



A sighting of the rare and localised Grey-crested Helmetshrike in the Serengeti was just one of the many tour highlights this trip. (Nik Borrow)

NORTHERN TANZANIA

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This incredible tour through Arusha and Tarangire National Parks, the Ngorongoro Crater and finally over the seemingly endless plains of the Serengeti surely has to be the ultimate wildlife travel experience out of anywhere in Africa if not indeed the whole world! The journey is simply one of those 'must-do' pilgrimages that all ecotourists should make at least once in their lifetimes. Our visit was firmly in the wet season and it was truly wet with at least some rain most days but this did not dampen our enthusiasm or indeed cost us too much time and during just fourteen days in the field we managed to record colourful endemics such as Grey-breasted Spurfowl, Fischer's and Yellow-collared Lovebirds, Ashy Starling, Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbill and regional specialities such as Taveta and Rufous-tailed Weavers, the little-known Karamoja Apalis and the elusive Grey-crested Helmetshrike. To add to the bonanza of birds there was a wealth of mammals with cats featuring prominently during our game drives and we also gained a remarkable insight into the workings of this huge and almost untouched ecosystem. Under the panoramic skies and across the

expansive plains of the Ngorongoro and Serengeti, we were able to witness one of the greatest concentrations of large mammals on earth. After all the wildlife documentaries that have been made on the area the first-time visitor feels a sort of familiarity with the place but no widescreen television or Imax cinema can ever recreate or replace the amazing jaw-dropping and absolutely astonishing experience of actually being there! The sheer spectacle of being surrounded by grunting gnus and hee-hawing zebra combined with the obvious pleasures of a rich and vibrant avifauna, makes this tour a marvellous and deeply moving experience. Despite the huge number of tourists passing through the region it is still possible in this enormous space to escape the gaggles of vehicles that gather around sleepy lions, stealthy cheetahs or secretive leopards and set out in order to discover one's own wonders. It is indeed exhilarating to head off into the wide blue yonder in search of the next wildlife encounter travelling over huge tracts of country where one never sees another car or human being apart from perhaps the occasional Masai warrior or cowherd draped in vivid red and striding purposefully across the apparently infinite landscape.



You have to see the Ngorongoro Crater in order to believe it. The ever-changing light plays across the surface like an artist's brush and the animal encounters were amazing as always. (Nik Borrow)

Our adventure began at Kilimanjaro airport where we actually began by heading eastwards, away from the Serengeti to an area of thorn bush that surrounds Nyumba Ya Mungu Reservoir. Here we enjoyed a great variety of species that frequent the acacia and commiphora habitats including specialities such as White-headed Mousebird, Pringle's Puffback and Scaly Chatterer. The rain meant that the weavers, widows and bishops were all in breeding plumage and we were greatly entertained by the busy displays of Zanzibar Red Bishops and White-winged Widowbirds. Returning westwards, our next stop was Lake Duluti where we found Brown-breasted Barbet in the grounds of our comfortable lodge overlooking the lake itself and Taveta Golden Weavers at an active colony by the lake. In the thick, tangled lakeside vegetation, colourful Hartlaub's Turacos and a roosting African Wood Owl in broad daylight was a real treat.

A morning visit to the plains at Engikaret gave us the exceedingly rare Beesley's Lark and we gained some prolonged views of this seriously threatened bird. We also found Short-tailed and Athi Short-toed Larks and our first large mammals with Eastern White-bearded Wildebeest and Eastern Thomson's Gazelles both present. As we departed we were delighted to find some spectacular Golden-winged Sunbirds in some flowering *Leonotis* before moving onto Tarangire National Park dominated by its enormous Baobabs, impressive gatherings of African Elephants and endemic Ashy Starlings and Yellow-collared Lovebirds. The wet weather brought with it Dwarf Bittern, Lesser Moorhens, African Swamphen and Allen's Gallinule and a night drive produced some unnervingly close roaring Lions as well as Verreaux's Eagle Owl and Three-banded and Bronze-winged Coursers.

The lake was full to bursting and access was limited in Lake Manyara National Park because of the heavy rain but we saw our first Hippos and spent some time watching the antics of Yellow-crowned Bishops buzzing around like giant bumblebees!

Fortunately, the weather cleared for tremendous views of the Ngorongoro crater and we managed to scope our first Black Rhinos from the crater rim! In the forests we found Brown-headed Apalis and on the high grasslands watched displaying Jackson's Widowbirds and glittering Malachite and Tacazze Sunbirds. Although our day in the crater itself coincided with the worst weather of the trip we made the most of our time there and managed views of the unassuming Lynes's Cisticola whilst down below we witnessed the mass of herbivores and attendant Lions which did not fail to impress. From the crater rim the road led us down through stunted Whistling Thorn (*Vachellia drepanolobium*) and spiky wild Sisal (*Sansevieria ehrenbergii*) with amazing vistas towards the Serengeti itself where enormous numbers of Serengeti White-bearded Wildebeest and Plains Zebra were grazing. Our stay was split with three nights in the Seronera region in the heart the Serengeti and three nights at Ndutu on the borders with the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. We did well for cats generally and had multiple encounters with Lion, two Cheetah and no less than six different individual Leopards. We also scored well with the bird specialties and found three Karamoja Apalis, a pair of Grey-crested Helmetshrikes, a number of White-tailed Larks, 2 Pangani Longclaws and endemic Grey-breasted Spurfowl, Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbill and Fischer's Lovebirds. Despite the rain diluting the alkalinity of the Ndutu lakes there were small numbers of Lesser Flamingos, Greater Flamingos and some Chestnut-banded Plovers. Other noteworthy species seen during the tour included Hildebrandt's Francolin, Yellow-necked Spurfowl, Hartlaub's Bustard, Yellow-throated and Black-faced Sandgrouse, Nyanza Swift, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Abyssinian Scimitarbill, Von der Decken's Hornbill, Moustached Tinkerbird, Spot-flanked, Black-throated, Red-and-yellow, D'Arnaud's and 'Usambiro' Barbets, Eastern Grey Woodpecker, Greater Kestrel, Red-bellied Parrot, Eastern Black-headed Batis, Rosy-patched Bushshrike, Long-tailed and Taita Fiscals, Red-throated Tit, Fischer's Sparrow-Lark, Foxy Lark, Dodson's Bulbul, Mountain and Grey-olive Greenbuls, Trilling and Hunter's Cisticolas, Bar-throated Apalis, Grey-capped Warbler, Grey Wren-Warbler, Rufous Chatterer, Black-lored and Northern Pied Babblers, Banded Parisoma, Abyssinian and Montane White-eyes, Hildebrandt's Starling, Bare-eyed Thrush, African Grey Flycatcher, Silverbird, Rüppell's Robin-Chat, 'Schalow's' Abyssinian Wheatear, Eastern Double-collared and Tsavo Sunbirds, Kenya and Swahili Sparrows, Grey-capped Social Weaver, Speke's, 'Layard's' Village and Golden-backed Weavers, Blue-capped Cordon-bleu, Steel-blue Whydah, Southern Citril, Reichenow's Seedeater and Southern Grosbeak-Canary.



Serengeti White-bearded Wildebeest on their incredible migration! (Nik Borrow)

The tour started in the morning at Kilimanjaro airport from where we began our safari by travelling southeastwards to an area of thornbush that borders the northern edge of Nyumba Ya Mungu reservoir. Although degraded in recent years by the clearance of bush for the charcoal industry the area still holds some interesting species that reach the southernmost limit of their range here. During the course of the remainder of our first day and the following morning we explored the area and spent our overnight stay in the unremarkable town of Same. The tour was timed to coincide with the rainy season and during our two weeks there was hardly a day went by that we did not have at least some rain but fortuitously the wet weather did not impede our birding too much. The plus side of rain was that many of the birds were in prime breeding condition and as a result the bishops, weavers, widows and whydahs were all at their very best.



The attractive and localised White-headed Mousebird put on an excellent show in the Nyumba Ya Mungu area. (Nik Borrow)

Two of the most wanted birds to be found amongst the Acacia, Euphorbia and Commiphora bushes were the characterful White-headed Mousebird and the ultra-skulking Scaly Chatterer and it was a great surprise that we saw the chatterer first, almost as soon as we arrived with even more seen the following day. The members of the small flock were coerced out of their hiding places and amazingly were soon enough, and somewhat unusually, flaunting themselves in front of us. The heavy rains this season had made the landscape lush and green and the vegetation was tall and thick and eventually the birds melted back from whence they came. The mousebird for some reason eluded us that afternoon but the following morning they were easily seen and we enjoyed some excellent views of these beautifully marked birds. We also scored well with great views of Pringle's Puffback, another often-secretive denizen of this habitat although in the breeding season they are noisy and relatively easy to see. A Three-streaked Tchagra did not give itself up so easily and was only seen briefly by some of the group whereas the similar Brown-crowned Tchagra was more obliging.



