



*Our cover star is neither Shoebill nor Gorilla...It was a rare privilege to watch a pair of Grauer's Broadbills feeding their nearly fledged youngsters still in the nest in the fantastic Bwindi Impenetrable Forest! (Nik Borrow)*

# SHOEBILLS & GORILLAS OF UGANDA

19 – 29 JULY 2017

Uganda is famously quoted as being the 'Pearl of Africa' and although neither Henry Morton Stanley nor Winston Churchill had birders and ecotourists in mind when they awarded the country this title, it is most certainly an appropriate one! Uganda is surely an essential destination for any world-travelling birdwatcher as it is home to the incredible Shoebill, a good number of Albertine Rift endemics and is also an excellent place to see a few otherwise difficult western African forest species. A visit to this friendly and welcoming country also offers a great mammal-watching experience and primates in particular with 13 species seen on this tour with Eastern Gorilla and Chimpanzee obviously at the top of the list! It is not often that the mammals get a mention before the birds, but on this occasion it is apt, as our encounters with the incredible Eastern Gorillas of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park were truly unforgettable! The incomparable Shoebill was a worthy rival and fortunately surrendered to our collective gaze on day one when we were also lucky to find Lesser Jacana, the often-elusive Weyns's Weaver and several 'wintering' Blue Swallows nearby. Brightly

coloured Papyrus Gonoleks allowed amazing views in a swamp en route to Kibale National Park where we enjoyed marvellous views of a pair of Green-breasted Pitta and were privileged to be able to follow them through the forest as they foraged just metres ahead of us. Our 'pitta trek' then turned into a 'chimp trek' and we soon came face to face with a troop of these great apes that allowed themselves to be studied at unbelievably close quarters. A super little Red-chested Owlet hooting in the trees above us followed by an unusually confiding Blue-shouldered Robin-Chat in the undergrowth topped the morning. The Bigodi Wetland walk produced brief looks at two White-collared Olivebacks for some but everyone saw White-spotted Flufftail and Speckle-breasted Woodpecker. Our stay in Queen Elizabeth National Park was most enjoyable although the recent drought meant that conditions were incredibly dry. Despite the dust we managed good looks at African Crane; a breeding plumaged male Pennant-winged Nightjar was dressed to impress and the boat trip along the Kazinga Channel was most definitely a trip highlight. In the wonderfully named Bwindi Impenetrable Forest we spent a magical hour with a family of Eastern Gorillas and scored enormously with excellent views of a pair of the little-known and decidedly rare Grauer's (or African Green) Broadbill feeding their almost fledged youngsters in the nest. There was also a whole host of Albertine Rift endemic species that included gorgeous Doherty's Bushshrikes and Regal and Purple-breasted Sunbirds as well as Handsome Francolin, Ruwenzori Batis, Stripe-breasted Tit, Neumann's Warbler, Grauer's Warbler, Grauer's Swamp Warbler, Red-faced Woodland Warbler, Ruwenzori Apalis, Mountain Masked Apalis, Red-throated Alethe, Archer's Ground Robin, Yellow-eyed Black Flycatcher, Willard's Sooty Boubou, Lagden's Bushshrike (heard only), Blue-headed Sunbird, Jameson's Antpecker, Dusky Crimsonwing and Strange Weaver. We finished our African adventure with a splendid flock of Brown-chested Lapwings near Lake Mburo. Amongst the many other mouth-watering specialities that we encountered were Mountain Buzzard, Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, Black-billed Turaco, Ruwenzori Nightjar, Scarce Swift, Elliot's Woodpecker, Montane and Lowland Sooty Boubous, Mountain Oriole, Kakamega, Olive-breasted, Joyful, White-throated and Yellow-streaked Greenbuls, White-browed Crombec, White-winged Swamp Warbler, Trilling, Chubb's and Carruthers's Cisticolas, Black-faced Prinia, Chestnut-throated Apalis, Grey-capped Warbler, Scaly-breasted and Mountain Illadopsises, Black-lored Babbler, Ruwenzori Hill Babbler, Stuhlmann's Starling, Oberländer's Ground Thrush (heard only), Chapin's Flycatcher, White-bellied and Grey-winged Robin-Chats, Equatorial Akalat, Red-chested Sunbird, Golden-backed Weaver, Red-headed Bluebill (heard only) and Western Citril.



*African Jacanas are common birds of the Ugandan wetlands. (Nik Borrow)*

Our action-packed journey around Uganda began in Entebbe and soon after dawn we set off for Mabamba Swamp to search for the species, which for many of us was to be the 'ultimate' bird of the tour – the

enormous and totally unique Shoebill. The hour-long journey to the landing stage was uneventful and as the sun began to rise in the sky, we soon found ourselves on the water in two small, motorised wooden pirogues. Our success with the Shoebill was virtually instantaneous for we had only gone a very short distance before the grey bulk of the bird was seen against a wall of papyrus. Binoculars and cameras were raised whilst some extremely skilful manoeuvring of our boats enabled us to sneak closer and closer with the golden light of the rising sun behind us illuminating this incredible bird to perfection.



*Once again we enjoyed up close and personal views of the totally unique Shoebill at Mabamba Swamp during our very first morning in the field! Although there are a number of spectacular species to be found in Uganda the Shoebill placed in its own monotypic family is often considered the ultimate prize. (Nik Borrow)*

Having had our fill of the Shoebill we went in search of other birds and as we wended our way around the creeks of the extensive swamps surrounding Lake Victoria our boats flushed jewel-like Malachite Kingfishers that darted from the reeds whilst chequered Pied Kingfishers hovered overhead. The handsome Long-toed Lapwing much in evidence, as were numerous Yellow-billed Ducks and African Jacanas. A few African Marsh Harriers sailed past and even an 'over-summering' female Western Marsh Harrier was seen. A lone Blue-headed Coucal was perched atop the dense swampland vegetation and we also noted Hadada Ibis, Squacco Heron, Black-headed and Purple Herons, Great and Little Egrets, Hamerkop, Reed Cormorant, Grey-headed Gull, White-winged Tern, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, Winding Cisticola, Slender-billed, Northern Brown-throated and Black-headed Weavers, Fan-tailed Widowbird and Cape Wagtail. However we were primarily on the lookout for another specialty of the swamp, the diminutive Lesser Jacana. To see this tiny bird, we had to venture past the enormous Shoebill, which hardly batted a nictitating membrane as we glided over the still waters through the extensive lily pads. It wasn't too long before we had found one but it was somewhat flighty and it took a little time for one of our mini flotilla of two boats to get satisfactory views but finally all was well, and everybody dutifully ticked the bird so we headed back to terra firma.

Back near the landing stage we were entertained by a succession of new birds: Yellow-billed Kites and the vociferous African Fish Eagle were both to be expected in this habitat and Long-crested and Wahlberg's Eagles were also in the skies. A fruiting tree attracted some very fine Weyns's Weavers with males in breeding plumage. This attractive species can be of erratic occurrence so we were very pleased to have some close up views. In the same tree a Magpie Mannikin was apparently collecting nesting material which was a great Ugandan record as it is a scarce bird in the country. Other common species in the vicinity of the landing stage included Speckled Mousebird, Little Bee-eater, Broad-billed Roller, Woodland and African Pygmy Kingfishers, Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, African Blue Flycatcher, Dark-capped Bulbul, Yellow-throated Leaflove, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Grey-backed Camaroptera, African Yellow White-eye, African Thrush, Swamp and African Dusky Flycatchers, Collared, Olive-bellied, Superb, Copper and gorgeous Red-chested Sunbirds, Village and Vieillot's Black Weavers, Red-billed Firefinch, Common and Black-crowned Waxbills, Bronze Mannikin, Pin-tailed Whydah and African Pied Wagtail.



*Hanging upside down seems to be very popular: A male Weyns's Weaver (left) and a Magpie Mannikin (right). (Nik Borrow)*

Some areas of remnant grassland and scrub round the shores of the lake still survive amongst the ever-expanding cultivated areas. At one such patch we had fun testing our identification skills on the numerous hirundines that were swooping low all around us. Our prize was finding the rare 'wintering' Blue Swallow and we managed to see two individuals amongst the more numerous Grey-rumped Swallows mixed with Banded Martin and Barn, Angolan, Lesser Striped and Red-breasted Swallows. A small flock of Senegal Lapwings allowed good views and bizarrely top-knotted Great Blue Turacos and noisy Eastern Plantain-eaters bounced around in the boughs of the surrounding trees, which also held the colourful Double-toothed Barbet and characterful Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher. Several African Pied Hornbills (sometimes split as Congo Pied Hornbill) were seen, a male Marsh Widowbird was a good record and small numbers of Olive Bee-eaters hawked over the open grasslands where we also found a spiky-crested Levillant's Cuckoo, Diederik Cuckoo, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Brown-crowned Tchagra, Rufous-naped Lark, Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, Sooty Chat, Grey-headed Nigrita, Yellow-throated Longclaw, African and Plain-backed Pipits, Western Citril and Brimstone Canary. A final search of the few remaining bushes in the shallows of the lake where weavers chose to nest revealed both Orange Weaver and also Golden-backed Weaver.

It had been a full and satisfying day and we headed back to Entebbe noting common roadside species along the way such as African Openbill, Marabou Stork, Western Cattle Egret, Palm-nut Vulture, Hooded Vulture, Red-eyed Dove, Blue-spotted Wood Dove, African Green Pigeon, African Palm Swift, Little Swift, Pied Crow, Splendid and Rüppell's Starlings, White-browed Robin-Chat and Northern Grey-headed Sparrow. On arrival back at our delightful hotel we found our only African Hobby of the tour.

We left Entebbe early the next morning and took a short cut across country in order to avoid Kampala's horrendous traffic problems. We were headed to Kibale National Park and the long journey was brightened considerably by a stop made at a convenient roadside swamp that produced a simply stunning pair of colourful Papyrus Gonoleks whilst further on another swamp yielded a skulking White-winged Swamp Warbler and the attractive Grey-capped Warbler. We also enjoyed great views of a perched (for a change) Grey Parrot, a most obliging Western Banded Snake Eagle and striking Ross's Turaco whilst other species noted during the drive included Black-winged Kite, Shikra, Laughing and Tambourine Doves, White-rumped Swift, Striped Kingfisher, White-throated Bee-eater, Crowned Hornbill, Grey Kestrel, Meyer's Parrot, Grey-backed and Northern Fiscals, Fork-tailed Drongo, Mosque and Red-rumped Swallows, White-headed Saw-wing, Red-faced Cisticola, African Stonechat, Baglafecht and Holub's Golden Weavers and Village Indigobird.



