

# CAMEROON

4 – 31 MARCH 2012

## TOUR REPORT

**LEADER:** NIK BORROW

Cameroon may not be a tour for those who like their creature comforts but it certainly produces a huge bird list and if one intends to only ever visit one western African country then this is surely an essential destination. Our comprehensive itinerary covers a superb and wide range of the varied habitats that this sprawling country has to offer. We started our tour at the end of an unusually early period of heavy rain that ceased soon after our arrival and the weather stayed dry throughout the month only resuming at the very end of our stay. This somewhat strange weather pattern certainly had some effect on the birds but nonetheless we amassed an impressive total of 620 species or recognisable forms of which all but 18 were seen. We also recorded 49 species of mammal.

These included 26 of the regional endemics; Cameroon Olive Pigeon, Bannerman's Turaco, Mountain Saw-wing, Cameroon Montane, Western Mountain, Cameroon Olive and Grey-headed Greenbuls, Alexander's (split from Bocage's) Akalat, Mountain Robin Chat, Cameroon and Bangwa Forest Warblers, Brown-backed Cisticola, Green Longtail, Bamenda Apalis, White-tailed Warbler, Black-capped Woodland Warbler, Banded Wattle-eye, White-throated Mountain Babbler, Cameroon and Ursula's Sunbirds, Mount Cameroon Speirops, Green-breasted and Mount Kupe Bush-shrikes, Yellow-breasted Boubou, Bannerman's Weaver and Shelley's Oliveback.

This year we nailed Red-headed Picathartes on our very first day at a new and easily accessible site and watched them for around two hours over two afternoons and counted up to 15 individuals hopping all around us. We had incredible views of a male Golden Nightjar in the far north where once again we found the restricted range Rock Firefinch (first discovered in the country in 2005 by Birdquest) and the recently rediscovered Chad Firefinch. Small numbers of Quail-plovers and a male Savile's Bustard were relatively easy to see this year in the Waza area and both the beautiful Sjöstedt's Owlet and Vermiculated Fishing Owl put on great performances in Korup National Park.

Many other specialities including much-wanted species such as Hartlaub's Duck, African Swallow-tailed Kite, Fox Kestrel, Latham's Forest, White-throated and Clapperton's Francolins, Red-chested Flufftail, Arabian Bustard, Egyptian Plover, Bronze-winged Courser, Grey Pratincole, Brown-chested

Lapwing, Four-banded Sandgrouse, Adamawa Turtle Dove, Red-fronted Parrot, Violet Turaco, Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo (heard only), Gabon (heard only) and Black-throated Coucals, Fraser's Eagle Owl, Standard-winged Nightjar, Bates's Swift, Bare-cheeked Trogon, White-bellied Kingfisher, Yellow-casqued Hornbill, Western Green Tinkerbird, Vieillot's and Bearded Barbets, African Piculet, Tullberg's, Gabon and Elliot's Woodpeckers, Grey-headed Broadbill, Sun Lark, Square-tailed and Petit's Saw-wings, West African and Forest Swallows, Preuss's Cliff Swallow, Cameroon, Bannerman's and Long-legged Pipits, Sjöstedt's Honeyguide, Yellow-necked, Xavier's, Eastern Bearded and White Bearded Greenbuls, Lesser Bristlebill, Yellow-throated Nicator (heard only), Gabon Forest Robin, White-bellied, Grey-winged and White-crowned Robin Chats, African Scrub Robin, Heuglin's Wheatear, White-fronted Black Chat, White-crowned Cliff Chat, Chattering, Red-pate, Dorst's and Rufous Cisticolas, River Prinia, Cricket Warbler, Red-winged Grey Warbler, Black-collared Apalis, Oriole Warbler, Violet-backed Hyliota, Yellow-footed Flycatcher, Dusky Crested Flycatcher, Rufous-vented and Bates's Paradise Flycatchers, White-spotted and Black-necked Wattle-eyes, West African Batis, Ruwenzori Hill Babbler, Spotted Thrush Babbler, Sennar Penduline Tit, Spotted Creeper, Brown, Reichenbach's, Orange-tufted and Bates's Sunbirds, Forest White-eye, Fiery-breasted Bush-shrike, Mountain Sooty Boubou, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Neumann's, Purple-headed Glossy, Chestnut-bellied and White-collared Starlings, Maxwell's Black Weaver, Cassin's, Red-vented and Blue-billed Malimbés, Pale-fronted Negrofinch, White-cheeked Oliveback, Yellow-winged and Red-winged Pytilias, Black-bellied Seedcracker, Brown and Dybowski's Twinspots, Black-faced Firefinch, Black-headed Waxbill, Sahel Paradise Whydah, and White-rumped and West African Seedeaters. We did well with mammals too recording XX species that included great looks at Drill on Mount Kupe and West African Giraffe, Korrigum and Roan Antelope in Waza National Park.

We began our grand tour of this panhandle of a country in Douala and were met by a blast of hot and humid air as we made our way out through the sweaty and bustling airport. With only a short night to acclimatise we set off early the next morning after a Red-chested (split from African) Goshawk entertained us during breakfast but then immediately got entangled in the busy rush hour traffic that kept us captive for two hours before we broke free and arrived at a small forest pool by the roadside which has become a rather well known 'duck pond' in Cameroon as it usually holds at least a few Hartlaub's Ducks and this day was no exception for we had fine scope views of a pair. Also on the pool were an African Darter and a pair of African Pygmy Geese as well as Long-tailed Cormorant and Malachite Kingfisher. The aim was to get to Campo as early as possible and so there weren't really any birding stops but a Brown Sunbird at our lunch stop was a good find and a few Long-legged Pipits were noted along the way. Large numbers of Preuss's Cliff Swallows were getting ready to breed under the bridges and culverts alongside Rufous-chested and Lesser Striped Swallows whilst large numbers of migrant Barn Swallows were gathering presumably fattening themselves up for their imminent departure back to Europe. Other species recorded during the journey included numerous Western Cattle Egrets, Little Egret, Yellow-billed Kite, Palm-nut Vulture, African Harrier Hawk, Common Sandpiper, Blue-spotted Wood Dove, Red-eyed Dove, Blue-headed Coucal, African Palm Swift, Little Swift, Woodland and African Pygmy Kingfishers, White-throated Bee-eater, African Pied, Piping and White-thighed Hornbills, Common Bulbul, African Thrush, Chattering Cisticola, Pied Crow, Northern Grey-headed Sparrow, Vieillot's Black and Village Weavers and Bronze Mannikin.

We reached Campo Ma'an National Park by late afternoon and headed straight to a Red-headed Picathartes colony which happily was only about 15 minutes easy walk from where we left the vehicles. It was an overcast afternoon and rain threatened as we arrived at the huge rocks that are hidden inside the forest where the birds nest. At this season the birds have not yet begun breeding but habitually frequent the nest site in the late afternoon and there were already birds present when we arrived. Over the two afternoons that we spent at these rocks that also sheltered Forest Swallows, we enjoyed some intimate encounters with the very special picathartes or rockfowl and counted up to 15

individuals bouncing all around us, visiting their nests and hissing with puffed up necks and spiky hackles. All in all it was an experience nothing short of superb! Anyone who has ever seen the picathartes well has always been overwhelmed by their beauty and oddness. Indeed there is something mysterious and even spiritual about them and it is easy to see why they are revered in certain areas.

With perhaps the main target bird of the trip happily underneath our belts we were free to explore the forest itself. Sadly there is not a decent infrastructure of trails inside the park and we were limited to the main road that runs through the forest. As dawn broke large numbers of Grey Parrots squawked and whistled as they left their roosts to feed. A fruiting tree in the clearing around our simple accommodation attracted many species and we watched Speckled and Yellow-throated Tinkerbirds coming and going alongside Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatcher and Little Green, Blue-throated Brown, Western Olive, Green-throated and Collared Sunbirds. Swamp Palm Bulbuls cackled at each other and a variety of greenbuls such as Little, Little Grey, Ansorge's, Slender-billed, Yellow-whiskered, Golden and Spotted Greenbuls tested our identification skills. We also spotted goodies such as Cassin's Malimbe, Maxwell's Black Weaver and Pale-fronted Negrofinch. Overhead fluttering bat-like Cassin's and Sabine's Spinetails and European Swift were seen and even a single Bates's Swift. A stunning Red-chested Owlet was persuaded to reveal itself well in daylight but sadly the hulking Gabon Coucal refused to show and remained a disembodied voice in the forest. Other highlights of our stay included some great looks at several Yellow-throated Cuckoos, enormous Black-casqued Hornbills were quite common and certainly easy to see as was the magnificent Great Blue Turaco. Also recorded during our stay were European Honey Buzzard, African Green Pigeon, Blue-throated Roller, Yellow-spotted Barbet, Gabon and Yellow-crested Woodpeckers, Square-tailed Saw-wing, Western Nicator, Banded Prinia, Yellow-browed Camaroptera, Rufous-crowned Eremomela, Green Crombec, Sooty Flycatcher and pretty Orange-cheeked Waxbills. At night we spotlighted African Wood Owl and an impressive array of nocturnal mammals that included Potto, Allen's Squirrel, Elegant Needle-clawed and Demidoff's Galagos, African Palm Civet and Western Tree Hyrax.

Leaving Campo Ma'an behind us we returned to Douala but paused along the way at a river where there were Rock Pratincoles, Intermediate Egret, African Openbill Stork, African Pied Wagtail and glittering White-throated Blue Swallows. A small colony of Orange Weavers were much enjoyed and at the Sanaga River out on the sandbanks we easily located our target species and were treated to the sight of assembled pretty little Grey Pratincoles, African Skimmers and White-headed Lapwings with their pendulous wattles and fearsome spurs alongside Woolly-necked Stork and Palearctic migrants such as Little Stint, Common Greenshank and Blue-headed Wagtail. A pair of dapper Black Bee-eaters on the roadside wires disappeared far too quickly, an Ayres's Hawk Eagle circled overhead and White-breasted Negrofinch sang from the tops of trees that provided sustenance to Wood Warbler and both Johanna's and Superb Sunbirds. An obliging White-browed Forest Flycatcher showed exceedingly well and we managed glimpses of a pretty Gabon Forest Robin in the undergrowth. Other species that were seen during the day included Tambourine Dove, Little Bee-eater, Olive-bellied Sunbird, Red-headed Quelea and Black-and-white Mannikin.

Douala airport is not a comfortable place to spend any length of time at all and so we were all overjoyed when the check-in and departure of our plane to the north early the next morning went without any hitch or delay – in fact it arrived ahead of schedule! The plane took us from the dripping humidity of the coastal forest zone to the searing heat of the north at Maroua. We were greeted by a blast of hot air that was so dry that any sweat that dared to break through the skin had little chance of remaining there for long! We transferred to our air-conditioned minibus that carried us swiftly to our hotel where we enjoyed a delicious lunch.

In the afternoon began our explorations of the area under clear blue skies that enabled a blistering sun to beat down onto the bare rocks and sand. However as the day cooled down so the bird activity increased. The huge ghostly rocky inselbergs loomed out of the flat landscape and we spent some time birding around these enormous piled heaps of giant boulders where Cinnamon-breasted Rock Buntings were common and in the bushes comical Blue-naped Mousebirds clung spread-eagled to the vegetation. Brightly coloured Little Green Bee-eaters sallied out, handsome White-crowned Cliff Chats perched up, perky Rock-loving Cisticolas were seen and garrulous Stone Partridges scampered over the rocks like little bantams as a Lanner Falcon and the much-wanted Fox Kestrel drifted overhead. Pretty Red-cheeked Cordon-bleus and Lavender Waxbills enchanted and ultimately to everyone's great pleasure we watched a pair of Rock Firefinches, a species previously only known from Nigeria but confirmed in Cameroon for the first time by Birdquest in 2005. As dusk fell a Greyish Eagle Owl hooted above us and both Long-tailed and Freckled Nightjars were seen well. Other birds in the area included Hooded Vulture, Speckled Pigeon, Laughing Dove, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Vieillot's Barbet, Grey Woodpecker, Eurasian Wryneck, Rock Martin, Familiar Chat, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Grey-backed Camaroptera, Western and Eastern Olivaceous Warblers, Common Whitethroat, Scarlet-chested, Pygmy, Beautiful and Variable Sunbirds, Speckle-fronted Weaver, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow Weaver, Vitelline Masked Weaver, Black-winged Red Bishop, Red-billed Firefinch, African Silverbill, Yellow-fronted Canary.

The cool of the morning in the far north does not last long but the first hours of daylight are essential for notching up some quality birds. The next day found us setting off on a walkabout hoping to flush one of the most wanted species of the tour; the bizarre and remarkably little known Quail-plover. At this time of year the air is normally full of sand and dust blown from the Sahara by the prevailing Harmattan winds, but this year we had piercing blue skies and the sun beat down on us mercilessly and temperatures rose to over 40° C. In order to see this highly desirable species much ground needs to be covered in the hope of ultimately flushing this tiny bird. We set off in an organised line through the bush and after some distance we chanced upon another target species - a trio of Cricket Warblers (a species first discovered in Cameroon by Birdquest in 1995). These delightful birds were watched at length and having had our fill we continued on when suddenly a nightjar got up from under our feet and it was quickly evident that after many years of searching Birdquest had finally come face to face with the glorious Golden Nightjar. Fortunately the bird did not fly far and we all had prolonged and close views of it on the ground for as long as we wished. This still left one more special bird to go and as a flock of Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse got up from the stubble fields so did a strange little bird that flapped away looking half lark and half quail! Relocating the bird was not easy and in our attempts to do so we also came across a Bronze-winged Courser which was a most worthy diversion for a while. Finally we found the same or perhaps another Quail-plover and this time it was much more obliging and crouched in the shelter of some vegetation eyeing us warily and bobbing and swaying in chameleon mode every now and then. The views were astounding this year and in the end we simply walked away from the bird.

