae, with 23 species one of the largest and most distinctive bird families restricted to Sub Saharan Africa). Another highlight was the subtly-plumaged, endemic Gabela Akalat that popped up beautifully in the dense undergrowth. We managed to scope a singing, well-marked Yellow-throated Nicator, had great looks at modestly-attired Falkenstein's Greenbuls and played hide and seek with a tiny Hartert's (or Green-tailed) Camaroptera. We had a great time with birds of prey as we were able to admire a displaying adult and two immature African Goshawks, a pair of totally unexpected fabulous Crowned Eagles (shouldn't occur according to distribution maps) and a pair of African Cuckoo Hawks travelling slowly through the canopy. Sunbirds were well represented in this rich environment as we found Little Green, Collared, Olive, Carmelite, Purple-banded and Superb Sunbirds on our walks. Other interesting species noted included African Green Pigeon, Blue Malkoha, Klaas's Cuckoo, Mottled Swift, Trumpeter Hornbill, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Hairy-breasted Barbet (of the Streaky-throated form), smart and ever so cute Yellow-bellied Wattle-eyes, Pink-footed Puffback, Black and Petit's Cuckooshrikes, African Blue Flycatcher, a family party of Dusky Tits, a tiny Green Crombec, Buff-throated Apalis, Southern Hyliota, Forest Scrub Robin (brief looks only), Black-necked, Vieillot's Black and Dark-backed Weavers and Grey-headed Nigrita. We heard the loud reverberating calls of several Gabon Coucals, but, sadly, never managed to see them. Only a couple of mammals were seen: a Southern Talapoin (a kind of monkey) showed quite well and several Gambian Sun Squirrels played about. Our night walk produced glimpses only of a fairly vocal African Wood Owl.



*The endemic Gabela Akalat is modestly attired (tour participant Charles Davies); African Goshawk displayed at length (Mark Van Beirs)*

On our second full day in the Kumbira Forest we continued our explorations of the varied habitats this lovely site has to offer. We managed to locate several new birds for our tally. From our tents, before dawn, we heard the distinctive calls of a Grey-striped Francolin. A few calls of a Gabela Bushshrike emanated from a distant thicket and that was it for this much wanted species. We waited and waited, but not a single other sniff was ever heard. Extremely frustrating! A pair of charming Brown-eared Woodpeckers were found foraging in the mid storey. A single Bates's Paradise Flycatcher showed rather well and we finally connected with the funnily-named Bubbling Cisticola. A Fraser's Rufous Thrush sat on its bough in full glory and in late afternoon we obtained prolonged fantastic scope views of a singing Forest Scrub Robin. Gaudy Red-crested Turacos and cute Yellow-bellied Wattle-eyes were regularly encountered. The raucous calls of the former species really were a feature of these forests. New birds for the trip included Blue-spotted Wood Dove, Tambourine Dove, African Paradise Flycatcher, Yellow-whiskered Greenbul, Red-capped Robin-Chat, Brown-capped Weaver and Bronze Mannikin.



*The shy Forest Scrub Robin and the retiring Fraser's Rufous Thrush allowed perfect scope views (Mark Van Beirs)*

A short walk on our last morning at Kumbira just added a very nice, dainty, African Pygmy Kingfisher and a heard only Scaly-throated Honeyguide to our total. After breaking up camp we started to drive north along some terrible stretches of road which, luckily, alternated with some excellent smooth sections. Sometimes there were more potholes than asphalt so we had to zigzag our way through. The drivers sure had quite a



tough time and well-greased elbows! The rest of the day was spent travelling as we wanted to get as close as possible to our next birding spot. A short stop at an artificial dam gave us Yellow-billed Duck, Striated Heron, African Jacana, Senegal Coucal, Pied Kingfisher and Wire-tailed Swallow, but best of all was the pair of aerobatic Lanner Falcons that were diving and stooping towards potential prey in the court yard of a village, obviously to no avail. What an aerial show they offered! In late afternoon we made camp near a small lake where the frogs kept us entertained with high levels of decibels throughout the night...



*The fabulous Calandula Falls are truly breath-taking (Mark Van Beirs)*

In the early morning we birded the scrubby bush surrounding our camp where Hamerkop, White-rumped Swift, Meyer's Parrot, Copper Sunbird, Black-necked Weaver, White-winged Widowbird and Orange-cheeked and Common Waxbills were found. Later we drove to the Tombingo Forest, a beautiful stretch of evergreen woodland dotted with imposing baobab trees, where Yellow-crested Woodpecker, African Pied Hornbill and Speckled Tinkerbird obliged. In mid-morning we continued our travels, which were briefly interrupted by a posing Brown Snake Eagle. After a brief bout of shopping we had lunch at the famous Calandula Falls. The 105m high and c400m wide curtain of water offered a truly impressive spectacle. An African Openbill flew past and just a few kilometres further we paused at a bridge over a sluggish river where we enjoyed a fabulous swallow and swift festival. Hundreds of pairs of Red-throated Cliff Swallows were nesting under the bridge and showed ever so well. Hundreds of Little Swifts were also about and we were able to observe their very vocal big flock display at close range. Careful scrutiny of the swirling masses gave us several White-throated Swallows and a few more well-known, widespread hirundines. In late afternoon we found a delightful camping spot at the edge of a finger of good quality gallery forest amidst fine miombo woodland. While our crew organised camp, we took a short walk that immediately produced great looks at a White-headed Robin Chat, our main target here! This gorgeous creature was only found here in 2004. We obtained cracking views of this exquisite species and witnessed some unusual aerial display. A fitting end to a great day!



*The ultra-rare White-headed Robin-Chat and the cute Barred Owlet were some of the highlights at Kinjila (tour participant Charles Davies)*

At dawn we were exploring the edges of the gallery forest, but as it was cool and cloudy very little activity could be noted, so we struggled to locate any birds at first. We heard the distinctive song of a White-spotted Flufftail emanating from a particularly dense patch and obtained good looks at a couple of colourful Ross's Turacos. A Levallant's (African Striped) Cuckoo sat up in the open and we also located African Pygmy Kingfisher, African Broadbill and retiring, but talkative Little Greenbuls. The attractive White-headed Robin-Chat gave very nice views again. The nearby open miombo woodland produced a totally different bunch of birds. Most of the miombo had been burned recently, but eventually we found a fairly undisturbed stretch where African Barred Owlet, a pair of sedate Anchieta's Barbets at a nesthole, a nice Black-collared Bulbul, Whistling Cisticola, Sharp-tailed Starling, a very smart male Anchieta's Sunbird and unpretentious Pale-billed Firefinches showed. We heard several species of cuckoo in the distance and these included Black, African and Red-chested. We also identified Broad-billed Roller, Grey-headed Kingfisher, White-winged Black Tit, Neddicky, Yellow-bellied Hyliota, Green-throated Sunbird and Red-collared Widowbird. The final bird of the day was a very cooperative African Scops Owl that posed for great close ups.



*Pale-billed Firefinch (Mark Van Beirs) and African Scops Owl (tour participant Charles Davies) performed well in the Kinjila miombo*





*Red-throated Cliff Swallows showed very well at a large colony (tour participant Charles Davies & Mark Van Beirs)*

Another early morning in the gallery forest delivered a Square-tailed Drongo and more good looks at the splendid White-headed Robin-Chat. We explored a beautiful stretch of miombo woodland where Thick-billed Cuckoo (in flight), Pale-billed Hornbill, Anchieta's Barbet and Fawn-coloured Waxbill were the favourites. An extra stop at our preferred bridge allowed us to observe a Blue-headed Coucal and a range of hirundines. Next to the many superb views of Red-throated Cliff Swallows and some other widespread martins and swallows we had hoped to pick up a rarity, but no such luck. Lesser Swamp Warbler and Fan-tailed Grassbird put in an appearance and then followed a long drive northwards along atrocious roads. We arrived in mid-afternoon at our camping spot at the Damengola Forest in the northern province of Uige. While our faithful crew erected the tents and set up camp, we explored the surrounding farmbush-forest mosaic. One of the first sounds we heard was the distinctive bell-like call of an endemic Braun's Bushshrike. We couldn't believe our luck. After a bit of judicious tape play we obtained out of this world looks at this extremely attractive species. What a fantastic creature it was! Minutes later it was joined by its mate and we had more splendid, much-cherished looks at this cracking pair. Speckled Mousebird, Elliot's Woodpecker, Mosque Swallow and a male Copper Sunbird added to the fun. A mega surprise was finding several Olivebacks playing about near a disused nest of a Village Weaver. These tiny estrildids were found here several years ago and identified as a distant population of White-collared Oliveback, which normally is restricted to the highlands of eastern Congo, NW Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda. We had great and prolonged looks at this mega rarity. In late afternoon the chief of the nearby village and one of his henchmen performed a beer offering ceremony at the adjacent lake to get the ghosts of the forest in a friendly mood. At dusk, the raucous calls of Great Blue and Guinea Turacos were echoing about while we were sipping our beer.