*Papyrus Gonoleks are not always this showy! We saw a pair easily as we left Kampala – colours to burn an everlasting image onto the retina! (Nik Borrow)*

We reached the edge of Kibale National Park situated near the town of Fort Portal in the mid afternoon and were able to begin our first explorations of the area with some roadside birding. It was very dry and somewhat quiet but nonetheless we still managed to see some interesting species. A pair of Black-billed Turaco was scoped as they fed in a fruiting tree and two dazzling male African Emerald Cuckoos were seen well. We had our first looks at some crazy looking Grey-throated (sometimes split as Grey-headed) Barbets with their 'rhinoceros' nasal-tufts but the main target of the afternoon was a pair of Lowland Masked Apalis

which after a bit of a battle finally gave themselves up and showed well. Other species seen during our time here included Afep Pigeon, White-headed Wood Hoopoe, Yellow-spotted Barbet, Honeyguide Greenbul, Purple-headed and Stuhlmann's Starlings, Grey-chinned Sunbird, Thick-billed Weaver and Grey-headed Nigrita. The remaining drive to our lodge took us through somewhat birdless tea estates and we arrived before dark. After a long travel day our intrepid band were understandably tired so sadly it was only Nik who saw a very obliging Verreaux's Eagle Owl that frequented the camp for that night only.



*Green-breasted Pitta (Pete Wheeler)*

We had to be up well before dawn in order to increase our chances of finding the elusive Green-breasted Pitta, a species that normally prefers to display at first light. Our guide led us through the darkness into the sleeping forest that still had not yet stirred. The night creatures were still active and we managed to see (and hear) both Thomas's and Demidoff's Galagos as well as a Rusty-spotted Genet as we walked towards where the pittas had been seen two days previously. In the pitch black we waited and strained our ears to catch the sound of the frog-like "blip" of the pitta; a mechanical noise made by the wings. This tour we were very fortunate as the birds began to display fairly nearby and we moved closer in the early morning gloom trying to pinpoint the source of the sound which was beginning to get a little difficult as the other species were also waking up and the dawn chorus had fully begun. The tension was increasing as the pitta calls became less frequent and we thought that we had lost our quarry when suddenly the bird appeared above our heads on a broken branch illuminated by the first light. The views were brief and unfortunately, although close not everyone had seen the bird and after this short performance it seemed to have fallen completely quiet. Our guide decided that the best thing to do would be for him and Livingstone to go and search the vicinity in order to find its feeding place while we waited where we stood. Our time was not wasted as we enjoyed good views of Scaly-breasted Illadopsis and both Red-tailed Ant Thrush and Red-tailed Bristlebill were also seen before our guide returned to tell us that he had found a pair of Green-breasted Pittas feeding nearby on the path. It wasn't long before we had the birds firmly in our sight and we were able to follow the birds through the forest as they foraged in the leaf litter just metres away from us, the luminous colours glowing in the dim forest light.

Eventually we lost the pittas, indeed they simply disappeared and so we turned our attentions to the forest's other star attraction – Chimpanzee. Kibale National Park has surely got to be THE place to see Chimpanzee as it now boasts of at least a 90% hit rate chance of seeing members of their habituated troops although I'm sure that it is highly unlikely that one could miss these great apes. The creatures had been very noisy all morning so we followed the direction of the sound of their blood-curdling screams and howls and it wasn't too long before we found ourselves face to face with a small number of the troop. Some were on the ground enjoying their rest or being groomed whilst others were still high in the trees, yet to descend and move on with the group. To be so close to these habituated individuals is a rare treat, as they seem to disregard our human attentions completely. It is as if we were not even there and so easy to forget that these are really wild animals. We spent our hour watching them going about their business and also following them as they descended the trees until our allocated time had run out and we returned to birding as we walked out of the forest.



*We were privileged to spend some memorable moments with the Kibale Chimpanzees. (Nik Borrow)*

A male Narina Trogon showed reasonably well, a gorgeous little Red-chested Owlet was found in the canopy high above us, a Crowned Eagle displayed in the skies and a normally skulking Blue-shouldered Robin-Chat allowed some most memorable views. Other species seen during the morning included Blue Malkoha, Red-chested Cuckoo, Chestnut Wattle-eye, Western Oriole, Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher, Grey-throated Tit-Flycatcher and White-throated Greenbul. A break for lunch was most welcomed back at the lodge where we noted Rock Martin, Brown-backed Scrub Robin and Green-headed, Bronzy and Olive-bellied Sunbirds. In the cool of the late afternoon we returned to the forest and were pleased to locate a pair of dazzling Black Bee-eaters whilst on a small river a pair of African Black Ducks were seen briefly and a Cassin's Flycatcher allowed good views. The bird activity wasn't great but we notched up a reasonable selection of birds that included Alpine Swift, Speckled and Yellow-throated Tinkerbirds, Elliot's Woodpecker, Petit's Cuckooshrike, Dusky Tit, Slender-billed, Little, Little Grey, Plain and Yellow-whiskered Greenbuls, Buff-throated Apalis,

Chestnut-winged and Narrow-tailed Starlings, Dusky-blue and Sooty Flycatchers, Blue-throated Brown, Olive and Green-throated Sunbirds and Yellow-mantled Weaver.



*African Goshawk (left) and Great Blue Turaco both posed well for us at Bigodi Wetland. (Nik Borrow)*

Early the next morning we embarked on a somewhat lengthy and thoroughly enjoyable walk around Bigodi Wetland that produced a number of interesting species. This is a community-operated nature reserve that always provides some excellent birding being a mixture of cultivation, papyrus swamp and riparian woodland.



*Bigodi Wetland is a great place not only for birds, but also for primates and we saw Central African Red Colobus (left) and Grey-cheeked Mangabey well. (Nik Borrow)*

Although it was a somewhat grey morning the birds were soon to colour the day as a noisy colony of Village Weavers greeted us at the starting point. Our guide led us along a trail that ran around the swamp, at one point crossing it via a boardwalk. The drought had taken its toll here and the water levels were the lowest that we have ever seen it. However with a little effort we found a damp corner where a tiny male White-spotted Flufftail crept to and fro in the shadows on the edges of the swamp. An African Goshawk posed nicely for us and we finally managed views of both Hairy-breasted (sometimes split as Streaky-throated)

Barbet and the striking (Eastern) Yellow-billed Barbet. Our first Marsh Tchagra put in an appearance and a brilliant breeding plumaged male Black Bishop was admired. Unfortunately a pair of White-collared Olivebacks that were feeding in the yellow flowers along the boardwalk flushed into the thick papyrus and was only seen by two of our group. A female Speckle-breasted Woodpecker was much more obliging and we all managed good scope views of this scarce and localised species. Other birds seen during the morning included a (leader-only) Cassin's Honeybird, Lesser Honeyguide, Tropical Boubou, Tawny-flanked and White-chinned Prinias, White-tailed Ant Thrush, Ashy Flycatcher, Red-headed Malimbe, White-breasted Nigrita and Black-and-white Mannikin. Mention must also be made of the superb looks at a succession of primates during the morning for Central African Red Colobus, Guereza Colobus, Red-tailed Monkey and Grey-cheeked Mangabey were all seen exceptionally well. After a good lunch we set off for Queen Elizabeth National Park and a completely new set of birds.



*Queen Elizabeth National Park is normally an excellent place to see African Crake although it was strange to see them on the dry dusty roads (left, Peter Markham) and this year Senegal Lapwings were also numerous. (right, Nik Borrow)*

We stopped for a pair of secretive Joyful Greenbuls and an obliging Red-chested Cuckoo en route and also paused briefly at the equator for the obligatory tourist shots before reaching the open savannas of Queen Elizabeth National Park, which because of the drought was incredibly dry and dusty. At the park entrance we scanned the hillsides and lake at Queens Pavillion where we saw our first distant Egyptian Geese, Grey Heron, Pied Avocet, Spur-winged Lapwing, Gull-billed Tern, a pair of Saddle-billed Storks and a solitary Greater Flamingo. A showy Moustached Grass Warbler was far closer and as we travelled further into the park a juvenile Martial Eagle was found perched by the remains of its nest, Red-necked Spurfowl were easily seen by the roadsides and vibrantly coloured Black-headed Gonoleks were everywhere. The journey also added species such as Mourning Collared and Ring-necked Doves, Grey-headed Kingfisher, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Spot-flanked Barbet, Western Black-headed Batis, Short-winged Cisticola, Black-lored Babbler, White-browed Scrub Robin, Spectacled and Lesser Masked Weavers, Fawn-breasted Waxbill and Golden-breasted Bunting. At park closing time, we arrived at the sumptuous Mweya Lodge for a two nights stay and during our time spent in the area we explored the extensive savannas, acacia woodlands and waterways both in our sturdy landcruiser and by boat. Our luxurious accommodation overlooked the Kazinga Channel and the grounds held glorious Red-chested Sunbirds, tame Swamp Flycatchers and numerous Black-headed and Slender-billed Weavers that also joined us at the dining table at lunch-time allowing ample opportunity for close study!

Our time spent in Queen Elizabeth National Park is always considered to be yet another of the great highlights of the tour and after an early breakfast we set out to explore the park. Along the road in the cool of the morning and in spite of the dessicated conditions we found several fine African Crakes and luckily a single non-breeding plumaged Black Coucal was spotted atop a shrubby clump of vegetation that it had

claimed as a perching post. Small numbers of Compact Weavers were located and there were some Southern Red Bishops in partial breeding plumage. Scattered out over the close-cropped Kasenyi Plains were Senegal, African Wattled and Crowned Lapwings, Kittlitz's Plover, Temminck's Courser and Collared Pratincole. Other plains birds included White-backed Vulture, a solitary Lappet-faced Vulture, Bateleur and there were plenty of Zitting and Croaking Cisticolas as well as species that included Helmeted Guineafowl, Crested Francolin, Blue-naped Mousebird, Black-crowned Tchagra, Flappet Lark, Banded Martin, Arrow-marked Babbler, Grey Tit-Flycatcher and Little Weaver. The park has numbers of large mammals and we spent some time on the mating grounds watching the richly coloured and excitable Uganda Kob with a supporting cast of African Savanna Elephant, Common Warthog, Lake Chad Buffalo (often sporting Yellow-billed Oxpeckers!), Nile Bushbuck, and Defassa Waterbuck. On a large crater-lake there were good numbers of albeit distant Lesser Flamingos but the main waterbird extravaganza was yet to come!



