



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! (Nik Borrow)

SHOEBILLS & GORILLAS OF UGANDA

25 JULY – 4 AUGUST 2016

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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! This is surely an essential destination for any world-travelling bird watcher as it is home to the incredible Shoebill, a good number of Albertine Rift endemics and is 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 of course primates in particular with Eastern Gorilla and Chimpanzee 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 experiences with the incredible Eastern Gorillas of Bwindi Impenetrable Forest were truly unforgettable! To rival this experience the incomparable Shoebill surrendered to our collective gaze on

day one and we were also lucky to find 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 embarked on a 'chimp trek' and the die-hard members of the group after 18 plus hours finally managed excellent looks at a displaying Green-breasted Pitta. 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 the little-known and rare Grauer's (or African Green) Broadbill. There was also a whole host of Albertine Rift endemic species that included gorgeous Doherty's Bushshrikes and Regal 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, 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, Black-billed Turaco, Ruwenzori Nightjar, Scarce Swift, Speckle-breasted and Elliot's Woodpeckers, Mountain Sooty Boubou, Mountain Oriole, Kakamega, Olive-breasted, Joyful, Toro Olive, White-throated and Yellow-streaked Greenbuls, White-browed Crombec, Mountain Yellow Warbler, 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, Grey-chested Babbler (heard only), Stuhlmann's Starling, Oberländer's Ground Thrush (heard only), Chapin's Flycatcher, White-bellied and Grey-winged Robin-Chats, Equatorial Akalat, Grey-headed and Red-chested Sunbirds, Golden-backed Weaver, Red-headed Bluebill, Kandt's Waxbill and Western Citril.



Like the Shoebill, the Hamerkop is in a monotypic family and is equally bizarre, if somewhat taken for granted as it is so common! (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 that was to become the 'ultimate' bird of the tour – the enormous and totally

unique Shoebill. Along the roadside we paused for a Western Banded Snake Eagle but we were keen to get on to our destination while it was still early. It was a somewhat gloomy morning and it looked as though rain might come our way as our local boatmen prepared our motorised wooden pirogues for the excursion out onto the lake. Hamerkops were present at the landing area as we boarded our simple craft which flushed jewel-like Malachite Kingfishers that darted from the reeds whilst chequered Pied Kingfishers hovered overhead as we wended our way around the creeks of the extensive swamps surrounding Lake Victoria. A few African Marsh Harriers sailed past, Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill and Grey Parrots flew over and we also noted White-faced Whistling Duck, Spur-winged Goose, Knob-billed and Yellow-billed Ducks, African Openbill, Hadada Ibis, Striated, Squacco, Black-headed and Purple Herons and Great, Intermediate and Little Egrets. Overhead Yellow-billed Kites and the vociferous African Fish Eagle were both to be expected in this habitat whilst in the dense swampland vegetation Blue-headed Coucals lurked and handsome Long-toed Lapwing, numerous African Jacanas, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, Winding Cisticolas and Swamp Flycatcher were all prominent as were the common Northern Brown-throated, Black-headed and Slender-billed Weavers and Fan-tailed Widowbird.

We had only travelled a short distance before we set eyes on the bird we had all come to see for as we turned a corner the grey hulk of the Shoebill could be seen standing in the reed beds. Binoculars and cameras were raised and then calamity upon calamity, for seemingly no reason at all the big bird spread its hefty wings and launched into the air and flying away from us all too quickly disappeared from view. We were all left feeling a little cheated but we were assured that there was another individual to be seen and wasting no time the pirogues were turned around and we were taken to another part of the swamp where sure enough a second Shoebill was waiting for us and this time completely unperturbed by our presence we ultimately all managed the sort of views that were more than we could ever have dreamed of for this individual was incredibly close and presumably these days, well habituated to its daily visitors. We watched this amazing creature for as long as we wished before finally leaving it in peace.



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)

We then turned our attentions to 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 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 three boats to get satisfactory views but finally all was well, and everybody dutifully ticked the bird so we headed back to terra firma.

A short drive away found us along the lakeshore looking for Orange Weaver. This bird has never been common here but increasing human activity in the area has destroyed many of the nesting bushes and this year we were struggling to locate them. However, we still managed to see a selection of the more common birds for out on the lake there were Pink-backed Pelican, Reed and White-breasted Cormorants, Grey-headed Gulls and moulting (and breeding plumaged) White-winged Terns, whilst along the scrubby lake shore and in the cultivation we found Spur-winged Lapwing, Common and Wood Sandpipers, Red-eyed Dove, Blue-spotted Wood Dove, African Green Pigeon, White-browed Coucal, Diederik and Klaas's Cuckoo, Speckled Mousebird, Broad-billed Roller, Woodland Kingfisher, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, Olive Bee-eater, Brown-crowned Tchagra, Dark-capped Bulbul, Yellow-throated Leaflove, White-headed Saw-wing, Green Hylia, Tawny-flanked and White-chinned Prinias, Grey-capped Warbler, Grey-backed Camaroptera, African Yellow White-eye, Splendid and Rüppell's Starlings, African Thrush, Brown-backed Scrub Robin, Collared, Scarlet-chested and Olive-bellied Sunbirds, gorgeous Red-chested Sunbirds, Northern Grey-headed Sparrow, Thick-billed Weaver, Spectacled, Black-necked, Village and Vieillot's Black Weavers, Red-billed Firefinch, Common Waxbill, Bronze and Black-and-white Mannikins, Pin-tailed Whydah and Cape and African Pied Wagtails.



A somewhat skittish Lesser Jacana (left) was much appreciated but the flock of breeding plumaged Weyns's Weavers certainly had the 'Wow-factor'! (right). (Nik Borrow)

As it was now nearing lunch time and the day heating up, we decided to head to a shady, leafy place where we could have our lunch and were delighted to find that the fruiting trees were home to some very fine Weyns's Weavers with some males in breeding plumage. In this little fruiting grove of tall trees we had our lunch on the grass whilst bizarrely top-knotted Great Blue Turacos, Ross's Turaco and noisy Eastern Plantain-eaters bounced around in the boughs above our heads. Speckled Tinkerbird and Grey-headed Nigrita put in appearances and after lunch we headed back to another area of open wet grassland where we had fun testing our identification skills on numerous hirundines that were swooping low all around us. The prize was the rare 'wintering' Blue Swallow and we saw at least three amongst the more numerous Grey-rumped Swallows along with Banded Martin and Barn, Angolan, Lesser Striped and Red-breasted Swallows.

Palm-nut Vulture and Long-crested and Wahlberg's Eagles were spotted as were some noisy 'Congo' Pied Hornbills and we also enjoyed views of Grey Crowned Crane, Double-toothed Barbet, Red-headed Lovebird, Rufous-naped Lark, Sooty Chat, Yellow-throated Longclaw and African Pipit. Before heading back to Entebbe we returned to the lakeshore and this time successfully located the Orange Weavers and also Golden-backed Weaver thus ending a highly successful first day. The journey added species such as Black-winged Kite, Lizard Buzzard, Little Swift, Grey Kestrel, Crowned Hornbill, Pied Crow 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 left Entebbe early and White-browed Robin Chat and an African Goshawk in the hotel garden along with a flock of Piapiacs in Entebbe bade us farewell as we made the tedious journey around Kampala. The city is the haunt of large numbers of Marabou Storks that act as the city's garbage disposal team, but finally we were mercifully released on the open road towards Kibale National Park. It was a long journey which was brightened considerably by a stop made at a convenient roadside swamp that yielded a simply stunning pair of colourful Papyrus Gonoleks and a couple of skulking White-winged Swamp Warblers. We also saw Black-crowned Night Heron and other species noted during the drive included Woolly-necked Stork, Grey Heron, Speckled Pigeon, Laughing Dove, African Palm Swift, Striped Kingfisher, Tropical Boubou, Grey-backed and Northern Fiscals, Fork-tailed Drongo, African Blue Flycatcher, Mosque Swallow, Red-faced Cisticola, Bronzy Sunbird, House Sparrow, Compact Weaver and Black-crowned Waxbill.