Scaly Chatterer (left) is a sought-after species of the thorn bush that surrounds the North Pare Mountains. Due to the wet conditions the weavers, widows, whydahs and bishops were all in breeding plumage. This is a male Zanzibar Red Bishop (right). (Nik Borrow)

We were pleased to find three Eastern Black-headed Batis that allowed good views as this is not a species we see commonly on our tours and more widespread species of the thornbush included Black-throated Barbet, Red-bellied Parrot, Pygmy Batis, Rosy-patched Bushshrike, Slate-coloured Boubou, Northern White-crowned Shrike, Pink-breasted Lark, Dodson's Bulbul, Red-fronted Warbler, the 'Brown-tailed' version of Yellow-breasted Apalis, Grey Wren-Warbler, Abyssinian White-eye (here of the yellow-bellied race *flavilateralis* which is sometimes considered part of a separate species; Pale Scrub White-eye), Southern Grosbeak-Canary, Hunter's Sunbird, Tsavo Sunbird and Somali Bunting. Raptors were not particularly well represented but a superb juvenile Martial Eagle was seen on both of our visits and there was also Brown Snake Eagle, Eastern Chanting Goshawk, Yellow-billed Kite and 'Steppe' Common Buzzard. Other more widespread bush country species included Ring-necked and Namaqua Doves, Emerald-spotted Wood Dove, Diederik Cuckoo, Little and White-rumped Swifts, Blue-naped Mousebird, Grey-headed Kingfisher Little and European Bee-eaters, Von der Decken's Hornbill, Spot-flanked, White-headed and D'Arnaud's Barbets, Nubian and Cardinal Woodpeckers, Eurasian Hobby, Black-backed Puffback, Red-backed Shrike, Eurasian Golden Oriole, Pied Crow, Sombre Greenbul, Lesser Striped Swallow, Northern Crombec, Buff-bellied Warbler, White-browed Scrub Robin, Spotted Palm Thrush, Capped Wheatear, House Sparrow, Yellow-spotted Petronia, White-browed Sparrow-Weaver, Black-necked Weaver, Lesser Masked and Vitelline Masked Weavers, 'Layard's' Village Weaver, Red-billed Quelea, Green-winged Pytilia, Cut-throat Finch, Red-billed Firefinch, Blue-capped Cordon-bleu, Purple Grenadier, Common Waxbill, Black-faced Waxbill, Village Indigobird, Pin-tailed Whydah, Long-tailed Paradise Whydah, African Pied Wagtail,

The Pangani River flows out of the dam and along its reedy banks were a number of Taveta Weavers, a restricted range species whose population dwells in the lowlands around the base of Mount Kilimanjaro. On the shores of the vast reservoir itself we found a large gathering of African Skimmer and numerous White-winged Terns in smart breeding plumage alongside Grey-headed and Lesser Black-backed (Baltic) Gulls and Gull-billed, Whiskered, and Caspian Terns. Other waterbirds included White-faced Whistling Duck, Egyptian Goose, Yellow-billed Stork, African Sacred Ibis, Western Cattle Egret, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Hamerkop, Pink-backed Pelican, Reed Cormorant, Western Osprey, African Fish Eagle, Water Thick-knee, Blacksmith and Spur-winged Lapwings, Three-banded Plover, Common Sandpiper and Malachite and Pied Kingfishers. In the cultivated areas surrounding the lake Harlequin Quails were calling and we found good White-winged Widowbird along with Zanzibar Red Bishops hurling themselves into the air like little fireballs. Long-tailed Fiscals were numerous and we also noted Golden-backed Weaver, Cardinal Quelea, Yellow Bishop and African Silverbill.



Red-fronted Warblers (left) are active and inquisitive birds always wiggling their tails. This Bare-eyed Thrush (right) was one of the last species to be seen before we left the reservoir area. (Nik Borrow)

We retraced our steps westwards back past the airport to our extremely comfortable lodge overlooking the picturesque Lake Duluti a small crater lake that nestles between the cultivation, busy towns and the peak of Mount Meru. This is a prime site for Brown-breasted Barbet and the fruiting trees in the garden gave up this prize easily.



At Lake Duluti Brown-breasted Barbets (left) were feeding in the fruiting trees and an African Wood Owl (right) was found at its daytime roost. (Nik Borrow)

Some enormous Silvery-cheeked Hornbills that shared the same trees were extremely impressive but the smaller Trumpeter Hornbill was only seen distantly. By the lakeshore a Black Heron was watched performing its peculiar 'umbrella-ing' fishing technique, more Taveta Weavers were busy with their nests as were the Thick-billed Weavers and a Lesser Swamp Warbler was seen well. Black Saw-wing and Wire-tailed Swallows hawked over the deep crater-lake and there were numbers of White-breasted Cormorants loafing on the dead snags around the edges where Hadada Ibis, Palm-nut Vulture and Giant Kingfisher were also seen. The gardens and woodland that surrounds the lake are usually quite birdy and from the dense

vegetation we hunted out Grey-olive Greenbul, Rüppell's Robin-Chat and the stunning Hartlaub's Turaco. A superb and amazingly close African Wood Owl at its daytime roost was a definite bonus and other species seen during the afternoon included Red-eyed Dove, Nyanza Swift, Speckled Mousebird, Brown-hooded Kingfisher, White-eared Barbet, Retz's Helmetshrike, African Paradise Flycatcher, Dark-capped Bulbul, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Ashy Flycatcher, Olive Sunbird and Spectacled Weaver. While it was still dark the following morning we also had some good looks at a Small-eared or Garnett's Greater Galago (a type of bushbaby) before enjoying a good breakfast.

We bade farewell to Duluti and travelled north out of Arusha, gradually descending lower and lower until we reached our destination near the small settlement of Engikaret on the Lariboro Plains that is home to the incredibly rare endemic Beesley's Lark. One wonders how long this taxon will survive as perhaps only 50 of these birds are thought to survive and sadly, despite evidence that supports the validity of the species (IOC have split it) this taxon is not currently recognised as such by BirdLife International and HBW.



The rarest bird of the trip was undoubtedly Beesley's Lark, with a total known population of perhaps no more than 50 birds! (Nik Borrow)

The plains were lush and green and we met up with our local Maasai guide who equipped with mobile phone had already been searching for the larks for us but had not yet found them. We set off on foot over the wide flat landscape and after a short while managed to locate a pair feeding quietly just ahead of us. Once found the birds were easy to follow and ultimately everyone had great views of this truly rare bird. Following this great success, we were free to look for a series of other larks the most common of which appeared to be the Red-capped Larks that seemed to be absolutely everywhere. There were also numbers of Athi Short-toed Larks and eventually some Short-tailed Larks were also located. To complete this 'lark-fest' we also scored with Fischer's Sparrow-Lark, Rufous-naped Lark and even a Foxy Lark! During our meanderings across the plains there were also many Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse flying over and perky Capped Wheatears were common. A few Kori Bustards were scoped, a dapper Taita Fiscal was watched dismembering a large beetle and we also found Black-chested Snake Eagle, Crowned Lapwing, Common Kestrel, Banded Parisoma, Scarlet-chested Sunbird and African Pipit. There was also some distant game dotted around with Plains Zebra, Eastern White-bearded Wildebeest and Eastern Thomson's Gazelles all present.

The morning was advancing rapidly and it was time to move on so we retraced our steps back towards Arusha but our progress was delayed by some attractive White-fronted Bee-eaters and a colony of Horus Swifts by the roadside and then a little further on a cluster of flowering *Leonotis* (or 'Lion's Paw') held some dazzling Golden-winged Sunbirds and we spent some time watching these beautiful creatures, with their strongly curved bills perfectly shaped for sliding into the flowers that they were feeding from.



We spent some time watching some dazzling Golden-winged Sunbirds by the roadside after we had left the lark plains. (Nik Borrow)

At the Tarangire National Park entrance gate there were endemic Ashy Starlings and Yellow-collared Lovebirds everywhere and ‘almost endemic’ Rufous-tailed Weavers a species that is mainly found in Tanzania but has recently apparently extended its range into the Maasai Mara of Kenya.



The Yellow-collared Lovebird (left, Nik Borrow) and Ashy Starling (right, Carlos Carvalho) are both endemic to Tanzania and abundant in Tarangire National Park.

Northern Pied Babblers put in their first appearance and we also had great views of Red-chested Cuckoo and Eastern Grey Woodpecker. The park is particularly well-known for its healthy population of African Elephants and we soon saw our first feeding amongst the enormous Baobabs that are also a feature of this beautiful park. Other mammals included herds of tail-twitching Impala, shaggy-coated Ellipsen Waterbuck,

towering stately 'Maasai' Giraffes and tiny little Thomas's Dik-diks. During the fairly short drive to our lodge we also encountered a surprising number of new birds for the trip including Helmeted Guineafowl, Yellow-necked and Red-necked Spurfowls, White-backed and Lappet-faced Vultures, Bateleur, Long-crested Eagle, Tawny Eagle, Grey Crowned Crane, African Jacana, Black-faced Sandgrouse, Mourning Collared and Ring-necked Doves, White-bellied Go-away-bird, White-browed Coucal, Striped Kingfisher, Abyssinian Scimitarbill, Northern Red-billed Hornbill, Grey Kestrel, Magpie and Northern White-crowned Shrikes, Black-headed Oriole, Fork-tailed Drongo, Rattling Cisticola, Yellow-billed Oxpecker, Silverbird, Beautiful Sunbird, Swahili Sparrow, White-headed Buffalo Weaver and Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu.

Tarangire Safari Lodge is set in an idyllic setting and the 'awesome view' that is advertised on the approach road looks out over the Tarangire River and is well worth having a sundowner for! We settled into our 'tents' which were more like huts made out of canvas and upon arrival we were shown a tiny African Scops Owl that had chosen a convenient tree between them as its roost site!



The 'awesome' view from Tarangire Safari Lodge – well worth sundowning for even on a rainy day! (Nik Borrow)

The Tarangire ecosystem covers an area of approximately 20,000 square kilometres and comprises Baobab and Acacia woodland, Commiphora bushland and open grassland dotted with Real Fan Palms (*Hyphaene petersiana*) with swamps dominating the southern section. We opted for a full day drive that took us through open savanna and then followed the Tarangire River southwards to Silale Swamp. We started the day with a fine Pearl-spotted Owlet at our lodge and commencing our game drive, our first Common Ostrich were seen letting us know that we were truly in 'Safari Land' Africa! Other savanna species included Black-bellied Bustard, Double-banded Courser, Spotted Thick-knee, African Cuckoo, Bare-faced Go-away-bird, Red-and-yellow Barbet, Red-rumped Swallow, Croaking, Zitting and Desert Cisticolas, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Arrow-marked Babbler, African Grey Flycatcher and there were new mammals such as Black-backed Jackal, Bat-eared Fox and Cape Buffalo. Many colourful species were seen such as Woodland Kingfisher, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, African Hoopoe, Green Wood Hoopoe, Meyer's Parrot, Hildebrandt's Starling and Red-headed Weaver as well as the impressively huge Saddle-billed Stork and Southern Ground Hornbill. New raptors for the trip were Black-winged Kite and African Hawk-Eagle and lingering migrants included Lesser Grey Shrike and 'Yellow-headed' Wagtail. At the swamp itself we were expecting to see more open water due to all of the recent rain but instead verdant vegetation had infringed on the pools. This provided good habitat for some unusual water birds and in addition to the expected Black Crakes and Common Moorhens we were pleased to see a number of Lesser Moorhens, African Swampphen and an Allen's Gallinule at the water's edge. Other waterbirds included Fulvous Whistling Duck, Spur-winged Goose, Knob-billed Duck, Hottentot Teal, Red-billed Teal, Southern Pochard, African Openbill, Glossy Ibis, Squacco Heron, Intermediate Egret, Long-toed Lapwing, African Jacana and Common Greenshank. Fan-tailed Widowbirds were in breeding plumage and both Western and African Marsh Harriers quartered the vast swamp. The rains also had brought Dwarf Bittern into the area and we saw three birds in total and heard them calling from a roadside pool.