*Intensely coloured Red-throated Bee-eaters were seen during the Kazinga Channel boat trip (left Nik Borrow) and during our lunchtime break we got to meet the tame Banded Mongoose family that frequents the lodge. (right, Peter Markham)*

At lunchtime the fearless radio-collared Banded Mongoose family delighted and we shared the dining table with tame Black-headed and Slender-billed Weavers and Swamp Flycatchers as we gazed out over a spectacular view of the Kazinga Channel flowing below us. Later that afternoon we sat back and enjoyed the fantastic experience of an afternoon boat trip on the waters, an event that offered excellent wildlife viewing with plenty of photographic opportunities for waterside birds. There were also huge numbers of Hippopotamus and Lake Chad Buffalo, a few Nile Crocodiles and in particular a large bachelor herd of African Savanna Elephants, which was so impressive that it was hard for us to tear ourselves away from the spectacle. As usual there were amazing numbers of Pied Kingfishers catching and carrying fish everywhere. A large congregation of White-breasted Cormorants was gathered and dotted along the shore were numbers of Egyptian Goose, Pink-backed Pelican, Yellow-billed Stork, African Openbill and Marabou Storks as well as a few Reed Cormorant, African Sacred Ibis, African Spoonbill, Striated Heron, a lone Goliath Heron, Black Crane, Water Thick-knee, Black-winged Stilt, and a smattering of Palearctic waders included Common Greenshank and Common Sandpiper. Several Red-throated Bee-eaters added brilliant splashes of colour and Wire-tailed Swallows darted across the waters where African Fish Eagles stood sentinel.

Returning to shore we then continued with our action packed day with another drive through the more bushed areas of the park. These dense thickets are harder to work and it was exceedingly quiet. However at the end of the day we were lucky enough to see the reclusive Giant Hog, a breeding plumaged male Pennant-winged Nightjar drifted over causing jaws to drop and a super male Square-tailed Nightjar landed on the ground in front of us thus ending a totally superb day.



*A bachelor herd of African Savanna elephants sporting some very fine ivory was a star attraction during the Kazinga Channel boat trip.  
(Nik Borrow)*

Leaving Mweya Lodge the next day we embarked upon what was basically a very long 'game drive' that took us through some wild country into the Ishasha sector of Queen Elizabeth National Park. In the papyrus along the Kazinga Channel we coaxed a Lesser Swamp Warbler and the impressively named Carruthers's Cisticola into view. A productive stop in some open Acacia woodland gave us Nubian and African Grey Woodpecker, Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike, Orange-breasted Bushshrike, Trilling Cisticola, Buff-bellied Warbler and Scarlet-chested and Purple-banded Sunbirds. A surprise find was a pair of Lowland Sooty Boubou in some moist evergreen forest and a juvenile Little Sparrowhawk and a Western Nicator at the same location were most welcome. Travelling further through the park we hunted out Stout Cisticola before reaching the Ishasha sector of the park where a few Uganda Topi were spotted on the open grass plains under trees that held some roosting vultures that included several Rüppell's Vultures. A White-headed Barbet was seen in the scattered fig trees that we searched in vain for elusive 'tree-climbing' Lions. Elsewhere a Pearl-spotted Owlet attracted in a Black Cuckooshrike and other new species included Gabar Goshawk, Green Wood Hoopoe, Common Scimitarbill, Black-headed Oriole, African Paradise Flycatcher, Black-necked Weaver and White-winged Widowbird. However perhaps the most interesting record was that of a juvenile Beaudouin's Snake Eagle.

Leaving the park, our next destination was Buhoma situated at the edge of Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park. Woolly-necked Stork, Grey Crowned Crane and Yellow Bishop were all seen en route and although only a relatively short distance, the habitat (and weather) changed dramatically. From the parched flat landscape of the park itself, once we entered the steep valleys near to our destination a fierce rainstorm had been raging and the roads had become rivers.



*A fierce-looking Pearl-spotted Owlet (left) and a Trilling Cisticola (right) in Queen Elizabeth National Park. (Nik Borrow)*

We arrived at the end of the day and settled into our comfortable and welcoming lodge with its rooms that overlooked a valley and the impressive steep forested slopes beyond. This was the wonderfully evocative Impenetrable Forest, so named due to the steepness of its hills as opposed to the density of its vegetation and with it the promise of seeing a selection of fascinating Albertine Rift endemics and other exciting birds. This beautiful forest dates back to before the Pleistocene ice age, which makes it at over 25,000 years old, one of the most biologically diverse in Africa.



*Our comfortable lodge at Buhoma (and home for three nights) was idyllically situated overlooking the forest that held the Gorillas (left, Peter Markham), the views from the dining area were nothing short of superb (right, Nik Borrow)*

The next few days were spent trying to hunt out the specialties of the region. We hadn't even ventured into the park before there were great sightings to be obtained for in the morning half-light we found Grey-winged Robin-Chat on the main track. The trail itself was pleasantly birdy and without being overwhelmed by birds we managed to see some of those important and coveted Albertine Rift endemic species such as Red-faced Woodland Warbler, Red-throated Alethe and Jameson's Antpecker. One of the greatest successes was that after some persistence we all actually saw the tiny Neumann's (or Short-tailed) Warbler as it ran circles around us on or near the forest floor. Even the decidedly little-known Oberländer's Ground Thrush was heard that day but too deep in the forest to see and ultimately at the end of the day the recently described Willard's Sooty Boubou was teased out of the tangles and its distinctive blue iris was noted. During our walk we saw several individuals of the supposedly 'rare' but probably simply overlooked Chapin's Flycatcher, managed views of the pretty White-bellied Robin-Chat and furtive Equatorial Akalats were also eventually seen. Liberal

splashes of colour were provided by species such as a gorgeous male Bar-tailed Trogon and a male Many-coloured Bushshrike, which was located due to its far-carrying hooted call. A displaying male African Broadbill twirling round on its perch was much appreciated, Scarce Swifts and Black Saw-wings were in the skies above us and a fine supporting cast of other species included Ansorge's Greenbul, a species first discovered in the country during BirdQuest's 2001 Uganda tour, as well as African Olive Pigeon, Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo, Buff-spotted Woodpecker, Pink-footed Puffback, Lühder's Bushshrike, Grey Cuckooshrike, Mountain Oriole, Red-tailed Greenbul, Black-throated and Grey Apalises, Olive-green Camaroptera, Black-faced Rufous Warbler, Fraser's Rufous Thrush, Northern Double-collared Sunbird and Black-billed and Brown-capped Weavers. Our afternoon ended somewhat prematurely as once again the heavens opened and we were subjected to a heavy shower of rain so we squelched back to our lovely lodge and watched the mists roll in across the hillsides.



*Red-throated Alethe (left) is one of the specialties that is endemic to the Albertine Rift and we enjoyed wonderful views of a pair. A male Bar-tailed Trogon (right) flaunted itself in front of us. (Nik Borrow)*

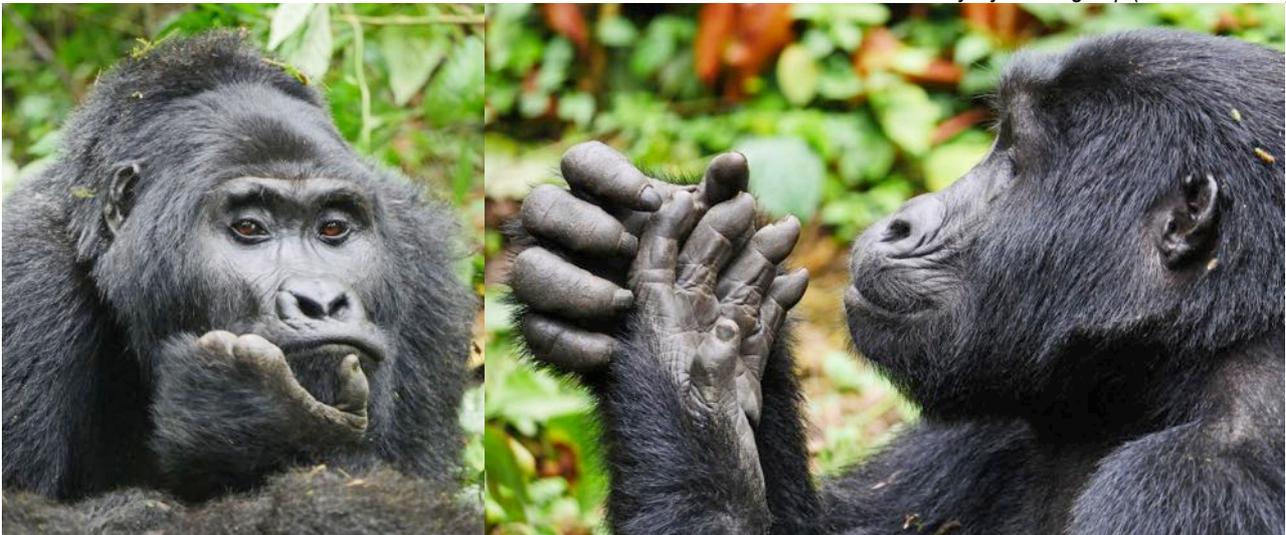
Buhoma is particularly famous for its gorilla trekking opportunities and all of us had opted to go in search of our close cousins. Of course we were wondering just how easy (or difficult depending on how you view your half-filled glass) it was going to be to see these gentle giants! This year we had permits to visit Rushegura or 'R' group and Habinyanja or 'H' group. After the lengthy briefing session we set off on our respective 'treks'. It was the luck of the draw how far away the animals are as the gorillas obviously move daily in search of food and this year it seemed that both 'R' and 'H' groups were over two hours hike away although the latter group demanded a steep climb through cultivation before they were found. Group 'R' was found deep in the forest and a few hills and a river had to be crossed in order to reach them. During the excursion, the pace is always geared to that of the slowest member of the group and expert guides, guards, porters and trackers ensured the safety of all. Approximately 880 'mountain' Gorillas have survived the ravages of modern times and a population of about 400 animals is believed to inhabit Bwindi itself. Patiently our guides and trackers led us deeper amongst the troop thus introducing us to the various family members and revealing an ever-moving, somewhat theatrical tableau, at times carefully peeling the vegetation away from the animals so that we could see them better.

The emotional and spiritual experience of seeing these Great Apes always more than compensates for any physical discomfort (stinging nettles!) or hardship (those steep hills!) that is required. Although these habituated troops might occasionally object to our human presence, mostly it seems that they are either oblivious to our attentions or, in the case of the youngsters, a little too curious for their own good and it is normal to be able to watch these creatures at rest and play. However, for the most part, all they are usually intent on doing is sleeping or packing more food into their already distended stomachs!

The taxonomy of the 'mountain' Gorillas has been hotly debated in recent decades. Most taxonomists seem to agree now on two species of Gorilla, Western Lowland Gorilla (*G. gorilla*) and Eastern Gorilla (*G. beringei*). The eastern group includes both the Eastern Lowland Gorilla (*G. beringei graueri*) and two mountain populations of the nominate form *G. b. beringei*. The Bwindi population is at the centre of the argument and has been suggested to form a third subspecies *G. beringei bwindi*. It has been claimed that these are not 'mountain' gorillas at all on morphological and ecological grounds. Mitochondrial DNA research however reveals the Bwindi and Virunga populations to be indistinguishable.