*Ayres's Hawk-Eagle and Long-crested Eagle were circling over the Damengola Forest (Mark Van Beirs)*

The farmbush dotted with patches of secondary and primary growth forest was our birding venue for the morning and we had a great time sampling all the goods that were on offer. A Long-crested Eagle was easy to identify, but a subadult Ayres's Hawk-Eagle proved a bit more difficult. Afep Pigeon was only seen in flight, sadly. A lumbering, but very vocal Great Blue Turaco showed only briefly, but bright green Guinea Turacos performed beautifully. Several pied Piping Hornbills moved through the canopy. At a glade we located a nest of a cute Black-and-white Shrike Flycatcher in a dead-looking tree. Both sexes of this very attractive species showed ever so well. A Bocage's Bushshrike was scoped as it was foraging in some vines and we had another encounter with a gaudy Braun's Bushshrike. A mixed bird party held a variety of greenbuls including Slender-billed and Simple Greenbuls. Nearby we found a Honeyguide Greenbul that allowed us to scope its bright white eye and outer tail. Dense thickets eventually yielded good looks at Banded and White-chinned Prinias and Lowland Masked and Black-throated Apalises. Other interesting species that caught our eye included Woodland Kingfisher, Black Bee-eater (only briefly), European Bee-eater (migrants overhead), Purple-throated Cuckooshrike, Black-winged Oriole, Velvet-mantled Drongo, Rufous-crowned Eremomela (a very skittish party), Splendid Starling, Dusky-blue and Sooty Flycatchers and a Crested Malimbe for a lucky soul. The afternoon was hot and rather quiet. We had a look at the nearby lake and checked the surrounding bush. Some time was spent observing the White-collared Olivebacks that were nesting in a disused Village Weaver nest in a small tree close to the camp. We heard the mellow, resonant notes of a White-spotted Flufftail just under our noses, but no joy. Malachite Kingfisher, Banded Martin and perfect scope views of Moustached Grass Warbler were noted before we enjoyed another great campfire dinner.

We enjoyed another morning in the farmbush of the Damengola Forest and picked up several new species like Blue-throated Roller, Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatcher, Chestnut-winged Starling, Blue-throated Brown Sunbird, Red-headed Malimbe (a pair doing its nuthatch thing) and White-breasted Nigrita. A Yellow Longbill was calling in the subcanopy and after some persistent scanning most of us managed fair views of this tiny species. We also heard a Narina Trogon and bumped into a troupe of Vervet Monkeys. As we had seen the majority of the wanted birds, we decided to break up camp, drive south and head for the famous Quiçama (Kissama) National Park, where the remaining Angola endemics were waiting for us. The long drive skirted the enormous megapolis of Luanda (estimated at c5-8 million people) with its many Chinese shopping centres, Chinese compounds and pink and yellow Chinese hotels. In late afternoon we arrived at our well-appointed campsite on the south side of the Kissama National Park.





*The Kissama National Park gave us Purple Roller and amazing clumps of Euphorbia trees (Mark Van Beirs)*

The 10,000 km<sup>2</sup> large Kissama National Park which is mainly covered in scrubby woodland, thickets and isolated copses of Euphorbia trees and gigantic baobabs, is the only functional National Park of Angola. Its southeast corner offers some of the densest patches of vegetation and our first explorations produced a good selection of specialities. Best of all was a male of the endemic White-fronted Wattle-eye that gave very nice views. A party of adorable White-crested Helmetshrikes didn't hold any other interesting species, but was fun to watch anyway. A pair of subtly-plumaged Brown-backed (or Wahlberg's) Honeybirds made its way through the low canopy and Green Woodhoopoe, Black Scimitarbill, Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush and Grey Waxbill obliged nicely. We found several endemic Golden-backed Bishops in non-breeding plumage at the edge of a clearing. Their distinctive rich yellow golden eyebrow made them almost look like a bunting. Nothing was moving in the heat of the day, but in the afternoon we reccied another part of the park where a flock of Common Swifts, Rufous-crowned Roller and Northern Grey-headed Sparrow were seen. A late afternoon walk near our camp produced a fairly timid, but really nice Monteiro's Bushshrike. There were also lots of Purple-banded Sunbirds and a couple of Dark-backed Weavers about. At dusk a Fiery-necked Nightjar responded well to its call and gave excellent views both perched and in flight. We enjoyed our a last evening around the campfire with entertaining story-telling and a very tasty dinner.



*Kissama National Park woodland (Mark Van Beirs)*

At dawn we were already patrolling the scrubby thickets where we had found the Monteiro's Bushshrike and although the bird showed again, it wasn't a great performance, sadly. We then visited a stretch of shrubby woodland where after a while we connected with a party of eight Gabela Helmetshrikes together with several White-crested Helmetshrikes. We obtained great looks at these very attractive endemics and managed to appreciate their intricate facial pattern at length. We also picked up Golden-tailed Woodpecker and Grey Tit-Flycatcher and then it was time to pack up for the last time. We slowly drove along the scenic southern fringe road of the National Park and in the baobab and Euphorbia dominated woodland found Gabar Goshawk, Little Sparrowhawk, Lilac-breasted Roller, a very nice Bateleur and several Southern White-crowned Shrikes. Upon leaving the Park a Wahlberg's Eagle was circling over a bushfire. In mid-afternoon we arrived at the lovely Kwanza River lodge which overlooked the Atlantic Ocean at the mouth of the water hyacinth-cloaked Rio Cuanza. After a pause, we walked about and checked the nearby large sandbanks which held a large tern roost. We scoped hundreds of Royal Terns and just a handful of Caspian and Sandwich Terns with fair numbers of Kelp Gulls nearby. Yellow-billed Stork, African Sacred Ibis, Western Osprey, African Fish Eagle (finally!) and very showy Pied Kingfishers completed the list for the day.

The final morning of the tour was spent in the gardens of the lovely Rio Kwanza Lodge and at the nearby sandbanks. It was high tide, so we had to search for the tern roost and found it further away on a distant sandbank. With the scope we could discern hundreds of Royal Terns, a few dozen Caspian Terns, small numbers of Sandwich Terns, a few Common Terns and, after a bit of diligent searching a single Damara Tern turned up. Marvellous! Our only Goliath Heron of the tour flew past and then it was time for a final shower and packing the bags. We drove north into the enormous conurbation of Luanda to the international airport, where we bade farewell to our splendid camping crew. It had been a truly memorable trip!





*The stunning scenery of the Tundavala escarpment (Mark Van Beirs)*

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **IOC World Bird Names**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>.

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

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

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

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from *Threatened Birds of the World*, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

**E** = Endangered, **V** = Vulnerable, **NT** = Near Threatened, **DD** = Data Deficient.

**Cape Teal** *Anas capensis* Small numbers, including pairs with ducklings, were seen at the Lobito salt pans.

**Yellow-billed Duck** *Anas undulata* Three were noted on a lake near Kibala.

**Red-billed Teal** *Anas erythrorhyncha* A dam near Lubango held 50+ birds.

**Finsch's Francolin** ◊ *Scleroptila finschi* This speciality was seen and heard at Mount Moco. See Note.

**Grey-striped Francolin** ◊ *Pternistis griseostriatus* (H) This endemic was heard at several venues, and we tried...

**Swierstra's Francolin** ◊ *Pternistis swierstrai* (E) Heard and briefly seen in the forest patches on Mount Moco.

**Hartlaub's Spurfowl** ◊ *Pternistis hartlaubi* (H) Heard at two kopjes in the southern part of the country.

**Red-necked Spurfowl** *Pternistis afer* Regular encounters with this widespread species.

**Swainson's Spurfowl** *Pternistis swainsonii* (H) We heard the distinctive calls near Lobito.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* A few encounters with this well-known critter.

**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus* Close up views at the Lobito salt pans.

**Lesser Flamingo** *Phoeniconaias minor* (NT) Hundreds showed very well at the Lobito salt pans.

**Yellow-billed Stork** *Mycteria ibis* Four birds were noted at the Rio Cuanza rivermouth.



Greater and Lesser Flamingos showed well at the Lobito salt pans (Mark Van Beirs)

- African Openbill** *Anastomus lamelligerus* A single was observed in flight at the fabulous Calandula Falls.
- Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* Good looks at one in flight at the Tundavala escarpment.
- African Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus* A few were seen at the Rio Cuanza rivermouth.
- Hadada Ibis** *Bostrychia hagedash* A dam near Lubango held a pair of these vocal birds.
- African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba* Lots were seen at the Lobito salt pans and at the Rio Cuanza rivermouth.
- Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* Two were found in a reedbed at the Lobito salt pans.
- Striated Heron (Green-backed H)** *Butorides striata* A single was found at a lake near Kibala.
- Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* Just a few were seen.
- Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* Small numbers were found at lakes and rivers.
- Black-headed Heron** *Ardea melanocephala* Three sightings only.
- Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath* A single bird was seen on the final day of the tour at the Rio Cuanza rivermouth.
- Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* A lone bird was found at the Lobito salt pans.
- Great Egret** *Ardea alba* Regular encounters.
- Black Heron** *Egretta ardesiaca* A single bird was found at the Lobito salt pans.
- Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* Small numbers were noted at lakes and rivers.
- Hamerkop** *Scopus umbretta* Four observations of this unique species.