Tarangire was 'the' park on our circuit to get the best African Savanna Elephant experience and these enormous creatures did not fail to impress! At night we scored exceptionally well with Three-banded Courser (below left) and Bronze-winged Courser (right) (Nik Borrow)

At night Tarangire were offering game drives for the somewhat extortionate sum of \$107 per person but most of the group opted to take part. The highlight was perhaps the extremely close encounter with a pride of roaring Lions in the darkness and we all felt a little vulnerable in our open-sided safari vehicle as we followed the 'king of the jungle' through the night. We also had excellent views of Three-banded and Bronze-winged Coursers, several Verreaux's Eagle Owls were seen and small mammals included Northern Lesser Galago, African Savanna Hare and Common Genet.

During an early morning session in Tarangire we added a few species to the list including Coqui Francolin, Rüppell's Vulture, Wahlberg's Eagle, Flappet Lark and Speckle-fronted Weaver but it was time to move on and the journey took us out of Tarangire and towards Lake Manyara National Park. A roadside pool held some more Lesser Moorhens and a fantastic breeding colony of Yellow-crowned Bishops all fluffed up and buzzing around in great excitement. A huge colony of Yellow-billed Storks just near the park gates was another great attraction but we were unfortunately plagued by people trying to sell souvenirs so we entered the park in order to escape them!



In Lake Manyara National Park, this male Southern Ground Hornbill (left) was watched 'singing' from his perch and a marvellous Red-and-yellow Barbet was seen at very close quarters (right). (Nik Borrow)

The park itself stretches for 50 kilometres along the edge of the imposing Rift Valley escarpment and the lake shore and lower cliffs are cloaked in attractive acacia woodland that is the haunt of 'tree-climbing' Lions. Unfortunately, we could not fully explore the park due to time restrictions and because the recent heavy rains had washed the main road out and there was a great amount of reconstruction going on. We therefore chose to visit the freshwater hippo pools and the wooded areas around the northern end of the lake. The lake itself was full to bursting and as a result the flamingos had mostly moved on to alkaline waters elsewhere. Small numbers of African Spoonbill, Black-winged Stilt and Collared Pratincole were seen and lingering Palearctic migrant waders included Curlew Sandpiper, Little Stint, Marsh and Wood Sandpipers. A Highland Rush Warbler was teased out of the dense reedbeds and allowed some quite reasonable views. In the more wooded areas we added Common Scimitarbill and Crowned Hornbill to our lists although neither showed for long and the D'Arnaud's type barbets here were showing more characters of Usambiro Barbet, which is sometimes treated as a separate species and has somewhat different vocalisations. We heard mixes of both song types and it seems that Manyara is firmly in the intergrade zone between the two forms. One of the highlights of the afternoon was a superb 'singing' Southern Ground Hornbill perched above our head!

Leaving Manyara we made an overnight stop near the gate to the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Our lodge was set in farmland and we spent the early morning birding in the surrounding scrub and gardens which

produced a small number of species that we had not seen previously. A pair of Black Cuckooshrike was a nice addition as was a showy Grey-capped Warbler and we also saw Tambourine Dove, Chinspot Batis, Tropical Boubou, Rock Martin, Red-faced and Trilling Cisticolas, White-browed Robin-Chat and Southern Citril.

We continued onwards, ever onwards to Ngorongoro Conservation Area entering by the Lodoare Gate. Here we found Moustached Tinkerbird, Brown-headed Apalis and Collared Sunbird before continuing up through the montane forest until we reached a viewpoint on the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater. Here the first word on everyone's lips was a synchronised "WOW" because for all the media familiarity that one might feel for the crater, actually seeing it for the first time is simply breathtaking! Stretching out down below was the vast caldera itself, over 16 kilometres across, and even at that great distance we could make out Black (or Browse) Rhinoceros, elephants, buffalos and numerous Serengeti White-bearded Wildebeest wandering across the grasslands and even a sleepy pride of Lions!



Eastern Double-collared Sunbird (left) and Schalow's Turaco (right) were seen in the forests on the crater rim. (Nik Borrow)

We ate our picnic lunch in the rain and after it stopped went on to explore the open grasslands that surround the crater and although they seemed to be a little overgrazed these days we eventually found striking Red-collared Widowbirds and the desirable Jackson's Widowbird which we watched performing their bizarre bouncing display rituals. Driving further there were some Kenya Sparrows and African Stonechat as we searched for stands of flowering *Leonotis* favoured by sunbirds in which we discovered some lovely Malachite Sunbirds holding territories. We also managed to hunt out Brown Parisoma in their favoured flat-top Acacia trees.

Our two nights stay was at the Serena lodge perched upon the very rim of the crater with rooms that had a view to die for! In the grounds we were delighted to see some glorious Schalow's Turacos and we also noted African Olive Pigeon, Dusky Turtle Dove, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Mountain Greenbul, Common House Martin, Hunter's Cisticola, Montane White-eye, Abyssinian Thrush, White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher, Cape Robin-Chat, Tacazze and Eastern Double-collared Sunbirds, Thick-billed and Streaky Seed eaters and Yellow-crowned Canary before the chill of the late afternoon sent the birds to roost.

The next morning, we were up early expecting to see the marvellous vista as day dawned but we were met with a wall of fog and a slight drizzle. This was slightly disappointing to say the least but still we headed straight for the 'Descent Road' where as usual our behaviour must have puzzled the numerous other passing tourist vans in the extreme as we stopped by the wayside hunting for Lynes's Cisticola rather than Lions! In fact, over the next few days it became an amusing experiment to see just how many tourists or their drivers would snarl in disgust or give us withering or sadly sympathetic looks upon discovering that we were merely looking at 'ndege' (the Swahili word for birds)! The cisticola played hard to get due to the miserable viewing conditions and we first added a Singing Cisticola along the way but ultimately had close views from our

vehicle of the cisticola which is named after the respected Rear-Admiral Hubert Lynes who was responsible for sorting out the taxonomy of this confusing group of warblers in a supplement to *The Ibis* in 1930.

We then embarked on our journey down the steep and narrow road into the crater noting Anteater Chats and Schalow's Wheatear along the way and having reached the wide expanse of flat open grassland that spread over the floor of the crater we were even more aware of the space involved, as recognisable animals gradually diminished in size to dots that were scattered as far as the eye could see. The huge Common Eland was a new addition to the list as were Spotted Hyaena, Golden Jackal and Defassa Waterbuck. Our main quest was to see the rhinos better and eventually we caught up with several animals but they were still fairly distant and typically inactive.



A bedraggled Kori Bustard (left) having a bad hair day and a male Common Ostrich (right) feeding during the rain. (Nik Borrow)

Big birds were also a feature of the day with plenty of Common Ostrich and stately Kori Bustards striding across the plains as well as the smaller Black-bellied Bustard and the bizarre Secretarybird. With no shelter many of these bedraggled species looked rather sad and sorry for themselves in the rain.



We saw a number of glorious Rosy-throated Longclaws (left) and smart Abyssinian [Schalow's] Wheatears (right) were noted during our descent into the crater. (Nik Borrow)

The shallow lake in the crater is called Lake Magadi and this had been swollen by the rain to a vast area where there were numerous Greater Flamingos feeding along the edge and a small variety of waterfowl

included Cape Teal, Spur-winged Goose, Hottentot Teal, Red-knobbed Coot and a huge flock of Great White Pelican. Pied Avocet and Kittlitz's Plovers are associated with the alkaline lakes and we saw small numbers of both.



The near-endemic Rufous-tailed Weaver (right) and Speke's Weavers (left) were aggressive visitors to the Ngoitokitok Springs picnic site but the Hippopotamuses kept their distance in the lake. (Nik Borrow)

Both lingering Palearctic migrant White Storks and the resident Marabou Storks were seen on the expansive grasslands where good numbers of Pectoral-patch Cisticolas made their little buzzing calls in display flight and Banded Martin, Barn and Mosque Swallows hawked for insects. The beautiful Rosy-throated Longclaw was in pristine condition due to the rains and we enjoyed some marvellous close up views of a number of individuals. Due to the enormous amount of water, the Hippo Pools were hippo-less but we did see Black-crowned Night Heron and later caught up with the hippos at our picnic site where the usual marauding Yellow-billed Kites and Rufous-tailed and Speke's Weavers joined us for our picnic lunch, sneaking in for accidentally dropped scraps or even grabbing food from the hands of unsuspecting tourists unaware that

being fed is strictly against the park rules. Some enormous bull elephants were nearby, Wattled Starling was seen briefly and as we made our way out of the crater the somewhat grandly named Lerai Forest (which looks very sad these days as most of the once beautiful Yellow Fever Trees are dead or dying) delivered Hildebrandt's Francolin, Yellow-bellied Waxbill and Cape Bushbuck.



The view towards the Serengeti with Mount Lemakarot in the distance. (Nik Borrow)

The next day we woke to a fine morning so we had another look at the lodge grounds before leaving and quickly located Bar-throated Apalis before setting forth on our journey towards the Serengeti. As we descended from the crater rim of Ngorongoro the spectacular expanse of the Serengeti unfolded before us until we reached the edge of the national park itself on a beautiful sunny day. The promise of big cats lay ahead of us and the next and final stages of our adventure beckoned.



Road to somewhere – the entrance to the Serengeti! (Nik Borrow)

There are nearly three million wildebeest in the Serengeti and almost all of them flood into the southeast corner of the ecosystem between January and April when the heavy long rains arrive. At the lonely entrance to the Serengeti we found our first Greater Kestrel and the short grass plains were dotted with Serengeti Thomson's and Grant's Gazelles with wildebeest and zebra as far as the eye could see. Small numbers of Black-winged Lapwing were seen as we continued onwards to the Central Serengeti. The name is derived from the word "Serengit" in the Maa language, which means "Endless Plains" and we certainly experienced this incredible feeling of space as we journeyed on.