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. We had our first looks at some crazy looking Grey-headed (split from Grey-throated) Barbets with their 'rhinoceros' nasal-tufts and noisy and excitable Chubb's Cisticolas were in the undergrowth. Other species included White-headed Wood Hoopoe, Yellow-throated and Yellow-rumped Tinkerbirds, Streaky-throated (sometimes split from Hairy-

breasted) Barbet, Willcocks's Honeyguide, Dusky Tit, Western Nicator, Slender-billed and Honeyguide Greenbuls, Lowland Masked Apalis (heard only), Buff-throated Apalis, Purple-headed and Chestnut-winged Starlings, African Dusky Flycatcher, Dusky-blue Flycatcher, Northern Double-collared Sunbird and Dark-backed Weaver. The remaining drive to our lodge took us through somewhat birdless tea estates although the African Stonechat seems to thrive in them and we arrived before dark.

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 call at first light. Our guide led us through the darkness into the sleeping forest that still had not yet stirred and in the pitch black we waited and fruitlessly strained our ears to catch the sound of the frog-like "blip" of the pitta. We had been told that the birds had been displaying up until two days previously but seemed to have now fallen quiet and indeed nothing we could do during the morning could motivate the birds to call for us. Gradually the inhabitants of the forest were waking up and the dawn chorus began. However from the pitta itself we heard nothing and as the birds were apparently not displaying there was little else to do but walk the trails through their territories in our quest and hope for the best. We spent all day looking for the bird and also Kibale's other star attraction – Chimpanzee, which was also proving extremely elusive despite the fact that Kibale Forest 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! Even though most of our attention was given over to pitta and chimp searching we did manage to coax Scaly-breasted and Brown Illadopsises into view. A male Narina Trogon showed reasonably well up in the canopy unlike a flighty Red-chested Owlet. At lunchtime a Crowned Eagle displayed in the skies high above us and also seen were Blue-breasted Kingfisher, Chestnut Wattle-eye, Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher, Plain and White-throated Greenbuls and Blue-throated Brown and Olive Sunbirds. In the mid afternoon after much repeated muddy stream crossing, we finally caught up with some Chimpanzees feeding on some figs and as always this close encounter with our primate relatives was an emotionally spiritual moment in time. Having fed these great apes descended from the trees and we were privileged to be able to follow them through the forest and watch them resting and feeding.



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

The disappointment of 'missing' the pitta was almost too much to bear for some of the group who were determined not to give up and so a dedicated bunch of five people slipped back into the forest with Livingstone the next morning to see if they could do any better. In Daragh's own words, this is what came to pass:

"Sometimes things go to plan and sometimes they don't. The group spent the best part of a day scouring the forest in vain for Green breasted Pitta. Five went back for more the next morning but after another six hours

of efforts they again drew a blank. However, even in a tropical forest you are never far away from the mobile phone these days and as we trudged back towards park H.Q. a call came through that a pitta was displaying in another part of the reserve. Pandemonium followed as we ran back to the headquarters, passing a Red-capped Robin Chat en route - literally a case of tick and run! Back at base we piled into our vehicle and, after negotiating stray Olive Baboons and a White-tailed Ant Thrush on the track, we finally made it to the pitta stakeout. An agonising wait then followed while we waited for another birding group to finish their viewing. Finally we crept into position.... only for the bird to fly off! Fortunately it only flew some 20 metres before resuming its display. We then crawled on our hands and knees before all of our group finally, finally enjoyed prolonged views of this spectacular bird as it performed its amazing display - leaping up and down on its perch like a demented toy.”



Whilst some of the group went back into Kibale Forest for a second (successful!) attempt for the Green-breasted Pitta (top left) the rest opted to take a walk around nearby Bigodi Wetland where African Pygmy Kingfisher (top right), Central African Red Colobus (bottom left) and Uganda’s National Bird – the Grey Crowned Crane (bottom right) were all seen well. (Nik Borrow)

The rest of us started our day with a noisy juvenile Verreaux’s Eagle Owl in the garden of our lodge and then embarked on a lengthy and thoroughly enjoyable walk around Bigodi Wetland that produced a number of interesting and often very showy species. This is a community-operated nature reserve that always provides some excellent birding being a mixture of cultivation, papyrus swamp and riparian woodland. The highlight of

the morning perhaps belonged to at least three tiny White-spotted Flufftails that crept to and fro in the shadows on the edges of the swamp as a (leader-only) Shining-blue Kingfisher flashed past. A pretty African Pygmy Kingfisher posed for us, striking Eastern Yellow-billed Barbet, Red-headed Malimbe, Red-headed Bluebill and brilliant breeding plumaged male Black Bishop were all admired and we also saw Black Cuckoo, Cardinal Woodpecker, Little Greenbul, Green Crombec, Violet-backed Starling, White-tailed Ant Thrush, Ashy Flycatcher, Green-headed, Green-throated and Superb Sunbirds and White-breasted Nigrita. At a forest stream a Cassin's Flycatcher sat on a rock and when the group was finally reunited we were all thrilled to find a pair of Speckle-breasted Woodpeckers at our lodge where there was also Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Rock Martin, Variable Sunbird and Yellow-fronted and Brimstone Canaries. After lunch we set off for Queen Elizabeth National Park and a completely new set of birds.

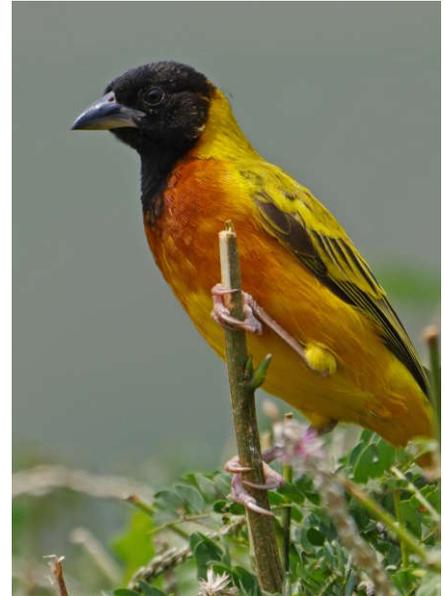
We stopped for a pair of secretive Joyful Greenbuls and colourful African Emerald and Red-chested Cuckoos en route and also paused briefly at the equator for the obligatory tourist shots before reaching the open savannas of Queen Elizabeth National Park. Despite being incredibly dry and dusty we were exceedingly fortunate to find two African Crakes in the road ahead of us almost immediately and Red-necked Spurfowl were easily seen. Vibrantly colourful Black-headed Gonoleks proved easy to see and other species included White-rumped Swift, Blue-naped Mousebird, Lanner Falcon, Meyer's Parrot, Flappet Lark, Moustached Grass Warbler, Croaking Cisticola, Lesser Masked Weaver, Red-billed Quelea and White-winged Widowbird. We arrived at the sumptuous Mweya Lodge for a two nights stay exactly at park closing time. During our time spent in the area we explored the extensive savannas, acacia woodland 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!