A squadron of Great White Pelicans at Lobito (Mark Van Beirs)



**Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* Impressive flotillas at Lobito and a handful at the Rio Cuanza river.  
**Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C)** *Microcarbo africanus* Regular observations.  
**White-breasted Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax lucidus* A handful were seen at the Lobito salt pans.  
**African Darter** *Anhinga rufa* Just a few observations.  
**Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* A single bird showed very well at the Rio Cuanza rivermouth.  
**Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* Three observations of this dainty bird of prey.  
**African Harrier-Hawk (Gymnoglene)** *Polyboroides typus* 14 observations of this well-known raptor.



We only saw African Cuckoo-Hawk once (tour participant Charles Davies), but Palm-nut Vultures showed almost daily (Mark Van Beirs)

**Palm-nut Vulture** *Gypohierax angolensis* 41 sightings of this attractive species. See Note.  
**African Cuckoo-Hawk** *Aviceda cuculoides* A pair showed well as it was foraging at Kumbira Forest.  
**Brown Snake Eagle** *Circaetus cinereus* A single was seen near the Tombingo Forest.  
**Bateleur** *Terathopius ecaudatus* (NT) Eight observations of this glorious bird of prey. See Note.  
**Crowned Eagle** *Stephanoaetus coronatus* (NT) A displaying pair at Kumbira was a very nice surprise!  
**Martial Eagle** *Polemaetus bellicosus* (V) A single bird was seen at the base of Mount Moco.



Crowned Eagle was an unexpected bonus at Kumbira; Augur Buzzard was regularly observed (Mark Van Beirs)

**Long-crested Eagle** *Lophaetus occipitalis* A few observations only.

**Wahlberg's Eagle** *Hieraaetus wahlbergi* A single bird was at a bushfire at Kissama NP.

**Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus* Four observations. Both pale and dark morphs were seen.

**Ayres's Hawk-Eagle** *Hieraaetus ayresii* An immature bird was identified at the Damengola Forest.

**Tawny Eagle** *Aquila rapax* Two observations only of this widespread eagle.

**Verreaux's Eagle** *Aquila verreauxii* Cracking views of this smart bird of prey at Tundavala and Mt Moco. See Note.

**Lizard Buzzard** *Kaupifalco monogrammicus* Three sightings of this often tame bird of prey.

**Gabar Goshawk** *Micronisus gabar* A young bird showed well at Kissama NP.

**Pale Chanting Goshawk** ♦ *Melierax canorus* Nice looks in the Namibe desert.

**African Goshawk** *Accipiter tachiro* A displaying adult and young birds showed well at Kumbira.

**Shikra** *Accipiter badius* A single bird was observed on the journey to Kumbira.

**Little Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter minullus* Glimpses of a lone bird at Kissama NP.

**African Marsh Harrier** *Circus ranivorus* Great looks at a showy bird near our Mount Moco camp.

**Yellow-billed Kite** *Milvus aegyptius* Eight observations only!

**African Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus vocifer* Three birds were active at the Rio Cuanza rivermouth.

**Red-necked Buzzard** *Buteo auguralis* Two observations in the Mount Moco area.

**Augur Buzzard** *Buteo augur* Regular encounters with this attractive species.

**Ludwig's Bustard** *Neotis ludwigii* (E) A single bird was seen in flight in the Namibe desert.

**White-spotted Flufftail** *Sarothrura pulchra* (H) We heard it at Kinjila and at Damengola.

**Black Crane** *Amaurornis flavirostra* A single bird was noted at the Lobito saltpans.

**Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* This widespread bird was only found at the Lobito saltpans.

**Common Buttonquail** *Turnix sylvaticus* We flushed one in the grasslands at the base of Mount Moco.

**Water Thick-knee** *Burhinus vermiculatus* Several were at the Lobito saltpans and at the Rio Cuanza river.

**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus* Many were foraging at the Lobito saltpans.

**Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula* Two were identified at the Lobito saltpans.

**Kittlitz's Plover** *Charadrius pecuarius* A dozen birds showed well at the Lobito saltpans.

**Three-banded Plover** *Charadrius tricollaris* We only saw two at the Lobito saltpans.

**African Jacana** *Actophilornis africanus* Three sightings at lake side stops.

**Whimbrel (Eurasian W)** *Numenius [phaeopus] phaeopus* Several at Lobito and at the Rio Cuanza river.

**Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis* Three were foraging at the Lobito saltpans.

**Common Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia* 15 were counted at the Lobito saltpans.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* A handful of observations of this well-known wader.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta* 30 were at the Lobito saltpans.

**Double-banded Courser** *Rhinoptilus africanus* Four performed beautifully in the Namibe desert.

**Grey-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus* The Lobito saltpans held c10 of these.



*The Kelp Gull and Royal Tern roost at the Rio Cuanza rivermouth; a miombo woodland flower (Mark Van Beirs)*

**Kelp Gull (Cape G)** *Larus [dominicanus] vetula* Several dozen were noted at the Rio Cuanza rivermouth.

**Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia* Fair numbers both at the Lobito saltpans and at the Rio Cuanza rivermouth.

**Royal Tern** *Thalasseus maximus* Several hundred were roosting at the Rio Cuanza rivermouth.



**Sandwich Tern** *Thalasseus sandvicensis* c25 were at the Rio Cuanza rivermouth.

**Damara Tern** ♦ *Sternula balaenarum* (NT) A single bird was found at Rio Cuanza rivermouth.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* We located three amongst the other terns at the Rio Cuanza rivermouth.

**Namaqua Sandgrouse** *Pterocles namaqua* Good looks at a pair in the Namibe desert.

**Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral Pigeon)** *Columba livia*

**Afep Pigeon** *Columba unicincta* Two were seen in flight at the Damengola Forest.

**Mourning Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decipiens* Three were noted in a dry riverbed in the Namibe desert.

**Red-eyed Dove** *Streptopelia semitorquata* Regular encounters.

**Ring-necked Dove** *Streptopelia capicola* Small numbers along the whole route.

**Laughing Dove** *Spilopelia senegalensis* Just a few sightings.

**Emerald-spotted Wood Dove** *Turtur chalcospilos* Regular in the open woodlands.

**Blue-spotted Wood Dove** *Turtur afer* Regular in the denser forests.

**Tambourine Dove** *Turtur tympanistria* Four observations of this smart species.

**Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis* Three sightings of this widespread species.

**African Green Pigeon** *Treron calvus* Regular where figs were available.

**Great Blue Turaco** *Corythaeola cristata* We only saw this remarkable bird at Damengola.

**Guinea Turaco (Green T)** *Tauraco persa* Several excellent encounters at Damengola.

**Schalow's Turaco** *Tauraco schalowi* Good looks at the Lepe escarpment and at Mount Moco. See Note.

**Red-crested Turaco** ♦ *Tauraco erythrolophus* Regular, but best seen in the Kumbira Forest. Endemic! See Note.

**Ross's Turaco** *Musophaga rossae* Fair looks at this cracker in the Kinjila gallery forest. See Note.

**Grey Go-away-bird** *Corythaixoides concolor* Small numbers were noted in drier habitat.

**Gabon Coucal** ♦ *Centropus anelli* (H) Often heard at Kumbira and Damengola, but no joy.

**Senegal Coucal** *Centropus senegalensis* A few observations.

**Blue-headed Coucal** *Centropus monachus* Nice looks at one near the Calandula Falls.

**Coppery-tailed Coucal** *Centropus cupreicaudus* (H) We heard the distinctive calls at Mount Moco.

**White-browed Coucal** *Centropus superciliosus* (H) We heard it in the Kissama National Park.

**Blue Malkoha** *Ceuthmochares aereus* One was seen well in the Kumbira Forest.

**Levaillant's Cuckoo** *Clamator levaillantii* Great looks at one in the Kinjila gallery forest.

**Thick-billed Cuckoo** ♦ *Pachycoccyx audeberti* An adult was seen in flight over the Kinjila miombo woodland.

**Klaas's Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx klaas* Several encounters. See Note.

**African Emerald Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx cupreus* (H) Regularly heard at Kumbira, but not responsive.