The morning was passing by quickly and other species seen during our hike included elegant African Swallow-tailed Kites that glided overhead with Black-shouldered Kite nearby for comparison. Pallid and Montagu's Harriers skimmed low over the bushes in search of tasty morsels. A Red-necked Falcon competed with a Lanner Falcon in chasing down a Black-headed Lapwing but we never did discover who finally won the battle. Elsewhere White-bellied Bustards were flushed, Abyssinian Rollers shone out in glorious *Technicolor*, Black Scrub Robins cocked and fanned their tails everywhere and Green-winged Pytilia, Red-pate Cisticola, and Chestnut-bellied Starlings were common and easy to see. Other species recorded included Black-headed Heron, Namaqua Dove, Central African Hoopoe, Crested Lark, Chestnut-backed Sparrow Lark, Ethiopian Swallow, Tawny

Pipit, African Scrub Robin, Northern Wheatear, Zitting Cisticola, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Western Bonelli's Warbler, Southern Grey Shrike, Black-crowned Tchagra, Greater Blue-eared Starling and Little Weaver. Finally we had to admit defeat with the mid-day sun sizzling fearsomely overhead and we retired to the shade of a local bar for a good lunch where strangely enough for a predominantly Muslim population, only beers and no soft drinks at all were on sale!

The road north of Maroua had continued to worsen considerably over the past year and we arrived at the Campement de Waza in the late afternoon and birded the bush country nearby successfully hunting out a trio of Sennar Penduline Tits. The dowdy River Prinia was also easy to see here and the Palearctic Masked Shrike was a popular find. We had our first looks at Black-rumped Waxbill and White-rumped Seedeater amongst the numerous Red-billed Queleas. A Greater Painted-snipe, Squacco Heron, Sacred Ibis, African Jacana and Green and Wood Sandpipers made use of the drying pools. Stunning Northern Carmine Bee-eater glided past us and other species noted this afternoon included Short-toed Eagle, Gabar Goshawk, Dark Chanting Goshawk, Grasshopper Buzzard, Helmeted Guineafowl, Senegal Coucal, Northern Red-billed and African Grey Hornbills, Common House Martin, Sedge Warbler and Northern Crombec. At dusk we watched Four-banded Sandgrouse coming into drink followed closely by some Long-tailed Nightjars leaving their daytime roost.

We woke to another clear morning. Waza National Park has a mean annual rainfall that varies from between 550 and 750 mm that usually only falls between June and September. Therefore we were here in one of the driest months when temperatures can be expected to reach 45°C and much animal activity occurs around the artificial waterholes. Travelling from one such oasis to the next, with Clapperton's Francolins scurrying from the roadsides, was the order of the day, and at each stop thousands upon thousands of birds greeted us. In such parched conditions the lure of water is strong and the swirling flocks of Red-billed Queleas, Bush Petronias and Northern Red Bishops were simply overwhelming at times. Smaller numbers of Cut-throat and Sahel Paradise Whydah were also present. Some beautiful Black Crowned Cranes, Saddle-billed and Marabou Storks loitered by pools where Spur-winged Goose, Knob-billed Duck, Black-winged Stilt and Spur-winged Lapwing could also be found and everywhere there was a sense of ebb and flow as species after species having rested or quenched their thirst then moved on thus presenting an ever-changing tableau. This was a great opportunity to get to know your doves as the Vinaceous, European Turtle, African Mourning and African Collared Doves that filled the trees eventually came down to drink. As seems to be the worrying trend in other parts of Africa these days vulture numbers were very low and only a few Rüppell's Griffon Vultures and Lappet-faced Vultures were seen. Sadly it also seemed that numbers of other raptors that are usually always well represented in the park were substantially down on previous years but we did find Tawny and Long-crested Eagles and Common Kestrel. Equally elusive was the Arabian Bustard and only a couple of the group managed a fleeting flight view as a lone bird disappeared. Similarly a timid Common Ostrich also vanished fast in a cloud of dust! Elsewhere Northern Anteater Chats were perhaps rather less exciting lifers, Black Wood-hoopoe and Singing Bush Lark were seen and we also found Palearctic migrants such as and White Stork, Eurasian Marsh Harrier, Common Sand Martin, Grey-headed Wagtail and Isabelline Wheatear. This year mammals were again worryingly scarce but we had some close encounters with the beautiful West African Giraffe (with attendant Yellow-billed Oxpeckers) and also saw Patas Monkey, Roan Antelope and Korrigum (split from Topi). Despite the dry conditions we had done well and this whole experience was surely as much about the overwhelming Sahelian spectacle as it was about ticking off some memorable life birds!

Our remaining time in the Waza area was spent searching for the remaining specialities and in particular Savile's Bustard and Little Grey Woodpecker. These birds certainly did not come easy as we trekked over large areas of open country and we never did find the woodpecker but we enjoyed

great success with the bustard and had great flight views with some of the group lucky enough to see it on the ground. Noisy Brown Babblers squabbled in the thickets and also added to the list were skulking but intensely coloured Yellow-crowned Gonoleks, Senegal Parrot, Booted Eagle, Bateleur, Spotted Thick-knee and Green Wood-hoopoe.

Before leaving Waza some of us were up before breakfast enjoying the resident Western Barn Owls that frequent the camp along with nocturnal mammals such as Sand Fox, White-tailed Mongoose and Common Genet. Leaving Waza we took in some long overdue White-billed Buffalo Weavers en route but it was time to head back south to Garoua for a short overnight stay as we were to leave very early the next morning in order to get to Poli. The reason for our visit was because of the rediscovery in Cameroon four years previously of the little known Chad Firefinch. At that time we had been the first group allowed into the area to see this species and we were hoping to repeat our success this year. Unfortunately the site is in a mining area and special permission is needed to visit but fortunately this was granted again this year.

On the journey we paused briefly for a roadside flock of Abdim's Storks and then we bounced up a mountainside in a 4X4 clinging on for dear life, as some sections are particularly steep and unfortunately one of our vehicles never did make it all the way to the top! However we all made it up in the end and after a short time the distinctive dry trills of the firefinches were heard and we were soon watching a small family group exhibiting a whole range of plumages from juveniles, females, moulting males and even a full plumaged male. At least one Dybowski's Twinspot was seen with them and the area held some other interesting species that included the magnificently grotesque Bearded Barbet, Violet Turaco, a pair of White-fronted Black Chat, a Willcocks's Honeyguide holding territory, posing Heuglin's Wheatears and the unassuming Dorst's Cisticola. Red-throated Bee-eaters were busy at their nesting colonies and we also saw Brown Snake Eagle, Red-necked Buzzard, African Wattled Lapwing, Western Grey Plantain-eater, Speckled Mousebird, Grey-headed Kingfisher, White-shouldered Black Tit, Violet-backed Starling and Cabanis's Bunting.

We drove further south and into Bénoué National Park and arrived at the Campement Buflé Noir in the late afternoon. Sadly last year's improvements were already looking like they might not last another year as some of the bukurus were already out of commission. The remarkable Long-tailed Glossy Starling greeted us and as dusk fell the little African Scops Owls started their purring calls and we had just enough time before nightfall to see one or two leaving their roosts.

The next morning we were up early and whilst dodging Tsetse flies and sweat bees in the dry woodlands we located a pair of White-throated Francolins that were calling loudly amongst the more numerous Double-spurred Francolins. The time is always too short before the temperatures get too high and the bees torment one to distraction but during our time this morning we gathered up a good selection of the wooded savannah birds. Bruce's Green Pigeon, White-headed Barbet, African Golden Oriole and many Purple Glossy Starlings were feeding in the fruiting fig trees whilst African Moustached Warbler, Short-winged and Rufous Cisticolas and Red-winged Warbler lurked in the dry grasses. Silvery White-breasted Cuckoo-shrikes joined loose bird parties that gathered together Senegal Eremomela, Northern Black Flycatcher, Senegal Batis, Western Violet-backed Sunbird, Green-headed Sunbird, Yellow White-eye, tail-wagging Yellow-billed Shrikes, Northern Puffback, White Helmet-shrike and Fork-tailed Drongo. West African Seedeater was seen, a Brubru sounded out its 'half time whistle' cry, Red-headed Weavers were attending a nest and we obtained some good looks at a male Brown-rumped Bunting. Other species that were seen during the day included Lizard Buzzard, African Hawk Eagle, Black-billed Wood Dove, Greater Honeyguide, Fine-spotted Woodpecker, Tree Pipit, Whinchat, Willow Warbler and Grey-headed Bush-shrike.

In the afternoon we went down by the river and as the hot afternoon sun began to fall in the sky we sought the shelter of patches of shade in a tranquil riverine setting. Charming and excitable Red-winged Grey Warblers showed well and there were also pretty African Blue Flycatcher, Black-headed Gonolek, Spectacled Weaver and both Snowy-crowned and White-crowned Robin Chats to brighten up the day. Along the sandy riverbed we had some wonderful encounters with Egyptian Plovers as well as striking Pied Kingfishers, Green-backed Heron, Senegal Thick-knee, Three-banded Plover and Wire-tailed Swallows. Hamerkops and Hadada Ibises moved from one shady bank to another where a Great Reed Warbler was seen and dowdy Swamp Flycatchers sallied back and forth alongside the strange Oriole Warbler or Moho that sang loudly from the thick riverine vegetation, which also provided ample cover for noisy Blackcap Babbblers. The ultimate bird of the afternoon was probably the localised Adamawa Turtle Dove and we had great scope views of individuals coming down to drink at the end of the day.

We stayed with this habitat the following morning and starting before first light we managed to get brief views of a somewhat distant juvenile Pel's Fishing Owl that was calling. The 'yodelling' cries of African Fish Eagle welcomed the dawn and with daylight came a Grey Kestrel and more birds thanks to a very useful Pearl-spotted Owlet that attracted some attractive Yellow-bellied Hyliotas. We spent a fair amount of time birding a shady dry creek where a pool of water was attracting many thirsty birds and had some excellent views of Yellow-winged and Red-winged Pytilias and Bar-breasted, Black-bellied and Black-faced Firefinches as they came down to drink. The superb White-crested Turaco was watched in the tangled lianas and we also saw Yellow-throated Leaflove, Red-faced Cisticola, Yellow-breasted Apalis and Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike in the same area. A pair of White-headed Vultures soared overhead and other species seen that morning included Lesser Honeyguide, Grey-rumped Swallow, Croaking Cisticola, Lead-coloured Flycatcher, Common Wattle-eye, Black-headed Weaver and Yellow-mantled Widowbird. As we drove away from the Campement de Buflé Noir we met with the spectacular and prehistoric looking Abyssinian Ground Hornbill and an immature Martial Eagle with full crop perched by the roadside. Despite the bees and the flies our time in Bénoué had been highly successful and it must be said that some very pleasant hours were spent walking the drying riverbed amongst the company of sublime Egyptian Plovers and snorting hippos.

Leaving Bénoué National Park behind us we continued further south up the twisting hairpin-bend road past the corpses of numerous trucks and lorries to the 'cooler' heights of the Adamawa Plateau and Ngaoundéré. We stopped at a lake that we scanned relentlessly for Lesser Jacana but without success. However, we did manage to find Little Grebe, Purple Heron, White-faced Whistling Duck, Yellow-billed Duck, African Hobby, Black Crake, Allen's Gallinule, African Swampphen, Winding Cisticola, Northern Fiscal, Tropical Boubou, Marsh Widowbird, Brown Twinspot, Blue-billed Firefinch and a large flock of strange Piapiacs.

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

At what was previously a somewhat more idyllic location, the ranch guesthouse overlooks an attractive crater lake surrounded by rolling grassy hills and beautiful gallery forest that is home to some very special birds. Early on our first morning in the area we began our explorations and wandered down to the lakeside. Normally each night hundreds of egrets, cormorants, ibises, weavers and starlings come into roost on an island in the middle of the lake but the egrets were virtually absent again this year with only small numbers of Western Great Egrets and Black-crowned Night Herons seen. However the starlings and weavers were present and as they left the roost we ticked off Splendid and Bronze-tailed Glossy Starlings although getting views of the localised White-collared Starling took a little more time but by the end of our stay everyone had succeeded. On the lake African Water Rail was heard, Black Crakes scuttled over the lily pads and even four Hartlaub's Ducks showed well, however the Greater Swamp Warblers spent most of their time buried in the rushes frequented by Baglafaecht Weavers. Blue-breasted Kingfisher and the enormous Giant Kingfisher were seen and Broad-billed Rollers perched on dead snags or hawked for insects. An incredibly lucky sighting was that of a responsive Red-chested Flufftail that flushed twice by the lakeside.

Our two and a half days at Ngaoundaba were spent walking in various directions around the grounds of the ranch in search of the specialties. Now yellow-vented Dark-capped Bulbuls had replaced the white-vented birds encountered elsewhere. In the galleries we heard the impressively loud gong-like song of Spotted Thrush Babblers and after a lot of persistent effort we all managed to see them this year. Leafloves were very noisy and thus much in evidence but as their name suggests weren't always easy to see amongst the dense foliage. The endemic Bamenda Apalis proved tricky to see, as it seemed to favour the interior of the galleries rather than the edge. Some stunning long-tailed black-and-white morph African Paradise Flycatchers were a joy to watch whilst the loud rhythmic sweeping cries of Oriole Warblers (or Moho) were there to break the silence of these woodlands. White-spotted Flufftails were heard calling but refused to show. We saw some fantastic Ross's Turacos that displayed their marvellous colours so well and whose raucous calls were a companion during our walks. In the damp thickets and gallery forests, secretive Grey-winged Robin Chats were glimpsed, the charming White-cheeked Oliveback was watched feeding on ripe figs and we also found Yellowbill, Red-headed Lovebird, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Double-toothed Barbet, Green-backed Woodpecker, excitable White-chinned Prinias, African Dusky Flycatcher and Square-tailed Drongo.