Eastern Gorillas: members of Habinyanja or 'H' group (Peter Markham)



Eastern Gorillas: members of Rushegura or 'R' group (Nik Borrow)

Both of our groups had finished gorilla trekking by early afternoon so there was time for those that wished to go back into the forest and carry on birding. We had seen a lovely Red-capped Robin-Chat well before trekking for the gorillas and it certainly proved most worthwhile heading back into the forest for an afternoon session as we managed to see both Dusky and Olive Long-tailed Cuckoos which was no mean feat and other species added to the list that afternoon included the 'Fine-banded' form of Tullberg's Woodpecker (sometimes treated as a separate species), dapper Bocage's Bushshrike, Green Hylia, White-chinned Prinia and White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher. We had done well during our stay at Buhoma and it was sad to leave our comfortable and homely lodge with its friendly and attentive staff.



*A female Jameson's Antpecker (left), a strange little estrildid that is never easy to see and a furtive Equatorial Akalat (right) were highlights of our birding in the Buhoma area. (Nik Borrow)*

Our next short journey took us from the lower part of the forest at Buhoma to the higher areas around Ruhija. A displaying Highland Rush Warbler (recently split from Little Rush Warbler) showed well en route whilst the amazing cries of Tropical Boubous echoed through the cultivated valleys and noisy and excitable Chubb's Cisticolas were in the undergrowth. Here we also found Augur Buzzard, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Cardinal Woodpecker, Mackinnon's Shrike, Singing Cisticola, Variable Sunbird, African Firefinch and Thick-billed Seedeater.



*The Kakamega Greenbul (left) habitually creeps along the mossy branches. The delightful little White-browed Crombec (right) was seen well. (Nik Borrow)*

At 'The Neck', a narrow corridor of forest connecting two sections of the park the *Symphonia* trees were in flower and as a result we were rewarded by excellent scope views of several Purple-breasted Sunbirds feeding in them. This is a nomadic species that follows the apparently erratic blooming of these special flowers. A Little Grebe was on a roadside pool and we picked up a few more forest species such as Kakamega Greenbul creeping along the mossy boughs, the delightful White-browed Crombec and striking Black-faced Prinias.



*Birding at 'The Neck'. (Peter Markham)*

Above the forest, the intensive cultivation of these high altitude hills has I fear put paid to our success at finding Dusky Twinspot and despite an intensive search we only came away with White-necked Raven, Yellow-bellied Waxbill and Streaky Seedeater in the few remaining weedy fields. Continuing onto Ruhija where the air was cooler we began to find some of the higher-level specialities of the Impenetrable Forest. Chestnut-throated Apalises 'trilled' from the treetops, Northern Puffbacks were found as was the delightful White-tailed Blue Flycatcher and eventually the drop-dead-gorgeous Doherty's Bushshrike was coaxed into view. The wooded hillsides provided suitable habitat that allowed us to add to our growing collection of Albertine Rift endemics and first up was the normally retiring and secretive Grauer's Warbler, which in spite of being totally silent proved surprisingly easy to see in the tangles. Initially somewhat dry and quiet we found the activity to increase as the afternoon wore on. Stripe-breasted Tits were easy to see and we had good looks at the attractive Ruwenzori Apalis, Mountain Masked Apalis and also seen was our first Strange Weaver as well as Ruwenzori and Chinspot Batises.

Evening was approaching and so we boarded our vehicle and drove slowly along the road that bisects the park in search of Handsome Francolin. Our search was fruitless but we stayed out till dusk in order to try for the desirable Ruwenzori Nightjar. As luck would have it a francolin was spotted as it climbed into a tree nearby in order to go to roost. Initially we were worried that our attentions would disturb the bird but it adamantly stayed put and we eventually had excellent views of it in the spotlight! Fuelled by our success we stayed out until dusk fell and promptly on cue the nightjar also treated us to some fine flyby views! It had been another great day and we settled into our lodge at Ruhija with its panoramic views and rested up for a good nights sleep to prepare for the long hike the next day.

The main reason for coming to Ruhija was to trek up and down and then down, down and down to the Mubwindi Swamp where some major targets occur. It was a fine, dry morning and the views over the forest were superb. All of the group opted to do this trek and following a well maintained trail we were aiming to get

to the bottom as early as we could as we knew that the pair of Grauer's Broadbill had almost-fledged young but were probably still in the nest thus making these tiny birds easy to find. The trail was very birdy so getting to our destination was not an easy task. A glorious Regal Sunbird put on a great show at the beginning of the track and during our descent we saw skulking groups of Mountain Illadopsis, pretty Dusky Crimsonwings and an obliging Archer's Ground Robin in the shadowy undergrowth. We also found Olive-breasted Greenbul, wing flicking, tail-pumping Yellow-streaked Greenbul, Ruwenzori Hill Babbler, Abyssinian Thrush and a single Blue-headed Sunbird. Eventually we reached the bottom and were led to the nest site where we were welcomed by the calls of the youngsters and looking up above our heads there they were in their pendulous mossy nest with both adults conveniently nearby. The big prize was now most certainly in the bag and we spent a long time watching the adults going back and forth bringing black shiny fruits to push deep down into the orange gaping mouths of the fledglings.



*Albertine Rift endemics such as the simply stunning Regal Sunbird (top left) and Yellow-eyed Black Flycatcher (top right) were seen during our day trekking down to Mubwindi Swamp (below). (Nik Borrow)*

Eventually we decided to continue down and walk the short distance to Mubwindi Swamp and try our luck with the Grauer's Swamp Warbler. Along the way Mountain Buzzards 'mewed' overhead and we obtained excellent views of Yellow-eyed Black Flycatcher. The Grauer's Swamp Warblers were not particularly obliging (as usual) but we managed some reasonable views. There was little left to do now but start the long climb back up to the top. We picked up a flock of Slender-billed Starling, Montane Sooty Boubou and White-starred Robin along the path and a distant Lagden's Bushshrike could be heard calling in the valley but otherwise the forest had fallen very quiet and we continued onwards and upwards finally reaching the top and a well-deserved rest.

The last day was strictly a travel day as we had to get all the way back to Entebbe to connect with late evening flights. However the birds kept coming for near Kabale we noted the colony of African Black Swifts

that lives there and as we neared Mburo both Black-chested and Brown Snake Eagles were seen. Mburo National Park itself comprises dry acacia bush surrounding the lake and grazing land for the ridiculously large-horned Ankole Cattle and hence a new habitat that supported a few new species of birds for us. A very timely lunch stop enabled us to squeeze one more goodie and we enjoyed munching our sandwiches amongst a flock of highly desirable Brown-chested Lapwings. After this we noted plenty of Lilac-breasted Rollers along the main road but otherwise it was an uneventful drive back to Entebbe.

It had surely been an amazing trip with so many memories to cherish! Uganda is the proud owner of an extensive network of well-managed parks and reserves which contain a wide range of habitats: high to low altitude rain forests, vast open wetlands, thorn-bush and dry savannahs. The country boasts a bird list of over 1,000 species, as well as large numbers of big game and wonderful facilities for unrivalled primate watching, making this one of the most outstanding eco-destinations anywhere in the world. All of these natural wonders are complemented by the extremely high standard of comfortable accommodation that is now available (and is improving every year). The people are friendly and helpful and in particular thanks to Livingstone, our hardworking driver/guide who really made our tour a holiday to remember.



*Near Lake Mburo we saw a flock of about 20 migrant Brown-chested Lapwings. (Peter Markham)*



*The one and only Shoebill. (Nik Borrow)*

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

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>

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

**Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiaca* Common in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**African Black Duck** *Anas sparsa* A pair for some in Kibale Forest.

**Yellow-billed Duck** *Anas undulata* Common at Mabamba Swamp and seen again near Mburo.

**Helmeted Guineafowl** *Numida meleagris* Small numbers in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Crested Francolin** *Dendroperdix sephaena* Small numbers seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Handsome Francolin** *Pternistis nobilis* ◊ Great looks at 1 on its roost at Ruhija.

**Red-necked Spurfowl** *Pternistis afer* Common and easy to see in Queen Elizabeth NP.



*Crested Francolin (left) and Red-necked Spurfiowl are both easily seen in Queen Elizabeth NP. (Nik Borrow)*

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* 1 at 'the Neck' and 2 near Lake Mburo NP.

**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus* 1 in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Lesser Flamingo** *Phoeniconaias minor* (NT) 100+ in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Yellow-billed Stork** *Mycteria ibis* Common and easily seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**African Openbill (A Open-billed Stork)** *Anastomus lamelligerus* Most numerous in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**(African) Woolly-necked Stork** *Ciconia [episcopus] microscelis* Small numbers in the Buhoma area.

**Saddle-billed Stork** *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis* A pair in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Marabou Stork** *Leptoptilos crumenifer* Common and widespread.

**African Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus* 2 in Queen Elizabeth NP and more as we journeyed back to Entebbe.

**Hadada Ibis** *Bostrychia hagedash* Common and widespread.

**African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba* 2 in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Striated Heron (Green-backed H)** *Butorides striata* 2 in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Squacco Heron (Common S H)** *Ardeola ralloides* Common at Mabamba Swamp.

**Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* Widespread and common in suitable habitat.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* Small numbers in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Black-headed Heron** *Ardea melanocephala* Common and widespread, breeding colonies noted.

**Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath* 1 immature in Queen Elizabeth NP.



*African Openbill (left) and an immature Goliath Heron (right) in Queen Elizabeth National Park. (Nik Borrow)*

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* 2 at Mabamba Swamp.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba* Small numbers at Mabamba Swamp and in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* This familiar species was observed at various wetlands throughout the country.

**Hamerkop** *Scopus umbretta* Common and widespread.

**Shoebill (Whale-headed Stork)** *Balaeniceps rex* ◊ (V) Fantastic close encounters with 1 at Mabamba Swamp.

**Pink-backed Pelican** *Pelecanus rufescens* Most numerous in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C)** *Microcarbo africanus* Most numerous at Mabamba and Queen Elizabeth NP.

**White-breasted Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax lucidus* Hundreds on the Kazinga Channel, Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Black-winged Kite (B-shouldered K)** *Elanus caeruleus* Small numbers were seen at widespread locations.

**African Harrier-Hawk (Gymnogene)** *Polyboroides typus* Small numbers were seen at widespread locations.

**Palm-nut Vulture (Vulturine Fish Eagle)** *Gypohierax angolensis* Seen at widespread locations.

**Hooded Vulture** *Necrosyrtes monachus* (CR) Just 2 in Entebbe.

**White-backed Vulture** *Gyps africanus* (CR) 20+ seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Rüppell's Vulture** *Gyps rueppelli* (CR) 5 in the Ishasha sector of Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Lappet-faced Vulture** *Torgos tracheliotus* (E) Just 1 in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Beudouin's Snake Eagle** *Circaetus beudouini* (V) An immature in the Ishasha sector of Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Black-chested Snake Eagle** *Circaetus pectoralis* 1 near Mburo NP.