**Black Cuckoo** *Cuculus clamosus* (H) Regularly heard in the distance at Kinjila.



Pearl-spotted Owlet is widespread, but Red-backed Mousebird is an Angolan endemic (tour participant Charles Davies)

**Red-chested Cuckoo** *Cuculus solitarius* (H) We heard at three different locations.

**African Cuckoo** *Cuculus gularis* (H) One was heard distantly at Kinjila.

**African Scops Owl** *Otus senegalensis* Magical looks at this cute critter in the Kinjila miombo.

**African Wood Owl** *Strix woodfordii* Glimpses only in the Kumbira Forest. A great voice!

**Pearl-spotted Owlet** *Glaucidium perlatum* Good looks in the baobab forest near Lobito. Heard elsewhere.

**African Barred Owlet** ♦ *Glaucidium capense* Superb scope looks in the miombo woodland at Kinjila.

**Fiery-necked Nightjar** *Caprimulgus pectoralis* Excellent views, both perched and in flight in the Kissama NP.

**Freckled Nightjar** *Caprimulgus tristigma* (H) We heard two in the distance at the Tundaval escarpment.

**African Palm Swift** *Cypsiurus parvus* Regular encounters.

**Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba* Common and showy at the Tundavala escarpment.

**Mottled Swift** *Tachymarptis aequatorialis* Quite common over the Kumbira Forest.

**Common Swift** *Apus apus* Small numbers were noted over the Kissama NP.

**Bradfield's Swift** ♦ *Apus bradfieldi* Common at the Tundavala escarpment.

**Little Swift** *Apus affinis* Seen on most days. Great display of dozens at the Kinjila bridge.

**White-rumped Swift** *Apus caffer* Seen very well on several occasions.

**Speckled Mousebird** *Colius striatus* Small numbers were found in the Damengola farmbrush.

**Red-backed Mousebird** ♦ *Colius castanotus* Regular sightings of this Angolan endemic. See Note.

**Red-faced Mousebird** *Urocolius indicus* Regularly seen in drier habitat, often together with previous species.

**Narina Trogon** *Apaloderma narina* (H) We heard it in the Damengola Forest.

**Purple Roller (Rufous-crowned R)** *Coracias naevius* Good views of one in the Kissama NP.

**Lilac-breasted Roller** *Coracias caudatus* Four were found in the Kissama NP.

**Blue-throated Roller** *Eurystomus gularis* Scope views of this attractive forest bird at Damengola.

**Broad-billed Roller** *Eurystomus glaucurus* Several showed well in the Kinjila miombo.

**Grey-headed Kingfisher** *Halcyon leucocephala* A single bird was noted at Damengola.

**Striped Kingfisher** *Halcyon chelicuti* A couple of sightings of this open woodland species.

**Woodland Kingfisher** *Halcyon senegalensis* Just a handful of observations of this vocal bird.



*African Pygmy (tour participant Charles Davies) and Pied Kingfishers obliged ever so well (Mark Van Beirs)*

**African Pygmy Kingfisher** *Ispidina picta* Four sightings of this tiny cracker.

**Malachite Kingfisher** *Corythornis cristatus* We only saw this species at the Damengola lake.

**Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* A few at lakes while travelling and many at the Rio Cuanza rivermouth.

**Black Bee-eater** *Merops gularis* Brief views of one at Damengola. Frustrating.

**Swallow-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops hirundineus* Regular encounters.

**Little Bee-eater** *Merops pusillus* Easily the most commonly seen bee-eater.

**European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster* A migrating flock was noted over the Damengola Forest.

**African Hoopoe** *Upupa africana* Just a couple of observations.

**Green Wood Hoopoe** *Phoeniculus purpureus* A couple were found in the Kissama NP.





Swallow-tailed (tour participant Charles Davies) and Little Bee-eaters are real eye candy (Mark Van Beirs)

**Black Scimitarbill** *Rhinopomastus aterrimus* Two were observed in the Kissama NP.  
**Common Scimitarbill** *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas* We saw this species in the Namibe desert and near Lobito.  
**Damara Red-billed Hornbill** ♦ *Tockus damarensis* Quite common in the baobab forest near Lobito.  
**Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill** *Tockus leucomelas* Regular near Lobito and especially in the Kissama NP.  
**Crowned Hornbill** *Lophoceros alboterminatus* Regular encounters.  
**African Pied Hornbill** *Lophoceros fasciatus* Regular encounters in the northern forests.  
**Pale-billed Hornbill** ♦ *Lophoceros pallidirostris* Good looks at this miombo special at Kinjila.  
**Piping Hornbill** *Bycanistes fistulator* Small numbers were seen in the Damengola area.  
**Trumpeter Hornbill** *Bycanistes bucinator* A handful showed well in the Kumbira forests.  
**Anchieta's Barbet** ♦ *Stactolaema anchietae* Nice views of several in the Kinjila miombo.  
**Speckled Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus scolopaceus* Seen and heard in several of the northern forests.  
**Western Tinkerbird (W Green T)** *Pogoniulus coryphaea* Excellent views of a single bird on Mount Moco.  
**Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus bilineatus* Regular encounters. More often heard than seen.  
**Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* Regularly recorded in the southern woodlands.  
**Hairy-breasted Barbet** *Tricholaema hirsuta* Most of the northern forests produced this subtly-plumaged species.



The Black-collared Barbet was readily seen in the south; bright flowers appear soon after a bushfire (Mark Van Beirs)

**Acacia Pied Barbet** *Tricholaema leucomelas* A few in the southern savannas.  
**Black-collared Barbet** *Lybius torquatus* Regular, colourful and vocal.  
**Yellow-billed Barbet** *Trachyphonus purpuratus* (H) Heard in several of the northern forests, must no joy.  
**Brown-backed (Wahlberg's) Honeybird** *Prodotiscus regulus* Great looks at two in the Kissama NP.  
**Lesser Honeyguide** *Indicator minor* A single bird was found in the Tundavala area.  
**Scaly-throated Honeyguide** *Indicator variegatus* (H) We heard the distinctive vocalisations at Kumbira.  
**Greater Honeyguide** *Indicator indicator* Several sightings of this very special species.  
**Golden-tailed Woodpecker** *Campethera abingoni* A single bird was seen in the Kissama NP.  
**Brown-eared Woodpecker** *Campethera caroli* A pair performed ever so well in the Kumbira Forest.  
**Yellow-crested Woodpecker** *Chloropicus xantholophus* Great looks at Tombingo and Damengola.



An unobtrusive Brown-backed Honeybird feeding in the canopy (tour participant Rainer Seifert); a pair of interacting Yellow-crested Woodpeckers (tour participant Charles Davies)

**Cardinal Woodpecker** *Dendropicos fuscescens* A few sightings of this widespread species.  
**Elliot's Woodpecker** *Dendropicos elliotii* A single bird showed quite well at Damengola.  
**Olive Woodpecker** *Dendropicos griseocephalus* Several encounters.  
**Rock Kestrel** *Falco rupicolus* Many observations, almost always near cliffs or rocky areas.  
**Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus* Four observations of this aerobatic species.  
**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* A pair showed brilliantly at the Tundavala escarpment.  
**Meyer's Parrot (Brown P)** *Poicephalus meyeri* A few sightings only.  
**Rüppell's Parrot** ♦ *Poicephalus rueppellii* This speciality gave excellent looks in the southern woodlands. See Note.  
**African Broadbill** *Smithornis capensis* Recorded at Kumbira and Kinjila.  
**Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher (Vanga F)** *Bias musicus* A pair showed at their nest at Damengola.  
**Margaret's Batis** ♦ (Mrs Boulton's B) *Batis margaritae* A male was seen in the forest at Mount Moco. See Note.  
**Chinspot Batis** *Batis molitor* Just a few observations of this well-known species.  
**Pririt Batis** ♦ *Batis pririt* Two were noted in the Namibe desert area.  
**Angolan Batis** ♦ *Batis minulla* A few were found in the Escarpment forests.  
**White-tailed Shrike** ♦ *Lanioturdus torquatus* Fantastic views of this cute species in dry areas of the south. See Note.  
**Black-throated Wattle-eye** *Platysteira peltata* Several very nice encounters.  
**White-fronted Wattle-eye** ♦ *Platysteira albibrons* (NT) Excellent looks at this endemic in the Kissama NP.  
**Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye** *Platysteira concreta* Regular encounters in the Kumbira forests. So very smart!  
**White-crested Helmetshrike (White H)** *Prionops plumatus* Magnificent views of a party at Kissama NP.





*Peregrine and Rock Kestrel gave fantastic views at the Tundavala escarpment (Mark Van Beirs)*

**Gabela Helmetshrike** ♦ *Prionops gabela* (E) Terrific looks at eight of these endemics at Kissama NP.  
**Monteiro's Bushshrike** ♦ *Malaconotus monteiri* (NT) Fair studies of this speciality at Kissama NP. See Note.  
**Grey-headed Bushshrike** *Malaconotus blanchoti* (H) We heard this widespread species in the Kinjila miombo.  
**Bocage's Bushshrike (Grey-green B)** *Chlorophoneus bocagei* Scope views of a foraging bird at Damengola.  
**Orange-breasted Bushshrike (Sulphur-b B)** *Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus* Regular observations. Smart!  
**Gorgeous (Perrin's) Bushshrike** *Telophorus viridis* Cracking looks at this speciality at two sites. See Note.  
**Bokmakierie** *Telophorus zeylonus* A pair showed ever so well in the Namibe desert.  
**Brown-crowned Tchagra** *Tchagra australis* Regular encounters. Often heard.  
**Black-crowned Tchagra** *Tchagra senegalus* A distinctive sound of the bush. Regularly observed.  
**Pink-footed Puffback** *Dryoscopus angolensis* Several excellent observations of foraging pairs.  
**Black-backed Puffback** *Dryoscopus cuba* Fairly common.