The open bush around the ranch stretches for miles and during our convoluted, meandering forays cross-country we came upon roosting Standard-winged Nightjars, a pair of beautiful Brown-chested Lapwings in full breeding plumage, an Ovambo Sparrowhawk and smart male Red-shouldered Cuckoo-shrikes. An obliging family of Sun Lark was much appreciated, a pair of migrating Black Storks was a surprise and other species included Shikra, Black Sparrowhawk, Wahlberg's Eagle, Klaas's Cuckoo, Alpine Swift, Cardinal and Brown-backed Woodpeckers, Petit's Saw-wing, West African Swallow, Pale and Pied Flycatchers, Western Black-headed Batis, Spotted Creeper, Northern Double-collared, Splendid and Copper Sunbirds, Woodchat Shrike, Lesser Blue-eared Starling, Black-necked Weaver and Black-crowned Waxbill.

Our last bird in the north was a Greyish Eagle Owl at its daytime roost by our hotel. We returned to Garoua for a (remarkably punctual!) flight southwards to Yaoundé for a two nights stay. The ever-growing capital is set amongst rolling hills within the forest zone and there is not much to recommend the sprawling city to the birder but during our time here we managed to find some exciting species in the rapidly disappearing forests on the city outskirts.

We climbed up through some farm bush that held both singing Yellow-throated Nicators (which we never did actually set eyes on) and the poorly named Yellow-necked or Falkenstein's Greenbul both



species at the edge of their range. A colony of nasal-tufted Grey-throated Barbets lives in the dead trees here and they were seen frequently throughout the morning. Yellow-billed Barbet showed well and a Red-rumped Tinkerbird was coaxed down from the treetops for good views. A superb Cassin's Hawk Eagle was found perched in a large tree, Cameroon Sombre and Honeyguide Greenbuls were all added to the growing greenbul list. A colourful Bates's Paradise Flycatcher was seen and a pair of Violet-backed Hyliotas worked their way through the canopy where a male West African Batis piped out his repetitive song. Both Tiny and Bates's Sunbirds were identified and a tiny African Piculet showed briefly whilst other forest and edge species included Red-fronted Parrot, African Emerald and Didric Cuckoos, Rufous Flycatcher Thrush, Green Hylia, Chestnut Wattle-eye, Forest White-eye, Black-shouldered Puffback, Black-winged Oriole and Grey-crowned Negrofinch.

Another spot visited the following morning near Yaoundé gave us some added bonuses with Buff-throated Apalis, the charming Chestnut-capped Flycatcher, a dapper pair of Shrike Flycatchers, Velvet-mantled Drongo and Green Twinspot. We left the Yaoundé area heading for Bamenda in Anglophone Cameroon. On the journey we drove through plague-sized swarms of African Beak butterflies (*Libythea labdaca*), which were doing their best to clog the radiators of cars causing many vehicle problems on the way. We shared a picnic lunch with Whistling Cisticola before arriving at our destination in the late afternoon just in time to find some Neumann's Starlings on the cliff face above our hotel in Bamenda as a rather dull afternoon drew to a close.

Our first day in the Bamenda area was spent exploring a patch of remnant forest that has been protected for centuries by the local Fon and his community. The forest itself cloaks a steep hillside and although it is small it is still magnificent and in it cling for survival some of the avian jewels of the Cameroonian crown of endemism. No sooner had we embarked on our walk than we were watching a bright yellow Bannerman's Weaver in the farmbrush along the way and excitable Brown-backed (split from Chubb's) Cisticolas. A male Orange-tufted Sunbird was also seen alongside Brown-crowned Tchagra and African Stonechat. From deep inside the forest we could hear the raucous guttural cries of turacos so we climbed onwards and upwards until with a flash of red and green through the treetops a Bannerman's Turaco bounced into view. However, not all turacos here were this species for we also found Green Turaco alongside the less common species. Although it was somewhat quieter than usual inside the forest we eventually found the dapper endemic Banded Wattle-eye sporting intensely red wattles and it was interesting to find Common Wattle-eye here also - surely a pitfall for the unwary! Attractive Black-collared Apalises, the unassuming Green Longtail and rather drab Cameroon Olive Greenbuls crept through the lush undergrowth and other species seen included Cassin's Honeybird, Grey Cuckoo-shrike, Western Mountain Greenbul, Grey Apalis, White-bellied Crested Flycatcher, Ruwenzori (recently re-split from African) Hill Babbler, Brown-capped Weaver and a chunky Oriole Finch. We were just thinking of leaving the forest when the mournful hoots of a Green-breasted Bush-shrike finally reached our ears and soon we were getting views of the bird as it clattered back and forth in the canopy above us. As we descended from the forest and returned to the cultivated areas a welcome find was a Bamenda Apalis that showed itself far better than the individual at Ngaoundaba and before we left White-bellied Tit, Mackinnon's Shrike, and Thick-billed Seedeater were also added to the list.

By now it was mid day and with the birding activity at a lull we moved on in the afternoon to the more open grasslands where an attractive vista of rolling grasslands, rocky escarpments and patches of gallery forest laid out before us proved to be a pleasant place to spend the rest of the day. Most of our time here was given over to searching for the localised Bannerman's Pipit which gave us the run around until we all had seen it well. The only other new birds for the tour that were noted were Plain-backed Pipit, Yellow Bishop and Pin-tailed Whydah.

The following day began with a cool morning and we spent our time at a small crater lake that held four African Black Ducks and Common Moorhen. During the morning on the forested crater rim we renewed our acquaintance with the marvellous Bannerman's Turaco, Bannerman's Weaver and Banded Wattle-eye! Up to this time there had been no sight or sound of the regionally endemic, Bangwa Forest Warbler and the dry conditions meant that they were quiet here also. Nonetheless we did manage to entice one individual to show itself briefly as it crept like a mouse through dense vegetation. We enjoyed great views of a perched African Cuckoo Hawk and out on the open grasslands we found Pectoral-patch Cisticola and a pair of Cameroon Pipits. Regional endemics such as the endearing Shelley's Oliveback, Mountain Robin Chat, Cameroon Sunbird and the brightly coloured and totally stunning Yellow-breasted Boubou were all seen and we also noted African Cuckoo, Western Green Tinkerbird, Mountain Wagtail, Blackcap and Black-billed Weaver. We then bade our farewells to the members of the group who were returning home that day and a smaller intrepid band of travellers journeyed on to Buea at the foot of Mount Cameroon.

We awoke to clear skies behind the ever-rising Mount Cameroon. The true height of the mountain is argued to lie between 4,040 and 4,095 metres and is actually thought to be increasing every year. We set off at first light for the climb up the famous 'Guinness track', the location of an annual race to and from the summit that is normally completed in something like four and a half hours! All we had to do was merely stagger to the tree line at about 2,000 metres where the endemic Mount Cameroon Speirops occurs. We wended our way through the fields, bracken and tall stands of Elephant Grass that cover the lower slopes and as we climbed slowly, higher and higher the path entered the sadly degraded forest and new birds began to appear. We scanned the treetops thoroughly for the Cameroon Olive Pigeon but drew a blank faring rather better with small numbers of graceful endemic Mountain Saw-wings flying low over our heads. A few Cameroon Montane Greenbuls amongst the far more common Western Mountain Greenbuls gradually replaced the Little Greenbuls of the lower slopes. A pair of strange White-tailed Warbler squealed at us from the gloomy tangles and the Cameroon Forest (split from Evergreen Forest) Warbler proved easy to get to grips with meaning that everyone saw it well with the first try! Yellow-billed Turacos, Naked-faced Barbets and Waller's Starling, were feasting on the copious fruits. African Hill Babblers and Dark-backed Weavers allowed good views, a pair of Lemon Dove flushed from the track and both Tullberg's and Elliot's Woodpeckers put in an appearance. We eventually reached the tree line and quickly encountered our quarry, the charming Mount Cameroon Speirops and were rewarded with some very close views.

Curtains of cloud repeatedly hid from view and then revealed the mountain above us and a family of Peregrine Falcons was watched screeching overhead before we turned and begun our descent. The loose rocks along the pathway made the descent somewhat treacherous but making our way carefully down we found Thick-billed Honeyguide, a charming Black-capped Woodland Warbler and Mountain Sooty Boubou but the biggest star of all was perhaps a Brown-chested Alethe that sat and posed quietly out in the open for as long as we wished to look at it. We reached the bottom weary and tired but very satisfied with our successful day.

We paid an early morning visit to Limbe situated on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean where we spent a few hours in the Botanical Gardens. Sadly there were few flowers to be found but we managed to see the coastal specialist Reichenbach's Sunbird. Species such as Western Reef Egret, Spotted Flycatcher and the unobtrusive Cassin's Flycatcher were expected but we were most surprised to find a pair of Black-bellied Seedcrackers there. Our time in the gardens was short as we had a long drive on a route that is notorious for claiming many a vehicle during the rainy season over some good to terrible roads onwards towards the Nigerian border and the small town of Mundemba on the edge of Korup National Park. We travelled with the cries of "white-man, white-man" ringing in our ears but the journey was pretty much uneventful bird-wise as it was best to arrive and get everything sorted for

our mini expedition into the park. The cultivated areas around the hotel didn't look particularly inspiring but the fields held a small group of intensely coloured Black-headed Waxbills and Simple Leaflove.

The following morning we found ourselves at the foot of the impressive suspension bridge spanning the Mana River. Some solid concrete steps now replace the once rickety wooden ladder thus making the experience of crossing the river somewhat less hair-raising although when wet a few slippery planks here and there still test the grip on your walking boots! The sounds of a bird party welcomed us into the gloom and from this point on a thick wall of primary rainforest engulfed our party as we slipped inside the dark green mass of vegetation and began trekking along narrow trails between tall solid tree trunks and looped and tangled lianas, heading to our base camp some eight kilometres away. As we moved through the forest, we were accompanied by the sound of enormous Yellow-casqued Hornbills as they moved from tree to tree, the buzzing whirr of their wings slicing the silence of the forest. Getting a view of them through the high, dense canopy however was a task in itself! For the third year running the distinctive call of a pitta reached our ears but perhaps of the unusually dry conditions it only called twice but distantly and try as we might we could not elicit another response.

We pressed on stopping for anything of interest en route as one does on these occasions. An ant swarm allowed us amazing views of so many Fire-crested Alethes and White-tailed Ant Thrush and both Pale-breasted and the brown-throated *iboensis* form of Brown Illadopsises were seen. The roving bird parties gave us our first taster of mixed greenbul flocks and we managed to sort out Icterine, Xavier's, Red-tailed, White-bearded and Eastern Bearded Greenbuls and also Red-tailed and Lesser Bristlebills. A responsive White-spotted Flufftail shared the same field of view as a Forest Robin but neither was very easy to see in the gloomy understorey. A Blue Cuckoo-shrike was called down from the canopy and we also enjoyed views of Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher, Blue-billed and Crested Malimbos. A Blue-headed Wood Dove responded to playback but only posed briefly for us on an exposed branch and some lucky people saw Shining-blue Kingfisher. It was hard work and the pace was slow but some recompense came later that night with great scope views of one of a pair of the resident Vermiculated Fishing Owls captured magically in the torch beam.

The next two days were spent working some of the forest trails as there were still many other species for us left to find and we quickly discovered that forest birding here is definitely not easy and were soon coping with the frustrations of catching (or perhaps missing) furtive shadowy shapes that slipped away before we had hardly even registered their presence! However, these occasions of hair-tearing and teeth-gnashing frustration were surely offset by the joys of seeing a pair of Sjöstedt's Owlet in broad daylight. Some careful stalking enabled us to see a stunning male Bare-cheeked Trogon well. Bright-eyed Red-billed Dwarf Hornbills dashed back and forth above our heads. A superb male Rufous-sided Broadbill sat frozen on its perch. A White-bellied Kingfisher sat on one side of a stream and an African Dwarf perched on the opposite bank. Bird parties held species such as Grey Longbill, Blue-headed and Dusky Crested Flycatchers, White-spotted Wattle-eye, Fraser's Sunbird, Shining Drongo. The forest was very quiet this year and frustrations were high and it did not help when only some of the group managed to get glimpses of species such as Blackcap Illadopsis or Latham's Forest Francolin. The sound of a Chocolate-backed Kingfisher piping its far-reaching cry into the extensive forest and a Lyre-tailed Honeyguide heard displaying over the closed canopy were particularly frustrating!

We birded along the road as we left Mundemba and continued to add species. A perched Palearctic migrant Eurasian Hobby started the day. We teased an Olive-green Camaroptera from its hiding place, saw Chestnut-breasted Negrofinch and found Red-vented Malimbos to be plentiful. The delightful Black-capped Apalis showed well and we also obtained good views of Purple-headed Glossy Starling. A Black Cuckoo played hide and seek and we lured a hulking Black-throated Coucal in for views. We arrived at Nyasoso at the foot of Mount Kupe at the end of the day and were slightly surprised to find some Red-rumped Swallows in residence.

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

Mount Kupe is uncompromisingly steep in places and we decided to delay the agony of climbing it by first visiting the village of Kodmin in the nearby Bakossi Mountains. The advantage of this locality is that the village is already at the altitude preferred by many of the special birds that we previously needed to climb the steep slopes of Mt Kupe for and so by driving to Kodmin the difficult climb up is avoided although it must be remembered that the steep paths at Kodmin then of course only lead down and they need to be climbed again! Birdquest discovered the first record of Mount Kupe Bush-shrike at Kodmin in 2002 and this now seems to be a reasonably reliable site for this elusive species as well as the regional endemic Green-breasted Bush-shrike. We had no problems with the village community this year although a little time was needed in order to sort out the arrangements. Unfortunately land ownership and access isn't that simple in parts of Cameroon so that one cannot freely wander about and the chiefs, councils and local gods all have to be appeased mainly by beer, whisky, cola nuts and ultimately money. However finally the settlement was reached and we were allowed to enter the forest.