**Brown Snake Eagle** *Circaetus cinereus* 2 near Mburo NP.

**Western Banded Snake Eagle** *Circaetus cinerascens* 1 en route to Kibale Forest.

**Bateleur** *Terathopius ecaudatus* (NT) Seen in Queen Elizabeth NP and near Lake Mburo.

**Crowned Eagle** *Stephanoaetus coronatus* (NT) Displaying birds over Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.

**Martial Eagle** *Polemaetus bellicosus* (V) 1 in Queen Elizabeth NP.



Western Banded Snake Eagle (left) and Martial Eagle (right). (Nik Borrow)

**Long-crested Eagle** *Lophaetus occipitalis* A regularly met with roadside bird with an impressive hairdo!

**Wahlberg's Eagle** *Hieraaetus wahlbergi* Regularly encountered throughout the tour.

**Lizard Buzzard** *Kaupifalco monogrammicus* A number of widespread sightings particularly by roadsides.

**Gabar Goshawk** *Micronisus gabar* 1 juvenile in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**African Goshawk** *Accipiter tachiro* 1 at Bigodi Wetland.

**Shikra** *Accipiter badius* 1 en route to Kibale Forest.

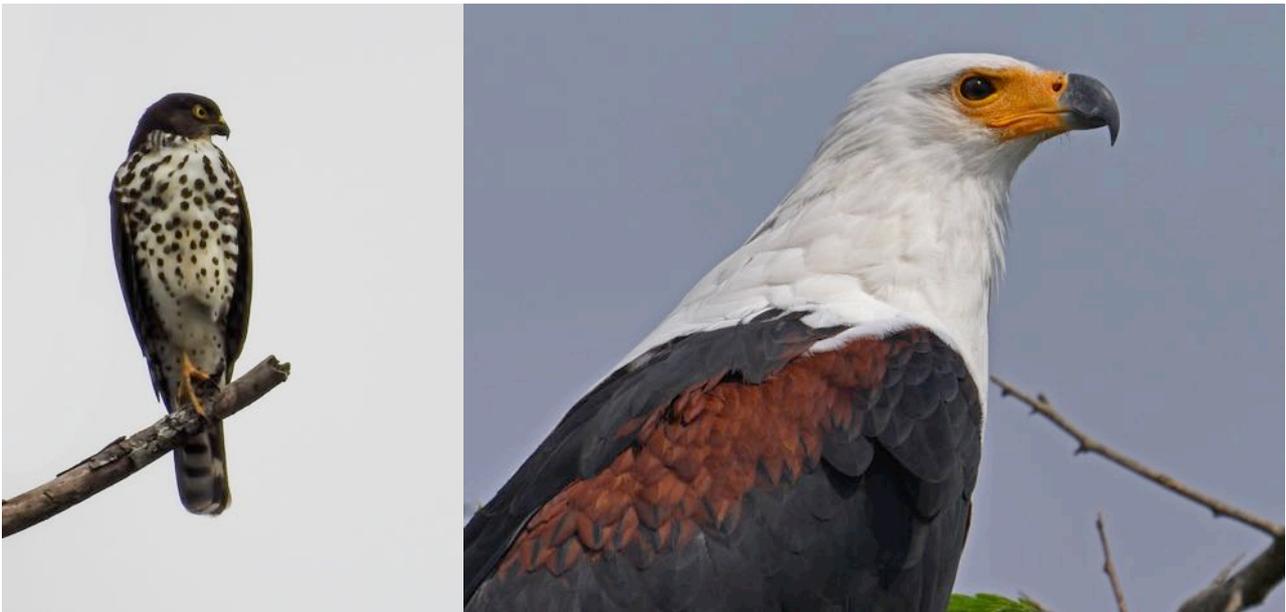
**Little Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter minullus* 1 juvenile in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* A sighting of a 'summering' female at Mabamba Swamp on 19/7.

**African Marsh Harrier** *Circus ranivorus* Small numbers at Mabamba Swamp.

**Yellow-billed Kite** *Milvus aegyptius* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

**African Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus vocifer* Easily seen at Mabamba Swamp and in Queen Elizabeth NP.



A juvenile Little Sparrowhawk (left, Peter Markham) and African Fish Eagle (right, Nik Borrow) in Queen Elizabeth NP.

- Mountain Buzzard *Buteo oreophilus* ◊ (NT)** 2 in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
- Augur Buzzard *Buteo augur*** Small numbers in the southwest.
- White-spotted Flufftail *Sarothrura pulchra*** 1 male watched in the shadows of Bigodi Swamp.
- African Crake *Crex egregia*** 4 sightings in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostra*** Easily seen along the Kazinga Channel.
- Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum* (E)** Occasional sightings of this superb species.
- Water Thick-knee *Burhinus vermiculatus*** Easily seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*** Small numbers in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Pied Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*** 3 seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Long-toed Lapwing *Vanellus crassirostris*** Seen well at Mabamba Swamp.
- Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus*** Easily seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Senegal Lapwing (S Plover) *Vanellus lugubris*** First seen at Mabamba but numerous in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Crowned Lapwing (C Plover) *Vanellus coronatus*** A pair seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus*** Easily seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Brown-chested Lapwing *Vanellus superciliosus* ◊** A flock of about 20 near Lake Mburo NP.
- Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius*** Just 2 seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Lesser Jacana *Microparra capensis*** Brief views of a rather skittish bird at Mabamba Swamp.
- African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*** Easily seen in appropriate habitat.
- Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*** 2 of these Palearctic migrants on the Kazinga Channel and 1 near Mburo.
- Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*** 1 of these Palearctic migrants on the Kazinga Channel.
- Temminck's Courser *Cursorius temminckii*** 4 in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*** 1 in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus*** 2 at Mabamba Swamp and 1 in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Gull-billed Tern *Gelocheilidon nilotica*** 2 distant birds in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*** Palearctic migrants at Mabamba Swamp.
- Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia*** Feral or 'table' birds only.
- Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea*** Seen on urban electric wires and rooftops.
- Afep Pigeon *Columba uncinata*** 2 seen in Kibale Forest.
- African Olive Pigeon *Columba arquatrix*** Flight views in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.
- Western Bronze-naped Pigeon *Columba iriditorques* (H, LO)** Heard in in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.
- Mourning Collared Dove *Streptopelia decipiens*** Small numbers in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*** This common and widespread species sings "I am a Red-eyed Dove".
- Ring-necked Dove *Streptopelia capicola*** Common in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis*** Widespread sightings.
- Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur afer*** The common wood dove of moister country and regularly encountered.

**Tambourine Dove** *Turtur tympanistria* Commonly encountered in the forested areas but often just in flight.  
**African Green Pigeon** *Treron calvus* Widespread sightings.  
**Great Blue Turaco** *Corythaeola cristata* Uganda is one of the easiest places in Africa to see this magnificent bird.  
**Black-billed Turaco** *Tauraco schuettii* ◊ Seen in both Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable NPs.  
**Ross's Turaco** *Musophaga rossae* First seen well en route to Kibale Forest.  
**Eastern Plantain-eater (E Grey P-e)** *Crinifer zonurus* Widespread sightings of this noisy bird.



Eastern Plantain-eater (right) and Ross's Turaco (left) (Peter Markham)

**Blue-headed Coucal** *Centropus monachus* 1 at Mabamba Swamp and usually associated with papyrus in Uganda.  
**White-browed Coucal** *Centropus superciliosus* Widespread sightings throughout the savannas.  
**Black Coucal** *Centropus grillii* Just 1 in non-breeding plumage in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Blue Malkoha (Yellowbill)** *Ceuthmochares aereus* 1 sighting in Kibale NP and heard in the Bwindi forests.  
**Diederik Cuckoo (Didric C)** *Chrysococcyx caprius* Just 2 sightings.  
**Klaas's Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx klaas* (H) Heard distantly at Bigodi Wetland.  
**African Emerald Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx cupreus* Excellent views in Kibale Forest.  
**Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo** *Cercococcyx mechowi* ◊ Heard in Kibale and seen in Bwindi NP.  
**Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo** *Cercococcyx olivinus* Excellent views of a perched bird in Bwindi NP.  
**Red-chested Cuckoo** *Cuculus solitarius* Often heard during the tour and seen several times.  
**Verreaux's Eagle-Owl** *Bubo lacteus* (LO) 1 in our lodge garden at Kibale for Nik.  
**Pearl-spotted Owlet** *Glaucidium perlatum* 1 in the Ishasha sector of Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Red-chested Owlet** *Glaucidium tephronotum* Good looks at 1 in Kibale Forest.  
**Ruwenzori Nightjar** *Caprimulgus ruwenzorii* ◊ 1 male seen at dusk at Ruhija.  
**Square-tailed Nightjar** *Caprimulgus fossii* Excellent views of a male in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Pennant-winged Nightjar** *Caprimulgus vexillarius* A male in breeding plumage seen in flight in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Scarce Swift** ◊ *Schoutedenapus myoptilus* Seen over Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.  
**African Palm Swift** *Cypsiurus parvus* Small numbers seen in suitable habitat.  
**Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba* 40+ over Kibale NP.  
**African Black Swift** *Apus barbatus* Small numbers seen near Kabale.  
**Little Swift** *Apus affinis* Most often a bridge and town bird (that's where their nesting habitat is!).  
**White-rumped Swift** *Apus caffer* Widespread sightings.  
**Speckled Mousebird** *Colius striatus* An abundant and very widespread species noted throughout the tour.  
**Blue-naped Mousebird** *Urocolius macrourus* Common in bush country though often flying by at a rate of knots!  
**Narina Trogon** *Apaloderma narina* Good looks at a male in Kibale Forest.  
**Bar-tailed Trogon** *Apaloderma vittatum* Great views in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.  
**Lilac-breasted Roller** *Coracias caudatus* Good numbers were seen by the road between Mburo and Masaka.  
**Broad-billed Roller** *Eurystomus glaucurus* First seen well and most numerous in the Mabamba area.  
**Grey-headed Kingfisher** *Halcyon leucocephala* Small numbers in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Striped Kingfisher** *Halcyon chelicuti* Widespread roadside sightings in appropriate habitat.  
**Blue-breasted Kingfisher** *Halcyon malimbica* (H) Heard in Kibale Forest.  
**Woodland Kingfisher** *Halcyon senegalensis* Common and widespread.

**African Pygmy Kingfisher** *Ispidina picta* Widespread sightings.  
**Malachite Kingfisher** *Corythornis cristatus* Easily seen in appropriate habitat.  
**Shining-blue Kingfisher** *Alcedo quadribrachys* (H) Heard in flight at Bigodi Swamp.  
**Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* Astonishingly numerous at Mabamba and along the Kazinga Channel.  
**Black Bee-eater** *Merops gularis* Seen well in Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.