Queen Elizabeth National Park is normally an excellent place to see African Crake (left) and this year Senegal Lapwings (right) were also numerous. (Nik Borrow)

Our time spent in Queen Elizabeth National Park is always considered to be yet another of the great highlights of the tour and as always our day began before dawn for we took with us a picnic breakfast and set out in the early morning half-light. Along the road in the cool of the morning we found Plain-backed Pipit, Yellow-throated Longclaw and Rufous-naped and Flappet Larks. Black-lored Babblers called from the shrubby clumps of vegetation that a few non-breeding Black Coucals had claimed as perching posts and a brief Fan-tailed Grassbird, Marsh Tchagra and some small flocks of Fawn-breasted Waxbill were also found. A female Western Marsh Harrier quartering the high grasslands was presumably 'over-summering' and scattered out over the close-cropped Kasenyi Plains were Senegal and Crowned Lapwings and Collared

Pratincole. Although there were plenty of Zitting Cisticolas, we only located a single Red-capped Lark and other plains birds included White-backed Vulture, Bateleur, Tawny Eagle, Black-bellied Bustard and Mourning Collared and Ring-necked Doves. Luckily we were also guided to a well-hidden Lion that we would never have seen without the help of our guard escort on a motorbike who fearlessly scouted the creature out in the dense thickets. Other large mammals included African Savanna Elephant, Common Warthog, Lake Chad Buffalo (often sporting Yellow-billed Oxpeckers!), Nile Bushbuck, Uganda Kob and Defassa Waterbuck. There were good numbers of albeit distant Lesser Flamingos on a huge crater-lake but the main waterbird extravaganza was yet to come!



Lunchtime is not a dull affair at Mweya Lodge for the feeders by the dining tables attract a colourful array of hungry birds including gorgeous Rüppell's Starlings (left) and Black-headed Weaver (right). (Nik Borrow)

At lunchtime 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 and in particular a sizeable flock of African Skimmers and a few Gull-billed Terns.



The African Skimmer experience on the Kazinga Channel is a sight that definitely cannot be missed. (Nik Borrow)



The boat trip is a great way to view the park's healthy population of African Savanna Elephants (top left). A snowy white Malachite Kingfisher (top right) has been gracing the reedy banks of the channel this year. An 'over-summering' Common Sandpiper rests on the horns of a 'Lake Chad' Buffalo enjoying the cooling waters of the Kazinga Channel (bottom). (Nik Borrow)

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 smaller numbers of Egyptian Goose, Pink-backed Pelican, Yellow-billed Stork, African Sacred Ibis, African Spoonbill, a few Goliath Herons, Black Crake, Water Thick-knee, Black-winged Stilt, African Wattled Lapwing, Kittlitz's, and Three-banded Plover. A smattering of Palearctic waders included Wood, Common and Marsh Sandpipers, Common Greenshank, Ruff and a surprising Black-tailed Godwit. African Fish Eagles stood sentinel, there were huge numbers of Hippopotamus and Lake Chad Buffalo, a few Nile Crocodiles and some enormous African Savanna Elephants coming down to drink. Along the reedy edges Lesser Swamp Warbler was glimpsed and Little Bee-eater, Red-throated Bee-eater and African Hoopoe added brilliant splashes of colour whilst a snowy white Malachite Kingfisher was a sight to behold!

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 but other species included Helmeted Guineafowl, Crested Francolin, African Grey Hornbill, Spot-flanked Barbet, Nubian Woodpecker, Black-crowned Tchagra, African Paradise Flycatcher, Arrow-marked Babbler, Wattled Starling, Snowy-crowned Robin Chat, Marico and Copper Sunbirds and Lesser Masked Weaver. In spite of staying out till dusk fell somewhat unusually we did not see or hear any nightjars but this loss did not impact on the general success of this most successful and enjoyable day.



Striking Crowned Lapwings (left) can be found on the open Kasenya Plains, Trilling Cisticola (middle) prefers the Acacia dotted savanna and Uganda Topi (right) may be encountered in the Ishasha sector of the park. (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 the impressively named Carruthers's Cisticola into view and managed to get views of more Papyrus Gonoleks and a male Little Bittern. Travelling through the park we hunted out Trilling and Stout Cisticolas and some Southern Red Bishops that were still clinging on to their breeding plumage. A productive stop in some open Acacia woodland gave us Common Scimitarbill, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Orange-breasted Bushshrike, Black and Red-shouldered Cuckooshrikes, Grey Penduline Tit, Buff-bellied Warbler, White-browed Scrub Robin and a male Purple-banded Sunbird. Raptors were well represented during the drive and we noted singles of Lappet-faced Vulture, Martial Eagle, Ayres's Hawk Eagle, Gabar Goshawk and Little Sparrowhawk. The habitats that we passed through during the day were amazingly varied for we saw Green-winged Pytilia and Golden-breasted Bunting in the scrubby bush lands, a family of Blue-throated Roller in the dense high forests, Temminck's Coursers and Uganda Topi on the open grass plains and White-headed Barbets feeding in the scattered fig trees that we searched in vain for elusive

'tree-climbing' Lions. Other species during the day included Grey-headed Kingfisher, African Grey Woodpecker, Western Black-headed Batis and Wire-tailed and Red-rumped Swallows.

Our next destination was Buhoma situated at the edge of Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park. We arrived at the end of the day taking in some Mackinnon's Shrikes on the roadside wires and settled into our comfortable and welcoming lodge with rooms that overlooked the valley and the impressive steep forested slopes beyond. We had arrived at the wonderfully named Impenetrable Forest with the promise of seeing a selection of fascinating Albertine Rift endemics and other exciting forest birds. So named because of the steepness of the hillsides, rather than the density of the vegetation, 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.



A selection of birds and a butterfly from our time at Buhoma on the edge of Bwindi Impenetrable Forest: Black-billed Turaco (top left, Nik Borrow), the Albertine Rift endemic Mountain Masked Apalis, Lühder's Bushshrike (top right and bottom left, Ben Loehnen), Eastern Blue Beauty Butterfly and a skulking Equatorial Akalat (bottom middle and bottom right, Nik Borrow)

The next few days were spent trying to hunt out the specialties of the forest. We hadn't even ventured into the forest before there were great sightings to be obtained for in the morning half-light there were Grey-winged and Red-capped Robin-Chats on the main track. The hoots of a beautiful Many-coloured Bushshrike

allowed us to quickly locate the bird and both Bocage's and Lühder's Bushshrikes put in an appearance. There were also Buff-spotted and Elliot's Woodpeckers and nest building Black-billed Weavers whilst Scarce Swifts and Black Saw-wings were in the skies above us. 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, Mountain Masked Apalis, Red-throated Alethe and ultimately the recently described Willard's Sooty Boubou. One of the greatest successes was that after some persistence we all actually saw the tiny Neumann's (or Short-tailed) Warbler. This Albertine Rift endemic is notoriously difficult to see as it moves very fast on or near the ground and usually in the densest vegetation. A fine supporting cast was also present and we managed views of a White-bellied Robin-Chat that was teased out of the shadows. Furtive Equatorial Akalats were eventually seen and we saw several individuals of the supposedly 'rare' but probably simply overlooked Chapin's Flycatcher. Black-billed Turacos were reluctant to show but finally one showy bird flaunted itself. Grey-headed Sunbird allowed views as did Stuhlmann's Starlings and liberal splashes of colour was provided by species such as Bar-tailed Trogon, Black Bee-eater, Yellow-spotted Barbet, Mountain Oriole and Brown-capped Weaver. An array of greenbuls included Red-tailed Bristlebill and Kakamega, Olive-breasted, Cabanis's and Red-tailed Greenbuls as well as Ansorge's Greenbul, a species first discovered in the country during BirdQuest's 2001 Uganda tour. Other species seen during our stay included Western Bronze-naped Pigeon, Cassin's Honeybird, African Broadbill, African Shrike-flycatcher, Chinspot Batis, Chestnut Wattle-eye, Pink-footed Puffback, Petit's Cuckooshrike, Black-throated and Grey Apalises, Olive-green Camaroptera, Black-faced Rufous Warbler, Fraser's Rufous Thrush, Grey-throated Tit-Flycatcher, White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher, Dusky-blue and Sooty Flycatchers, Little Green and Grey-chinned Sunbirds, Green Twinspot and Thick-billed Seed-eater. For one person who opted not to go for the gorillas, a fine male Jameson's Antpecker was a just reward and even the decidedly little-known Oberländer's Ground Thrush was heard that day.