Initially the path leads through bracken-covered hillsides where we saw species such as Fan-tailed Grassbird and during our two days spent in these forests we discovered a wealth of very special birds. On distant snags we managed to scope Cameroon Olive Pigeon and a couple of Forest Chestnut-winged Starling and Afep Pigeons were also seen. A pair of Levallant's Cuckoo was found, Red-chested and Olive Long-tailed Cuckoos were seen fleetingly and we had some excellent looks at Black-throated Apalis and Bocage's Bush-shrike.

However it was inside the forest that we spent the most time trying to track down a bird party or better still a Mount Kupe Bush-shrike. As with everywhere in this hilly region the terrain often presents more problems in seeing the birds than the birds themselves! Steep, densely vegetated valleys and narrow trails do not make it easy for groups of people to get onto birds. Once again this year we were fortunate enough to see a pair of the desirable Mount Kupe Bush-shrike and hear its grating calls echoing through the forest. The bird responded aggressively crashing in above our heads but gradually became more and more elusive. However we were determined not to give up and with persistence everyone managed good views of the bird. At Kodmin it was also easy to get some marvellous views of the regionally endemic White-throated Mountain Babblers and very attractive tail-pumping Grey-headed Greenbuls. We also obtained some excellent views of Bar-tailed Trogons, Alexander's (split from Bocage's) Akalat, family parties of White-bellied Robin Chats, Yellow Longbill and the diminutive Ursula's Sunbird. Unfortunately our second day was spoiled by afternoon rain. The month long drought had finally ended, the day ended in a torrential downpour and we slid back down the mountain.

Back at Nyasoso we began our assault of Mt Kupe itself but took it very slowly up Max's trail, as there was much to see on the way and a lot of time was spent birding the highly productive farm bush. Here we fought a long and hard battle trying to see a pair of Fiery-breasted Bush-shrikes and in the end everyone managed some sort of a view but these colourful beasts favoured the densely vegetated understorey, which made them hard to see. We had better views of a beautiful Many-coloured Bush-shrike that was calling persistently and was lured in to the open trees above us. Furtive Black-faced Rufous Warblers and skulking Lühder's Bush-shrike crept through the undergrowth but Yellow-footed and Dusky-blue Flycatchers sat out in the open. We enjoyed good looks at both Yellow-bellied and Black-necked Wattle-eyes that dashed to and fro posing briefly every now and then. A female Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike was a welcome find, a male Grey-headed Broadbill sat up and colourful

Petit's Cuckoo-shrikes were seen. Green Sunbird, Pink-footed Puffback and Western Black-headed Oriole all showed well and a flock of Narrow-tailed Starlings going to roost signified the end of the day. Once again we saw the *hyliotas* that appear to show the field characters of Southern *Hyliota* rather than the Yellow-bellied that had 'officially' been recorded from the mountain up until our visit in 2005 when we started looking at these birds with a more critical eye. There is one specimen of a Southern *Hyliota* collected by Serle in 1965 from the nearby Rumpi Hills and this has always remained a bit of a puzzle. However, this *slatini* rain forest population of 'Southern *Hyliota*' ranges from just a little further east and reaches as far as Kenya's Kakamega Forest and the Angolan scarp forests and there are surely closer links with this form and the recently split Usambara *Hyliota* from Tanzania rather than the miombo dwelling races of Southern *Hyliota*. At night Fraser's Eagle Owls were heard calling but they remained stubbornly unresponsive although as luck would have it we flushed an individual in daylight up on Max's trail and so the species wasn't entirely lost! Climbing up the mountain was a strenuous exercise that left everyone lighter and hopefully fitter by the end of the stay, but the rewards were great and we were all eager to try and track down the mountain's special inhabitants. However the biggest surprise on Mount Kupe had to be the discovery of a spectacular troop of Drill and we all had great scope views of this very rare primate.

Mount Kupe is a wonderful place and since the BirdLife and WWF projects has seen a high level of protection but it is now worrying that the trees are continuing to be cut down inside the boundary of the 'protected' forest. It remains to be seen what will happen.

Although perhaps not an 'easy' destination, Cameroon is probably the 'ultimate' western African country to visit and our 28 days tour had taken us virtually the entire length of the country, through all the major habitats and had surrendered many of the best birds that western Africa has to offer. From Mount Cameroon itself to the Sahel spectacle, the rare endemics of the Adamawa Plateau and Bamenda Highlands and finally the rich lowland and Montane forests of the southwest, we had surely sampled a wide range of habitats and some beautiful scenery as well! The infrastructure in the country seems at best fragile and if Cameroon turns out to be yet another African country forced off of the ecotourist/birding map of destinations then it will be a very great loss indeed.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST

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

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

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

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

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). 2012. IOC World Bird Names (v2.11). Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

### STRUTHIONIDAE

Common Ostrich *Struthio camelus*: A female was seen disappearing fast in Waza National Park. It is thought that the population remaining in the park numbers no more than 100 birds.

### PODICIPEDIDAE

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*: Small numbers were seen on Dang Lake and Lake Awing.

### PHALACROCORACIDAE

Long-tailed Cormorant *Phalacrocorax africanus*: Also known as Reed Cormorant this species was easy to see in appropriate habitat throughout the tour. The IOC places the species in the genus *Microcarbo*.

### ANHINGIDAE

African Darter *Anhinga rufa*: Singletons were seen on the 'duck pond' near Douala and the Nyong and Sanaga Rivers.

### ARDEIDAE

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* (NL): C-G saw one at Ngaoundaba.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*: About six were seen at Ngaoundaba. Louette suggests that this is not a breeding bird in Cameroon and these are Palearctic migrants.

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

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

Green-backed Heron *Butorides striata*: Also known as Striated Heron, we saw several in Bénoué National Park and another in Limbe Botanical Gardens.

Western Reef Egret *Egretta gularis*: Just one individual was seen at Limbe.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*: Small numbers were seen at widespread locations during the main tour.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*: Also known as Yellow-billed Egret, small numbers were seen at widespread locations during the main tour. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Mesophoyx* as DNA work suggests a closer link with *Ardea* herons than *Egretta*.

Western Great Egret *Egretta alba*: One was seen in Bénoué National Park and at least 15 birds were at Ngaoundaba. Recent DNA work suggests that this species shows a closer link with *Ardea* than *Egretta*. It is placed in the genus *Ardea* by the IOC but sometimes also in *Casmerodius*.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*: About six were seen at Dang Lake and two at Ngaoundaba.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*: Singletons at the Sanaga River, Waza and Lake Awing.

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

#### SCOPIDAE

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

#### CICONIIDAE

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

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*: A surprise sighting of a pair over Ngaoundaba on 17/4. This is a very scarce bird in Cameroon with few documented records.

Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii*: A few migrating birds were seen en route to Poli. Breeding begins north of 9°N in Cameroon from May. Bey El-Arnaut Abdim (1780-1827) was a Turkish governor of Dongola in Sudan who was of great help to Rüppell during his northeast African expedition.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*: Two on the Sanaga River and a singleton in Waza National Park were the only sightings of this mainly dry season visitor.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen in Waza National Park.

Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*: A pair of these enormous storks was seen well in Waza National Park.

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumeniferus*: About ten were seen in Waza National Park. The name is early 19<sup>th</sup> century French derived from the Arabic *murabit* or holy man, the stork being regarded as holy. The scientific name has been corrected to *Leptoptilos crumenifer*.

#### THRESKIORNITHIDAE

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*: This noisy bird was seen in Bénoué National Park, Ngaoundaba and again en route to Nyasoso. The name is an onomatopoeic rendering of the call.

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

#### ANATIDAE

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*: At least 80 were seen on Dang Lake.

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis*: 80+ in Waza National Park A pair on Dang Lake and a singleton at Ngaoundaba.

Hartlaub's Duck *Pteronetta hartlaubii*: This forest duck is always a popular tick of the trip. We managed to find a pair on the 'duck pond' near Douala and four at Ngaoundaba. Gustav Hartlaub (1814-1900) was a German physician and collector with a specialist interest in East African Birds. He became Honorary Supervisor of the Zoological Collection of the Bremen Natural History Society Museum. The species was previously classified as 'Near Threatened' by BirdLife International with hunting and pollution being the major threats but the species has now been removed from their list.

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*: Eight were seen in Waza National Park.

African Pygmy Goose *Nettapus auritus*: A pair of these pretty little geese was scoped at the duck pond.

Yellow-billed Duck *Anas undulata*: About 50 of these distinctive ducks were found on Dang Lake. The species is here at the most westernmost extent of its range.

African Black Duck *Anas sparsa*: Four were scoped on Lake Awing.

#### PANDIONIDAE

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen at the Sanaga River.

#### ACCIPITRIDAE

African Cuckoo Hawk *Aviceda cuculoides*: Excellent scope views of a perched bird at Lake Awing.

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*: Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants were seen flying over Campo Ma'an, near Yaoundé and Mount Kupe and Kodmin.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*: Also known as Black-winged Kite, we obtained widespread sightings during the main tour of this familiar roadside species.

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

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

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*: At least one in Bénoué National Park. Its yodelling call must be one of the most evocative sounds of Africa.

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

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



probably experiencing a rapid decline in numbers due to hunting, poisoning and persecution. The current population is thought to number 197,000 mature individuals.

Rüppell's Griffon Vulture *Gyps rueppellii*: Numbers were again low this year in Waza National Park with only eight seen. Another pair was seen over Bénoué National Park. However this species is still apparently more common than African White-backed Vulture *contra* Louette. The species is currently classified as 'Near-threatened' by BirdLife International as it is experiencing a moderately rapid decline in numbers due to habitat loss, poisoning and persecution. The current population is thought to number 30,000 mature individuals. Wilhelm Peter Eduard Simon Rüppell (1794-1884) was a German explorer, cartographer and zoologist, best known for ornithological discoveries in Ethiopia and the interior of northeast Africa.

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotus*: Three of these huge vultures were seen well in Waza National Park. Sometimes placed in the genus *Aegypius* it is classed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International as only a small declining population remains. Poisoning and persecution appear to be the main threats. The current population is thought to number 8,500 mature individuals. Populations of northern forms have been treated as a separate race, *nubicus* or else placed in the nominate race. However, variation appears to be simply individual and/or clinal and the forms are best merged together. The species is often considered monotypic. A lappet is a little flap and refers to the folds of skin on the sides of the head and neck.

White-headed Vulture *Trigonoceps occipitalis*: A pair was seen over Bénoué National Park. BirdLife International currently classifies the species as 'Vulnerable' as it appears to be in decline. Poisoning and persecution appear to be the main threats. The current population is thought to number less than 12,500 mature individuals.

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*: Four of these Palearctic migrants were seen in the far north.

Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*: Just one was seen at Poli.

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*: A poor showing with two in Waza National Park and another in Bénoué National Park. The species is currently classified as 'Near-threatened' by BirdLife International as it is experiencing a moderately rapid decline in numbers due to habitat loss, poisoning and persecution. The current population is thought to number less than 100,000 mature individuals. The name means ' juggler' in French and refers to the balancing mode of flight employed by this distinctive and spectacular birds! The Bateleur is also the magician or 'wand-user' of the Tarot Cards.

African Harrier Hawk *Polyboroides typus*: Widespread sightings of this common and distinctive raptor. Two races occur in the dry season. The nominate race is a migrant from east Africa. The smaller, darker resident race *pectoralis* is restricted to the forests and galleries.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*: Although some of the harriers seen had to go unidentified we saw at least seven individuals of this handsome raptor in the far north. This Palearctic migrant is currently classified as 'Near-threatened' by BirdLife International. It is threatened by the destruction of its steppe grassland habitat of its breeding grounds. Pesticide use in Africa may also be a problem. The current population is thought to number less than 30,000 mature individuals.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*: This Palearctic migrant was for once less common than the previous harrier in the far north. George Montagu (1735-1815) was a British soldier and Natural Historian who after being court-marshalled from the Wiltshire militia subsequently dedicated his life to his mistress and ornithology. He collected the harrier in 1803 near his Devonshire home.

Eurasian Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*: This Palearctic migrant was seen at widespread localities in the north.

Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar*: This fierce little raptor was easily seen in the far north. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Melierax*. In this case the word Gabar is derived from two French words *garde* (guard) and *barré* (barred).

Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates*: This distinctive raptor was easily seen in the far north.

Red-chested Goshawk *Accipiter toussenelii*: Our first was seen in the hotel garden at dawn in Douala! After this we obtained several sightings in the forest zone at Kupe and Korup and it is easiest to find at dawn when the birds display noisily over their territories. Taxonomy of the African Goshawk complex is controversial and the form concerned is often lumped in *A. tachiro*. Alternatively, Red-chested Goshawk is sometimes split into two species, West African Goshawk *A. macroscelides* and Red-chested Goshawk *A. toussenelii*. However, our birds occur on the edge of the intergradation zone between *macroscelides* and *toussenelii* and it is possible that at least some of our birds were intermediate between the forms. However the voices of all those heard was most similar to *macroscelides*.

Shikra *Accipiter badius*: Singletons were seen en route to Ngaoundéré and at Ngaoundaba.

Ovambo Sparrowhawk *Accipiter ovampensis*: An adult was watched circling over Ngaoundaba. Ovamboland is now part of northern Namibia and southern Angola.

Black Sparrowhawk *Accipiter melanoleucus*: Also known as Great Sparrowhawk, singletons were seen en route to Campo Ma'an, Ngaoundaba and at Nyasoso.

Grasshopper Buzzard *Butastur rufipennis*: Just three sightings of this handsome raptor in north and once again numbers seemed unusually low. Always worth seeing in flight when the rufous primaries are visible.

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*: First seen in Bénoué National Park and then scattered sightings throughout the rest of the tour.

Red-necked Buzzard *Buteo auguralis*: Widespread sightings of this attractive raptor with a red tail throughout the tour.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*: Numbers of this variably plumaged eagle were well down in Waza National Park with just eight individuals seen.