Kibale birds: Blue Malkoha (left) and Red-chested Owlet (middle, Nik Borrow) Black Bee-eater (right, Peter Markham)

**Swallow-tailed Bee-eater** *Merops hirundineus* Small numbers in Murchison Falls NP.  
**Little Bee-eater** *Merops pusillus* Easily seen at Mabamba and in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Blue-breasted Bee-eater** *Merops variegatus* Easily seen at Mabamba.  
**Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater** *Merops oreobates* Numerous sightings in the Bwindi area.  
**Red-throated Bee-eater** *Merops bullocki* At least 3 along the Kazinga Channel in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**White-throated Bee-eater** *Merops albicollis* Good numbers seen en route to Kibale.  
**Olive Bee-eater (Madagascar B-e)** *Merops superciliosus* Seen well at Mabamba Swamp and Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**White-headed Wood Hoopoe** *Phoeniculus bollei* Groups seen in Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.  
**Common Scimitarbill** *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas* Singletons in Queen Elizabeth NP and near Mburo.  
**Crowned Hornbill** *Lophoceros alboterminatus* Widespread sightings in small numbers.  
**African Pied Hornbill (Congo P H)** *Lophoceros [f.] fasciatus* ◇ 3 seen well at Mabamba.  
**Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill** *Bycanistes subcylindricus* Pleasingly numerous during the tour.  
**Grey-throated Barbet (G- headed B)** *Gymnobucco [bonapartei] cinereiceps* ◇ Kibale and Bwindi Forests.  
**Speckled Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus scolopaceus* More often heard than seen in the lower altitude forests.  
**Western Tinkerbird (W Green T)** *Pogoniulus coryphaei* (H) Heard only at Mubwindi Swamp.  
**Yellow-throated Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus subsulphureus* More often heard than seen in the lower altitude forests.  
**Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus bilineatus* Regularly recorded in the higher altitude forests and cultivation.  
**Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* A few seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Yellow-spotted Barbet** *Buccanodon duchaillui* The 'snoring' song was heard more than the bird was seen in forest.  
**Hairy-breasted Barbet (Streaky-throated B)** *Tricholaema [hirsuta] flavipunctata* Seen in the lower altitude forests.  
**Spot-flanked Barbet** *Tricholaema lacrymosa* Good views in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**White-headed Barbet** *Lybius leucocephalus* 1 seen in the Ishasha sector of Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Double-toothed Barbet** *Lybius bidentatus* First seen well at Mabamba and widespread sightings thereafter.  
**(Eastern) Yellow-billed Barbet** *Trachyphonus [p.] purpuratus* Seen well at Bigodi Wetland, heard in Bwindi.  
**Cassin's Honeybird** *Prodotiscus insignis* (LO) 1 for Nik in Kibale Forest.  
**Willcocks's Honeyguide** *Indicator willcocksii* (H) ◇ Heard only at Buhoma.  
**Thick-billed Honeyguide** *Indicator conirostris* (H) Heard only in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.  
**Lesser Honeyguide** *Indicator minor* 1 seen at Bigodi Wetland.  
**Nubian Woodpecker** *Campethera nubica* A pair seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Tullberg's Woodpecker (Fine-banded W)** *Campethera [tullbergi] taeniolaema* 1 male in Bwindi Forest.

**Buff-spotted Woodpecker** *Campethera nivos* 2 sightings in Kibale and Bwindi forests.

**Speckle-breasted Woodpecker** *Dendropicos poecilolaemus* ◊ A female seen well at Bigodi Wetland.

**Cardinal Woodpecker** *Dendropicos fuscescens* 1 male in Bwindi NP.

**Elliot's Woodpecker** *Dendropicos elliotii* Seen well in Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.

**African Grey Woodpecker** *Dendropicos goertae* A pair seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Grey Kestrel** *Falco ardosiaceus* 2 widespread sightings in appropriate habitat.

**African Hobby** *Falco cuvierii* 1 in residence at our Entebbe guest house.

**Grey Parrot** *Psittacus erithacus* (E) Great views of 1 perched en route to Kibale Forest.

**Meyer's Parrot (Brown P)** *Poicephalus meyeri* Widespread sightings but in flight only.

**Red-headed Lovebird** *Agapornis pullarius* (LO) Flight views for Nik near Mabamba and again near Buhoma.

**African Broadbill** *Smithornis capensis* A displaying male was seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable NP.

**Grauer's Broadbill** *Pseudocalyptomena graueri* ◊ (V) A pair and two young seen well at the nest, Mubwindi Swamp.

**Green-breasted Pitta** *Pitta reichenowi* Fantastic views of 2 individuals in Kibale NP.

**Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher** *Bias musicus* Widespread sightings, first seen well in the Mabamba area.

**Ruwenzori Batis** *Batis diops* (NL) ◊ 1 seen well by the group in Bwindi Impenetrable NP.

**Chinspot Batis** *Batis molitor* Small numbers in Bwindi Impenetrable NP.

**Western Black-headed Batis** *Batis erlangeri* Several in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Chestnut Wattle-eye** *Platysteira castanea* Small numbers seen in Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable forests.

**Brown-throated Wattle-eye (Common W-e)** *Platysteira cyanea* Widespread sightings during the tour.

**Lagden's Bushshrike** ◊ *Malaconotus lagdeni* (NT) (H) Heard only in Bwindi Impenetrable NP.

**Many-coloured Bushshrike** *Chlorophoneus multicolor* A male seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**Bocage's Bushshrike (Grey-green B S)** *Chlorophoneus bocagei* Seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.



A male African Broadbill (left) and the lovely Bocage's Bushshrike (right) in the Bwindi Impenetrable forests. (Nik Borrow)

**Orange-breasted Bushshrike** *Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus* Seen well in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Doherty's Bushshrike** *Telophorus dohertyi* ◊ This gorgeous bird was seen well at Ruhija.

**Marsh Tchagra (Blackcap T)** *Bocagia minuta* Seen well at Bigodi Wetland and in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Brown-crowned Tchagra (Brown-headed T)** *Tchagra australis* 3 widespread sightings.

**Black-crowned Tchagra** *Tchagra senegalus* Easy to see in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Pink-footed Puffback** *Dryoscopus angolensis* Small numbers seen in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**Northern Puffback** *Dryoscopus gambensis* A pair was seen at Ruhija.

**Lowland Sooty Boubou** *Laniarius leucorhynchus* A surprise sighting of a pair in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Mountain Sooty Boubou** *Laniarius poensis* (LO) ◊ Only Livingstone saw a calling bird in Bwindi Impenetrable NP.

**Willard's Sooty Boubou** *Laniarius willardi* ◊ The blue eyes were seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**Lühder's Bushshrike** *Laniarius luehderi* Seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**Tropical Boubou** *Laniarius major* Seen at Bigodi Wetland and near Buhoma.

**Papyrus Gonolek *Laniarius mufumbiri*** ◊ (NT) Incredible views of this papyrus specialist this year.  
**Black-headed Gonolek *Laniarius erythrogaster*** Especially numerous in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Grey Cuckooshrike *Coracina caesia*** Good views in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.  
**Black Cuckooshrike *Campephaga flava*** 1 male in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike *Campephaga phoenicea*** 1 male in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Petit's Cuckooshrike *Campephaga petiti*** Small numbers in Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.  
**Mackinnon's Fiscal *Lanius mackinnoni*** Small numbers were seen in the southwest.  
**Grey-backed Fiscal *Lanius excubitoroides*** Common and widespread but absent from forest and the southwest.



*Black-headed Gonolek (left) and Grey-backed Fiscal (right) are both easy to see in Queen Elizabeth NP. (Peter Markham)*

**Northern Fiscal *Lanius humeralis*** Widespread sightings during the tour.  
**Western Oriole (W Black-headed O) *Oriolus brachyrhynchus*** Seen well in Kibale NP.  
**Mountain (Montane) Oriole *Oriolus percivali*** ◊ Seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.  
**Fork-tailed Drongo (Common D) *Dicrurus adsimilis*** Commonly encountered in the savannahs.  
**Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone rufiventer*** Heard in Kibale Forest and seen at Bigodi Wetland.  
**African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis*** Seen from Queen Elizabeth NP to Bwindi NP.  
**Pied Crow *Corvus albus*** Common and widespread.  
**White-necked Raven (White-naped R) *Corvus albicollis*** Several seen at Ruhija.  
**African Blue Flycatcher *Elminia longicauda*** Widespread sightings of this dainty bird.  
**White-tailed Blue Flycatcher *Elminia albicauda*** Seen well in the Bwindi area.



*Two delightful 'fairy-flycatchers': African Blue Flycatcher (left) and White-tailed Blue Flycatcher (right) (Nik Borrow)*

**Dusky Tit *Melaniparus funereus*** Easily seen in Kibale and Bwindi Forests.  
**Stripe-breasted Tit *Melaniparus fasciiventer*** ◊ Great views of these Albertine Rift endemics at Ruhija.  
**Western Nicator *Nicator chloris*** Seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafra africana*** Seen well at Mabamba and in Queen Elizabeth NP.



The Albertine Rift endemic Stripe-breasted Tit (left, Nik Borrow). Rufous-naped Lark (right, Peter Markham)

- Flappet Lark** *Mirafra rufocinnamomea* Common in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Dark-capped Bulbul** *Pycnonotus tricolor* Every day!
- Kakamega Greenbul** *Arizelocichla kakamegae* ◊ A couple in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
- Olive-breasted Greenbul (O-b Mountain G)** *Arizelocichla kikuyuensis* ◊ Small numbers in Bwindi Impenetrable NP.
- Slender-billed Greenbul** *Stelgidillas gracilirostris* Easily seen in the forests.
- Little Greenbul** *Eurillas virens* Common but more often heard than seen in the forests.
- Little Grey Greenbul** *Eurillas gracilis* 1 was seen in Kibale Forest.
- Ansorge's Greenbul** *Eurillas ansorgei* Small numbers in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
- Plain Greenbul (Cameroon Sombre G)** *Eurillas curvirostris* Small numbers in the forests.
- Yellow-whiskered Greenbul** *Eurillas latirostris* Common and easily seen in the forests.
- Honeyguide Greenbul** *Baeopogon indicator* Seen in Kibale and Bwindi Forests.
- Joyful Greenbul** *Chlorocichla laetissima* ◊ A pair seen near Kibale Forest.
- Yellow-throated Leaflove** *Atimastillas flavicollis* Widespread sightings of the creamy-throated race *flavigula*.
- Cabanis's Greenbul** *Phyllastrephus cabanisi* (H) Heard only in Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.
- White-throated Greenbul** *Phyllastrephus albigularis* ◊ Just 1 of these shy but vocal forest greenbuls in Kibale.
- Yellow-streaked Greenbul** *Phyllastrephus flavostriatus* Seen well at Ruhija.
- Red-tailed Bristlebill** *Bleda syndactylus* Sightings in Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.
- Red-tailed Greenbul** *Criniger calurus* Seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
- White-headed Saw-wing** *Psalidoprocne albiceps* ◊ A widespread bird throughout the lower country.
- Black Saw-wing** *Psalidoprocne [pristopectera] holomelas* Common around Bwindi Impenetrable NP.
- Grey-rumped Swallow** *Pseudhirundo griseopyga* Appeared to be breeding at Mabamba Swamp.
- Banded Martin** *Riparia cincta* 1 at Mabamba Swamp but numerous in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* Small numbers of this Palearctic migrant at Mabamba and in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Angolan Swallow** *Hirundo angolensis* Numerous during the tour, particularly around settlements.
- Wire-tailed Swallow** *Hirundo smithii* Seen in Queen Elizabeth NP and also en route back to Entebbe.
- Blue Swallow** *Hirundo atrocaerulea* (V) ◊ 2 of these intra-African migrants seen at Mabamba.
- Rock Martin** *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* Widespread sightings.
- Lesser Striped Swallow** *Cecropis abyssinica* Widespread sightings.
- Red-breasted Swallow** *Cecropis semirufa* Small numbers seen at Mabamba and in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Mosque Swallow** *Cecropis senegalensis* A pair en route to Kibale and more in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica* Widespread sightings in small numbers.
- Moustached Grass Warbler (African M W)** *Melocichla mentalis* A few seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Green Crombec** *Sylvietta virens* Several widespread sightings.
- White-browed Crombec** *Sylvietta leucophrys* ◊ Excellent views in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**Neumann's Warbler (Short-tailed W) *Urosphena neumanni*** ◇ This difficult bird was seen well in Bwindi this year.