At Naabi Hills we gazed out over the plains shimmering in the haze. The rocks were home to numerous Mwanza Flat-headed Agamas and a few birds also sought the shelter of the rocky outcrop such as the striking Red-fronted Barbet, some 'pure' Usambiro Barbets, Black-lored Babbler, Black-faced Waxbill and White-bellied Canary.



This female Leopard and her cub was the highlight of our first afternoon in the Serengeti. (Nik Borrow)

Entering into the Serengeti we drove for a long distance along the main road through fairly empty grasslands as the majority of the game had already passed through and were spending their time in the Ndutu area to which we were due to return at the end of the tour. Along the way we found a male Hartlaub's Bustard which seems to be a fairly recent arrival in the Serengeti grasslands or perhaps was previously simply overlooked. We also saw plenty more Kori Bustards as well as Black-bellied and White-bellied Bustards. Better still, soaring overhead in display flight were some vocal White-tailed Larks and other species seen included a single Pallid Harrier as well as numerous Grey-backed Fiscals and Cape Crow. Turning off the main road and into the grasslands we met with some close Kongoni and further on were delighted to find a super Pangani Longclaw perched up for all to see. We also saw our first endemic Grey-breasted Spurfowl as well as Rüppell's Starling, Topi and Cavendish's Dik-dik but the absolute highlight of the afternoon was a female

Leopard. We first saw the animal distantly in a tree being watched by two other vehicles but as we drove closer to our dismay she started to descend from the tree into the long grass. Disappointment rapidly turned to excitement as we watched her walking through the grass towards us calling loudly every now and then and we realised that she was surely calling to her cub which must have been somewhere in the long grass. She passed our vehicle and then went to climb up another nearby tree where to our delight she was joined by her cub. We watched the animals in awe as they interacted with each other and having put on a great performance both mother and cub left the tree, walked straight past us and between the gathering safari vehicles only to once again disappear into the sea of grass. We felt that nothing else could top this and as time was pushing there was little left to do except head for our lovely accommodation for the start of a three nights stay in the heart of the Serengeti. To welcome us there were refreshing towels, a drink and some Northern Lesser Galagos jumping in the trees around reception!



Karamoja Apalis is a highly localised East African endemic restricted to Whistling Thorn (left). Pangani Longclaw can be found in small numbers in the Serengeti (right). (Nik Borrow)

The next day we headed straight to an area of Whistling Thorn where we soon found the highly localised Karamoja Apalis. This species is strictly linked with stands of this particular thorn tree and fortunately it did not take too long to track this excitable bird down. In an unbelievable run of luck, it wasn't too much later before we found ourselves looking at a pair of Grey-crested Helmetshrikes, another scarce species that is restricted to a small area stretching from northern Tanzania and into southern Kenya where it is particularly localised and appears there to hybridise with White Helmetshrike thus making the future of this striking bird perhaps doubtful. Adding these two major targets was a real coup and with two full days in the central Serengeti, gave us a lot of time to find the third (which really should have been the easiest) the recently split Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbill. Rather wet weather perhaps caused this to take a little longer than expected but on the plus side enabled us to find a pair of Black Coucals in breeding plumage which is a species that can be tricky to find outside of the wet season. New birds after this success was a slow task but we also encountered Great Spotted and Levaillant's Cuckoos, European Roller, Greater Honeyguide, Bearded Woodpecker, Pygmy Falcon, Lesser Kestrel, Marico Sunbird, Yellow-throated Longclaw and Cinnamon-breasted and Golden-breasted Buntings. A close encounter with a fierce little Pearl-spotted Owlet proved

entertaining particularly as it incurred the wrath of the small birds in the neighbourhood. Three more individual Leopards were rather unexpected and we had great views of all, again in trees which suggested that they were preferring the dry boughs to the wet grass particularly as a number of Lions appeared to be doing the same! We enjoyed the interpretive walk around the kopjes at the Seronera centre and compared the two species of very tame hyraxes that lounge around the picnic tables. On the second day as a light shower of rain fell down, our first Cheetah was spotted in the tall grass and although quite close we could not see much of the animal itself, simply the head peering above the grass in search of prey.



Endemic Grey-breasted Spurfowl (left) and Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbill were both seen very well during our explorations of the central Serengeti. (Nik Borrow)

The journey from the Serengeti to Ndutu where we to spend our remaining three nights was fairly uneventful and only Hooded Vulture, Gabar Goshawk and Alpine Swift were new birds for our lists although we did manage some excellent views of a perched White-tailed Lark that was singing from a bush rather than high in the skies above us!



The rain had brought along the lush vegetation and with it there were singing Black Coucal (left) and the localised White-tailed Lark (right). (Nik Borrow)

We re-entered the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and crossed the plains disturbing numerous Spotted Hyaenas from their wallows along the way and surprisingly found yet another Leopard (our sixth) sat in the very top of a flat topped acacia tree and we watched it for some time hoping that it would find a more photogenic position but it seemed determined to sleep so we continued on to the wonderful Ndotu Safari Lodge and managed to arrive in good time and somewhat fortuitously for the afternoon turned out to be a grey one as rain clouds gathered and so we sought solace in the bar. Ndotu itself is a delightful spot and we all came to love this simple lodge in the middle of nowhere, complete with its lithe and beautiful Common Genets that arrived silently along the roof beams of the lodge each evening to rendezvous with their nightly snacks!



The Ndotu area is particularly good for predators and we were not disappointed on this trip with some memorable encounters with Cheetah (left) and Lion (right). (Nik Borrow)

As in the Serengeti, we had two full days to explore the Ndotu area and although where we could go was a little restricted due to the recent rains we still managed some exciting off-road driving excursions in search of cats and more during our stay for here one isn't limited to simply driving along the tracks but can also take off into the wide blue yonder creating a great sense of adventure. Our explorations took us out over the endless plains, through acacia woodlands and around the two lakes Ndotu and Masek that lie on the border of the Serengeti and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. The Serengeti White-bearded Wildebeest were here in force having dropped their calves earlier in the year and were now feasting on the luxurious grass that covers the plains. With the wildebeest were plenty of Plains Zebra and with the enormous numbers of herbivores there were plenty of predators and we had some highly memorable encounters with a young male Cheetah that had presumably had grown too big and was recently abandoned by his mother and left to fend for himself. We followed him across the plains on the first day as he repeatedly called out in vain and scent marked his progress. His eyes scanning the horizon for his mother and also his next meal for he looked hungry. We also found a number of Lions but as is the norm they were mainly sleeping and waiting for the night and the chance to find their next meal.

The water levels of the shallow lakes had been swollen and it was impossible to drive around Lake Masek but despite the input of fresh water we still managed to see a number of Lesser Flamingos and Chestnut-banded Plovers, species normally associated with alkaline conditions. Also, around the lake we found Common Ringed Plover, a wandering Lesser Sand Plover and our only Yellow-throated Sandgrouse of the trip. Fischer's Lovebirds were numerous in the acacia woodlands that also gave us the restricted range Red-throated Tit as well as Rufous Chatterer, Little Weaver and both Verreaux's Eagle-Owl and a marvellous pair of Spotted Eagle-Owls at their daytime roosts. A migrant European Honey Buzzard was seen and out on the plains we found Harlequin Quail, African Wattled Lapwing and Quailfinch.

During our second day we went in search of more cats and managed to track down yesterday's young Cheetah who was gorging himself on a young wildebeest. We had only just missed the kill itself and he was

obviously eating as quickly as he could in case some other predator chanced along and rob him of his prize. We encountered several Lions that day but the pride in the hidden valley that contained some well-fed Lionesses and their cubs was perhaps the most outstanding of all. There was not another vehicle in sight and the remote beauty of the situation was awe-inspiring. Out on the plains we watched fascinated as a huge gathering of vultures, marabou, hyaenas and jackal gathered around a recently deceased zebra. The hyaenas kept everything at bay and glutted themselves on the carcass keeping the Rüppell's Vultures away but surprisingly they didn't have the same power over the Marabou, Hooded Vultures and the thieving Black-backed Jackal that ducked and dived and snatched food from under their noses. In the late afternoon dark rain clouds gathered so we made our way back to the lodge and at dusk we watched a Slender-tailed Nightjar flying around us.



More Lions, perhaps surprised to see a safari vehicle in this remote place! (Nik Borrow)

It was time to begin the long journey home and as we left Ndutu many of the animals that had become familiar to us were by the roadside to bid us farewell. However, we had one more stop to squeeze in and that was the famous Oldupai Gorge (named after the wild sisal that grows there), site of many important hominid discoveries by the Leakey family. At this historic place most of the group explored the interesting little museum now in a grand new building while birders found the hulking Southern Grosbeak Canary as well as Abyssinian White-eye and Red-fronted Tinkerbird.

The journey back to the airport now began and climbing up out of the plains we headed into bad weather on the crater rim but despite the gloom we still managed to see a Cinnamon Bracken Warbler close to the car. There was nothing else to do now but baton down the hatches and head back to Arusha carrying home with us a myriad of marvellous experiences both on numerous memory cards but better still in our own internal memories! It had been a stunning fortnight packed full of amazing wildlife encounters and the amount of time spent at each location had actually helped us feel a part of the Ngorongoro and Serengeti rather than just visitors. Our talented driver/guide had manoeuvred the car over all manner of difficult terrain and without his driving skills we might never have had the marvellous views of the wildlife that we had enjoyed on this tour. The Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater is home to one of the greatest wildlife scenarios on this planet and we were privileged to have witnessed it for ourselves.



Fischer's Lovebirds are endemic to Tanzania and easily seen on the Serengeti and at Ndutu. (Nik Borrow)

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).

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>

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

BIRDS

Common Ostrich *Struthio camelus* Still common and easy to see in the parks.

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata* A few at Nyumba Ya Mungu and Silale Swamp.

Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor* 10+ at Silale Swamp and a couple in the crater.

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis* Small numbers in Tarangire and Ngorongoro.

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* Small numbers in Tarangire.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* Commonly encountered.

Hottentot Teal *Anas hottentota* Seen well in Tarangire and again in the crater.