Members of 'R' group of Eastern Gorilla. (Ben Loehnen)

Buhoma is particularly famous for its gorilla trekking opportunities and most 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 led by Mwirima and Habinyanja or 'H' group led by Makara. After the lengthy briefing session we set off on our 'trek'. It was the luck of the draw how far away the animals are as the gorillas obviously move daily in search of food but this year 'R' group was only some 15 minutes away whilst 'H' group was a couple of hours! During the excursion, the pace is always geared to that of the slowest member of the group and expert guides, guards 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.



Members of 'R' group of Eastern Gorilla. (Ben Loehnen)

It is difficult for me to describe one's actual feelings whilst spending time amongst these great apes for the single hour and so this time here are tour participant Howard's own words describing the adventure:

"We gathered at daybreak for our instructions from the head guide at the gorilla trekking centre at Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, where we were told that we should not go on the trek if we were ill, whereupon I sneezed loudly to everyone's amusement except my own. Happily, I was allowed to go on. Livingstone had managed to negotiate a visit for our group to the troupe closest to the centre (we had been warned about possible six hour return trips) and in fact we only needed to take a 15 minute hike before we approached the gorillas, although this was long enough for me to fall flat on my back when not paying enough attention to my footing down a steep slope.

The first gorilla we saw was a 'blackback' male (no silverback yet) foraging on the other side of a fast running stream. These males stay on the outside of the main group to avoid altercations with the silverback, although they still travel with the group as a whole. We had to cross the stream – the good news was that there were stepping stones; the bad news was that most of them were actually under the water! Having got across with the help of the guides and porters, we were about to approach the main group when a torrent of water began to fall from the top of the trees in front of us, as an unseen gorilla who must have had a very full bladder relieved him or herself in the canopy above. We waited for a few moments until the flow subsided and then the head guide pressed on with me immediately behind him. Unfortunately the water was only a prelude to the remainder of this gorilla's ablutions and the guide and I were both splattered!

Undeterred, within a few moments we were with the main group, comprising the silverback, seven females with four young, two of which were very young. They seemed entirely at ease and unconcerned by our presence even though we were no more than three metres from them in an open area and were firing off literally thousands of photographs between the eight of us. The gorillas must think the interminable clicks were the way we humans communicated! We watched in awe as the gorillas lounged around, groomed each other and showed affection. Two of the youngsters, however, seemed to be showing off to us, climbing saplings and practicing their gymnastics and watching us as if expecting our approval. So cute!

We were told that we could only spend an hour with the group, and this period was counted down to the minute. We also spent some time with the blackback male group of four, but eventually our hour had expired

(I am sure it was only ten minutes) and we were led away. All of us were thrilled by this unique experience, which is certainly different from anything else I have ever done. I am sure we will always remember it.”

The emotional and spiritual experience of seeing these Great Apes always more than compensates for any physical discomfort or hardship 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.

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 where we found Black Sparrowhawk, Augur Buzzard, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Singing Cisticola, Holub’s Golden Weaver, African Firefinch and Western Citril.

At ‘The Neck’, a narrow corridor of forest connecting two sections of the park we picked up a few more forest species and in particular were pleased to find a singing Toro Olive Greenbul and although the bird was as skulking as ever we managed to get some good views of it. The song is not well known and it was pleasing to get some excellent recordings. Also here were some striking Black-faced Prinias and we also noted Grey Cuckooshrike and Abyssinian Thrush. The intensive cultivation in these high altitude hills has I fear put paid to some of the more difficult species and despite an intensive search for Dusky Twinspot we only came away with Yellow-bellied and Kandt’s Waxbills and Yellow-crowned Canary in the weedy fields.



We enjoyed exceptionally good views of Black-faced Prinia (left) as we journeyed towards the Ruhija area where the fabulous Doherty's Bushshrike (right) was also seen well. (Nik Borrow)

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, wing flicking, tail-pumping Yellow-streaked Greenbul, Ruwenzori Hill Babbler, Thick-billed Honeyguide and Streaky Seedeater 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 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 and also seen was our first Strange Weaver and glorious Regal Sunbird. Evening was approaching and so we boarded our vehicles and drove slowly along the road that bisects the park in search of Handsome Francolin. Our luck was in for it wasn't too long before we found a pair feeding quietly at the edge of the road. Fuelled by our success we stayed out until dusk fell and promptly on cue the desired Ruwenzori Nightjar also treated us to some fine flyby views and then settled in the road for more! It had been another great day and we settled into our comfortable 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. Most 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 fledged young and had left the nest thus making these tiny birds harder to find. The trail was very birdy so getting to our destination was not an easy task. During our descent we saw skulking groups of Mountain Illadopsis and a pretty Archer's Ground Robin in the shadowy undergrowth but as time was of the essence we only gave a singing Grey-chested Babbler a brief opportunity to show itself otherwise this notorious skulker could have wasted much valuable time. We vowed to try again on the return journey! Mountain Buzzards 'mewed' overhead, a Lagden's Bushshrike could be heard calling in the valley and eventually we reached the area where the broadbill family had last been seen. The excitement mounted because there seemed to be a great deal of bird activity and our local guide was convinced he had just heard the broadbill when the Lagden's Bushshrike popped into view! To say that there was some sort of panic ensued is probably an understatement and the room on the trail that ran along the steep hillside was not conducive to easy viewing but amazingly everyone managed to get onto what turned out to be a pair of Lagden's Bushshrikes that seemed quite happy displaying to each other with associated hoots and bill-snapping. Other species in the party included Fine-banded Woodpecker, Ruwenzori Batis, White-bellied Crested Flycatcher and Yellow-eyed Black Flycatcher but the broadbills seemed to have vanished into thin air.



The stars of Mubwindi Swamp – Lagden's Bushshrike (left) and the tiny, green ball of feathers that is known as Grauer's (or African Green) Broadbill. (Nik Borrow)

We decided to continue and try our luck with the Grauer's Swamp Warbler. Along the way there were glimpses of White-browed Crombec and Dusky Crimsonwing but little else and we got to the swamp only to find a pair of Grauer's Swamp Warblers immediately in full view! Almost quite unheard of for this normally difficult species but we were very happy about this event, as we were able to quickly return to the broadbill spot. According to one of the porters there had been no sign of the birds whilst we had been away so we settled down to listen and wait watchfully. It wasn't long before we heard the bird party returning from its foray into the forest and we couldn't believe our luck when the high-pitched calls were heard and the local guide located a pair of Grauer's (or African Green) Broadbills. We were incredibly lucky that the birds chose a tree to sit in that was next to the path and they remained there for long enough for us all to have prolonged great views and rather than walk away we even ate our lunch whilst watching them! The experience was nothing short of sublime.

There was little left to do now but start the long climb back up to the top. We picked up Slender-billed Starling and White-starred Robin along the path but the forest had fallen very quiet with the threat of oncoming rain and the gamble with the Grey-chested Babbler had not paid off. We reached the cars without getting too wet and still had some time in the late afternoon to pick up a few other species that were still missing, namely Western Tinkerbird, Mountain Yellow Warbler and Blue-headed Sunbird but the weather was turning very gloomy and with failing light we called it a day.

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 sat on roadside pylons and on a small pool Little Grebe, Common Moorhen and Red-billed Teal were seen. The 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. As we arrived Black-faced Go-away-bird was seen and we enjoyed a flock of highly desirable Brown-chested Lapwings whilst having lunch. A pair of African Hawk-Eagles circled round and there were plenty of Lilac-breasted Rollers by the main road and Common Kestrel and African Hobby were also spotted.

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 30 migrant Brown-chested Lapwings (right). (Nik Borrow)



Members of 'R' group of Eastern Gorilla. (Ben Loehnen)

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>

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

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata* 1 only at Mabamba Swamp.

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis* 4 at Mabamba Swamp.

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* 2 at Mabamba Swamp.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* Most common in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Yellow-billed Duck *Anas undulata* Common at Mabamba Swamp.