*Black-throated Wattle-eye and the endearing, endemic Gabela Helmetshrike gave brilliant views (Mark Van Beirs)*



Angola is a great country for bushshrikes: a stunning Braun's Bushshrike (tour participant Rainer Seifert) and a Bokmakierie (Mark Van Beirs)

**Braun's Bushshrike** ♦ *Laniarius brauni* (E) **BIRD OF THE TRIP.** Exceptional looks at this exquisite bird! See Note.

**Gabela Bushshrike** ♦ *Laniarius amboimensis* (H)(E) We heard its call a couple of times at Kumbira.

**Tropical Boubou** *Laniarius major* Often heard and regularly seen.

**Swamp Boubou** ♦ *Laniarius bicolor* Many sightings of this badly named species.

**Brubru** *Nilaus afer* (H) We heard its distinctive call in acacia woodland in the south.

**Black Cuckooshrike** *Campephaga flava* Females were seen along forest edge at Kumbira.

**Petit's Cuckooshrike** *Campephaga petiti* Several observations in the Kumbira Forest.

**Purple-throated Cuckooshrike** *Campephaga quiscalina* Very nice looks at foraging birds at Damengola.

**Southern White-crowned Shrike** *Eurocephalus anguitimens* A feeding party showed well at Kissama NP.

**Northern Fiscal** *Lanius humeralis* Just a handful of observations.

**Southern Fiscal** *Lanius collaris* A single bird was identified in the Namibe desert.

**Black-headed Oriole (Eastern B-h O)** *Oriolus larvatus* Regular encounters.

**Black-winged Oriole** *Oriolus nigripennis* Great looks at several at Damengola.

**Square-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus ludwigii* We saw one in the gallery forest at Kinjila.

**Fork-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus adsimilis* A common member of bird parties in the bush.

**Velvet-mantled Drongo** *Dicrurus modestus* Regular in the forest at Damengola.

**Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher** *Trochocercus nitens* (H) Regularly heard in the Kumbira Forest.

**Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatcher** ♦ *Terpsiphone rufocinerea* A single bird was found at Damengola.

**Bates's Paradise Flycatcher** ♦ *Terpsiphone batesi* One showed well in the Kumbira Forest.

**African Paradise Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone viridis* Just a couple of sightings of this widespread species.

**Pied Crow** *Corvus albus* One of the most widespread species in Angola.

**African Blue Flycatcher** *Elminia longicauda* A handful of observations in northern forests.

**White-tailed Blue Flycatcher** *Elminia albicauda* We only saw this lovely bird in the Mount Moco forests.

**White-winged Black Tit** *Melaniparus leucomelas* A few sightings in the northern woodlands.

**Carp's Tit** ♦ *Melaniparus carpi* A couple of observations in the southwest. See Note.

**Dusky Tit** *Melaniparus funereus* Nice encounters with parties in the Kumbira Forest.

**Rufous-bellied Tit** ♦ *Melaniparus rufiventris* A single bird was found in the miombo woodland near Mt Moco.

**Ashy Tit** *Melaniparus cinerascens* In scrubby growth at the Tundavala escarpment we found one of these.

**Yellow-throated Nicator** ♦ *Nicator vireo* Several fantastic encounters in the Kumbira Forest.

**Spike-heeled Lark** *Chersomanes albofasciata* Regularly seen in the Namibe desert.

**Benguela Long-billed Lark** ♦ *Certhilauda benguelensis* Excellent studies of two in the Namibe desert.

**Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark** *Eremopterix verticalis* Good looks at a party in the Namibe desert.





We obtained point blank views of the skulking Yellow-throated Nicator (tour participant Charles Davies) and of Benguela Long-billed Lark (Mark Van Beirs)

- Sabota Lark** ◇ *Calendulauda sabota* Several encounters in the south.
- Rufous-naped Lark** *Mirafr africana* A handful of observations of this widespread species.
- Angolan Lark** ◇ *Mirafr angolensis* Perfect studies of this excellent songster at the base of Mount Moco.
- Red-capped Lark** *Calandrella cinerea* Regular in the Mount Moco grasslands.
- African Red-eyed Bulbul** *Pycnonotus nigricans* Common and attractive in the south.
- Dark-capped Bulbul** *Pycnonotus tricolor* Common and not so attractive all over our itinerary.
- Slender-billed Greenbul** *Stelgidillas gracilirostris* Several nice observations in the Damengola Forest.
- Little Greenbul** *Eurillas virens* Regularly recorded in the northern farmbrush.
- Yellow-whiskered Greenbul** *Eurillas latirostris* A single sighting in the Kumbira Forest.
- Honeyguide Greenbul** *Baeopogon indicator* Magnificent scope studies of this distinctive species at Damengola.
- Yellow-bellied Greenbul** *Chlorocichla flaviventris* Regular encounters with this subtly beautiful bird.
- Falkenstein's Greenbul** ◇ (Yellow-necked G) *Chlorocichla falkensteini* Several nice observations at Kumbira.
- Simple Greenbul** (S Leaflove) *Chlorocichla simplex* Good looks at Damengola.
- Pale-olive Greenbul** ◇ *Phyllastrephus fulviventris* This skulking endemic showed well at several venues.
- Cabanis's Greenbul** *Phyllastrephus cabanisi* (H) We heard the characteristic calls at Kinjila.
- Black-collared Bulbul** ◇ *Neolestes torquatus* This superb species showed well at several sites. *A real cracker!*
- Black Saw-wing** *Psaldoprocne pristoptera* A common bird of mountains and escarpments.
- Grey-rumped Swallow** *Pseudhirundo griseopyga* Regular encounters with this uncommon species.
- Banded Martin** *Riparia cincta* A few were seen at Damengola.
- Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* Just two of these well-known migrants were seen.
- Angolan Swallow** *Hirundo angolensis* This well-named bird was common all along our route.
- White-throated Swallow** ◇ *Hirundo albigularis* Very nice views, both perched and in flight at Kinjila.
- Wire-tailed Swallow** *Hirundo smithii* Two were seen at a lake on one of the journeys.
- Black-and-rufous Swallow** ◇ *Hirundo nigrorufa* All too brief views of one over the Mount Moco grasslands.
- Pearl-breasted Swallow** *Hirundo dimidiata* A few were identified at Lubango airport.
- Rock Martin** *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* Common and showy along the Tundavala cliffs.
- Common House Martin** *Delichon urbicum* A few observations of this northern migrant.
- Greater Striped Swallow** ◇ *Cecropis cucullata* Several very nice observations in the south.
- Lesser Striped Swallow** *Cecropis abyssinica* Common and easy to see.
- Red-breasted Swallow** (Rufous-chested S) *Cecropis semirufa* One was identified at Damengola.
- Mosque Swallow** *Cecropis senegalensis* A few of these very smart hirundines showed well at Damengola.
- Red-throated Cliff Swallow** ◇ *Petrochelidon rufigula* Exceptional views at a colony near Kinjila.
- Moustached Grass Warbler** (African M W) *Melocichla mentalis* Perfect scope views at Damengola.



*African Red-eyed Bulbul and Rockrunner showed well at the Tundavala escarpment (Mark Van Beirs)*

**Rockrunner** ♦ *Achaetops pycnopygius* Sublime looks at this speciality at the Tundavala escarpment. See Note.

**Yellow Longbill** *Macrosphenus flavicans* Heard and, eventually, seen at Damengola.

**Long-billed Crombec** *Sylvietta rufescens* Several nice observations of this cutie.

**Green Crombec** *Sylvietta virens* Regularly heard and seen in the northern forests.

**Green Hylia** *Hylia prasina* An often heard voice of the northern forests. Good looks too.

**Lesser Swamp Warbler** *Acrocephalus gracilirostris* Scope views of one at Kinjila.

**African Yellow Warbler (Dark-capped Y W)** *Iduna natalensis* A couple of nice sightings at Tundavala.

**Evergreen Forest Warbler** *Bradypterus lopezi* Great looks at a singing bird in montane forest at Mount Moco.

**Fan-tailed Grassbird (F-t Warbler)** *Schoenicola brevirostris* Good views of one in grassland at Kinjila.

**Whistling Cisticola** *Cisticola lateralis* Nice looks at this unobtrusive species at Kinjila and Damengola.

**Bubbling Cisticola** ♦ *Cisticola bulliens* Great looks at this marvelously-named species at Kumbira.

**Rattling Cisticola** *Cisticola chiniana* Several encounters with this widespread cisticola.

**Tinkling Cisticola** ♦ (Grey C) *Cisticola rufilatus* We only saw this one in the Tundavala area.

**Wailing Cisticola** ♦ *Cisticola lais* Many observations of this well-named species.

**Croaking Cisticola** *Cisticola natalensis* Several sightings.

**Short-winged Cisticola (Siffling C)** *Cisticola brachypterus* We only found this species at Mount Moco.

**Neddicky (Piping Cisticola)** *Cisticola fulvicapilla* Good looks in the Kinjila miombo.

**Wing-snapping Cisticola** *Cisticola ayresii* Scope views of this little tike at Tundavala.

**Tawny-flanked Prinia** *Prinia subflava* Regular, but less common than expected.

**Black-chested Prinia** ♦ *Prinia flavicans* Good looks at several in the Namibe desert.

**Banded Prinia** *Prinia bairdii* Perfect looks at this attractive species at Damengola.

**White-chinned Prinia** *Schistolais leucopogon* A single bird was seen at Damengola.

**Yellow-breasted Apalis** *Apalis flavida* A few observations of this well-known species.

**Lowland Masked Apalis** *Apalis binotata* Great looks at a pair in the Damengola thickets.

**Black-throated Apalis** *Apalis jacksoni* A single bird showed well at Damengola.

**Buff-throated Apalis** *Apalis rufogularis* Regular observations of this vocal bird.

**Grey Apalis** *Apalis cinerea* Not uncommon in hill or montane forest.

**Grey-backed Camaroptera** *Camaroptera brevicaudata* Often heard and regularly seen.

**Hartert's Camaroptera** ♦ (Green-tailed C) *Camaroptera harterti* Good looks at Kumbira. See Note.

**Green-capped Eremomela** *Eremomela scotops* Lovely views of a pair at Mount Moco.





The oddly-named Bubbling Cisticola; our camp at the Damengola Forest (Mark Van Beirs)