Cape Teal (C Wigeon) *Anas capensis* Most numerous on the Ndutu lakes.

Red-billed Teal (R-b Duck) *Anas erythrorhyncha* Seen well in Tarangire and again in the crater.
Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophthalma* At least 6 at Silale Swamp.
Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* Commonly encountered in the parks.
Coqui Francolin *Peliperdix coqui* Seen well Tarangire, in the Serengeti and around Ndotu.
Crested Francolin *Dendroperdix sephaena* Most numerous in Tarangire NP.
Hildebrandt's Francolin *Pternistis hildebrandti* Seen in the Ngorongoro Crater.
Yellow-necked Spurfowl *Pternistis leucoscepus* Easily seen in Tarangire NP



Coqui Francolins were particularly showy this tour (left). Yellow-necked Spurfowl could be found in Tarangire NP (right). (Nik Borrow)

Grey-breasted Spurfowl *Pternistis rufopictus* A Tanzanian endemic easily seen in the Serengeti.
Red-necked Spurfowl *Pternistis afer* Easily seen in Tarangire NP.
Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* (H) Heard on the crater rim in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.
Harlequin Quail *Coturnix delegorguei* Heard near Same and seen in the Serengeti.
Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* (LO) 1 seen at Silale Swamp.
Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* Seen well at Manyara, the crater and Ndotu.
Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* (NT) Flocks at Manyara and Ndotu.
Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis* The large nesting colony at Manyara was very busy.
African Openbill (O-billed Stork) *Anastomus lamelligerus* A large flock en route to Tarangire but only 1 in the park.
White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* Small numbers of this Palearctic migrant were noted in the Serengeti.
Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis* Pairs were seen in Tarangire and again in the crater.
Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumenifer* Small numbers scattered over the Serengeti.
African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* Most numerous in Ngorongoro Crater.
Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash* Noisy birds at Lake Duluti.
Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Many at Tarangire, more at Lake Manyara and 2 in the crater.
African Spoonbill *Platalea alba* Easily seen at Manyara and in the crater.
Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii* Wonderful views of a pair and a singleton in Tarangire NP.
Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* 4 in the crater.
Squacco Heron (Common S H) *Ardeola ralloides* Small numbers at Tarangire and 1 in the crater.
Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.
Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Widespread sightings but only small numbers.
Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.
Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* Excellent looks at 1 in the Serengeti.
Intermediate Egret (Yellow-billed E) *Ardea [intermedia] brachyrhyncha* 4 at Silale Swamp.
Black Heron (Black E) *Egretta ardesiaca* 1 at Duluti and at least 15 at Manyara.
Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Only seen from Nyumba Ya Mungu to Manyara.

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* Scattered sightings from Nyumba Ya Mungu to Ngorongoro.

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* A large flock of c. 450 in the crater and 6 at Manyara.

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* 2 at Nyumba Ya Mungu and small numbers at Manyara.

Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C) *Microcarbo africanus* Good numbers at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax lucidus* Common at Lake Duluti.

Secretarybird *Sagittarius serpentarius* (V) Singletons or pairs regularly seen in the crater and Serengeti.

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* 1 of these Palearctic migrants at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Black-winged Kite (B-shouldered K) *Elanus caeruleus* Scattered sightings from Tarangire to the Serengeti.

African Harrier-Hawk (Gymnogene) *Polyboroides typus* 1 en route to Tarangire.

Palm-nut Vulture (Vulturine Fish Eagle) *Gypohierax angolensis* 1 at Lake Duluti.

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* Palearctic migrants at Nyumba Ya Mungu and 1 over the Rift Valley wall.

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus* (CR) Small numbers in the Serengeti.

White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* (CR) The most common and widespread of the vultures encountered.

Rüppell's Vulture (R's Griffon V) *Gyps rueppellii* (CR) Still fairly numerous in the Serengeti.



Rüppell's Vulture is classified as Critically Endangered by BirdLife but they were still fairly numerous in the Serengeti. (Nik Borrow)

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos* (E) Small numbers in Tarangire and the Serengeti.

Black-chested Snake Eagle *Circaetus pectoralis* 5 sightings from Tarangire to the Serengeti.

Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus* 5 scattered sightings throughout the tour.

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* (NT) Regularly encountered in the parks.

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus* (V) 3 sightings of this majestic eagle at Nyumba Ya Mungu and the Serengeti.

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis* Widespread sightings but usually of single birds.

Wahlberg's Eagle *Hieraetus wahlbergi* Just 1 in Tarangire.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* The most commonly encountered eagle.

African Hawk-Eagle *Aquila spilogaster* 1 was seen in Tarangire NP.
Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar* Just 3 sightings in the Serengeti.
Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates* Small numbers seen regularly in the Serengeti.
Eastern Chanting Goshawk *Melierax poliopterus* Mainly East to Tarangire but 2 sightings in the Serengeti.
Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* A Palearctic migrant seen at Silale Swamp and 1 in the Serengeti.
African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus* 1 over Silale Swamp.
Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* (NT) A ringtail of this Palearctic migrant in the Serengeti.
Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius* Small numbers encountered and a species to be wary of in Ngorongoro!
African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer* 2 at Nyumba Ya Mungu and a juvenile in the Serengeti.
Common Buzzard (Steppe Buzzard) *Buteo [buteo] vulpinus* 3 Palearctic migrants over Nyumba Ya Mungu.
Augur Buzzard *Buteo augur* Commonly seen throughout the tour.
Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori* The widespread sightings were often close up and personal!
White-bellied Bustard *Eupodotis senegalensis* Regularly encountered in the Serengeti.
Black-bellied Bustard *Lissotis melanogaster* Sightings of small numbers in the parks.



We enjoyed terrific views of Black-bellied (left) and White-bellied Bustards (right). (Nik Borrow)

Hartlaub's Bustard *Lissotis hartlaubii* A male was seen well in Tarangire NP.
African Rail (A Water R) *Rallus caerulescens* (H) Heard calling at Silale Swamp.
Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostra* An easy crake to see as it is not shy or skulking!
African Swamphen *Porphyrio madagascariensis* At least 6 at Silale Swamp.
Allen's Gallinule *Porphyrio alleni* 1 at Silale Swamp.
Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* Most numerous at Silale Swamp.
Lesser Moorhen *Paragallinula angulate* 6 at Silale Swamp, 5 en route to Manyara and 1 in the Serengeti.
Red-knobbed Coot (Crested C) *Fulica cristata* At least 12 in the crater.
Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum* Small numbers from Tarangire onwards.
Water Thick-knee *Burhinus vermiculatus* Regularly encountered throughout the tour.
Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis* Seen in Tarangire, the Serengeti and Ndotu.
Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Commonly seen in suitable habitat.
Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* 4 in the crater and 2 at Ndotu.
Long-toed Lapwing (L-t Plover) *Vanellus crassirostris* Silale Swamp, Lake Manyara and in the crater.
Blacksmith Lapwing (B Plover) *Vanellus armatus* A common and most striking lapwing in the parks.
Spur-winged Lapwing (S-w Plover) *Vanellus spinosus* Most numerous at Nyumba Ya Mungu but seen elsewhere.
Black-winged Lapwing *Vanellus melanopterus* Small numbers in the Serengeti.
Crowned Lapwing (C Plover) *Vanellus coronatus* A common lapwing in the parks.
African Wattled Lapwing (A W Plover) *Vanellus senegallus* A pair was seen at Ndotu.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* Just 1 Palearctic migrant at Ndutu.

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius* Good numbers in the crater and some in the Serengeti.

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris* Most numerous in the Serengeti.

Chestnut-banded Plover *Charadrius pallidus* (NT) Seen well around Lake Ndutu.

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus* 1 was seen on Lake Ndutu on 27/4.

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus* Most numerous at Lake Manyara.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* Numbers of Palearctic migrants at Tarangire, Manyara and the crater.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* 6 of these Palearctic migrants at Manyara.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* Widespread sightings of Palearctic migrants from Manyara to Ndutu.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* 4 widespread sightings of Palearctic migrants.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* 2 of these Palearctic migrants at Lake Manyara.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Widespread sightings of Palearctic migrants from Manyara to Ndutu.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Small numbers of Palearctic migrants from Tarangire to Ndutu.

Double-banded Courser *Rhinoptilus africanus* Wonderful views of this delicate courser in Tarangire and Serengeti.

Three-banded Courser *Rhinoptilus cinctus* At least 6 during the night drive in Tarangire NP.

Bronze-winged Courser (Violet-tipped C) *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus* 1 during the night drive in Tarangire NP.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* 20+ at Lake Manyara.

African Skimmer *Rynchops flavirostris* 130+ distantly at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus* Most numerous at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (Baltic G) *Larus [fuscus] fuscus* 1 of these Palearctic migrants at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* 40+ at Nyumba Ya Mungu and also over the Serengeti grasslands.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* 1 at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* Many in breeding plumage over Silale Swamp and singletons elsewhere.

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* Breeding plumaged birds at Nyumba Ya Mungu and the crater.

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus* Seen on the plains at Engikaret and again in the Serengeti.

Yellow-throated Sandgrouse *Pterocles gutturalis* Surprisingly absent and only 6 seen around Ndutu.

Black-faced Sandgrouse *Pterocles decorates* Seen well in Tarangire and again in flight over the Serengeti.



The delicate Double-banded Courser (left) and Black-faced Sandgrouse at Tarangire (right) (Nik Borrow)

Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia* Domestic birds only.

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea* Most numerous in the Arusha area.

African Olive Pigeon (Rameron P) *Columba arquatrix* 2 flew over the crater.

Dusky Turtle Dove *Streptopelia lugens* Easily seen in the crater area.

Mourning Collared Dove (African M D) *Streptopelia decipiens* Numerous Tarangire and the Serengeti.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata* Everywhere except bush country and the Serengeti.

Ring-necked Dove *Streptopelia capicola* An abundant dove throughout the lower country.

Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis* Most numerous in the Serengeti.

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos* Small numbers in lower country.

Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistria* Seen in the Ngorongoro area.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* Widespread sightings of this pretty dove in lower country.

African Green Pigeon *Treron calvus* Heard at Manyara and 1 seen flying over the Serengeti!

Schalow's Turaco *Tauraco schalowi* Excellent, prolonged views at the crater rim.