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha* A pair seen near Lake Mburo NP.

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* Seen daily in Queen Elizabeth NP.

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

Handsome Francolin *Pternistis nobilis* ◊ Great looks in Bwindi at Ruhija.

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



Red-necked Spurfowl is both common and easy to see in Queen Elizabeth NP. (Nik Borrow)

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* 1 near Lake Mburo NP.

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

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis* Easily seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

African Openbill (A Open-billed Stork) *Anastomus lamelligerus* Seen well by Lake Victoria.

(African) Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia [episcopus] microscelis* 1 en route to Kibale and 4 to Entebbe. See note.

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumenifer* Common and widespread.

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* Queen Elizabeth NP and in the Kabale area.

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash* Common and widespread.

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba* Small numbers in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* A male of the resident race *pavesii* at the Kazinga channel.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* 2 at Buloba.

Striated Heron (Green-backed H) *Butorides striata* Seen at Mabamba and Buloba.

Squacco Heron (Common S H) *Ardeola ralloides* Common at Mabamba Swamp and 1 in Queen Elizabeth NP.

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

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Widespread sightings in small numbers.

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

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* 3 individuals in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* Singletons at Mabamba and Kabale.

Great Egret *Ardea alba* Widespread sightings in small numbers.

Intermediate Egret (Yellow-billed E) *Egretta [intermedia] brachyrhyncha* 2 at Mabamba Swamp. See Note.

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 encounters with 2 at Mabamba Swamp.

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C) *Microcarbo africanus* Mabamba, Buloba and Queen Elizabeth NP.
White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax lucidus* Most numerous 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.



Black-winged Kite (left) and Ayres's Hawk-Eagle (right). (Nik Borrow)

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus* (E) Around Entebbe and Kampala.
White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* (E) Seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.
Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotus* (V) Just 1 in 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* 2 in the Mabamba area.
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.
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.
Ayres's Hawk-Eagle *Hieraaetus ayresii* A pale bird in Queen Elizabeth NP.
Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* 1 in Queen Elizabeth NP.
African Hawk-Eagle *Aquila spilogaster* A pair near Lake Mburo.
Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus* A number of widespread sightings particularly by roadsides.
Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar* 1 in Queen Elizabeth NP.
Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates* Small numbers in the Murchison area.
African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro* First seen well in the garden of our hotel in Entebbe.
Shikra *Accipiter badius* Seen near Mabamba and en route to Entebbe.
Little Sparrowhawk *Accipiter minullus* Flight views in Queen Elizabeth NP.
Black Sparrowhawk (Great S) *Accipiter melanoleucus* Flight views for some near Buhoma.
Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* A sighting of a 'summering' female in Queen Elizabeth NP on 29/7.
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.
Mountain Buzzard *Buteo oreophilus* ◊ (NT) 2 in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
Augur Buzzard *Buteo augur* Small numbers in the southwest.
Black-bellied Bustard *Lissotis melanogaster* 2 sightings in Queen Elizabeth NP.

White-spotted Flufftail *Sarothrura pulchra* 3 watched in the shadows of Bigodi Swamp.
African Crake *Crex egregia* Three sightings in Queen Elizabeth NP.
Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostra* Easily seen along the Kazinga Channel.
Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* 1 near Lake Mburo.
Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum* (E) Plenty of great 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.
Long-toed Lapwing *Vanellus crassirostris* Seen well at Mabamba Swamp.
Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus* Easily seen at Mabamba Swamp and Queen Elizabeth NP.
Senegal Lapwing (S Plover) *Vanellus lugubris* 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 30 near Lake Mburo NP.
Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius* Small numbers in Queen Elizabeth NP.
Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris* 1 in Queen Elizabeth NP.
Lesser Jacana *Microparra capensis* Great looks at a rather skittish bird at Mabamba Swamp.
African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus* Easily seen in appropriate habitat.
Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* A surprise sighting of 1 of these Palearctic migrants, Kazinga Channel on 29/7.
Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* 2 of these Palearctic migrants on the Kazinga Channel.



This Marsh Sandpiper was one of several Palearctic migrant waders seen on the Kazinga channel. (Nik Borrow)

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* 3 of these Palearctic migrants on the Kazinga Channel.
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* 1 of these Palearctic migrants at Mabamba and 5+ on the Kazinga Channel.
Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* 2 of these Palearctic migrants at Mabamba and 4+ on the Kazinga Channel.
Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants in Queen Elizabeth NP.
Temminck's Courser *Cursorius temminckii* 3 in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* 10+ in Queen Elizabeth NP.

African Skimmer *Rynchops flavirostris* (NT) Great looks at the large flock on the Kazinga Channel.

Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus* Good numbers at Mabamba Swamp and Queen Elizabeth NP.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* Small numbers on the Kazinga Channel.

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* Palearctic migrants on Lake Victoria and Kazinga Channel.

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* (H) Heard only in Kibale Forest.

African Olive Pigeon *Columba arquatrix* (NL) Bob saw one at Mubwindi Swamp.

Western Bronze-naped Pigeon *Columba iriditorques* Heard in Kibale Forest and seen briefly in Bwindi NP.

Mourning Collared Dove *Streptopelia decipiens* A few 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* ◊ Heard in Kibale but we enjoyed good views in Bwindi Impenetrable NP.

Ross's Turaco *Musophaga rossae* First seen well in the Mabamba area.

Black-faced Go-away-bird *Corythaixoides [personatus] leopoldi* 1 seen in the Lake Mburo NP area. See Note.

Eastern Plantain-eater (E Grey P-e) *Crinifer zonurus* Widespread sightings of this noisy bird.

Blue-headed Coucal *Centropus monachus* 2 at Mabamba Swamp and usually associated with papyrus in Uganda.

White-browed Coucal *Centropus superciliosus* Widespread sightings throughout the savannas.

Black Coucal *Centropus grillii* Small numbers in mostly non-breeding plumage in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Blue Malkoha (Yellowbill) *Ceuthmochares aereus* Sightings of single birds in Kibale and Bwindi forests for some.

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



A male Diederik Cuckoo with a caterpillar at Mabamba. (Nik Borrow) An African Wood Owl in Kibale Forest (Ben Loehnen)

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* Best views were at Mabamba Swamp.

African Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus* Best views were near Kibale Forest.

Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx mechowi* ◊ (H) Heard in Kibale and Bwindi Forests.

Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus* Just one sighting at Bigodi Swamp.

Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius* Just one sighting near Kibale Forest.

African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii* 1 seen by the lucky pitta trekkers in Kibale Forest.

Verreaux's Eagle-Owl *Bubo lacteus* A noisy juvenile pre-dawn in our lodge garden at Kibale for some.

Red-chested Owlet *Glaucidium tephronotum* Seen in flight in Kibale Forest.

Ruwenzori Nightjar *Caprimulgus ruwenzorii* ◊ 2 were seen at dusk at Ruhija.

Swamp Nightjar *Caprimulgus natalensis* (NL) Bob saw 1 flushed by the car in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Scarce Swift ◊ *Schoutedenapus myoptilus* Seen over Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* Common in suitable habitat.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* A few seen over our lodge at Kibale.

Common Swift (Eurasian S) *Apus apus* Small numbers of this Palearctic migrant over Queen Elizabeth 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.

Blue-throated Roller *Eurystomus gularis* An adult with 2 juveniles in the forested part of Queen Elizabeth NP.

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus* First seen well in the Mabamba area.

Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala* An odd sighting in Kibale Forest and again in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti* Widespread roadside sightings in appropriate habitat.

Blue-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon malimbica* Seen in Kibale Forest and Queen Elizabeth NP.

Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis* Common and widespread.

African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ispidina picta* Seen well at Bigodi and in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus* Easily seen in habitat including a white bird along the Kazinga Channel.

Shining-blue Kingfisher *Alcedo quadribrachys* (LO) Nik saw 1 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 Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus* Small numbers in Murchison Falls NP.