**Rufous-crowned Eremomela** *Eremomela badiceps* All too short looks at a party in the Damengola forests.  
**Brown Illadopsis** *Illadopsis fulvescens* (H) We heard the distinctive vocalisations several times at Kumbira.  
**Bare-cheeked Babbler** ♦ *Turdoides gymnogenys* A pair showed frustratingly briefly in the Namibe desert.  
**African Hill Babbler** *Pseudoalcippe abyssinica* Two performed very well in montane forest on Mount Moco.  
**African Yellow White-eye** *Zosterops senegalensis* Several nice observations.  
**Yellow-bellied Hyliota** *Hyliota flavigaster* We only saw this species in the Kinjila miombo.  
**Southern Hyliota** *Hyliota australis* Great looks at several in the Kumbira Forest.  
**Cape Starling (C Glossy S)** *Lamprotornis nitens* One of the most common birds of the tour.  
**Splendid Starling (S Glossy S)** *Lamprotornis splendidus* Regular in the Damengola Forest.  
**Meves's Starling** ♦ *Lamprotornis mevesii* We only saw these impressive birds in the Namibe desert area.  
**Sharp-tailed Starling** ♦ *Lamprotornis acuticaudus* Common and beautiful in the Kinjila miombo.  
**Violet-backed (Plum-coloured) Starling** *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* Regular in small numbers. So attractive!  
**Chestnut-winged Starling** *Onychognathus fulgidus* Just a few in flight at Damengola.  
**Pale-winged Starling** ♦ *Onychognathus nabouroup* A handful of sightings in the Namibe desert.  
**Yellow-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus africanus* We only saw these birds in the southern acacia woodland.  
**Fraser's Rufous Thrush (R Flycatcher T)** *Stizorhina fraseri* Fantastic looks at several in Kumbira Forest. See Note.



Sharp-tailed Starlings were not uncommon in miombo woodland (tour participant Charles Davies); the fabulous Angolan Cave Chat (Mark Van Beirs)

**Groundscraper Thrush** *Turdus litsitsirupa* Three sightings of this unusual thrush in the south.  
**African Thrush** *Turdus pelios* Just three observations!  
**Forest Scrub Robin** ♦ *Cercotrichas leucosticte* Magnificent scope studies of this skulking species at Kumbira.  
**Miombo Scrub Robin** ♦ *Cercotrichas barbata* Good views of one near Lobito.  
**Kalahari Scrub Robin** ♦ *Cercotrichas paena* Excellent scope views of a singing bird in the Namibe desert.

**White-browed Scrub Robin** *Cercotrichas leucophrys* Several observations of this widespread species.

**Grey Tit-Flycatcher (Lead-coloured F)** *Myioparus plumbeus* A single bird was noted in Kissama NP.

**Angolan Slaty Flycatcher** ♦ *Melaenornis brunneus* Very nice encounters with this endemic in the scarp forests.

**Chat Flycatcher** *Melaenornis infuscatus* Several showed well in the Namibe desert.

**Ashy Flycatcher** *Muscicapa caerulescens* A couple of observations in open woodland.

**African Dusky Flycatcher** *Muscicapa adusta* We saw this tiny species in montane woodland.

**Dusky-blue Flycatcher** *Muscicapa comitata* Good looks at a pair in the Damengola Forest.

**Sooty Flycatcher** *Muscicapa infuscata* A single bird performed well at Damengola.

**Angolan Cave Chat** ♦ *Cossypha ansorgei* One of the star birds of the tour. Exquisite looks at Tundavala. See Note.

**White-browed Robin-Chat** *Cossypha heuglini* A few observations of this well-known bird.

**Red-capped Robin-Chat** *Cossypha natalensis* Seen and mostly heard in the scarp forests.

**White-headed Robin-Chat** ♦ *Cossypha heinrichi* (V) One of the highlights of the tour. See Note.

**Bocage's Akalat** ♦ *Sheppardia bocagei* Lovely views of this enchanting species on Mount Moco. See Note.

**Gabela Akalat** ♦ *Sheppardia gabela* (E) This endemic showed well in the Kumbira Forest undergrowth. See Note.



*The Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush is quite localized, unlike the African Stonechat (Mark Van Beirs)*

**Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush** ♦ *Cichladusa ruficauda* Regular sightings in the western plains.

**Short-toed Rock Thrush** ♦ *Monticola brevipes* This beautiful species showed very well on the Tundavala cliffs.

**Miombo Rock Thrush** ♦ *Monticola angolensis* Scope views of a male in the Mount Moco miombo.

**African Stonechat** *Saxicola torquatus* Regular in mountainous areas.

**Tractrac Chat** ♦ *Emarginata tractrac* Several were found in the Namibe desert.

**Sooty Chat** *Myrmecocichla nigra* We only saw this one on Mount Moco.

**Mountain Wheatear** ♦ *Myrmecocichla monticola* Several were seen in rocky areas.

**Capped Wheatear** *Oenanthe pileata* Regular observations at the base of Mount Moco.

**Familiar Chat** *Oenanthe familiaris* A single bird in the Mount Moco foothills.

**Anchieta's Sunbird** ♦ *Anthreptes anchietae* A fantastic male showed ever so well in the Kinjila miombo.

**Little Green Sunbird** *Anthreptes seimundi* Several showed quite well in the Kumbira Forest.

**Collared Sunbird** *Hedydipna collaris* Regular encounters.

**Blue-throated Brown Sunbird** *Cyanomitra cyanaolaema* A male was seen at Damengola.





*Short-toed Rock Thrush (Mark Van Beirs) and Ludwig's Double-collared Sunbird (tour participant Charles Davies) were two other gems at Tundavala*

- Olive Sunbird** *Cyanomitra olivacea* Regular in the northern forests.
- Carmelite Sunbird** ♦ *Chalcomitra fuliginosa* A handful were seen in the Kumbira Forest.
- Green-throated Sunbird** *Chalcomitra rubescens* A few of these were noted in the northern woodlands.
- Amethyst Sunbird** *Chalcomitra amethystina* Just three observations of this widespread species.
- Scarlet-chested Sunbird** *Chalcomitra senegalensis* A few observations of this cracker.
- Bronzy Sunbird (Bronze S)** *Nectarinia kilimensis* We only saw this boy on Mount Moco.
- Olive-bellied Sunbird** *Cinnyris chloropygius* Quite common in the northern farmbrush.
- Ludwig's Double-collared Sunbird** ♦ *Cinnyris ludovicensis* Excellent looks in the scarp forests.
- Marico Sunbird** *Cinnyris mariquensis* Just two observations near Lobito.
- Purple-banded Sunbird** *Cinnyris bifasciatus* One of the most common sunbirds of the tour.
- Superb Sunbird** *Cinnyris superbus* This very attractive species was seen in several northern forests.
- Oustalet's Sunbird** ♦ *Cinnyris oustaleti* Great looks at two males at the Tundavala escarpment. See Note.
- White-bellied Sunbird** *Cinnyris talatala* A few in the southern plains.
- Variable Sunbird** *Cinnyris venustus* A handful of observations of this well-known species.
- Copper Sunbird** *Cinnyris cupreus* Several classy sightings of this lovely species.