Hartlaub's Turaco *Tauraco hartlaubii* 4 seen in fruiting figs at Duluti.

Bare-faced Go-away-bird (Black-f G-a-b) *Corythaixoides [personatus] leopoldi* Seen at Tarangire and Serengeti.

White-bellied Go-away-bird *Corythaixoides leucogaster* Small numbers in Tarangire NP.

White-browed Coucal *Centropus superciliosus* Widespread sightings.

Black Coucal *Centropus grillii* Good looks at a pair in the Serengeti.

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius* Just 1 in the Serengeti.

Diederik Cuckoo (Didric C) *Chrysococcyx caprius* Widespread sightings.

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* 1 seen at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

African Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus (H)* Heard at the Lodoare Gate.

Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius* Heard often and seen well on occasions.

African Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis* Seen well at Tarangire, Serengeti and Ndotu.

African Scops Owl *Otus senegalensis* 1 at a daytime roost at Tarangire.

Spotted Eagle-Owl *Bubo africanus* A pair at a daytime roost at Ndotu.

Verreaux's Eagle-Owl *Bubo lacteus* 3 seen on the night drive in Tarangire NP and another during daylight at Ndotu.



Amazing daytime owl opportunities included this Verreaux's Eagle-Owl (left) and Spotted Eagle-Owl (right) (Nik Borrow)

African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii* Brilliant views of a roosting bird at Duluti.

Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum* No less than 7 sightings of this diurnal owl.

Montane Nightjar *Caprimulgus poliocephalus (H, LO)* Nik heard 1 distantly at the crater.

Slender-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus clarus* Great views at Ndotu.

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* Commonly encountered in areas with palms.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba (LO)* Nik saw 1 at Naabi Hills.

Nyanza Swift *Apus niansae* Flocks seen at Duluti and also in the Serengeti.

Little Swift *Apus affinis* Commonly seen throughout the tour.

Horus Swift *Apus horus* Seen between Arusha and Engikaret and apparently breeding in the gullies.

White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer* Commonly seen throughout the tour.

Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus* This characterful bird was commonly seen throughout the tour.

White-headed Mousebird *Colius leucocephalus* This localised species was easily seen at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Blue-naped Mousebird *Urocolius macrourus* Small numbers seen throughout the tour.

Lilac-breasted Roller *Coracias caudatus* This gorgeous bird was commonly seen throughout the tour.

European Roller (Eurasian R) *Coracias garrulus* 1 of these Palearctic migrants in the Serengeti.

Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala* Scattered sightings from Nyumba Ya Mungu to the Serengeti.

Brown-hooded Kingfisher *Halcyon albiventris* A pair in the garden at Duluti.

Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti* 2 sightings in Manyara and the Serengeti.

Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis* Small numbers in Tarangire.

Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus* Small numbers at Nyumba Ya Mungu and Duluti.

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima* Excellent views at Lake Duluti.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* A few at Nyumba Ya Mungu and 1 at Manyara.

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus* Widespread sightings.

Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater *Merops oreobates* A few were seen in the Ngorongoro forests.

White-fronted Bee-eater *Merops bullockoides* Good numbers seen between Engikaret and Arusha.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus* Small numbers seen in Tarangire NP.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* 3 of these Palearctic migrants at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

African Hoopoe *Upupa africana* Small numbers from Tarangire to Ndutu.

Green Wood Hoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus* Groups encountered at Tarangire and in the Serengeti.

Common Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas* Singletons in Manyara NP and Ngorongoro.

Abyssinian Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus minor* Sightings in Tarangire, Serengeti, Ndutu and Oldupai.

Southern Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus leadbeateri* Excellent views in Tarangire, Manyara and the Serengeti.

Tanzanian Red-billed Hornbill (Ruaha R-b H) *Tockus ruahae* After some searching found in the Serengeti.

Northern Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus erythrorhynchus* Common in Tarangire and Manyara NPs.

Von der Decken's Hornbill *Tockus deckeni* Easily seen throughout the tour.



A male Von der Decken's Hornbill with a large dung beetle! (Nik Borrow)

Crowned Hornbill *Lophoceros alboterminatus* (LO) Nik saw 1 in Manyara NP.

African Grey Hornbill *Lophoceros nasutus* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

Trumpeter Hornbill *Bycanistes bucinator* Distant views at Lake Duluti

Silvery-cheeked Hornbill *Bycanistes brevis* This impressive hornbill was seen well at Duluti and in Manyara NP.

White-eared Barbet *Stactolaema leucotis* Just 2 seen at Lake Duluti.

Moustached Green Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus leucomystax* 1 seen in the Ngorongoro forests.

Red-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus pusillus* Just 1 seen at Oldupai Gorge.

Red-fronted Barbet *Tricholaema diademata* Small numbers at Naabi Hills and Ndutu.
Spot-flanked Barbet (Spotted-flanked B) *Tricholaema lacrymosa* 1 at Nyumba Ya Mungu.
Black-throated Barbet *Tricholaema melanocephala* 1 at Nyumba Ya Mungu.
White-headed Barbet *Lybius leucocephalus* 2 at Nyumba Ya Mungu and a singleton in Manyara NP.
Brown-breasted Barbet *Lybius melanopterus* Good looks at this localised barbet in the garden at Duluti.
Red-and-yellow Barbet *Trachyphonus erythrocephalus* Seen well in Tarangire and Manyara NPs.
D'Arnaud's Barbet *Trachyphonus darnaudii* Sightings from Nyumba Ya Mungu to the hybrid zone in Manyara NP.
Usambiro Barbet *Trachyphonus [darnaudii] usambiro* Easily seen from Manyara (hybrids?) to the Serengeti.
Greater Honeyguide (Black-throated H) *Indicator indicator* A juvenile was seen in the Serengeti.
Nubian Woodpecker *Campethera nubica* Widespread sightings from Nyumba Ya Mungu to Ndutu.
Bearded Woodpecker *Chloropicus namaquus* Excellent views of 1 in the Serengeti.



Male Nubian Woodpecker (left) and Bearded Woodpecker. (right, Nik Borrow)

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens* Commonly encountered throughout the tour.
Eastern Grey Woodpecker *Dendropicos spodocephalus* Good looks in Tarangire and the Serengeti.
Pygmy Falcon *Polihierax semitorquatus* Small numbers in the Serengeti and at Ndutu.
Lesser Kestrel *Falco neumannii* Small numbers of this lingering Palearctic migrant in the Serengeti.
Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Just 1 positively identified at Engikaret.
Greater Kestrel (White-eyed K) *Falco rupicoloides* Just 3 sightings in the Serengeti.
Grey Kestrel *Falco ardosiaceus* 3 sightings in Tarangire and the Serengeti.
Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* 2 sightings of this Palearctic migrant at Nyumba Ya Mungu.
Meyer's Parrot (Brown P) *Poicephalus meyeri* Small numbers in Tarangire and the Serengeti.
Red-bellied Parrot (African Orange-b P) *Poicephalus rufiventris* Seen well in Nyumba Ya Mungu and Tarangire.
Fischer's Lovebird *Agapornis fischeri* (NT) No problems seeing this endemic in the Serengeti and at Ndutu.
Yellow-collared Lovebird *Agapornis personatus* No problems seeing this endemic in Tarangire NP.
Chin-spot Batis *Batis molitor* Seen from Ngorongoro to Ndutu.
Eastern Black-headed Batis *Batis minor* 3 seen and heard well at Nyumba Ya Mungu.
Pygmy Batis *Batis perkeo* Several seen well at Nyumba Ya Mungu.
Grey-crested Helmetshrike *Prionops poliophus* (NT) A pair was found in the Serengeti.
Retz's Helmetshrike *Prionops retzii* A party of 5 was seen well in the garden at Duluti.
Orange-breasted Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus* Seen at Manyara and Ngorongoro Farm House.
Rosy-patched Bushshrike *Telophorus cruentus* Singletons at Nyumba Ya Mungu and Engikaret.
Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis* Common but heard more often than seen throughout the tour.
Three-streaked Tchagra *Tchagra jamesi* Just 1 seen at Nyumba Ya Mungu.
Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla* Heard more often than seen from Nyumba Ya Mungu to Ngorongoro.

Pringle's Puffback *Dryoscopus pringlii* 3 males seen well.

Slate-coloured Boubou *Laniarius funebris* Easy to see throughout the tour.

Tropical Boubou *Laniarius major* Seen well in the Ngorongoro area.

Brubru *Nilaus afer* Widespread sightings from Tarangire to Ndutu.

Black Cuckooshrike *Campephaga flava* A pair was seen well at Ngorongoro Farm House.

Maggie Shrike *Urolestes melanoleucus* Common and easily seen in Tarangire and the Serengeti.



A perky little female Pygmy Batis (left) and a Magpie Shrike in Tarangire (right). (Nik Borrow)

Northern White-crowned Shrike *Eurocephalus rueppelli* Common and easily seen throughout the tour.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants scattered throughout the tour.

Red-tailed Shrike *Lanius phoenicuroides* (LO) Nik saw 1 of these Palearctic migrants en route to Tarangire.

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* Palearctic migrants seen from Tarangire to Ndutu passing through from the south.

Grey-backed Fiscal *Lanius excubitoroides* Commonly encountered in the Serengeti.

Long-tailed Fiscal *Lanius cabanisi* Easily seen from Same to Manyara NP.

Taita Fiscal *Lanius dorsalis* Easily seen at Engikaret and in the Serengeti.

Northern Fiscal *Lanius humeralis* Widespread and often seen on journeys from Arusha to Ngorongoro.

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* 1 female of this Palearctic migrant at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Black-headed Oriole (Eastern B-h O) *Oriolus larvatus* Heard more than seen from Tarangire to Lodoare Gate.

Fork-tailed Drongo (Common D) *Dicrurus adsimilis* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis* First seen at Lake Duluti.

Cape Crow (C Rook, Black C) *Corvus capensis* Small numbers in the Serengeti.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* Common but absent from Ngorongoro and the Serengeti.

White-necked Raven (W-naped R) *Corvus albicollis* Seen in Arusha area and the crater.

Red-throated Tit *Melaniparus fringillinus* 2 of these localised birds seen well at Ndutu.