Wahlberg's Eagle *Aquila wahlbergi*: Singletons of these small eagles were seen at Ngaoundaba and Bamenda. The IOC places this species in the genus *Hieraaetus*. Johan August Wahlberg (1810-1856) was a Swedish collector who was unfortunately killed by a wounded African Elephant at Lake Ngami in Bechuanaland.

African Hawk Eagle *Hieraaetus spilogaster*: A pair was seen circling over Bénoué National Park. The IOC places this species in the genus *Aquila*.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*: One sighting of a pale morph individual of this Palearctic migrant in the far north.

Ayres's Hawk Eagle *Hieraaetus ayresii*: Singletons sighted at the Sanaga River and near Yaoundé. Thomas Ayres (1828-1913) was a British collector who settled in South Africa. His other lines of work included gold digging and brewing beer!

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis*: Some very widespread sightings throughout the tour of this raptor with a very special hair-do.

Cassin's Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus africanus*: Several good sightings near Yaoundé, on Mount Cameroon and en route to Nyasoso. The IOC places this species in the genus *Aquila*. John Cassin (1813-69) was an American businessman and renowned systematic ornithologist. He became curator of ornithology and Vice-President of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences.

Crowned Eagle *Stephanoaetus coronatus* (H): This magnificent large eagle was only heard displaying over Campo Ma'an.

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus*: Fantastic looks at a juvenile in Bénoué National Park.

## FALCONIDAE

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*: An individual in Waza National Park was a Palearctic migrants of the nominate race. The distinctive smaller, dark resident race *rufescens* was seen well in the Bamenda area.

Fox Kestrel *Falco alopecurus*: We enjoyed no less than five sightings of this very special falcon in the north.

Grey Kestrel *Falco ardosiaceus*: Singletons were seen in Bénoué National Park and Ngaoundaba.

Red-necked Falcon *Falco chicquera*: One of these attractive little falcons was seen competing with a Lanner and chasing a Black-headed Lapwing at Mora.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*: This Palearctic migrant was scoped perched as we left Mundemba.

African Hobby *Falco cuvierii*: Singletons of these dashing falcons were seen at Dang Lake and Ngaoundaba.

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*: Sightings of this large falcon were mainly obtained in the north but we also saw one in the Bamenda area and again en route to Mundemba.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*: A pair with a juvenile of the smaller resident race *minor* was seen on Mount Cameroon.

## PHASIANIDAE

Stone Partridge *Ptilopachus petrosus*: We had a number of opportunities to see these 'rock chickens' well in the north. This species is now placed in the New World Quails, Odontophoridae by the IOC.

Latham's Forest Francolin *Francolinus lathamii*: Views for the first in line only of this pretty little francolin in Korup National Park. The IOC places this species in the genus *Peliperdix*. Dr John Latham (1740-1837) was a British physician, naturalist and author of a *General History of Birds*.

White-throated Francolin *Francolinus albogularis*: We had absolutely superb views of a pair of these wonderfully marked and somewhat localised francolins in Bénoué National Park. The IOC places this species in the genus *Peliperdix*.

Scaly Francolin *Francolinus squamatus* (H): This secretive but nocturnally noisy francolin was heard in Bénoué National Park where its presence in the riverine forest there is somewhat surprising and at various localities during the extension. The IOC places this species in the genus *Pternistis*.

Double-spurred Francolin *Francolinus bicalcaratus*: This large francolin was easily seen in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba. The IOC places this species in the genus *Pternistis*.

Clapperton's Francolin *Francolinus clappertoni*: Common and easy to see in the Waza area where it replaces the previous species. The IOC places this species in the genus *Pternistis*. Hugh Clapperton was a member of the 1823 expedition to chart the course of the Niger River. A "fiery, one-handed adventurer" he eventually died in Niger of fever and dysentery in 1827.

## NUMIDIDAE

[This family is sometimes lumped in Phasianidae.]

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

## TURNICIDAE

Quail-plover *Ortyxelos meiffrenii*: An absolute 'must-see' bird. The species is a unique and notoriously elusive little creature that looks like a cross between a lark, a quail and a

wader. During our bush-bashes across country, we first came across no less than eight individuals and enjoyed amazing prolonged views of a particularly confiding individual that we were able to watch for as long as we wished. We are keeping an extremely good track record with this species and have not yet missed it on any of our Cameroon tours. The relationships of Quail-plover are very uncertain and they are possibly more closely related to coursers – a monotypic family here would be nice and perhaps preferable!

#### SAROTHRURIDAE

[This family was previously lumped in Rallidae.]

White-spotted Flufftail *Sarothrura pulchra*: This tiny little crane was heard in Campo Ma'an and at Ngaoundaba but we managed to obtain views in Korup National Park.

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

Red-chested Flufftail *Sarothrura rufa*: A female was seen twice in flight at Ngaoundaba.

#### RALLIDAE

African Water Rail *Rallus caerulescens* (H): Sadly only heard this year at Ngaoundaba. First recorded in Cameroon as recently as 1979 in the Bamenda area and then in 1994 at Ngaoundaba, this would appear to be an isolated population.

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

Allen's Gallinule *Porphyrio alleni*: Scope views of singletons at Dang Lake and at Ngaoundaba. Rear-Admiral William Allen (1793-1864) was an English naval officer involved in fighting the slave trade. He survived two ill-fated expeditions up the Niger River and the type specimen was procured during the second. However, he himself does not seem to have been particularly interested in birds.

African Swamphen *Porphyrio madagascariensis*: Three were seen at Dang Lake.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*: Just one at Lake Awing.

#### GRUIDAE

Black Crowned Crane *Balearica pavonina*: A slight drop this year for numbers of this beautiful bird in Waza National Park with about 150 birds seen. These magnificent creatures create a particularly awesome sight and sound and a highlight of our visit was the sight of this beautiful bird on the dry dusty plains of Waza. Now threatened and verging on extinction in many parts of its range it is classified as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International. The population is thought to number no more than 70,000 mature individuals and is decreasing rapidly. Our birds were of the nominate race with a population of perhaps no more than 15,000 birds. Waza represents one of the species strongholds although there does seem to have been a constant and significant decline in numbers in recent years and the main threats are drought and wetland drainage.

#### OTIDIDAE

Arabian Bustard *Ardeotis arabs*: Another poor year with just one individual seen briefly in flight by some group members in Waza National Park this year.

Savile's Bustard *Eupodotis savilei*: A male was flushed but gave great flight views as it passed by us in the Waza area on 10/3. Some lucky people saw it well on the ground as well. This species appears to be regular at this site as it was exactly where we had found it during the previous four tours! This species is rarely recorded in Cameroon and the first few records for the country were from similar areas between 1994-96. The IOC places this species in the genus *Lophotis*. Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Vesey Savile (1873 –1947) was

a British soldier serving in Sudan from 1901 where he also became a provincial governor.  
Rear-Admiral Herbert Lynes (the 'cisticola' man) described the bird!

White-bellied Bustard *Eupodotis senegalensis*: No less than seven birds were seen in the far north.

Black-bellied Bustard *Eupodotis melanogaster*: A male was seen in Waza National Park. The IOC places this species in the genus *Lissotis*.

#### JACANIDAE

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

#### ROSTRATULIDAE

Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*: A great showing this year with sightings of a female at Waza, three in Bénoué National Park and another at Dang Lake.

#### RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*: About 15 were seen in Waza National Park.

#### BURHINIDAE

Senegal Thick-knee *Burhinus senegalensis*: Seen well in Bénoué National Park.

Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis*: A single bird was seen in the Waza area.

#### PLUVIANIDAE

[Borrow & Demey lump this family in Glareolidae.]

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

#### GLAREOLIDAE

Bronze-winged Courser *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus*: An excellent showing with two individuals seen well at Mora and again at Ngaoundaba.

Rock Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis*: The white-collared nominate race were seen on the Nyong, Sanaga and Mana Rivers.

Grey Pratincole *Glareola cinerea*: More than 80 of these delightful pratincoles were scoped on the sandbanks of the Sanaga River.

#### CHARADRIIDAE

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

African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus*: Three were seen in the Poli area.

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

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

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

Brown-chested Lapwing *Vanellus superciliosus*: A particularly fine pair in full breeding plumage was much admired at Ngaoundaba.

## SCOLOPACIDAE

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*: Two of these Palearctic migrants were seen on the Sanaga River.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*: Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants was seen on the Sanaga River and in Bénoué National Park.

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

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

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*: Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants were seen in widespread locations throughout the tour.

## RYNCHOPIDAE

[This family is sometimes lumped in Laridae.]

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

## PTEROCLIDAE

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

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

## COLUMBIDAE

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

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

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

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

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

Black-billed Wood Dove *Turtur abyssinicus*: Replaces the previous species in the drier north with some overlap in Bénoué National Park.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*: Numbers continue to be well down in the far north. Namaqualand is part of southern Namibia and coastal southwest South Africa.

Cameroon Olive Pigeon *Columba sjostedti*: This regional endemic was scoped perched on bare snags at Kodmin.

Afep Pigeon *Columba unicincta*: Several sightings of this large pigeon at Kodmin but only seen in flight. The name 'Afep' is a name for the bird in the Cameroonian Bulu language.

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea*: This colourful pigeon was easy to see in the north.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*: Feral or 'table' birds only.

Lemon Dove *Aplopelia larvata*: A pair was flushed from the path on Mount Cameroon. The IOC places this species in the genus *Columba*.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*: Widespread sightings but absent from the far north. This bird sings, "I am a Red-eyed Dove".

- African Mourning Dove *Streptopelia decipiens*: Small numbers were seen in the Waza area.
- Vinaceous Dove *Streptopelia vinacea*: Abundant in Waza National Park and extremely common throughout the north.
- African Collared Dove *Streptopelia roseogrisea*: This dove was easy to see in Waza National Park. The alternative name of Rose-grey Dove is far more aesthetically pleasing but the correct scientific name is apparently *S. risoria*.
- European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*: Just small numbers of this Palearctic migrant were seen in and around Waza National Park.
- Adamawa Turtle Dove *Streptopelia hypopyrrha*: At least seven of these handsome doves were seen in Bénoué National Park. The Adamawa Plateau rises in Nigeria, cuts across Cameroon, and terminates in the Central African Republic.
- Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*: A common and widespread dove throughout the north. The IOC places this species in the genus *Spilopelia*.

#### PSITTACIDAE

- Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus*: Good numbers were seen this year particularly in Campo Ma'an. BirdLife International classifies the species as 'Near-threatened'. A recent estimate has suggested that up to 21% of the wild population may be harvested annually and that this combined with habitat loss will seriously threaten the species survival. This familiar red-tailed form has recently been split from the western brown-tailed form *timneh*.
- Red-fronted Parrot *Poicephalus gulielmi*: Pairs of these uncommon parrots were seen flying over in the Yaoundé area and again as we left Mundemba.
- Senegal Parrot *Poicephalus senegalus*: Small numbers of this colourful parrot were seen in the far north and Bénoué National Park.
- Red-headed Lovebird *Agapornis pullarius*: At least five were seen well at Ngaoundaba.

#### MUSOPHAGIDAE

- Great Blue Turaco *Corythaeola cristata*: These impressive top-knotted birds were easy to see in Campo Ma'an and as we left Mundemba.
- Green Turaco *Tauraco persa*: Also known as Guinea Turaco we saw it well in the Bamenda area and on Mount Kupe and in the Bakossi Mountains. The feathers of turacos possess two copper pigments, red turacin and green turacoverdin that are unique in the avian world and are responsible for producing the bright red and green colours in their plumage. Contrary to popular belief these pigments are only soluble in alkali and not water.
- Yellow-billed Turaco *Tauraco macrorhynchus*: Excellent looks at this colourful bird on the slopes of Mount Cameroon but only heard at Campo Ma'an, Mount Kupe and Korup National Park. The race concerned is *verreauxii* with its red-tipped crest.
- White-crested Turaco *Tauraco leucolophus*: Great looks at this stunning turaco in Bénoué National Park and again at Ngaoundaba.
- Bannerman's Turaco *Tauraco bannermani*: Without doubt the biggest rarity of the Bamenda bunch, and we had some great views of it this year. The species survival depends upon the protection of the remaining forest on Mt Oku, which only covers about 100 square kilometres. This Cameroon endemic is now severely threatened and is classified as 'Endangered' by BirdLife International. It is thought that the total population lies somewhere between 2,500 - 10,000 birds. David Armitage Bannerman (1886-1979) was a staff member of British Museum (Natural History) and author of the important work *Birds of Tropical West Africa*.
- Violet Turaco *Musophaga violacea*: This West African specialty was easy to see this year in Bénoué National Park.

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

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

## CUCULIDAE

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

Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius*: This harbinger of rain was seen at Kodmin. This cuckoo is known to mainly parasitize thrushes and robins.

Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus*: Heard in Korup and seen by some as we left Mundemba.

African Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis*: This intra-African migrant was seen at Lake Awing. It is known to parasitize Fork-tailed Drongo.

Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx mechowi* (H): Heard at Kodmin. The call was a little bit fast but resembled the Upper Guinea form. The hosts of this cuckoo remain unknown but possibly include Forest Robin and Brown Illadopsis.

Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx olivinus*: Flight views only at Kodmin. The hosts of this cuckoo remain unknown but possibly include Pale-breasted Illadopsis and Rufous Flycatcher Thrush.

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

Yellow-throated Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx flavigularis*: Five separate individuals of this exquisite cuckoo were counted in one morning in Campo Ma'an. The hosts of this cuckoo remain unknown.

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

Didric Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius*: Two were seen near Yaoundé. This species parasitizes mainly weavers. The name is an onomatopoeic rendering of the call.

Yellowbill *Ceuthmochares aereus*: Also known as Blue Malkoha, we all had good chances to see this African malkoha well at Campo Ma'an, Ngaoundaba, in Korup and on Mount Kupe.

## CENTROPIDIDAE

[This family is often lumped in Cuculidae.]