**Grauer's Warbler *Graueria vittata*** ◇ This lover of vine tangles was seen well at Ruhija.

**Green Hylia *Hylia prasina*** Often heard but only seen once in Bwindi NP.

**Red-faced Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus laetus*** ◇ An Albertine Rift endemic seen in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris*** Seen along the Kazinga Channel.

**Highland Rush Warbler *Bradypterus centralis*** A displaying bird seen well at Buhoma.

**White-winged Swamp Warbler *Bradypterus carpalis*** ◇ Often heard in swamps and seen en route to Kibale.



The Albertine Rift endemic, Red-faced Woodland Warbler (left). The skulking White-winged Swamp Warbler (right). (Nik Borrow)

**Grauer's Swamp Warbler *Bradypterus graueri* (E)** Typically brief views of several in Mubwindi Swamp.

**Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops*** Often heard throughout the tour and occasionally seen.

**Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans*** A pair near Buhoma.

**Trilling Cisticola *Cisticola woosnami*** ◇ Seen well in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Chubb's Cisticola *Cisticola chubbi*** ◇ First encountered in Kibale Forest and common in the southwest.

**Winding Cisticola *Cisticola marginatus*** A common and showy cisticola seen frequently in appropriate wetlands.

**Carruthers's Cisticola *Cisticola carruthersi*** ◇ Mostly associated with papyrus and seen well at the Kazinga Channel.

**Stout Cisticola *Cisticola robustus*** Seen well in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis*** Easily seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Short-winged Cisticola (Siffling C) *Cisticola brachypterus*** 1 seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Zitting Cisticola (Fan-tailed C) *Cisticola juncidis*** Easily seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava*** Common and widespread.

**Black-faced Prinia *Prinia melanops*** ◇ This attractive species was seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**White-chinned Prinia *Prinia leucopogon*** First seen well at Bigodi Wetland.

**Ruwenzori Apalis (Collared A) *Oreolais ruwenzorii*** ◇ Good views in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**Buff-bellied Warbler *Phyllolais pulchella*** A pair seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Yellow-breasted Apalis (Black-breasted A) *Apalis flavida*** Seen well at Mabamba Swamp.

**Lowland Masked Apalis (M A) *Apalis binotata*** ◇ 3 seen in Kibale Forest.

**Mountain Masked Apalis (Black-faced A) *Apalis personata*** ◇ Easy to see in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**Black-throated Apalis *Apalis jacksoni*** Seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**Chestnut-throated Apalis *Apalis porphyrolaema*** The warbler with the 'trim-phone' call in the southwest.

**Buff-throated Apalis *Apalis rufogularis*** Numerous opportunities to see this species well in the various forests.

**Grey Apalis *Apalis cinerea*** Seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**Grey-capped Warbler *Eminia lepida*** Often heard and occasionally seen.

**Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brevicaudata*** Common and widespread.

**Olive-green Camaroptera *Camaroptera chloronota*** Good views in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**Black-faced Rufous Warbler *Bathmocercus rufus*** Good views in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**Scaly-breasted Illadopsis** *Illadopsis albipectus* ◊ Seen well in Kibale Forest and heard in Bwindi Forest.

**Brown Illadopsis** *Illadopsis fulvescens* (H) Heard only at Bigodi Wetland.

**Mountain Illadopsis** *Illadopsis pyrrhoptera* ◊ Seen in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**Black-lored Babbler** *Turdoides sharpei* Seen well in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Arrow-marked Babbler** *Turdoides jardineii* Seen well in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Ruwenzori Hill Babbler** *Pseudoalcippe atriceps* ◊ Small numbers were seen at Ruhija.

**African Yellow White-eye** ◊ (Green W-e) *Zosterops [senegalensis] stuhlmanni* Widespread. See Note.

**Purple-headed Starling** *Lamprotornis purpleiceps* Small numbers in Kibale NP and Bigodi Wetland.

**Splendid Starling** *Lamprotornis splendidus* Seen from Entebbe to Bigodi Wetland.

**Rüppell's Starling (R's Long-tailed S)** *Lamprotornis purpuropterus* Very common and widespread.

**Slender-billed Starling** *Onychognathus tenuirostris* Large numbers seen flying over Mubwindi Swamp.

**Chestnut-winged Starling** *Onychognathus [fulgidus] hartlaubii* 1 female in Kibale Forest.

**Waller's Starling** *Onychognathus walleri* (H) Heard only in Bwindi Impenetrable NP.

**Stuhlmann's Starling** *Poeoptera stuhlmanni* Small numbers in Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.

**Narrow-tailed Starling** *Poeoptera lugubris* Small numbers in Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.

**Yellow-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus africanus* Seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Red-tailed Ant Thrush** *Neocossyphus rufus* 1 seen in Kibale Forest.

**White-tailed Ant Thrush** *Neocossyphus poensis* Seen well at Bigodi Swamp and in Kibale and Bwindi Forests.

**Fraser's Rufous Thrush (Rufous Flycatcher T)** *Stizorhina fraseri* Seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.



Adult and juvenile Black-lored Babblers in Queen Elizabeth NP (left) and a Fraser's Rufous Thrush (right, Peter Markham)

**Oberländer's Ground Thrush** *Geokichla oberlaenderi* ◊ (H) Heard only in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**African Thrush** *Turdus pelios* Widespread sightings.

**Abyssinian Thrush (Mountain T)** *Turdus abyssinicus* 2 sightings in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**Brown-backed Scrub Robin** *Erythropygia hartlaubi* First seen by our lodge at Kibale NP.

**White-browed Scrub Robin** *Erythropygia leucophrys* Seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Grey-throated Tit-Flycatcher** *Myioparus griseigularis* Often heard and occasionally seen in the various forests.

**Grey Tit-Flycatcher (Lead-coloured F)** *Myioparus plumbeus* 1 seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher** *Dioptornis fischeri* Small numbers seen in the southwest.

**Yellow-eyed Black Flycatcher** *Melaenornis ardesiacus* ◊ 2 seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**Northern Black Flycatcher** *Melaenornis edolioides* Seen in the Entebbe area and in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Ashy Flycatcher** *Muscicapa caerulescens* 1 seen at Bigodi Swamp.

**Swamp Flycatcher** *Muscicapa aquatica* Seen at Mabamba and in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Cassin's Flycatcher (C's Grey F)** *Muscicapa cassini* 1 seen along a river in Kibale Forest.

**Chapin's Flycatcher** *Muscicapa lendu* ◊ (V) Several good sightings in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

**African Dusky Flycatcher** *Muscicapa adusta* Easy to see at Mabamba and in the southwest.

**Dusky-blue Flycatcher** *Muscicapa comitata* Easily seen in Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.  
**Sooty Flycatcher** *Muscicapa infuscata* Treetop birds in Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.  
**Red-throated Alethe** *Pseudaethe poliophrys* ◊ Great views of this Albertine Rift endemic in Bwindi Forest.  
**Brown-chested Alethe** *Pseudaethe poliocephala* (H) Heard only in Kibale NP.  
**White-bellied Robin-Chat** *Cossyphicula roberti* ◊ 1 seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.  
**Archer's Ground Robin** *Cossypha archeri* ◊ Great views of this Albertine Rift endemic in Bwindi Forest.  
**Grey-winged Robin-Chat** *Cossypha polioptera* ◊ A pair seen well at Buhoma.  
**Blue-shouldered Robin-Chat** *Cossypha cyanocampter* ◊ Amazing views of this notorious skulker in Kibale NP.  
**White-browed Robin-Chat (Heuglin's R)** *Cossypha heuglini* Particularly numerous in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Red-capped Robin-Chat** *Cossypha natalensis* Seen well at Buhoma.  
**Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat (S-headed R-c)** *Cossypha niveicapilla* A pair seen at Mabamba and another at Bigodi.  
**White-starred Robin** *Pogonocichla stellata* 1 sighting in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.  
**Equatorial Akalat** *Sheppardia aequatorialis* ◊ 2 sightings in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.  
**African Stonechat** *Saxicola torquatus* Seen en route to Kibale Forest and in the southwest.  
**Sooty Chat** *Myrmecocichla nigra* Easy to see at Mabamba and in Queen Elizabeth NP.