Beesley's Lark *Chersomanes beesleyi* A minimum of 5 birds at Engikaret. BirdLife does not yet recognise the split.

Fischer's Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix leucopareia* One of the most abundant birds seen during the tour.

Pink-breasted Lark *Calendulauda poecilosterna* Easily seen at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Foxy Lark *Calendulauda alopex* Small numbers seen from Engikaret, Tarangire and the Serengeti.

Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafraga africana* Commonly seen and always heard on the various plains.

Flappet Lark *Mirafraga rufocinnamomea* Displaying birds in Tarangire NP and the Serengeti.

White-tailed Lark *Mirafraga albicauda* Small numbers singing and displaying in the Serengeti.

Short-tailed Lark *Spizocorys fremantlii* At least 15 were seen on the plains at Engikaret.

Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea* A common lark and particularly abundant in the Serengeti.

Athi Short-toed Lark *Alaudala athensis* Numbers on the plains at Engikaret and also at Ndutu.

Dodson's Bulbul *Pycnonotus dodsoni* Easy to see at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Dark-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus tricolor* Widespread throughout the tour.

Mountain Greenbul (Black-headed M G) *Arizelocichla nigriceps* Seen well on the crater rim.

Grey-olive Greenbul *Phyllastrephus cerviniventris* Excellent views of this localised greenbul at Duluti.

Black Saw-wing (B Rough-wing) *Psalidoprocne [pristoptera] holomelas* Small numbers at Duluti and Ngorongoro.

Brown-throated Martin (Plain M) *Riparia paludicola* (LO) Between Engikaret and Arusha.

Banded Martin *Riparia cincta* Small numbers at Ngorongoro and the Serengeti.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Still numbers of this Palearctic migrant on the move.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* Small numbers at Duluti and in the Serengeti.

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* Small numbers at Ngorongoro and in the Serengeti.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum* A few of these Palearctic migrants over the crater.

Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica* Commonly encountered during the tour.

Mosque Swallow *Cecropis senegalensis* Just 1 in the crater.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* Most numerous from the crater to Ndotu.

Northern Crombec *Sylvietta brachyura* Easily seen at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Red-faced Crombec *Sylvietta whytii* Most numerous in the Serengeti and at Ndotu.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* Widespread sightings of these Palearctic migrants.

Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris* Sightings at Duluti and Manyara.

Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida* 1 of these Palearctic migrants at the airport!

Highland Rush Warbler *Bradypterus centralis* Seen well at Manyara.

Cinnamon Bracken Warbler *Bradypterus cinnamomeus* Great looks in the Ngorongoro forest.

Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythropus* Widespread sightings during the tour.

Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans* Seen on the crater rim and heard elsewhere.

Trilling Cisticola *Cisticola woosnami* Seen at Ngorongoro Farm House and heard in Tarangire.

Hunter's Cisticola *Cisticola hunter* Seen well on the crater rim.

Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana* Widespread and abundant.

Lynes's Cisticola *Cisticola distinctus* Good looks in the crater.



Cisticolas are a much-maligned group to celebrate them we have Hunter's Cisticola (left) and Lynes's Cisticola (right). (Nik Borrow)

Winding Cisticola *Cisticola marginatus* Widespread sightings and common in flooded grassland in the Serengeti.

Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis* Small numbers seen in the Serengeti.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* Commonly encountered throughout the tour.

Desert Cisticola *Cisticola aridulus* Common in Tarangire NP and the Serengeti.

Pectoral-patch Cisticola *Cisticola brunnescens* Common in the Ngorongoro Crater and Serengeti.

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava* Small numbers seen in Tarangire and heard elsewhere.

Buff-bellied Warbler *Phyllolais pulchella* Small numbers seen at suitable widespread localities.

Bar-throated Apalis *Apalis thoracica* 2 seen well on the crater rim.

Yellow-breasted Apalis (Black-breasted A) *Apalis flavida* Encountered throughout the tour except...

Brown-tailed Apalis *Apalis [flavida] viridiceps* Those seen at Nyumba Ya Mungu are of this taxon's song type.

Karamoja Apalis *Apalis karamojae* (V) Three allowed excellent views in the Serengeti.

Brown-headed Apalis *Apalis alticola* Three showed well in the Ngorongoro forests.

Red-fronted Warbler *Urorhipis rufifrons* Easily seen at Nyumba Ya Mungu and Engikaret.

Grey-capped Warbler *Eminia lepida* Singletons at Ngorongoro Farm House and Lodoare Gate.

Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brevicaudata* Encountered throughout the tour.

Grey Wren-Warbler *Calamonastes simplex* Easy to see at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Scaly Chatterer *Turdoides aylmeri* Surprisingly showy groups at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Rufous Chatterer *Turdoides rubiginosa* A group of 4 at Ndotu.

Black-lored Babbler (Sharpe's Pied B) *Turdoides sharpei* Easy to see in the Serengeti and Ndotu.

Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardineii* Noisy groups at Tarangire and in the Serengeti.

Northern Pied Babbler *Turdoides hypoleuca* Small numbers in Tarangire NP.

Brown Parisoma *Sylvia lugens* Several seen in the Ngorongoro area.

Banded Parisoma *Sylvia boehmi* Encountered at Engikaret and in the Serengeti.

Abyssinian White-eye (Pale Scrub W-e) *Zosterops [abyssinicus] flavilateralis* Nyumba Ya Mungu and Oldupai.



Banded Parisoma (left) at Engikaret. The yellow-bellied forms of Abyssinian White-eye (right) have been recently split as a separate species; Pale Scrub White-eye but the IOC have not yet accepted this. (Nik Borrow)

Montane White-eye (Mbulu W-e) *Zosterops [poliogastrus] mbuluensis* Seen in the Ngorongoro forests.

Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea* Small numbers encountered from Ngorongoro to Ndotu.

Rüppell's Starling (R's Long-tailed S) *Lamprotornis purpuroptera* Easy to see in the Serengeti.

Superb Starling *Lamprotornis superbus* An abundant and colourful addition to the avifauna and seen throughout.

Hildebrandt's Starling *Lamprotornis hildebrandti* Most numerous in the Serengeti.

Ashy Starling *Lamprotornis unicolor* This endemic was very common in Tarangire NP.

Red-winged Starling *Onychognathus morio* Regularly encountered throughout the tour.

Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus africanus* Seen in Tarangire, the Serengeti. And Ndotu.

Red-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhynchus* The more common oxpecker noted throughout the tour.

Bare-eyed Thrush (African B-e T) *Turdus tephronotus* 1 seen well at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Abyssinian Thrush (Mountain, Northern Olive T) *Turdus abyssinicus* Views for some in the Ngorongoro forests.

White-browed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas leucophrys* Widespread sightings in suitable habitat throughout.

White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher *Melaenornis fischeri* Easy to see at Ngorongoro.

African Grey Flycatcher *Melaenornis microrhynchus* Most numerous in the Serengeti and Ndotu.

Silverbird *Empidonax semipartitus* This beautiful flycatcher was seen in Tarangire, the Serengeti and Ndotu.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* Just 1 of these Palearctic migrants at the airport.

Cape Robin-Chat *Cossypha caffra* Sightings in the Ngorongoro area.

Rüppell's Robin-Chat *Cossypha semirufa* Seen well at Duluti.

White-browed Robin-Chat *Cossypha heuglini* Common in the garden at Ngorongoro Farm House and Serena.

Spotted Palm Thrush (S Morning T) *Cichladusa guttata* Widespread sightings in suitable habitat.

African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus* Common in the Ngorongoro uplands.

Anteater Chat (Northern A C) *Myrmecocichla aethiops* Seen well in the crater.

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata* Common on the Engikaret Plains, Ngorongoro and the Serengeti.

Schalow's Wheatear ◊ *Oenanthe [lugubris] schalowi* Small numbers in the crater.

Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird (Kenya V-b S) *Anthreptes orientalis* A pair at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris* A few at the Lodoare Gate.

Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra olivacea* 1 in the garden at Duluti.

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis* Most numerous in the Serengeti and at Ndotu.

Hunter's Sunbird *Chalcomitra hunteri* Small numbers at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Tacazze Sunbird *Nectarinia tacazze* Small numbers seen on the crater rim.

Bronzy Sunbird *Nectarinia kilimensis* Small numbers seen between Engikaret and Arusha and 1 in Ngorongoro.

Malachite Sunbird *Nectarinia famosa* 4 seen along the Misigiyo road.

Golden-winged Sunbird *Drepanorhynchus reichenowi* Seen between Engikaret and Arusha and in Ngorongoro.

Eastern Double-collared Sunbird ◊ *Cinnyris mediocris* Seen well on the crater rim.

Beautiful Sunbird (Gorgeous S) *Cinnyris [pulchellus] melanogastrus* Numerous in Tarangire and the Ndotu area.



BirdLife and HBW split the melanogastrus form of Beautiful Sunbird as a separate species and call it Gorgeous Sunbird. (Nik Borrow)

Marico Sunbird (Mariqua S) *Cinnyris mariquensis* Several seen in the central Serengeti.

Tsavo Sunbird *Cinnyris tsavoensis* Small numbers seen at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

House Sparrow (Introduced) *Passer domesticus* Noted on journeys in urban areas.

Kenya Sparrow (Rufous S) *Passer rufocinctus* Seen well in the crater, the Serengeti and Ndotu.

Swahili Sparrow *Passer suahelicus* Common and widespread.

Yellow-spotted Petronia *Gymnoris pyrgita* Sightings at Nyumba Ya Mungu and in the Serengeti.

Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger* Commonly seen throughout.

White-headed Buffalo Weaver *Dinemellia dinemelli* Very common in Tarangire and again in the Serengeti.

Rufous-tailed Weaver *Histurgops ruficauda* This near endemic was easy to see from Tarangire to the Serengeti.

Grey-capped Social Weaver *Pseudonigrita arnaudi* Most common in the central Serengeti and Ndotu.

Speckle-fronted Weaver *Sporopipes frontalis* Very common in the central Serengeti and Ndotu.

Thick-billed Weaver (Grosbeak-W) *Amblyospiza albifrons* Nest-building at Duluti.

Baglafaecht Weaver *Ploceus baglafaecht* The form concerned *reichenowi* was once treated as a separate species.