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus* Easily seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Blue-breasted Bee-eater *Merops variegatus* Easily seen at Mabamba.



Colourful beauties left to right; Woodland Kingfisher, Blue-breasted Bee-eater and Red-throated Bee-eater. (Nik Borrow)

Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater *Merops oreobates* Numerous sightings in the Bwindi area.

Red-throated Bee-eater *Merops bulocki* At least 8 in Queen Elizabeth NP.

White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis* A few seen by some in the Mabamba area and en route to Kibale.

Olive Bee-eater (Madagascar B-e) *Merops superciliosus* Seen well at Mabamba Swamp and Queen Elizabeth NP.

African Hoopoe *Upupa africana* 2 sightings in Queen Elizabeth NP.
White-headed Wood Hoopoe *Phoeniculus bollei* Groups seen in Kibale and in Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.
Common Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas* Seen by all in Queen Elizabeth NP.
Crowned Hornbill *Lophoceros alboterminatus* Widespread sightings in small numbers.
Congo Pied Hornbill (African P H) *Lophoceros [f.] fasciatus* ♦ A pair seen well at Mabamba. See Note.
African Grey Hornbill *Lophoceros nasutus* A few seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.
Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill *Bycanistes subcylindricus* Pleasingly numerous during the tour.
Grey-headed Barbet (G- throated B) *Gymnobucco [bonapartei] cinereiceps* ♦ Kibale and Bwindi. See Note.



Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill (left) and the bizarre Grey-headed Barbet recently split by some from Grey-throated. (Ben Loehnen)

Speckled Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus scolopaceus* More often heard than seen in the lower altitude forests.
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* Seen well in the Ishasha sector of Queen Elizabeth NP.
Double-toothed Barbet *Lybius bidentatus* First seen well at Mabamba.
Eastern Yellow-billed Barbet *Trachyphonus [p.] purpuratus* Seen well at Bigodi Wetland, heard in Bwindi. See Note.
Cassin's Honeybird *Prodotiscus insignis* 1 in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
Willcocks's Honeyguide *Indicator willcocksii* ♦ 1 was scoped in Kibale Forest.
Thick-billed Honeyguide *Indicator conirostris* 1 was seen at Ruhija.
Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor (H)* Heard at Bigodi Swamp.
Nubian Woodpecker *Campethera nubica* 2 sightings in Queen Elizabeth NP.
Fine-banded Woodpecker (Tullberg's W) *Campethera [tullbergi] taeniolaema* 2 seen in Bwindi Forest. See Note.
Buff-spotted Woodpecker *Campethera nivosa* A pair seen at Buhoma.
Brown-eared Woodpecker *Campethera caroli* 1 seen by the pitta hunters in Kibale Forest.
Speckle-breasted Woodpecker *Dendropicos poecilolaemus* ♦ A pair seen well at our lodge at Kibale.
Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens* Widespread sightings from Bigodi Swamp to Bwindi NP.
Elliot's Woodpecker *Dendropicos elliotii* Seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
African Grey Woodpecker *Dendropicos goertae* Singletons at Kibale and Queen Elizabeth NP.
Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* 1 for some during the drive back to Entebbe.
Grey Kestrel *Falco ardosiaceus* Widespread sightings in appropriate habitat.
African Hobby *Falco cuvierii* 1 for some during the drive back to Entebbe.

Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* (V) Seen in flight over Mabamba and Bigodi Swamps.

Meyer's Parrot (Brown P) *Poicephalus meyeri* Seen in flight over Queen Elizabeth NP.

Red-headed Lovebird *Agapornis pullarius* Flight views at Mabamba and near Buhoma.

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

Grauer's Broadbill (African Green B) *Pseudocalyptomena graueri* ◊ (V) A pair seen well at Mubwindi Swamp.

Green-breasted Pitta *Pitta reichenowi* The big reward after some 18+ hours of searching for the dedicated ones.

African Shrike-flycatcher *Megabyas flammulatus* A family party in Bwindi Impenetrable NP.

Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher (Vanga F) *Bias musicus* First seen well in the Mabamba area.

Ruwenzori Batis *Batis diops* ◊ Seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable NP.

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

Western Black-headed Batis *Batis erlangeri* (NL) 1 for Peter in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Chestnut Wattle-eye *Platysteira castanea* A few seen in Kibale and in Bwindi Impenetrable NP.

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

Lagden's Bushshrike ◊ *Malaconotus lagdeni* (NT) A displaying pair seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable NP.

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

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

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* 3 seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Brown-crowned Tchagra (Brown-headed T) *Tchagra australis* Seen at Mabamba and Ruhija.

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* Seen at Ruhija.

Mountain Black Boubou (Montane Sooty B) *Laniarius poensis* ◊ 1 seen in Bwindi Impenetrable NP.

Willard's Sooty Boubou *Laniarius willardi* ◊ Seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.



Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher (left) and Willard's Sooty Boubou "old blue-eyes" was back in Bwindi Impenetrable NP. (Nik Borrow)

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

Tropical Boubou *Laniarius major* Several widespread sightings.

Papyrus Gonolek *Laniarius mufumbiri* ◊ (NT) Incredible views of this papyrus specialist this year.

Black-headed Gonolek *Laniarius erythrogaster* Especially numerous in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Brubru *Nilaus afer* (NL) 1 for some in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Grey Cuckooshrike *Coracina caesia* Good views in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Black Cuckooshrike *Campephaga flava* Sightings in Queen Elizabeth NP, Ruhija and near Lake Mburo NP.

Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike *Campephaga phoenicea* 2 males in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Petit's Cuckooshrike *Campephaga petiti* Small numbers in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

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.

Northern Fiscal *Lanius humeralis* Widespread sightings during the tour.

Western Oriole (W Black-headed O) *Oriolus brachyrhynchus* (H) Remained stubbornly out of sight 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* Seen well in Kibale Forest.

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis* Seen from Queen Elizabeth NP to Ruhija.

Piapiac *Ptilostomus afer* Seen in Entebbe.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* Common and widespread.

White-necked Raven (White-naped R) *Corvus albicollis* (NL) 1 for some as we left Ruhija.

African Blue Flycatcher *Elminia longicauda* Widespread sightings of this dainty bird.

White-tailed Blue Flycatcher *Elminia albicauda* Seen well in the Bwindi area.

White-bellied Crested Flycatcher *Elminia albiventris* A pair seen in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

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.

Grey Penduline Tit (African P T) *Anthoscopus caroli* Good views of a pair in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Western Nicator *Nicator chloris* Seen in Kibale Forest and Bigodi Wetland.

Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafra africana* Seen well at Mabamba and in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Flappet Lark *Mirafra rufocinnamomea* Common in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea* 1 in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Dark-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus tricolor* Every day!

Kakamega Greenbul *Arizelocichla kakamegae* ◇ A few 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.

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 briefly near Kibale Forest.



From left to right; African Paradise Flycatcher, Western Nicator and Joyful Greenbul. (Nik Borrow)

Yellow-throated Leaflove *Atimastillas flavicollis* Widespread sightings of the creamy-throated race *flavigula*.

Toro Olive Greenbul *Phyllastrephus hypochloris* ◇ A vocal individual seen well at 'The Neck'.

Cabanis's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus cabanisi* Reasonable views of skulking birds at Buhoma.

White-throated Greenbul *Phyllastrephus albigularis* ◇ Several 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 Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Red-tailed Greenbul *Criniger calurus* Seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

White-headed Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne albiceps* ◇ A common and widespread bird throughout the lower country.

Black Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne [pristoptera] holomelas* Common around Bwindi Impenetrable NP.

Banded Martin *Riparia cincta* 2 at Mabamba Swamp.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* This Palearctic migrant was numerous 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* ◇ At least 3 of these intra-African migrants seen well at Mabamba.

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* Widespread sightings.

Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica* Widespread sightings.