Black-throated Coucal *Centropus leucogaster*: We were extremely lucky to get views of this retiring coucal as we left Mundemba.



Gabon Coucal *Centropus anelli* (H): This large coucal was sadly only heard in Campo Ma'an.

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

Blue-headed Coucal *Centropus monachus*: Widespread encounters with this large coucal in the south.

#### TYTONIDAE

Western Barn Owl *Tyto alba*: This widely distributed species was easy to see in the camp at Waza.

#### STRIGIDAE

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

Greyish Eagle Owl *Bubo cinerascens*: Excellent views of a pair in daylight at Ngaoundéré.

Fraser's Eagle Owl *Bubo poensis*: Although heard at night at Mount Kupe they were totally unresponsive. By chance we flushed a bird during daytime on Max's Trail. Louis Fraser (1819-1866) was a British museum man, naturalist, explorer, author and member of the infamous ill-fated Niger River Expedition of 1841-42. He also collected specimens from Fernando Po (Bioko) and was eventually appointed British Consul at Ouidah in West Africa.

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

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

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

Red-chested Owlet *Glaucidium tephronotum*: Great views of one low down for a change in daylight at Campo Ma'an.

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

African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii*: One was seen at night at Campo Ma'an.

#### CAPRIMULGIDAE

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

Freckled Nightjar *Caprimulgus tristigma*: One was seen well near Maroua.

Golden Nightjar *Caprimulgus eximius*: A dream came true when at last during one of our Quail-plover walks this exquisite nightjar flew up from underneath our feet and resettled nearby so that we could all feast our eyes for as long as we wished. First recorded from Cameroon on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2003 there have been erratic records from the same area ever since but it is not clear whether this is a rare breeding bird in the area or simply a non-breeding visitor.

Standard-winged Nightjar *Macrodipteryx longipennis*: We were treated to some wonderful views of roosting males and females during daylight hours at Ngaoundaba. The males complete with magnificent standards were unforgettable, particularly the views of the displaying birds at dusk.

#### APODIDAE

Sabine's Spinetail *Rhaphidura sabini*: Seen well over Campo Ma'an. Edward Sabine (1788-1883) was an English scientist mainly interested in terrestrial magnetism and astronomy. He

collected the spinetail and the puffback; both named after him, in Sierra Leone and donated them to the British Museum where J. E. Gray officially described the specimens.

Black Spinetail *Telacanthura melanopygia* (NL): C-G saw some over Korup National Park.

Cassin's Spinetail *Neafrapus cassini*: Bernard saw one over Campo Ma'an and another was seen over Korup.

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

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

Bates's Swift *Apus batesi*: One of these small black swifts was seen over Campo Ma'an. George Latimer Bates (1863-1940) was a British naturalist who worked in West Africa, especially Cameroon between 1895 and 1931. He was author of *Handbook of the Birds of West Africa* published in 1930.

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

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*: About 20 were seen over Ngaoundaba.

#### COLIIDAE

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

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

#### TROGONIDAE

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

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

#### ALCEDINIDAE

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

Chocolate-backed Kingfisher *Halcyon badia* (H): Sadly only heard piping its far-reaching cry from the tops of those tall trees in Korup.

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

Blue-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon malimbica*: Brightly coloured birds showed well at Ngaoundaba and en route to Nyasoso.

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

Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti* (H): This species managed to avoid being actually seen in the north this year.

African Dwarf Kingfisher *Ceyx lecontei*: Good looks at one in Korup. The IOC places this species in the genus *Ispidina*.

African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ceyx pictus*: A number of good sightings from the south of the country. The IOC places this species in the genus *Ispidina*.

White-bellied Kingfisher *Alcedo leucogaster*: Great views of one in Korup National Park. The IOC places this species in the genus *Corythornis*.

Malachite Kingfisher *Alcedo cristata*: Just a few widespread sightings of this little jewel and mainly from Bénoué to the Adamawa Plateau. The IOC places this species in the genus

*Corythornis*. The name derives (via Latin and French) from the Greek *molochitis* meaning “mallow-green stone”.

Shining-blue Kingfisher *Alcedo quadribachys*: Views for some of the group of this dazzling kingfisher in Korup National Park.

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima*: Sightings of this heavyweight kingfisher at Ngaoundaba and in Limbe Botanical Gardens.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*: Always a pleasure to see this striking kingfisher. Our few sightings were in Bénoué National Park, Dang Lake and Ngaoundaba. This is the largest bird routinely known to hover using wing power alone unlike kestrels, which ‘cheat’ by flying into a headwind.

#### MEROPIDAE

Black Bee-eater *Merops gularis*: These mouth-watering bee-eaters were seen briefly at the Sanaga River and distantly in Korup National Park. We had our best views of an obliging bird on Mount Cameroon.

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus*: Just a few widespread sightings throughout the tour.

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

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

Little Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*: The striking and intensely coloured race *viridissimus* was easily seen in the far north.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* (NL): C-G saw these Palearctic migrants moving over Kodmin.

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

#### CORACIIDAE

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

Blue-throated Roller *Eurystomus gularis*: One was seen in Campo Ma’an and two more were seen in Korup National Park.

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*: Singletons of this colourful roller were seen at Ngaoundaba.

#### PHOENICULIDAE

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

#### RHINOPOMASTIDAE

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

Black Wood-hoopoe *Rhinopomastus aterrimus*: A few were seen in the Waza area and Bénoué National Park. The species is alternatively placed either in the genus *Phoeniculus* or *Scoptelus*. Sibley and Monroe treat the genus *Rhinopomastus* as a separate family, Rhinopomastidae and these are usually referred to as ‘scimitarbills’.

#### UPUPIDAE

Central African Hoopoe *Upupa senegalensis*: Hoopoe taxonomy is presently under debate with some authorities splitting the complex into as many as four species. This form is contentious

and has been placed with either Eurasian Hoopoe *U. epops* or African Hoopoe *U. africana*. We only recorded some of the more brightly coloured birds of the resident race *senegalensis* in the far north.

#### BUCORVIDAE

[This family is often lumped in Bucerotidae.]

Abyssinian Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus abyssinicus*: A female was seen in Bénoué National Park and a male was seen at Ngaoundaba.

#### BUCEROTIDAE

Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill *Tockus camurus*: Heard in Campo Ma'an but with patience we managed good views of some responsive birds in Korup.

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

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

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

Piping Hornbill *Bycanistes fistulator*: A small hornbill that was common and easy to see in forested areas in the south. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Ceratogymna*. The English name seems strangely inappropriate and one wonders why the old name of Laughing Hornbill was never preferred.

White-thighed Hornbill *Bycanistes albotibialis*: Most numerous and easy to see in Campo Ma'an with other sightings near Yaoundé and in Korup National Park. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Ceratogymna*.

Black-casqued Hornbill *Ceratogymna atrata*: Far easier to see at Campo Ma'an than in Korup mainly because the forest canopy at the latter site was so thick!

Yellow-casqued Hornbill *Ceratogymna elata*: A feature of the forest in Korup was the amazing sound of the whirring wings of this and the previous species as they glided overhead. We were lucky enough to at least get flight views of this huge bird. The species is classified as 'Near-threatened' by BirdLife International. Hunting and habitat loss are thought to be the worst threats to the species survival and the total population is thought to number about 13,000 mature individuals.

#### LYBIIDAE

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

Grey-throated Barbet *Gymnobucco bonapartei*: Small numbers of the dark-eyed nominate race were seen around Yaoundé.

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

Speckled Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus scolopaceus*: The more yellow-speckled race *flavisquamatus* of this forest species was seen well in the forested areas of the south.

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

Red-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus atroflavus*: We often heard this tinkerbird emitting its series of single regular 'poops' in the forested areas of the south and enticed one into view near Yaoundé.

Yellow-throated Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus subsulphureus*: This tinkerbird with the fast succession of 'poops' was often heard in the forested areas of the south and was first seen well in Campo Ma'an.

- Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus*: This look-alike to the previous species with a slower paced rhythm allowed us some good views firstly at Ngaoundaba.
- Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus*: A few widespread sightings were obtained in the north.
- Yellow-spotted Barbet *Buccanodon duchaillui*: This strikingly patterned barbet with the 'snoring' cry was seen well at several forested localities in the south.
- Streaky-throated Barbet *Tricholaema flavipunctata* (H): As hard as we might we could not get this species to show itself in the forests of the south. This form is part of the Hairy-breasted Barbet *T. hirsuta* complex of which it has been suggested that it should be split into as many as three species. There are both vocal and plumage differences to support this. On the other hand, there is also extensive intergradation between the races.
- Vieillot's Barbet *Lybius vieilloti*: Small numbers of this attractive barbet were seen in the north. Louis Jean Pierre Vieillot (1748-1831) was a French businessman forced to take refuge in the United States during the French Revolution and because of slave rebellions on San Domingo where he had his business in the spice trade. He had a consuming passion for ornithology dedicating his life to it.
- White-headed Barbet *Lybius leucocephalus*: One was seen well feeding in a fruiting fig tree in Bénoué National Park.
- Double-toothed Barbet *Lybius bidentatus*: Great views were obtained of this striking barbet at Ngaoundaba.
- Bearded Barbet *Lybius dubius*: We enjoyed good views of this monstrous beast at Poli but it was more elusive in Bénoué National Park.
- Yellow-billed Barbet *Trachylaemus purpuratus*: Often heard, this most impressive barbet was seen near Yaoundé and on Mount Kupe. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Trachyphonus*. However, those very social barbets both look, sound and act differently to the present species.

#### INDICATORIDAE

- Cassin's Honeybird *Prodotiscus insignis*: Ken saw one near Yaoundé and another was seen in the Bamenda area. The species is known to parasitize flycatchers, warblers, sunbirds and probably white-eyes.
- Lyre-tailed Honeyguide *Melichneutes robustus* (H): Frustratingly heard only in Korup National Park.
- Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator*: Several sightings in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba. The species is known to parasitize at least 39 different hole-nesting species.
- Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*: Several sightings in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba. The species is known to parasitize kingfishers, bee-eaters, barbets, woodpeckers, swallows, starlings and petronias.
- Thick-billed Honeyguide *Indicator conirostris*: Singletons on Mount Cameroon and Mount Kupe. The forest counterpart of the previous species and perhaps conspecific with it. Plumage differences are noticeable but the calls are virtually identical. Both species are known to parasitize barbets.
- Willcocks's Honeyguide *Indicator willcocksii*: We had some excellent looks at one individual at Poli and again at Ngaoundaba and near Yaoundé. The host species are still unknown but probably includes Speckled Tinkerbird. General Sir James Willcocks (1847-1926) commanded the expedition to suppress the Ashanti rebellion of 1900.

#### PICIDAE

- Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*: A good showing for this Palearctic migrant with sightings at Maroua, Mora, Poli and Dang Lake.

- African Piculet *Sasia africana*: We had two chances to get good looks at this diminutive woodpecker near Yaoundé and again on Mount Kupe.
- Fine-spotted Woodpecker *Campethera punctuligera*: This handsome woodpecker was seen well in Bénoué National Park.
- Green-backed Woodpecker *Campethera cailliautii*: Individuals of the race *permista* with barred underparts were seen at Ngaoundaba and again near Yaoundé.
- Tullberg's Woodpecker *Campethera tullbergi*: Sightings were obtained on Mount Cameroon and at Kodmin. The East African form is sometimes split as Fine-banded Woodpecker *C. taeniolaema* leaving the present form a monotypic species. Tycho Fredrik Hugo Tullberg (1842-1920) was a Swedish Zoologist.
- Gabon Woodpecker *Dendropicos gabonensis*: The nominate race was seen in Campo Ma'an and we also managed sightings of the rather variable race *reichenowi* on Mount Kupe. This form is intermediate (and hence problematic) between *gabonensis* and the western form *lugubris* that is sometimes split off as a separate species, Melancholy Woodpecker.
- Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens*: Widespread sightings in appropriate habitat from Ngaoundaba through to the end of the tour.
- Yellow-crested Woodpecker *Dendropicos xantholophus*: A good showing this year with sightings in Campo Ma'an, near Yaoundé and on Mount Kupe.
- Elliot's Woodpecker *Dendropicos elliotii*: Excellent views of the montane form *johnstoni* on Mount Cameroon and again on Mount Kupe and at Kodmin. This recognisable form has historically been treated as a separate species, Johnston's Woodpecker. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Mesopicos*. Daniel Giraud Elliot (1835-1915) was an American Curator of Zoology at the Field Museum in Chicago and one of the founders of the AOU. Sir Harry Hamilton Johnston (1858-1927) standing at five feet tall and known as the 'Tiny Giant' was an English explorer, artist and discoverer of the Okapi. He travelled widely in tropical Africa through many countries including Cameroon.
- Grey Woodpecker *Dendropicos goertae*: We had several opportunities to see this one well in the north. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Mesopicos*.
- Brown-backed Woodpecker *Picoides obsoletus*: Seen well at Ngaoundaba.

#### EURYLAIMIDAE

- Grey-headed Broadbill *Smithornis sharpei*: Great views of a male were obtained on Mount Kupe but displaying birds were mainly silent this year.
- Rufous-sided Broadbill *Smithornis rufolateralis*: We all got great views of a fine male in Korup that stayed perfectly silent. This was obviously not a good time for displaying broadbills!

#### PITTIDAE

- African Pitta *Pitta angolensis* (H): A frustrating moment with this beautiful bird in Korup National Park on 24/3 as it only called twice and then fell completely silent. This follows on from our sightings of the last two years when we primarily identified the bird as Green-breasted Pitta based on the deeper flatter sound it made compared with African Pitta. However the birds in Korup do not have a deep green breast and pure white throat as in extreme examples of *reichenowi* and in colouration appear more like African Pitta *P. angolensis*, which is here represented by the race *pulih*. Our birds may in fact be hybrids but these Cameroonian 'forest' birds sound like and respond to *reichenowi* and not *longipennis*. Unfortunately the voice of the race *pulih* is not well known and recent evidence suggests that the breast and throat colour in *reichenowi* might be a variable feature anyway. Some taxonomists argue that there is only one species of pitta in Africa and that *reichenowi* should be lumped in African Pitta *P. angolensis*. However as there are vocal differences perhaps closer examination of supposed 'hybrids' between

*reichenowi* and the race *pulih* of African Pitta *P. angolensis* is called for particularly as the voice of Green-breasted Pitta from Uganda is now very well known.