*Purple-banded Sunbirds were plentiful at Kissama, but endemic Golden-backed Bishops were harder to find (Mark Van Beirs)*

**White-browed Sparrow-Weaver** *Plocepasser mahali* We only saw this one in the baobab woodland near Lobito.

**House Sparrow (introduced)** *Passer domesticus* Regular, but only in towns and cities.

**Cape Sparrow** *Passer melanurus* Several of these nice sparrows were found in a Namibe desert oasis.

**Northern Grey-headed Sparrow** *Passer griseus* Two were identified in the Kissama NP.

**Southern Grey-headed Sparrow** *Passer diffusus* Several observations of this subtle species.

**Yellow-throated Petronia** *Gymnoris superciliaris* Two were seen in the southern woodland.

**Thick-billed Weaver (Grosbeak W)** *Amblyospiza albifrons* A single bird was found at Damengola.

**Spectacled Weaver** *Ploceus ocularis* Regular.

**Black-necked Weaver** *Ploceus nigricollis* A handful of observations.

**Holub's Golden Weaver** *Ploceus xanthops* Fairly common and obvious.

**Southern Masked Weaver** *Ploceus velatus* Just two were found in the south.

**Village Weaver** *Ploceus cucullatus* Fairly common along the whole itinerary.

**Vieillot's Black Weaver** *Ploceus nigerrimus* Fairly common in the northern farmbush. See Note.

**Dark-backed Weaver (Forest W)** *Ploceus bicolor* Several encounters of this well-marked species.

**Brown-capped Weaver** *Ploceus insignis* Three observations of a smart species.

**Red-headed Malimbe** *Malimbus rubricollis* Two showed very well at Damengola.

**Crested Malimbe** *Malimbus malimbicus* (NL) Linda saw this cracker at Damengola.

**Red-billed Quelea** *Quelea quelea* Just a few flocks were seen on our travels.

**Golden-backed Bishop** ♦ *Euplectes aureus* Superb looks at several of these endemics at Kissama NP. See Note.

**Yellow Bishop** *Euplectes capensis* Several were noted in the Mount Moco grasslands.

**White-winged Widowbird** *Euplectes albonotatus* Several flocks were seen in grasslands.

**Red-collared Widowbird** *Euplectes ardens* A flock was found in the Kinjila area.

**White-breasted Nigrita (W-b Negrofinch)** *Nigrita fusconotus* A single bird was scoped at Damengola.

**Grey-headed Nigrita (G-h Negrofinch)** *Nigrita canicapillus* Several observations in the northern farmbush.



Finding White-collared Olivebacks more than 1000km from their usual range was good fun (tour participant Charles Davies); this Striped Pipit could be studied in detail (Mark Van Beirs)

**White-collared Oliveback** *Nesocharis ansorgei* Several showed well at Damengola. A very nice surprise!

**Green-winged Pytilia (Melba Finch)** *Pytilia melba* Eight observations of this attractive species.

**Dusky Twinspot** ♦ *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea* Several showed well in the Mount Moco scrub.

**Landana Firefinch** ♦ (Pale-billed F) *Lagonosticta landanae* We identified this speciality at Kinjila.

**Jameson's Firefinch** *Lagonosticta rhodopareia* Several very nice encounters. See Note.

**Blue Waxbill** *Uraeginthus angolensis* Common and striking in the lowlands.

**Violet-eared Waxbill** *Uraeginthus granatinus* These dazzling birds were found in the southwest.



**Angolan Waxbill** ♦ *Coccozygia bocagei* Several excellent observations during the first week.

**Grey Waxbill** ♦ (Black-tailed W) *Estrilda perreini* Two of these cuties were found in the Kissama NP.

**Fawn-breasted Waxbill** *Estrilda paludicola* A party was seen in the Kinjila miombo.

**Orange-cheeked Waxbill** *Estrilda melpoda* Several well-behaved flocks were found in the northern farmbush.

**Common Waxbill** *Estrilda astrild* A handful of observations, usually together with other small seedeaters.

**Orange-breasted Waxbill (Zebra W)** *Amandava subflava* Two showed quite well at the base of Mount Moco.

**Bronze Mannikin** *Lonchura cucullata* Regular in small numbers.

**Pin-tailed Whydah** *Vidua macroura* A few birds in non-breeding plumage were seen.

**Cape Wagtail** *Motacilla capensis* A single bird was feeding at a stream on the Lepe escarpment.

**African Pipit (Grassland P)** *Anthus cinnamomeus* Several birds showed well in the southern grasslands.

**Long-billed Pipit** *Anthus similis* (H) We heard its distinctive call at Tundavala.

**Buffy Pipit** *Anthus vaalensis* Fairly common at the Tundavala escarpment.

**Plain-backed Pipit** *Anthus leucophrys* A single bird was identified on a rocky slope at Mount Moco.

**Striped Pipit** *Anthus lineiventris* Impeccable scope views of a singing bird at Tundavala.

**Black-faced Canary** ♦ *Crithagra capistrata* Regular observations of this speciality.

**Black-throated Canary** *Crithagra atrogularis* Quite common in the Mount Moco scrub.

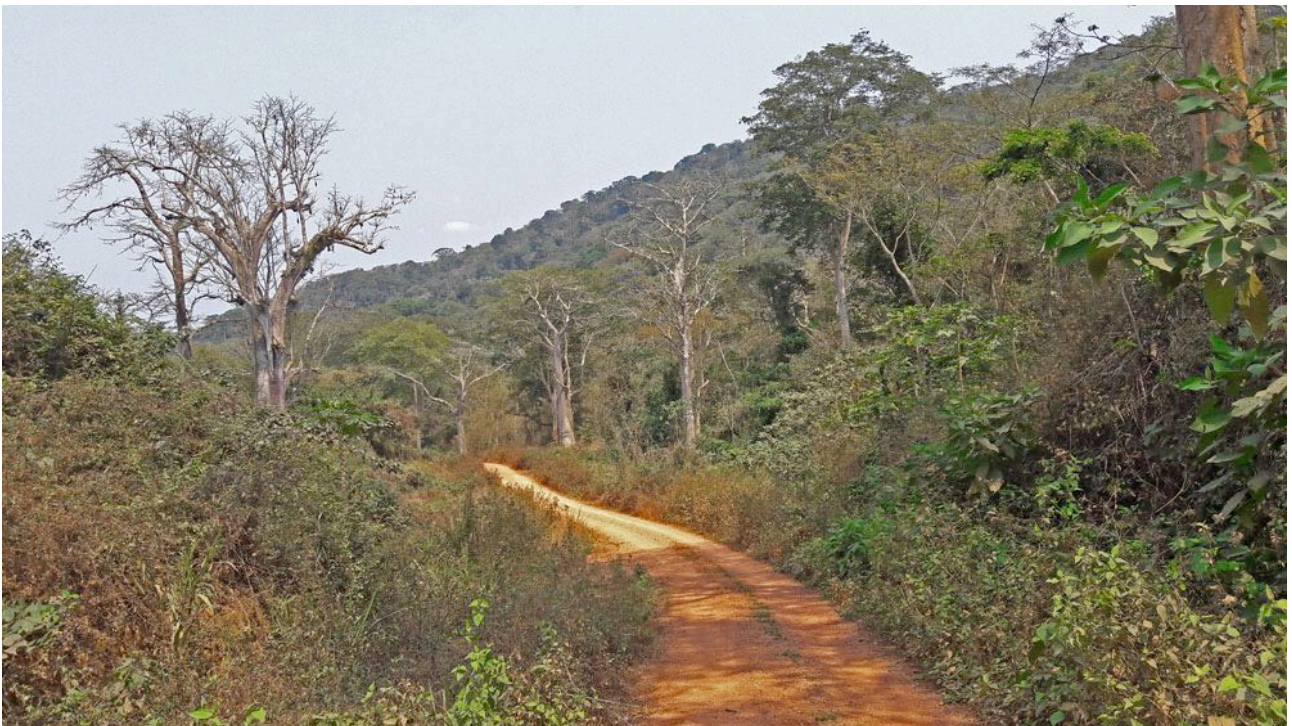
**Yellow-fronted Canary** *Crithagra mozambica* Quite a few encounters with this widespread species.

**Brimstone Canary** *Crithagra sulphurata* Several showed well at Mount Moco.

**Thick-billed Seed eater** *Crithagra burtoni* A single bird was foraging in ferns at Mount Moco.

**Yellow-crowned Canary** *Serinus flavivertex* A single bird showed very nicely near Lubango.

**Cinnamon-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza tahapisi* Regular observations in rocky areas.



*The birdy forest of Tombingo (Mark Van Beirs)*





Angola is a sad place for mammals. This Congo Rope Squirrel was one of the few we managed to observe (Mark Van Beirs)

## MAMMALS

**Southern Talapoin** *Miopithecus talapoin* A single animal showed well near our camp at Kumbira.

**Vervet Monkey** *Cercopithecus pygerythrus* Small numbers were seen at Damengola and in the Kissama NP.

**Gentle Monkey** *Cercopithecus mitis* Several troops were seen along our route.

**Congo Rope Squirrel** *Funisciurus congicus* Seven encounters with this swift species.

**Gambian Sun Squirrel** *Heliosciurus gambianus* A single animal was seen in the Kumbira Forest.

**Yellow-spotted Hyrax** *Heterohyrax brucei* Just one was found after a lot of scanning, at Tundavala.





*The Angolan way to get around (tour participant Charles Davies)*

## NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

### **Finsch's Francolin** *Scleroptila finschi*

Otto Finsch (1839–1917) was a German 'museum man' (Leiden and Bremen), explorer and collector and worked with Gustav Hartlaub on a monograph on parrots.

### **Palm-nut Vulture** *Gypohierax angolensis*

Also known as Vulturine Fish Eagle, this predominantly vegetarian raptor is certainly an eagle rather than a vulture and it is the only bird of prey that is most reliant on vegetable matter for its food although it also has a taste for carrion.