Red-breasted Swallow *Cecropis semirufa* Just a few seen at Mabamba and in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Mosque Swallow *Cecropis senegalensis* A pair en route to Kibale.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* Small numbers in the southwest.

Moustached Grass Warbler (African M W) *Melocichla mentalis* A few seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Green Crombec *Sylvietta virens* Often heard and seen at Bigodi Swamp.

White-browed Crombec *Sylvietta leucophrys* ◇ Brief views in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

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

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

Green Hylia *Hylia prasina* Often heard and occasionally seen.

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.

Mountain Yellow Warbler *Iduna similis* ◇ Seen well in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

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.

Grauer's Swamp Warbler *Bradypterus graueri* (E) Incredible views of a pair in Mubwindi Swamp.

Cinnamon Bracken Warbler *Bradypterus cinnamomeus* (H) Heard in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Fan-tailed Grassbird (F-t Warbler) *Schoenicola brevirostris* 1 seen briefly in Queen Elizabeth NP.

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

Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans* (LO) 1 for Livingstone 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.



This year Grauer's Swamp Warbler (left) proved easy to see and showy Chubb's Cisticolas delighted. (Nik Borrow)

- 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.
- 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 Mabamba Swamp.
- 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* (NL) Howard saw 1 en route to Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Lowland Masked Apalis (M A)** *Apalis binotata* ◊ (H) 1 heard only 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.



The Albertine Rift endemic Ruwenzori Apalis (left) and the unusual Grey-capped Warbler (right). (Nik Borrow)

- 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* Seen in Kibale Forest.
- Mountain Illadopsis** *Illadopsis pyrrhoptera* ◊ Seen in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
- Black-lored Babbler** *Turdoides sharpei* Seen well in Queen Elizabeth and in the Lake Mburo area.
- 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** *Zosterops senegalensis* Common and widespread throughout the tour.
- Grey-chested Babbler** ◊ (G-c Illadopsis) *Kakamega poliothorax* (H) Glimpses in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
- Wattled Starling** *Creatophora cinerea* Small numbers in Queen Elizabeth NP.
- Purple-headed Starling** *Lamprolornis purpureiceps* Easily seen in Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.

Splendid Starling *Lamprotornis splendidus* Seen in the Mabamba area.

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

Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* Small numbers seen at Bigodi Swamp.

Slender-billed Starling *Onychognathus tenuirostris* Large numbers seen flying over Bwindi Forest.

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

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

Stuhlmann's Starling *Poeoptera stuhlmanni* Small numbers in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

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* 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.

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* 1 sighting in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Brown-backed Scrub Robin *Erythropygia hartlaubi* Seen at Mabamba Swamp and heard elsewhere.

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

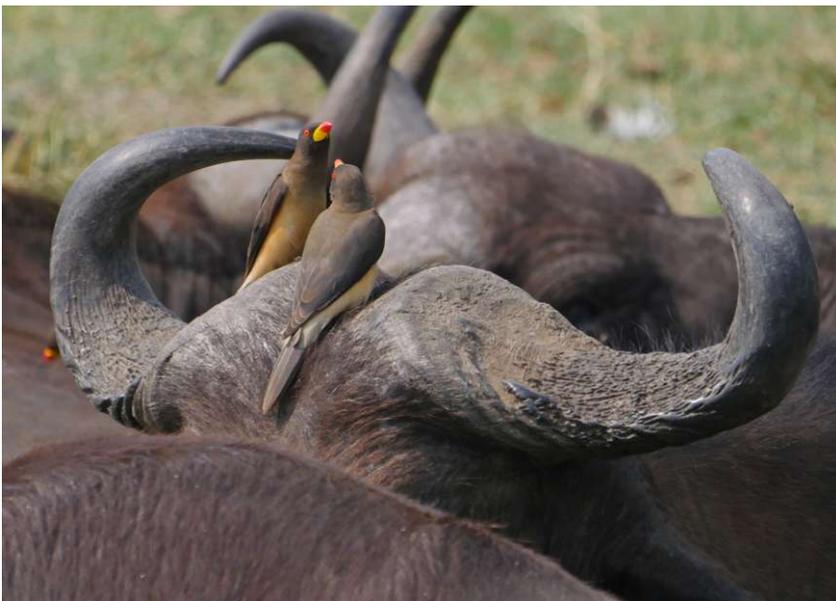
Fraser's Forest Flycatcher *Fraseria ocreata* A few seen in Budongo Forest.

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

Grey Tit-flycatcher (Lead-coloured F) *Myioparus plumbeus* (H) Heard at Mabamba and Kibale.

White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher *Dioptrornis fischeri* Easy to see in the southwest.

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



Yellow-billed Oxpeckers rest on Lake Chad Buffalo horns (left) The Albertine Rift endemic Yellow-eyed Black Flycatcher. (Nik Borrow)

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

Ashy Flycatcher *Muscicapa caerulescens* Pairs seen at Bigodi Swamp and in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

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

Cassin's Flycatcher (C's Grey F) *Muscicapa cassini* Seen by some 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 in the southwest.

Dusky-blue Flycatcher *Muscicapa comitata* A pair en route to Kibale and more in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Sooty Flycatcher *Muscicapa infuscata* Treetop birds in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Red-throated Alethe *Pseudaethe poliophrys* ◊ Great views of this Albertine Rift endemic in Bwindi Forest.

White-bellied Robin-Chat *Cossyphicula roberti* ◊ Several 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.

White-browed Robin-Chat (Heuglin's R) *Cossypha heuglini* Particularly numerous in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Red-capped Robin-Chat *Cossypha natalensis* Seen well in Kibale and again at Buhoma.

Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat (S-headed R-c) *Cossypha niveicapilla* A pair seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

White-starred Robin *Pogonocichla stellata* 2 sightings in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Equatorial Akalat *Sheppardia aequatorialis* ◇ 3 sightings in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus* Easy to see near Kibale Forest and in the southwest.

Sooty Chat *Myrmecocichla nigra* Easy to see at Mabamba and in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Grey-headed Sunbird *Deleornis axillaris* ◇ 2 seen in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Little Green Sunbird *Anthreptes seimundi* Several noted in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Grey-chinned Sunbird (Green S) *Anthreptes rectirostris* Present in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris* A common and widespread sunbird.

Green-headed Sunbird *Cyanomitra verticalis* A few sightings in the Kibale area.

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* Seen from Entebbe to Queen Elizabeth NP.

Bronzy Sunbird (Bronze S) *Nectarinia kilimensis* Widespread sightings.

Olive-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris chloropygius* Seen in various lower altitude forests.

Northern Double-collared Sunbird *Cinnyris reichenowi* Numerous in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Regal Sunbird *Cinnyris regius* ◇ Small numbers of this superb sunbird in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Marico Sunbird (Mariqua S) *Cinnyris mariquensis* Seen at Kibale and Queen Elizabeth NP.

Red-chested Sunbird *Cinnyris erythrocerus* ◇ A stunning sunbird and common around the swamps and wet places.



Simply stunning Regal Sunbirds (left) and Red-chested Sunbirds (right) were a joy to behold during this tour. (Nik Borrow)

Purple-banded Sunbird *Cinnyris bifasciatus* A male was seen well in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Superb Sunbird *Cinnyris superbus* 2 were seen at Bigodi Wetland.

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus* The attractive orange-bellied race, *igneiventris* was seen in the southwest.

Copper Sunbird *Cinnyris cupreus* 2 sightings in 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

Slender-billed Weaver *Ploceus pelzelni* Associated with papyrus, lakes and dining tables!

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis* Widespread sightings.

Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis* Widespread sightings in open habitats throughout the tour.

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* Small numbers in the Buhoma area.

Orange Weaver *Ploceus aurantius* A couple near Mabamba Swamp.

Northern Brown-throated Weaver *Ploceus castanops* Seen well at Mabamba Swamp.

Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius* Common 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* ◊ A single male seen at Mabamba Swamp.

Compact Weaver *Ploceus superciliosus* Seen well from near Kibale to Queen Elizabeth NP.

Dark-backed Weaver *Ploceus bicolor* Several seen in Kibale 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.

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* Small numbers in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Black Bishop *Euplectes gierowii* Breeding plumaged males at Bigodi Swamp and near Buhoma.

Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix* Birds moulting out of breeding plumage in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Fan-tailed Widowbird (Red-shouldered W) *Euplectes axillaris* Breeding plumaged birds at Mabamba Swamp.

Yellow-mantled Widowbird *Euplectes [m.] macroura* (NL) 1 for some en route to Kibale.

White-winged Widowbird *Euplectes albonotatus* Small numbers in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Jameson's Antpecker *Parmoptila jamesoni* ◊ A male for Nik and Daragh in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

White-breasted Nigrita (W-b Negrofinch) *Nigrita fusconotus* Small numbers at Bigodi and Bwindi Forest.

Grey-headed Nigrita (G-crowned Negrofinch) Small numbers from Mabamba to Kibale Forest.

Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba* A male in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Green Twinspot *Mandingoa nitidula* A pair at Buhoma.

Dusky Crimsonwing *Cryptospiza jacksoni* ◊ Only glimpses at Mubwindi Swamp.

Red-headed Bluebill *Spermophaga ruficapilla* ◊ A fine male at Bigodi Wetland.



Baglafaecht Weavers of the race stuhlmanni (right) in the southwest and Red-headed Bluebill (left) at Bigodi Swamp. (Nik Borrow)

Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala* Widespread and very common in Queen Elizabeth NP.

African Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubricata* A family group near Buhoma.

Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus bengalus* (NL) 2 sightings only.

Yellow-bellied Waxbill *Estrilda quartinia* Small numbers in the Ruhija area.

Fawn-breasted Waxbill *Estrilda paludicola* Small flocks in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild* Small numbers at Mabamba.

Black-crowned Waxbill *Estrilda nonnula* Seen well in the Kibale area.

Kandt's Waxbill *Estrilda kandti* ◊ Just 3 brief sightings in the Ruhija area.
Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura cucullatus* Common and widespread.
Black-and-white Mannikin *Lonchura bicolor* Seen at widespread locations during the tour.
Village Indigobird (Red-billed Firefinch I) *Vidua chalybeata* 2 Widespread sightings during journeys.
Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura* Common and widespread, many breeding plumaged birds.
Cape Wagtail *Motacilla capensis* Singletons at Mabamba and en route to Kibale.
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* Most numerous in Queen Elizabeth NP.
Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys* Common in Queen Elizabeth NP.
Western Citril *Crithagra frontalis* ◊ A male seen well near Buhoma.
Yellow-fronted Canary *Crithagra mozambica* Common and widespread.
Brimstone Canary *Crithagra sulphuratus* A few widespread sightings.
Streaky Seedeater *Crithagra striolatus* Small numbers in the southwest.
Thick-billed Seedeater *Crithagra burtoni* 1 in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
Yellow-crowned Canary *Serinus flavivertex* Small numbers near Ruhija.
Golden-breasted Bunting *Emberiza flaviventris* Sightings in Queen Elizabeth NP.



We enjoyed some incredible encounters with African Savanna Elephants. (Nik Borrow)

MAMMALS

Chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes* Seen in Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.
Eastern Gorilla *Gorilla beringei* (NL) This year our group visited 'R' and 'H' groups.
Central African Red Colobus *Piliocolobus oustaletii* Seen in Kibale Forest and 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 in Kibale Forest and 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 Kibale and Bwindi Impenetrable Forests.

Red-tailed Monkey (Black-cheeked White-nosed M) *Cercopithecus ascanius* Common and widespread.

Demidoff's Galago *Galagoides demidoff* 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 at Entebbe.

Yellow-winged Bat *Lavia frons* Seen in Queen Elizabeth NPs.

African Savanna Hare *Lepus victoriae* Seen after dusk 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.

Red-legged Sun Squirrel *Heliosciurus rufobrachium* Seen at Mabamba and in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Ruwenzori Sun Squirrel (Mountain S S) *Heliosciurus ruwenzori* 2 sightings in the Ruhija area.

Unstriped Grass Rat *Arvicanthis niloticus* Seen in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Banded Mongoose *Mungos mungo* The radio-collared troop in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Rusty-spotted Genet *Genetta maculata* Seen by the pitta trekkers.

Lion *Panthera leo* 1 in Queen Elizabeth NP.

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.

Common Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus* Common in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Lake Chad Buffalo *Syncerus brachyceros* Common in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Nile Bushbuck *Tragelaphus bor* 2 in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Eland *Taurotragus oryx* 6+ near Lake Mburo NP.

Bush Duiker *Sylvicapra grimmia* 1 in Murchison Falls NP.

Johnston's Duiker *Cephalophus johnstoni* At least 2 at Buhoma.

Black-fronted Duiker *Cephalophus nigrifrons* 2 seen at higher elevations in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Yellow-backed Duiker *Cephalophus silvicultor* 1 at Buhoma and another along the Mubwindi trail.

Uganda Kob *Kobus thomasi* Common in Queen Elizabeth NP.

Defassa Waterbuck *Kobus defassa* Seen in Queen Elizabeth NP and near Lake Mburo NP.

Impala (Common I) *Aepyceros melampus* 2 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

The most up to date referenced taxonomic list referred to in the Tour Report is that of the IOC World Bird Names. Gill, F and Donsker, D (Eds). 2015. IOC World Bird Names (v6.1). Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

The following forms are lumped by the IOC but currently treated as species by BirdLife International:

(African) Woolly-necked Stork (or African Woollyneck) *Ciconia [episcopus] microscelis*

Some authors split Woolly-necked Stork into two species: African Woollyneck *C. microscelis* and Asian Woollyneck *C. episcopus*.

Intermediate (or Yellow-billed) Egret *Egretta [intermedia] brachyrhyncha*

Some authors split off the form concerned as a separate species Yellow-billed Egret *E. brachyrhyncha*, renaming the nominate form Intermediate Egret *E. intermedia*.

Black-faced (Bare-faced) Go-away-bird *Corythaixoides [personatus] leopoldi*

Some authors split Bare-faced Go-away-bird into Black-faced Go-away-bird *C. leopoldi* and Brown-faced Go-away-bird *C. personatus*.

African (or Congo) Pied Hornbill *Lophoceros [fasciatus] fasciatus*

Some authors split African Pied Hornbill into two species: Congo Pied Hornbill *L. fasciatus* and West African Pied Hornbill *L. semifasciatus*. The species are sometimes placed in the genus *Tockus*.

Grey-headed Barbet (G-throated B) *Gymnobucco [bonapartei] cinereiceps*

Some authors split Grey-throated Barbet into two species: Grey-throated Barbet *G. bonapartei* and Grey-headed Barbet *G. cinereiceps*.

(Eastern) Yellow-billed Barbet *Trachyphonus [purpuratus] purpuratus*

Some authors split Yellow-billed Barbet into two species: Eastern Yellow-billed Barbet *T. purpuratus* and Western Yellow-billed Barbet *T. goffinii*. The species are sometimes placed in the genus *Trachylaemus*.

Tullberg's (or Fine-banded) Woodpecker *Campethera [tullbergi] taeniolaema*

The form concerned is sometimes split as a separate species, Fine-banded Woodpecker *C. taeniolaema*. *C. tullbergi* is then renamed Tullberg's Woodpecker.

TOP TEN

1. Shoebill
2. Green-breasted Pitta
3. Grauer's (African Green) Broadbill
4. Lagden's Bushshrike
5. Papyrus Gonolek
6. Neumann's (Short-tailed) Warbler
7. Red-throated Bee-eater
8. African Broadbill
9. Doherty's Bushshrike
10. Blue Swallow