#### ALAUDIDAE

Singing Bush Lark *Mirafraga cantillans* (LO): Nik saw one in Waza National Park.

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

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

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

#### HIRUNDINIDAE

Square-tailed Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne nitens*: Easy to see in the forested regions in the south.

Petit's Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne petiti*: Easily seen at widespread locations from Ngaoundaba and throughout the rest of the tour. Saw-wing taxonomy is very controversial but perhaps surprisingly the tendency is to lump rather than split. The form we encountered is often lumped in Black Saw-wing *P. pristoptera*. Louis Petit (1856-1943) was a French naturalist collecting in Angola between 1876 and 1884.

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

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

Grey-rumped Swallow *Pseudhirundo griseopyga*: Just one was seen briefly in Bénoué National Park.

Rufous-chested Swallow *Hirundo semirufa*: Also known as Red-breasted Swallow, small numbers were seen at widespread localities as far north as Bénoué National Park. The IOC places this species in the genus *Cecropis*.

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

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*: At least two pairs of the race *kumboensis* were seen at Nyasoso during our stay 2731/3. This appears to be a slight extension of range as Bowden doesn't list it in *The birds of Mount Kupe, southwest Cameroon* (2001). However the species is known from slightly north in the Manenguba Mountains. There is little logic for this resident highland form to be lumped with Palearctic migrant *H. daurica* particularly if the following form is treated as a separate species. The IOC places this species in the genus *Cecropis*.

West African Swallow *Hirundo domicella*: Just one individual of this pale resident form of Red-rumped Swallow was seen at Ngaoundaba. The IOC places this species in the genus *Cecropis*.

Forest Swallow *Hirundo fuliginosa*: Small numbers were seen at Campo Ma'an and again on Mount Kupe. It can be very difficult to separate from Square-tailed Saw-wing but is perhaps best told by its flight action. The IOC places this species in the genus *Petrochelidon*.

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

Rock Martin *Hirundo fuligula*: Sightings of small numbers near Maroua, Poli and in the Bamenda highlands. The IOC places this species in the genus *Ptyonoprogne*.

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

- White-throated Blue Swallow *Hirundo nigrita*: Small numbers of these glossy swallows were seen on the Nyong and Sanaga Rivers.
- Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo aethiopica*: Common and easily seen in the far north. The continued presence around the school buildings at Nyasoso on 31/3 was noted. The species was first noted by us in 2005 and appeared to be the first records for the area, representing an extension of range.
- Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*: Palearctic migrants were seen throughout the country but were most common in the south.
- Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum*: A few scattered sightings of these Palearctic migrants at Waza and Poli.

#### MOTACILLIDAE

- Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava*: The various forms that make up the 'Yellow Wagtail complex' have always been the subjects of much debate. Latest taxonomic decisions based on the phylogenetic species concept re-split some races into full species. In line with this, the most widespread species of this Palearctic migrant we saw was Blue-headed Wagtail *M. (f.) flava*.
- Grey-headed Wagtail *Motacilla (flava) thunbergi*: Two males were seen well in Waza National Park. The form is usually considered a race of Yellow Wagtail *M. flava*.
- Mountain Wagtail *Motacilla clara*: Two of these graceful birds were seen at Lake Awing.
- African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*: Seen at the Sanaga River and in Bénoué National Park.
- Grassland Pipit *Anthus cinnamomeus*: A pipit seen extremely well in Waza National Park on 10/3 is placed under this species for convenience. The (possibly only non-breeding) population of pipits known from this area were originally collected as Richard's Pipit *A. richardi*. However it is now believed that they are an undescribed taxon, presumably of Grassland Pipit. More information is needed before their identity can be correctly ascertained.
- Cameroon Pipit *Anthus cameroonensis*: A pair of the race *lynesi* was seen well in short grassland in the Bamenda Highlands.
- Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*: At least six of these Palearctic migrants were seen in the Mora area.
- Bannerman's Pipit *Anthus bannermani*: After some chasing around we had wonderful looks at one in the Bamenda Highlands.
- Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys*: Werner photographed one at Ngaoundaba and we all saw another in the Bamenda Highlands. An adult and a juvenile on the playing fields of the school at Nyasoso on 27/3 and 31/3 appeared to be this species rather than Long-legged Pipit *A. pallidiventris*. A record of either species would appear to be the first for Nyasoso.
- Long-legged Pipit *Anthus pallidiventris*: This species is apparently extending its range westwards and we had sightings en route to and from Campo Ma'an and at Mundemba.
- Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*: These Palearctic migrants were seen in Bénoué National Park, at Ngaoundaba, on Mount Cameroon and in the Bamenda area.

#### CAMPEPHAGIDAE

- Red-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga phoenicea*: A good showing with individuals seen at Ngaoundaba, Bamenda highlands and on Mount Cameroon.
- Petit's Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga petiti*: Several good sightings were obtained on Mount Kupe.
- Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga quiscalina*: A female was seen on Mount Kupe.
- Grey Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga caesia*: Small numbers were recorded from the Bamenda Highlands and Kodmin.
- White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina pectoralis*: These sleek, silvery birds were seen in Bénoué National Park.
- Blue Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina azurea*: This 'must-see' bird obliged in Korup National Park.



## PYCNONOTIDAE

- Cameroon Montane Greenbul *Andropadus montanus*: This rather secretive greenbul was seen on Mount Cameroon. Endemic to the Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands, this species is classed as 'Near-threatened' by BirdLife International with habitat loss cited as the main threat. The IOC currently names this bird Cameroon Greenbul *Arizelocichla montana*.
- Western Mountain Greenbul *Andropadus tephrolaemus*: A common and attractive montane greenbul. The IOC places this species in the genus *Arizelocichla*. This is another Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands endemic.
- Little Greenbul *Andropadus virens*: This widespread, nondescript but noisy bird was seen and heard throughout the south reaching as far north as Ngaoundaba. The IOC places this species in the genus *Eurillas*.
- Little Grey Greenbul *Andropadus gracilis*: Good sightings from Campo Ma'an and the Yaoundé area. The IOC places this species in the genus *Eurillas*.
- Ansorge's Greenbul *Andropadus ansorgei*: Small numbers were seen well at Campo Ma'an, in the Yaoundé area and again in Korup National Park. Dr William John Ansorge (1850-1913) was an English explorer who collected in Africa. The IOC places this species in the genus *Eurillas*.
- Cameroon Sombre Greenbul *Andropadus curvirostris*: Sightings of this nondescript bird with the apt alternative name of Plain Greenbul in the Yaoundé area and in Korup National Park. The IOC places this species in the genus *Eurillas*.
- Slender-billed Greenbul *Andropadus gracilirostris*: We managed a number of good sightings at Campo Ma'an, Korup National Park and on Mount Kupe. The IOC places this species in the genus *Stelgidillas*.
- Yellow-whiskered Greenbul *Andropadus latirostris*: Like so many other species, this common bird was heard far more often than it was seen at Campo Ma'an, in the Yaoundé area and Korup National Park. The IOC places this species in the genus *Eurillas*.
- Golden Greenbul *Calyptocichla serina*: Small numbers were seen at Campo Ma'an, Korup National Park and Mount Kupe.
- Honeyguide Greenbul *Baeopogon indicator*: Several were seen in the Yaoundé area and Korup National Park.
- Sjöstedt's Honeyguide Greenbul *Baeopogon clamans* (H): Sadly only heard in Korup National Park.
- Spotted Greenbul *Ixonotus guttatus*: We encountered flocks of this most attractive wing-flicking greenbul at Campo Ma'an, in the Yaoundé area and in Korup National Park.
- Yellow-necked Greenbul *Chlorocichla falkensteini*: Also known as Falkenstein's Greenbul, one was seen in the Yaoundé area.
- Simple Leaflove *Chlorocichla simplex*: Also known as Simple Greenbul and heard more often than seen but some of the group obtained views at Mundemba.
- Yellow-throated Leaflove *Chlorocichla flavicollis*: In Bénoué National Park we saw the yellow-throated nominate race. The white-throated race *simplicicolor* (often merged with *soror*) was seen at Ngaoundaba. The IOC places this species in the genus *Atimastillas*.
- Swamp Palm Bulbul *Thescelocichla leucopleura*: Great looks at this showy species at Campo Ma'an and on the outskirts of Yaoundé.
- Leaflove *Pyrrhurus scandens*: Very vocal at Ngaoundaba this year which meant that we had numerous opportunities to see this one but were often foiled with them very much living up to their name. Following Johannson's 2007 paper proposing a taxonomic revision of African greenbuls, the IOC name this bird Red-tailed Leaflove and place it in the genus *Phyllastrephus*. This is surprising as voice and habits of this rather unique greenbul recall none of the other members of the genus *Phyllastrephus*.
- Cameroon Olive Greenbul *Phyllastrephus poensis*: We saw this unassuming regional endemic in the Bamenda Highlands and again on Mount Kupe.

- Icterine Greenbul *Phyllastrephus icterinus*: A common bird and very easy to see in Korup, seemingly present in every bird party.
- Xavier's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus xavieri*: This larger version of the previous species was seen well in Korup. Xavier Dybowski was a French explorer who collected in the Congo during 1891-2. It is not clear as to whether or not he is the same person, or perhaps the brother of Jan Dybowski (1856-1928) who has the twinspace named after him.
- Grey-headed Greenbul *Phyllastrephus poliocephalus*: An attractive, large, showy, montane greenbul seen well at Kodmin and on Mount Kupe. Another Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands endemic classified as 'Near-threatened' by BirdLife International mainly threatened by habitat loss.
- Red-tailed Bristlebill *Bleda syndactylus*: Often a skulker we managed to get some views of this handsome bird in Korup National Park.
- Lesser Bristlebill *Bleda notatus*: Sometimes named Yellow-lored Bristlebill, this was a common bird in Korup National Park although this attractive greenbul was more often heard than seen. This cryptic species was previously mistakenly lumped with Green-tailed Bristlebill *B. eximius* but the bill structure and calls are different. Indeed it is probably more closely related to Grey-headed Bristlebill *B. canicapilla*.
- Eastern Bearded Greenbul *Criniger chloronotus*: The large one with the spiky white throat and greyish underparts in Korup National Park.
- Red-tailed Greenbul *Criniger calurus*: The smaller greenbul with a bright white puffy throat in Korup National Park and probably indistinguishable in the field from the following species except by voice.
- White-bearded Greenbul *Criniger ndussumensis*: This look-alike species was seen and perhaps more importantly heard in Korup this year as it is the call that best identifies the bird.
- Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*: An abundant species everywhere within its range except actually inside the closed forest of Korup National Park and Mount Kupe. Work done on the bulbuls by Hall & Moreau has been inconclusive. Some authorities argue that the complex be split into several species. If we follow this then we saw two races of Common Bulbul *P. barbatus*, which were the white-vented birds at many localities involving the races *inornatus* in the north and *gabonensis* in the south as well as the following 'species'.
- Dark-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus tricolor*: The yellow-vented birds seen well at Ngaoundaba then become Dark-capped Bulbul *P. t. tricolor*.

#### NICATORIDAE

[Borrow & Demey and other authors lump this family in *Pycnonotidae*. This newly created family is sequenced between Panuridae and Alaudidae according to the IOC and other authors.]

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

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

#### TURDIDAE

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

Western Forest Robin *Stiphornis erythrothorax*: The identity of the population in Korup is problematic as the birds to my eye show a grey head and olive upperparts more typically associated with the form *erythrothorax* that is sometimes split as a separate species, Western Forest Robin *Stiphornis erythrothorax*. The true easternmost boundaries of this form are not yet fully understood. However, the splitting and describing of 'new' species

from this variable complex (both song and plumage) seems to be getting out of hand and it is perhaps best recommended that all of the forms be treated as a single species (Forest Robin *S. erythrothorax*) for the time being until the entire complex can be properly evaluated.

Gabon Forest Robin *Stiphrornis gabonensis*: Most of us had good looks at the Sanaga River. This form is usually included in *S. erythrothorax* using the English name Forest Robin for the enlarged species.

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

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

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

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

Snowy-crowned Robin Chat *Cossypha niveicapilla*: This colourful species was seen in Bénoué National Park and again at Lake Awing.

White-crowned Robin Chat *Cossypha albicapilla*: The distinctive race *giffardi* has a predominantly dark crown. First seen in Bénoué National Park but more confiding and showy birds were seen well at Ngaoundaba.

Fire-crested Alethe *Alethe castanea*: Seen exceptionally well attending the ant swarms in Korup. The form concerned is sometimes lumped in White-tailed Alethe *A. diademata* with the name Fire-crested Alethe being used for the enlarged species. According to recent DNA analysis, this species pair remains the only representatives of the genus *Alethe*.

Brown-chested Alethe *Alethe poliocephala*: Amazing views of one on Mount Cameroon. The IOC places this species in the genus *Pseudaethe*.

White-tailed Ant Thrush *Neocossyphus poensis*: Several individuals of this often rather active species were seen in Korup National Park and on Mount Kupe.

Rufous Flycatcher Thrush *Stizorhina fraseri*: Often heard and seen well in the Yaoundé area, in Korup National Park and on Mount Kupe. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Neocossyphus* but these bird's structure and behaviour is quite different from those ant thrushes.

African Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas minor*: Small numbers were seen well in the far north. Clements split this form from Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin *C. galactotes* but the taxonomy does not seem to have been followed elsewhere. The IOC places this species in the genus *Erythropygia*.