Little Weaver *Ploceus luteolus* 6 were seen at Ndotu.

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis* Sightings at Duluti and in the crater area.

Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis* Small numbers at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Taveta Weaver *Ploceus castaneiceps* Colonies of this near endemic at Nyumba Ya Mungu and Duluti.

Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius* Widespread sightings throughout.

Vitelline Masked Weaver *Ploceus vitellinus* Widespread sightings throughout.

Speke's Weaver *Ploceus spekei* Easily seen at the picnic site in the crater.

Village Weaver (Black-headed W) *Ploceus cucullatus* Seen at Ngorongoro Farm House, the Serengeti and Ndotu.

Layard's Weaver *Ploceus [cucullatus] paroptus* Seen at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Golden-backed Weaver (Jackson's G-b W) *Ploceus jacksoni* Seen well near Same and in Lake Manyara NP.

Chestnut Weaver *Ploceus rubiginosus* Breeding plumaged birds in the Manyara area.

Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps* Only 3 widespread sightings during the tour.

Cardinal Quelea *Quelea cardinalis* Much breeding activity in evidence.

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* Numerous in Tarangire NP and abundant at Ndotu.

Yellow-crowned Bishop *Euplectes afer* A breeding colony in the Manyara area.

Black Bishop *Euplectes gjerowii* Seen well in Manyara NP, in the Serengeti and at Oldupai Gorge.

Zanzibar Red Bishop *Euplectes nigroventris* Breeding plumaged birds near Same.

Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix* Breeding plumaged birds at Tarangire and Ndotu.



The rains meant that the bishops were at their best: Yellow-crowned Bishop (left), Southern Red Bishop (centre) and Black Bishop of the race *friederichseni* (right)(Nik Borrow)

Yellow Bishop *Euplectes capensis* Small numbers of breeding plumaged birds at widespread localities.

Fan-tailed Widowbird *Euplectes axillaris* Breeding plumaged birds were abundant in the crater.

White-winged Widowbird *Euplectes albonotatus* Breeding plumaged birds most numerous near Same.

Red-collared Widowbird (R-naped W) *Euplectes ardens* Breeding plumaged birds on the crater rim.

Jackson's Widowbird *Euplectes jacksoni* (NT) Breeding plumaged birds on and in the crater.

Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba* Sightings at Nyumba Ya Mungu and the Serengeti.

Cut-throat Finch *Amadina fasciata* Just 1 male at Nyumba Ya Mungu.
Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala* Seen from Duluti to Ngorongoro.
Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus bengalus* Seen from Tarangire to the Serengeti.
Blue-capped Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus cyanocephalus* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.
Purple Grenadier *Uraeginthus ianthinogaster* Small numbers at Nyumba Ya Mungu and in the Serengeti.
Yellow-bellied Waxbill *Coccyzygia quartinia* 1 in the crater.
Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild* Just 2 at Nyumba Ya Mungu.
Black-faced Waxbill *Estrilda erythronotos* Seen well at Nyumba Ya Mungu, the Serengeti and Ndutu.
African Quailfinch *Ortygospiza [atricollis] fuscocrissa* We were lucky to see birds on the ground in the Serengeti.
African Silverbill *Euodice cantans* 4 near Same.
Village Indigobird (Red-billed Firefinch I) *Vidua chalybeata* Most numerous between Engikaret and Arusha.
Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura* Breeding plumaged birds throughout the tour.
Steel-blue Whydah *Vidua hypocherina* Small numbers at Nyumba Ya Mungu and in the Serengeti.
Long-tailed Paradise Whydah *Vidua paradisaea* 6 widespread sightings of males in breeding plumage.
Yellow-headed Wagtail *Motacilla [flava] lutea* A Palearctic migrant at Tarangire and other flava types elsewhere.
African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp* Widespread sightings throughout.
Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus* 2 sightings in the central Serengeti.
Pangani Longclaw *Macronyx aurantiigula* 2 sightings in the central Serengeti.
Rosy-throated Longclaw (R-breasted L) *Macronyx ameliae* At least 15 in the crater.
African Pipit (Grassland P) *Anthus cinnamomeus* Most numerous at Ngorongoro and the Serengeti.
Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys* The race *goodsoni* seen in the crater and Serengeti.
Southern Citril (East African C) *Crithagra hyposticta* Seen well in the Ngorongoro area.
Reichenow's Seedeater *Crithagra reichenowi* (LO) Small numbers en route to Ngorongoro Farm House.
White-bellied Canary *Crithagra dorsostriatus* Common in the Serengeti.
Southern Grosbeak-Canary *Crithagra buchmanani* Seen well at Nyumba Ya Mungu and Oldupai Gorge.



A male Steel-blue Whydah in breeding plumage (left) and a Southern Grosbeak-Canary (right). (Nik Borrow)

Thick-billed Seedeater *Crithagra burtoni* Easily seen in the Ngorongoro forests.
Streaky Seedeater *Crithagra striolata* Easily seen in the Ngorongoro area.
Yellow-crowned Canary *Serinus flavivertex* Seen in the Ngorongoro area.
Cinnamon-breasted Bunting (C-b Rock B) *Emberiza tahapisi* 1 in the Central Serengeti.
Somali Bunting *Emberiza poliopleura* Easy to see at Nyumba Ya Mungu.
Golden-breasted Bunting (African G-b B) *Emberiza flaviventris* 1 in the Central Serengeti.



Plains Zebras of the race boehmi. This tour was a mammal extravaganza with numerous photographic opportunities. (Nik Borrow)

MAMMALS

Leopard *Panthera pardus* No less than 6 individuals seen well during this tour.

Lion *Panthera leo* Plenty of Lions of all sizes and ages and even sitting in trees!

Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* 2 sightings of Cheetah in the Serengeti and Nduu.

Common Genet (Small-spotted G) *Genetta genetta* Seen on the Tarangire night drive and at Nduu.

Spotted Hyaena *Crocuta crocuta* Some very close encounters with these fascinating animals.

Common Slender Mongoose *Galerella sanguinea* A few widespread sightings.

Common Dwarf Mongoose *Helogale parvula* Seen well in Tarangire and the Serengeti.

Banded Mongoose *Mungos mungo* Seen well in Tarangire and the Serengeti.

Golden Jackal (Golden J) *Canis aureus* Seen well in the crater and the Serengeti.

Black-backed Jackal *Canis mesomelas* Seen from Tarangire to Nduu.

Bat-eared Fox *Otocyon megalotis* Great looks at these enchanting creatures from Tarangire to Nduu.

Rock Hyrax (Black-necked R H) *Procavia [capensis] johnstoni* Easy to see in the central Serengeti.

Bush Hyrax (Yellow-spotted H) *Heterohyrax brucei* Easy to see in Tarangire and the Serengeti.

African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* Wonderful encounters in Tarangire, the crater and the Serengeti.

Plains Zebra (Common Z) *Equus quagga* The race *boehmi* was seen from Tarangire to the Serengeti. And Nduu

Black Rhinoceros (Browse R) *Diceros bicornis* We were privileged to see up to 4 in the crater.

Common Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus* Seen from Tarangire to the Serengeti.

Bushpig *Potamochoerus larvatus* An amazing sight of 2 crossing the road in front of us in the Ngorongoro forests.

Common Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* Fascinating creatures seen in many a wallow!

Cape Buffalo (African B) *Syncerus caffer* Seen from Tarangire to the Serengeti.

Cape Bushbuck *Tragelaphus sylvaticus* Just 1 sighting in the crater.

Common Eland *Taurotragus oryx* Small numbers seen in the crater and the Serengeti.

Common Impala *Aepyceros melampus* Common in Tarangire and the Serengeti.

Steenbok (Steinbuck) *Raphicerus campestris* Up to 8 were seen in the Ndutu area.

Grant's Gazelle *Nanger granti* Common in the crater and Serengeti.

Eastern Thomson's Gazelle *Eudorcas thomsonii* Seen on the plains at Engikaret.

Serengeti Thomson's Gazelle *Eudorcas nasalis* Easily seen in the crater and Serengeti.

Thomas's Dik-dik *Madoqua thomasi* Seen well in Tarangire.

Cavendish's Dik-dik *Madoqua cavendishi* Easily seen in the Serengeti.

Bohor Reedbuck *Redunca bohor* Small numbers in the Serengeti.

Ellipsen Waterbuck *Kobus ellipsiprymnus* Easy to see in Tarangire NP.

Defassa Waterbuck *Kobus defassa* Just 2 sightings in the Ngorongoro area.

Kongoni (Coke's Hartebeest) *Alcelaphus cokii* Some in Tarangire and the crater but more in the Serengeti.

Serengeti Topi *Damaliscus jimela* Small numbers in the Serengeti.

Eastern White-bearded Wildebeest *Connochaetes albojubatus* Small numbers in Tarangire and Manyara NPs.

Serengeti White-bearded Wildebeest *Connochaetes mearnsi* Many in the crater and Serengeti.

Giraffe (Masai G) *Giraffa [camelopardalis] tippelskirchi* Seen from Tarangire NP to the Serengeti and Ndutu.

Northern Lesser Galago (Senegal G) *Galago senegalensis* Seen in Tarangire and at our lodge in the Serengeti.

Garnett's Greater Galago (Small-eared G) *Otolemur garnettii* 1 at night at Duluti.

Olive Baboon *Papio anubis* Commonly seen from Tarangire NP to the Serengeti.

Vervet Monkey (Savanna M) *Cercopithecus pygerythrus* Commonly seen throughout.

Sykes's Monkey (White-throated Guenon) *Cercopithecus albogularis* Seen at Nyumba Ya Mungu and Manyara.

African Savanna Hare *Lepus victoriae* Seen at night in Tarangire and Ndutu.

Cape Hare *Lepus capensis* (NL) 1 seen on the Engikaret Plains.

Unstriped Ground Squirrel *Xerus rutilus* Seen at Nyumba Ya Mungu.

Ochre Bush Squirrel *Paraxerus ochraceus* 1 in the garden at Duluti.

African Grass Rat *Arvicanthis niloticus* Seen in the Serengeti and at Ndutu.

Yellow-winged Bat *Lavia frons* Seen in Tarangire and the Serengeti.



Thomas's Dik-dik is often lumped in Kirk's Dik-dik (Nik Borrow)