*Blue-shouldered Robin-Chat in Kibale NP (left, Nik Borrow) Male Sooty Chat in Queen Elizabeth NP (right, Peter Markham)*

**Little Green Sunbird** *Anthreptes seimundi* (LO) Livingstone saw 1 in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.  
**Grey-chinned Sunbird (Green S)** *Anthreptes rectirostris* Present in Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.  
**Collared Sunbird** *Hedydipna collaris* A common and widespread sunbird.  
**Green-headed Sunbird** *Cyanomitra verticalis* A few sightings in the Kibale area and the southwest.  
**Blue-throated Brown Sunbird** *Cyanomitra cyanoaema* A few widespread sightings in the forests.  
**Blue-headed Sunbird** *Cyanomitra alinae* ◊ A poor showing (just one!) seen in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.  
**Olive Sunbird** *Cyanomitra olivacea* Common throughout the various forests.  
**Green-throated Sunbird** *Chalcomitra rubescens* Small numbers in Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.  
**Scarlet-chested Sunbird** *Chalcomitra senegalensis* Singletons in Queen Elizabeth NP and near Buhoma.  
**Purple-breasted Sunbird** ◊ *Nectarinia purpureiventris* About 5 seen at 'the Neck' included a good male.  
**Bronzy Sunbird (Bronze S)** *Nectarinia kilimensis* Widespread sightings.  
**Olive-bellied Sunbird** *Cinnyris chloropygius* Seen in various lower altitude forests and bush.  
**Northern Double-collared Sunbird** *Cinnyris reichenowi* Common in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.  
**Regal Sunbird** *Cinnyris regius* ◊ Small numbers of this wonderful sunbird in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest at Ruhija.  
**Red-chested Sunbird** *Cinnyris erythrocerus* ◊ A stunning sunbird and common around the swamps and wet places.  
**Purple-banded Sunbird** *Cinnyris bifasciatus* 2 males seen well in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Superb Sunbird** *Cinnyris superbus* Small numbers were seen at Mabamba and Bigodi Wetland.  
**Variable Sunbird** *Cinnyris venustus* The attractive orange-bellied race, *igneiventris* was seen in the southwest.  
**Copper Sunbird** *Cinnyris cupreus* A few sightings from Mabamba to Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**House Sparrow (introduced)** *Passer domesticus* Roadside birds seen around settlements during journeys.  
**Northern Grey-headed Sparrow (G-h S)** *Passer griseus* Very common and widespread.  
**Thick-billed Weaver (Grosbeak W)** *Amblyospiza albifrons* Widespread sightings.  
**Baglafaecht Weaver** *Ploceus baglafaecht* The race *stuhmanni* was seen in the southwest



Male Red-chested Sunbird (left) and a Baglafaecht Weaver of the race *stuhlmanni* (right) in the southwest (Nik Borrow)

- Slender-billed Weaver *Ploceus pelzelni*** Associated with papyrus, lakes and dining tables!
- Little Weaver *Ploceus luteolus*** Several seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis*** Widespread sightings.
- Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis*** Widespread sightings in open habitats.
- Strange Weaver *Ploceus alienus*** ◊ Good views of this Albertine Rift endemic in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
- Black-billed Weaver *Ploceus melanogaster*** Small numbers in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
- Holub's Golden Weaver *Ploceus xanthops*** Widespread sightings in open habitats.
- Orange Weaver *Ploceus aurantius*** 4 seen near Mabamba Swamp.
- Northern Brown-throated Weaver *Ploceus castanops*** Seen well at Mabamba Swamp.
- Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius*** Just 1 in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Village Weaver (Black-headed W) *Ploceus cucullatus*** This species was a constant companion throughout the tour.
- Vieillot's Black Weaver *Ploceus nigerrimus*** A common bird often seen in colonies by roadside villages.
- Weyns's Weaver *Ploceus weynsi*** ◊ Some fine breeding plumaged males near Mabamba Swamp.
- Black-headed Weaver (Yellow-backed W) *Ploceus melanocephalus*** An abundant waterside weaver.
- Golden-backed Weaver (Jackson's G-b W) *Ploceus jacksoni*** ◊ 2 males seen at Mabamba Swamp.
- Yellow-mantled Weaver *Ploceus tricolor*** 2 seen in Kibale NP
- Compact Weaver *Ploceus superciliosus*** Small numbers in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Brown-capped Weaver *Ploceus insignis*** Small numbers in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
- Red-headed Malimbe *Malimbus rubricollis*** Seen at Bigodi Swamp and in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
- Black Bishop *Euplectes gierowii*** 2 breeding plumaged males at Bigodi Swamp.
- Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix*** Birds moulting out of breeding plumage in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Yellow Bishop *Euplectes capensis*** 2 sightings in the southwest included a male in breeding plumage.
- Fan-tailed Widowbird (Red-shouldered W) *Euplectes axillaris*** Breeding plumaged birds at Mabamba Swamp.
- Marsh Widowbird *Euplectes hartlaubi*** Breeding plumaged males at Mabamba and en route to Kibale.
- White-winged Widowbird *Euplectes albonotatus*** Small numbers in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Jameson's Antpecker *Parmoptila jamesoni*** ◊ A pair in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
- White-breasted Nigrita (W-b Negrofinch) *Nigrita fusconotus*** Small numbers at Kibale, Bigodi and Bwindi Forest.
- Grey-headed Nigrita (G-crowned Negrofinch)** Small numbers only and first seen at Mabamba.
- White-collared Oliveback *Nesocharis ansorgei*** ◊ A pair for some at Bigodi Wetland.
- Dusky Crimsonwing *Cryptospiza jacksoni*** ◊ A small family party as we walked to Mubwindi Swamp.
- Red-headed Bluebill *Spermophaga ruficapilla* (H)** ◊ Only heard at Bigodi Wetland.
- Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala*** Widespread sightings and particularly common in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- African Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubricata*** 2 near Buhoma.
- Yellow-bellied Waxbill *Estrilda quartinia*** Small numbers in the Ruhija area.
- Fawn-breasted Waxbill *Estrilda paludicola*** A couple in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*** Small numbers at Mabamba and in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Black-crowned Waxbill *Estrilda nonnula*** Seen well from Mabamba to Kibale.
- Quailfinch *Ortygospiza atricollis* (LO)** Livingstone saw some in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Bronze Mannikin** *Lonchura cucullatus* Common and widespread.

**Black-and-white Mannikin** *Lonchura bicolor* Seen at widespread locations during the tour.

**Maggie Mannikin** *Lonchura fringilloides* 1 apparently nest building at Mabamba Swamp.

**Village Indigobird (Red-billed Firefinch I)** *Vidua chalybeata* A few en route to Kibale Forest.

**Pin-tailed Whydah** *Vidua macroura* Widespread sightings with some in breeding plumage.

**Cape Wagtail** *Motacilla capensis* Singletons at Mabamba and the southwest.

**Mountain Wagtail** *Motacilla clara* A pair in Kibale Forest.

**African Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla aguimp* Everywhere!

**Yellow-throated Longclaw** *Macronyx croceus* Common at Mabamba and in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**African Pipit (Grassland P)** *Anthus cinnamomeus* Common at Mabamba and in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Plain-backed Pipit** *Anthus leucophrys* Common at Mabamba and in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Western Citril** *Crithagra frontalis* ◊ A few sightings at Mabamba and the southwest.

**Black-throated Canary (B-t Seedeater)** *Crithagra atrogularis* 1 for some near Buhoma.

**Brimstone Canary** *Crithagra sulphuratus* Widespread sightings.

**Thick-billed Seedeater** *Crithagra burtoni* 2 near Buhoma.

**Streaky Seedeater** *Crithagra striolatus* 1 for some at Ruhija.

**Golden-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza flaviventris* A few sightings in Queen Elizabeth NP.



*A juvenile Red-chested Cuckoo being fed by its host, a Cape Wagtail. (Peter Markham)*



Chimpanzee (Nik Borrow)

## MAMMALS

- Chimpanzee** *Pan troglodytes* Seen in Kibale NP and heard in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
- Eastern Gorilla** *Gorilla beringei* This year our group visited 'R' and 'H' groups.
- Central African Red Colobus** *Piliocolobus oustaleti* Seen at Bigodi Wetland.
- Guereza Colobus (Eastern Black-and-white C)** *Colobus guereza* Widespread sightings.
- Olive Baboon** *Papio anubis* Common and widespread.
- Grey-cheeked Mangabey (White-c M)** *Lophocebus albigena* Small numbers at Bigodi Wetland.
- Vervet Monkey (Savanna M)** *Cercopithecus pygerythrus* Widespread sightings.
- L'Hoest's Monkey** *Cercopithecus lhoesti* Seen in Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.
- Gentle Monkey (Blue M)** *Cercopithecus mitis* Seen in Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.
- Red-tailed Monkey (Black-cheeked White-nosed M)** *Cercopithecus ascanius* Common and widespread.
- Spectacled Galago** *Galago matschei* 1 seen at night at Ruhija.
- Demidoff's Galago** *Galagoides demidoff* 2 seen pre-dawn in Kibale Forest.
- Thomas's Galago** *Galagoides thomasi* 2 seen pre-dawn in Kibale Forest.
- Hammer Bat** *Hypsignathus monstrosus* (H) Heard at night at Kibale.
- Wahlberg's Epauletted Fruit Bat** *Epomophorus wahlbergi* Seen at night in Entebbe.
- Yellow-winged Bat** *Lavia frons* Seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Striped Ground Squirrel** *Euxerus erythropus* Small numbers seen at Mabamba.
- Boehm's Squirrel (B Bush S)** *Paraxerus boehmi* Seen in Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.
- Ruwenzori Sun Squirrel (Mountain S S)** *Heliosciurus ruwenzori* 1 sighting at Mubwindi Swamp.
- African Giant Squirrel (G Forest S)** *Protoxerus stangeri* 1 seen in Bwindi Impenetrable NP.
- Unstriped Grass Rat** *Arvicanthis niloticus* Seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Slender Mongoose** *Herpestes sanguinea* (NL) 1 on the journey back to Entebbe.
- Banded Mongoose** *Mungos mungo* The radio-collared troop in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Spotted Hyaena** *Crocota crocuta* (H, NL) Heard at night in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Rusty-spotted Genet** *Genetta maculata* 1 seen by some on the way to the pitta.
- African Savanna Elephant** *Loxodonta africana* Seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Common Zebra (Plains Z)** *Equus quagga* The race *boehmi* near Lake Mburo NP.
- Hippopotamus** *Hippopotamus amphibius* Common in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Giant Hog (G Forest H)** *Hylochoerus meinertzhageni* Seen on two occasions in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Common Warthog** *Phacochoerus africanus* Common in Queen Elizabeth NP.

**Lake Chad Buffalo** *Syncerus brachyceros* Common in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Nile Bushbuck** *Tragelaphus bor* 3 in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Johnston's Duiker** *Cephalophus johnstoni* (NL) 1 for some in Kibale NP.  
**Black-fronted Duiker** *Cephalophus nigrifrons* 4 seen at higher elevations in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.  
**Uganda Kob** *Kobus thomasi* Common in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Defassa Waterbuck** *Kobus defassa* Seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.  
**Impala (Common I)** *Aepyceros melampus* Small numbers seen near Lake Mburo NP.  
**Uganda Topi** *Damaliscus ugandae* Seen in the Ishasha sector of Queen Elizabeth NP.



Some sizeable Nile Crocodiles were seen in Queen Elizabeth National Park. (Nik Borrow)

## NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

### **African Yellow White-eye (Green W-e) *Zosterops senegalensis***

“A taxonomic review of the genus *Zosterops* in East Africa, with a revised list of species occurring in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania” has been recently published in *Scopus* 37 (1), January 2017. It suggests that the form *stuhmanni* that we encountered should be treated as a separate species; Green White-eye *Zosterops stuhmanni*. It remains to be seen if IOC will adopt this taxonomy.



Footnote (Nik Borrow)