### **Bateleur** *Terathopius ecaudatus*

Widespread sightings of small numbers of this aberrant snake eagle throughout the tour. The name means 'juggler' in French and refers to the balancing mode of flight employed by this distinctive and spectacular bird! The Bateleur is also the magician or 'wand-user' of the Tarot Cards.

### **Verreaux's Eagle** *Aquila verreauxii*

Also known as Black Eagle we had several excellent encounters. The French Verreaux family was a business run by the father and his three sons. They owned 'Maison Verreaux' the largest ever known 'Natural History Emporium'! The eagle is named after one of the sons, Jean Baptiste Edouard Verreaux (1810-68) who was married to Pierre Antoine Delalande's sister.

### **Schalow's Turaco** *Tauraco schalowi*

This turaco with its marvellous crest showed well at Mt Moco. Hermann Schalow (1852–1925) was a German banker and amateur ornithologist. He was the author of a work on turacos "Die Musophagidae" that was published in 1886. He worked with Reichenow who named the turaco after him in 1891.



*A colourful Namib Rock Agama Agama planiceps (Mark Van Beirs)*

**Red-crested Turaco** *Tauraco erythrolophus*

Great looks at this Angolan endemic on several occasions. The 23 species of turacos, go-away birds and plantain-eaters form a truly remarkable family, restricted to sub-Saharan Africa. A unique feature of the family is the presence of two copper pigments, red turacin and green turacoverdin, which are unknown in any other birds, or indeed anywhere else in the Animal Kingdom. Bright colours in birds are usually produced by melanins and lipochromes, or by diffraction of light from the feather surface, but not so with turacos. The long-perpetuated fallacy that turacin is washed out of the birds' plumage during rainstorms is of course totally wrong: The pigment is soluble only in alkali and in no other solution.

**Ross's Turaco** *Musophaga rossae*

Pretty good looks in the Kinjila gallery forest. Lady Ann Ross (1817-1857) was the wife of Rear-Admiral Sir James Clark Ross who discovered the Magnetic North Pole and the Ross Sea and Ice Shelf. The turaco was sent to her from West Africa during the time that she was stationed on St Helena. She kept the bird as a pet for ten years and sent sketches and moulted feathers to John Gould who named the turaco after her.

**Klaas's Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx klaas*

Several nice observations, but obviously more often heard than seen. The species appears to parasitize a wide variety of small, insectivorous passerines, principally warblers and sunbirds. It was described by Stephens in 1815 and is supposedly named after one of Francois Levillant's Khoikhoi (Hottentot) servants. Popular myth has it that he was the husband of Narina who was in turn the mistress of Levillant!

**Rüppell's Parrot** *Poicephalus rueppellii*

Several nice observations. 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.





Mount Moco scenery (Mark Van Beirs)

**Margaret's Batis** *Batis margaritae*

Fair views of a male on Mt Moco. The forests that remain, clinging on to the few deeper gullies on the 'mountains' in the area are pathetically small and one wonders about the future of the populations of birds that inhabit them. Margaret Lander Holt was the wife of an American ornithologist E. G. Holt. Quite what the connection is between her and the batis is unclear. Its alternative name is (Mrs) Boulton's Batis named after Wilfred Rudyerd Boulton (1901-83) who described the bird in 1934 from a specimen from Mt Moco in Angola.

**White-tailed Shrike** *Lanioturdus torquatus*

This fantastic and charming species earned the nickname of 'Giant Batis'. We had excellent looks en route to Namibe. It is believed by some taxonomists to be more closely related to the Malaconotus shrikes whilst its eggs are more like those of the helmetshrikes!

**Monteiro's Bushshrike** *Malaconotus monteiroi*

Fair views of one in Kissama NP. Historically this species was treated as a race of Grey-headed Bushshrike *M. blanchoti* but vocal similarities to that species and Green-breasted Bush-shrike *M. gladiator* and morphological similarities to Fiery-breasted Bush-shrike *M. cruentus* complicate the issue. Its presence in Cameroon remains a mystery. Joachim João Monteiro (1833-78) author of "Angola and the River Congo" was a Portuguese mining engineer and collector in Angola.

**Braun's Bushshrike** *Laniarius brauni*

Magnificent views of several birds in the Damengola Forest. This species and Gabela Bushshrike, although sharing some vocalisations with Lühder's Bush-shrike *L. luehderi* with which they were once lumped, also seem to have a repertoire of their own as well. Since its discovery in 1939 remarkably few birders have seen this little known and highly localised species. It is threatened by deforestation. R. H. Braun (1908-?) was a German collector working in Angola and elsewhere.

**Carp's Tit** *Melaniparus carpi*

Several nice sightings in the southwest. Bernhard Carp (1901-66) was a Dutch South African businessman and naturalist who sponsored collecting expeditions, particularly to Namibia where the tit was collected and described as recently as 1957.



*The Tundavala escarpment (Mark Van Beirs)*

**Rockrunner** *Achaetops pycnopygius*

Also known as Damara Rock-jumper this is another very special bird that we saw very well on the Tundavala escarpment. It is another species with a chequered taxonomic history. It shows strong links to Cape Grassbird *Sphenoeacus afer* and it is now placed with that species and the warblers in the Sylviidae rather than with the rockjumpers.

**Hartert's Camaroptera** *Camaroptera harterti*

We saw this critter first in the Kumbira Forest. The species is usually lumped in either Grey-backed Camaroptera *C. brevicaudata* or Green-backed Camaroptera *C. brachyura* with the name Bleating Warbler being used for the enlarged species. Ernst Johann Otto Hartert (1859-1933) was a German ornithologist working for Walter Rothschild and curator of his private museum at Tring that now houses the bird collection of the British Museum (Natural History).

**Fraser's Rufous Thrush** *Stizorhina fraseri*

Seen very well in the Kumbira Forest. 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.

**Angolan Cave Chat** *Cossypha ansorgei*

This marvellous endemic with its lovely song was one of the highlights of the tour. It proved easy to see at Tundavala and was remarkably tame. It is restricted to localised areas on the escarpment of western Angola, but was recently found on rocky outcrops in northern Namibia.

**White-headed Robin Chat** *Cossypha heinrichi*

This stunning bird put on a wonderful performance for us and was most deservedly voted as one of the birds of the trip. Surprisingly it proved not to be a skulker at all and was most at home bouncing along the limbs of the large trees in the mid-canopy rather than the undergrowth. It is only known from a small area around Calandula in Angola and from the Bombo-Lumene Forest and nearby Nkiene and Nguma in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Habitat loss remains the biggest threat. The scientific epithet refers to Gerd Heinrich, a larger than life German entomologist and collector (1896-1984) who made some truly amazing trips (Sulawesi, Angola, Mexico) and discovered the Invisible Rail on Halmahera.





*The Namibe desert gave us brilliant White-tailed Shrikes and subtle Spike-heeled Larks (Mark Van Beirs)*

**Bocage's Akalat** *Sheppardia bocagei*

Amazing views of this glorious little robin-like bird on Mount Moco. 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.

**Gabela Akalat** *Sheppardia gabela*

Great looks at one in the Kumbira Forest. It is only known from a few forest patches within 40 kilometres of Gabela where it is considered to be uncommon. It is most threatened by habitat loss.

**Oustalet's Sunbird** *Cinnyris oustaleti*

Great looks at a male at Tundavala. Emile Oustalet (1844-1905) was a French zoologist who worked in the Far East. In 1873 he succeeded Jules Verreaux at the Paris Natural History Museum.

**Vieillot's Black Weaver** *Ploceus nigerrimus*

Common in the northern scarp forests and also seen in the Kumbira Forest. Louis Jean Pierre Vieillot (1748-1831) was a French businessman forced to take refuge in the United States during the French Revolution and later 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.

**Golden-backed Bishop** *Euplectes aureus*

Great views of at least five in the southeast of Kissama NP. Although in non-breeding plumage, they were very distinctive. They showed a strong yellow wash to the supercilium, ear coverts and throat and were generally very richly coloured and well-marked. They were slightly larger, though shorter-tailed, than the accompanying Red-billed Queleas.

**White-collared Oliveback** *Nesocharis ansorgei*

It was quite a surprise to find three of these dainty birds attending a disused Village Weaver nest near our camp at Damengola. Their 'normal' area of distribution is in eastern DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and NW Tanzania. They were discovered in Angola just a few years ago.



*A Buffy Pipit at Tundavala and shopping for veggies along the road (Mark Van Beirs)*

**Jameson's Firefinch** *Lagonosticta rhodopareia*

The sightings in the Tundavala area all referred to *ansorgei*, the most brightly coloured of all the races of this species. James Sligo Jameson (1856-1888) was an Irish naturalist explorer. In Africa he collected in South Africa and the Belgian Congo where he died whilst with Stanley on a mission to 'rescue' Emin Pasha.

**TOP THREE BIRDS OF THE TOUR**

- 1st     BRAUN'S BUSHSHRIKE
- 2nd     WHITE-HEADED ROBIN-CHAT
- 3rd     ANGOLAN CAVE CHAT