Black Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas podobe*: A very distinctive Sahelian species with a tremendous tail and easy to see in the extreme north.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* (NL): C-G and Angie saw one of these Palearctic migrants at Ngaoundaba.

African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*: The striking race *salax* was very common in the Bamenda area, on Mount Cameroon and also seen at Kodmin. The African resident forms are now

considered to be a separate species, African Stonechat *S. torquatus* (sometimes incorrectly named *S. axillaris*). The European Common Stonechat is then renamed *S. rubicola* because the type specimen described by Linnaeus in 1758 came from the Cape of Good Hope of all places! According to recent scientific studies, it has been found that the 'African' stonechats have a lower metabolic rate than their European relatives and therefore lead a slower, less hectic and more laid back life style more suited to the tropics!

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*: Good numbers of these Palearctic migrants were encountered at widespread localities throughout the tour.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*: Small numbers of this Palearctic migrant were seen in the far north.

Heuglin's Wheatear *Oenanthe heuglini*: Small numbers were seen in and around Poli. Theodor von Heuglin (1824-76) was a German explorer and ornithologist with a specialist interest in African birds.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen in Waza National Park on 10/3. There are few documented records of this species in Cameroon. The name refers to a dirty yellowish buff colour and according to modern myth could refer to two separate women with similar fixations. The most recent would be Isabella, Archduchess of Austria (1566-1633). Her husband Albert VII laid siege to Ostend in 1601 and Isabella who expected a quick victory vowed not to change her underwear until the city was won. This would have all been so well and good if the siege hadn't lasted for over three years! The earlier Isabella I of Castile (1451-1504) was a victim of an eight-month long siege of Granada in 1491-2 and she, also is said to have vowed not to change her knickers during this time!

Familiar Chat *Cercomela familiaris*: Also known as Red-tailed Chat, it was easy to see near Maroua, at Poli and in Bénoué National Park. The IOC places this species in the genus *Oenanthe*.

Northern Anteater Chat *Myrmecocichla aethiops*: A group of about five individuals was seen in the Waza area.

White-fronted Black Chat *Myrmecocichla albifrons*: A pair allowed brief views at Poli. The IOC places this species in the genus *Pentholaea*.

White-crowned Cliff Chat *Myrmecocichla coronata*: We had our best views of this beautiful chat near Maroua. Supposedly not all males show the white crown and this is often used as a reason to keep the species conspecific with Mocking Cliff Chat *M. cinnamomeiventris*. The IOC places this species in the genus *Thamnolaea*.

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

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

## SYLVIIDAE

[Recent genetic evidence place the genera *Melocichla*, *Macrosphenus* and *Sylvietta* in the family Macrosphenidae. The genus *Hylia* is placed *Incertae sedis* between Cettiidae and Aegithalidae. The genus *Phylloscopus* is placed in the family Phylloscopidae. The genera *Acrocephalus*, *Iduna* and

*Hippolais* are placed in the family Acrocephalidae. The genera *Bradypterus* and *Schoenicola* are placed in the family Locustellidae. The genera *Cisticola*, *Prinia*, *Schistolais*, *Heliolais*, *Urolais*, *Oreolais*, *Drymocichla*, *Spiloptila*, *Apalis*, *Hypergerus*, *Camaroptera*, *Bathmocercus*, *Poliolais* and *Eremomela* are placed in the family Cisticolidae. The genus *Hyliota* is placed in the family Hyliotidae.]

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

Bangwa Forest Warbler *Bradypterus bangwaensis*: Although very few birds were singing this year in the Bamenda Highlands this skulking warbler was coaxed into view at Lake Awing. There has been much long discussion concerning the montane *Bradypterus* warblers in Cameroon. Historically this form has been incorrectly classed as a race of Cinnamon Bracken Warbler *B. cinnamomeus*. However, its song is very similar, if not often identical to the Evergreen Forest Warbler *B. lopezi* complex and not at all similar to *cinnamomeus*. IOC and *Birds of Africa* treats the form concerned as a monotypic species; other authorities take the extremes of lumping it either with Barratt's Warbler *B. barratti* or Evergreen Forest Warbler *B. lopezi*. The species is a Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands endemic that BirdLife International classifies as 'Near-threatened' because of increasing habitat loss. The Bangwa people are part of the Bamileke group of tribes dwelling in the Bamenda Highlands.

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

African Moustached Warbler *Melocichla mentalis*: Also known as Moustached Grass Warbler, one was seen briefly in Bénoué National Park.

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

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*: Singletons of this Palearctic migrant were seen at Waza and in Bénoué National Park.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*: Following on from the last two years sightings strangely once again one of these Palearctic migrants allowed very good views in Bénoué National Park on 13/3. There do not appear to be any previously documented records for the park before these records.

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

Western Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais opaca*: Individuals of these Palearctic migrants were identified at Maroua and Waza. The IOC places this species in the genus *Iduna*.

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida*: Two of these smaller tail-pumping birds were identified at Maroua and Waza. The IOC places this species in the genus *Iduna*.

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

Whistling Cisticola *Cisticola lateralis*: One was seen well en route to Bamenda.

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

Brown-backed Cisticola *Cisticola discolor*: A montane species and a Cameroonian, and Nigerian highlands endemic that has a comical and lively display. It was easy to see on Mount Cameroon, in the Bamenda area and at Kodmin. This form is lumped in Chubb's Cisticola *C. chubbi* by Borrow & Demey and the IOC.

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

Winding Cisticola *Cisticola marginatus*: Two were seen at Dang Lake.

Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis*: This heavyweight streaky cisticola was seen in Bénoué National Park.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Banded Prinia *Prinia bairdii*: Noisy individuals of this strikingly attractive warbler in Campo Ma'an and at Mount Kupe.

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

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

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

White-chinned Prinia *Schistolais leucopogon*: These attractive little prinia-like birds were first seen at Ngaoundaba. Historically, it has been placed in the genus *Prinia* hence the English name.

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

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

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

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

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

Buff-throated Apalis *Apalis rufogularis*: Seen well near Yaoundé where we persuaded a male to come down from the canopy. The bird is named after the female plumage.

Bamenda Apalis *Apalis bamendae*: This endemic was difficult to see at Ngaoundaba, this year but we all had good views of it in the Bamenda Highlands. Once classified as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International it has now been found at several new sites and is more common than was once thought and has been officially removed from the threatened list.

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

White-tailed Warbler *Poliolais lopezi*: Excellent views of a pair on Mount Cameroon. This strange little bird is sometimes thought to show affinities to the tailorbirds, however its nest is not stitched. It is endemic to Bioko and the Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands.

Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brachyura*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour. Camaroptera is derived from the Greek, *kamara* = arch, *pteron* = wing.

Yellow-browed Camaroptera *Camaroptera superciliaris*: More often heard than seen but we did get some good views in Campo Ma'an and the Yaoundé area.

Olive-green Camaroptera *Camaroptera chloronota*: Often heard but this lover of the densest undergrowth was also coaxed into view on several occasions.

Yellow Longbill *Macrosphenus flavicans*: Always in the middle of the thickest vine tangles but an individual was finally seen at Kodmin.

Grey Longbill *Macrosphenus concolor*: This sibling vine-tangle loving species was also very vocal and seen in Korup National Park.

Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis*: A pair was seen in the Mora area. Eremomela is derived from the Greek, *eremos* = desert, *melos* = song or melody.

Senegal Eremomela *Eremomela pusilla*: An attractive and colourful little warbler seen well in Bénoué National Park and Ngaoundaba.

Rufous-crowned Eremomela *Eremomela badiceps*: This charming little warbler was seen well near Yaoundé and on Mount Kupe.

Northern Crombec *Sylvietta brachyura*: We enjoyed sightings of this 'nuthatch-warbler' throughout the north.

Green Crombec *Sylvietta virens*: Often heard in the south we actually only saw them at Campo Ma'an and in Limbe Botanic Gardens.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*: Sightings of this Palearctic migrant in Bénoué National Park, Ngaoundaba and Mount Cameroon.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*: These Palearctic migrants were seen in forests throughout the south.

Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli*: Two sightings of this Palearctic migrant in the far north.

Black-capped Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus herberti*: A cute little warbler and seen well on Mount Cameroon, Mount Kupe and Kodmin. The species is endemic to Bioko and the Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands.

Oriole Warbler *Hypergerus atriceps*: Also known as Moho, we heard its loud song in Bénoué National Park and had excellent views of this strange and beautiful bird there and encountered it again at Ngaoundaba. This species is currently placed in the Cisticolidae but its affinities are unclear. It has a warbler song, a sunbird-like nest and a babbler-shaped body!

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* (H): This Palearctic migrant was at Ngaoundaba and near Yaoundé.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*: A male of this Palearctic migrant was seen at Lake Awing.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*: Good numbers of this Palearctic migrant in the north.

Yellow-bellied Hyliota *Hyliota flavigaster*: Nice views of pairs of these attractive birds in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba. Taxonomists are unsure as to whether these unusual birds are warblers, flycatchers or wattle-eyes and they are now usually separated in their own family.

Southern Hyliota *Hyliota australis*: The hyliotas seen well on Mount Kupe appear to be this species rather than the previously officially recorded Yellow-bellied Hyliota *H. flavigaster*. A specimen of Southern Hyliota *H. australis* was collected in the nearby Rumpi Hills in 1965 and the identity of these rain forest hyliotas on Mt Kupe has perhaps never really been critically looked at. The population is presumably the same as the Southern Hyliota *H. a. slatini* that ranges from northeast DRC to Kakamega Forest in Kenya. Elsewhere *australis* is typically a miombo species and it is possible that a cryptic species is involved. Perhaps it is time for a critical reappraisal of this taxon?

Violet-backed Hyliota *Hyliota violacea*: A good find was a pair of these pretty birds foraging in the treetops near Yaoundé.

Green Hylia *Hylia prasina*: These were common birds in the forest zone although their familiar ringing call was heard far more often than the bird was seen!

#### MUSCICAPIDAE

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

Northern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis edolioides*: Widespread sightings from Bénoué National Park to Bamenda.

Pale Flycatcher *Melaenornis pallidus*: Seen well at Ngaoundaba. The IOC places this species in the genus *Bradornis*.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*: Sightings of these Palearctic migrants were obtained in Limbe Botanical Gardens and on Mount Kupe.

Ashy Flycatcher *Muscicapa caerulescens*: Just one sighting on Mount Kupe.

Swamp Flycatcher *Muscicapa aquatica*: A pair of these rather nondescript flycatchers was seen in Bénoué National Park.

Cassin's Flycatcher *Muscicapa cassini*: Super views of a pair in Limbe Botanical Gardens, near Mundemba and in the Bakossi Mountains.

African Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta*: These dumpy little flycatchers were easily seen in montane areas.

Yellow-footed Flycatcher *Muscicapa sethsmithi*: A poor showing for this delightful little flycatcher with bright yellow legs and feet that seem to glow. We only saw one but extremely well on Mount Kupe.

Dusky-blue Flycatcher *Muscicapa comitata*: This sombre flycatcher was seen on Mount Kupe.

Sooty Flycatcher *Muscicapa infuscata*: These thickset little flycatchers look more like small hirundines perched out on exposed branches. We saw them in Campo Ma'an, near Yaoundé and in Korup National Park.

Grey-throated Flycatcher *Myioparus griseigularis* (H): This skulking flycatcher was only heard in Korup National Park.

Lead-coloured Flycatcher *Myioparus plumbeus*: This 'tit-flycatcher' was seen in Bénoué National Park.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*: A number of these Palearctic migrants were seen at Ngaoundaba and in the Bamenda highlands. Most looked decidedly scruffy!



## MONARCHIDAE

[Recent genetic evidence places the genus *Erythrocercus* *Incertae sedis* between Cettiidae and Aegithalidae. The genus *Elminia* is placed with the fairy flycatchers in the family Stenostiridae.]

Chestnut-capped Flycatcher *Erythrocercus mccallii*: This charming little bird with its bright rufous tail was seen well near Yaoundé.

African Blue Flycatcher *Elminia longicauda*: A common and delightful bird seen well from Bénoué National Park through to the end of the tour.

Dusky Crested Flycatcher *Elminia nigromitrata*: Just two sightings of this furtive flycatcher in Korup National Park.

White-bellied Crested Flycatcher *Elminia albiventris*: Another charming species seen well in the Bamenda Highlands, on Mount Cameroon and at Kodmin.

Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher *Trochocercus nitens*: This normally skulking flycatcher was comparatively easy to see on this tour in Korup National Park and at Kodmin.

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis*: Widespread sightings from Ngaoundaba to Mount Cameroon with some really beautiful black and white morph males seen.

Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone rufocinerea*: Two were seen in Campo Ma'an and we also heard it in Limbe Botanic Gardens.

Bates's Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone batesi*: First seen near Yaoundé we went on to see more on Mount Kupe.

Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone rufiventer*: Also known as Black-headed Paradise Flycatcher, the very attractive grey-backed race *neumanni* was easily seen both at Kodmin and in Korup National Park.

## PLATYSTEIRIDAE

Shrike Flycatcher *Megabyas flammulatus*: A pair seen near Yaoundé was our only record. The somewhat comical, continuous circling motion made by the birds tail is an identification giveaway when seen high up in the canopy.

Black-and-white Flycatcher *Bias musicus*: This 'Vanga Flycatcher' was seen near Yaoundé, at Kodmin and on Mount Kupe. The species is noted for their amazing spiky crest and strange butterfly-like display flights.

Chestnut Wattle-eye *Dyaphorophya castanea*: Seen well in Campo Ma'an, around Yaoundé and in Korup National Park. This is a species that is named after the female. The IOC places this species in the genus *Platysteira*.

White-spotted Wattle-eye *Dyaphorophya tonsa*: It wasn't easy getting looks at a male directly above our heads in Korup National Park. The IOC places this species in the genus *Platysteira*.

Black-necked Wattle-eye *Dyaphorophya chalybea*: After a bit of a struggle we all had views of this active little bird on Mount Kupe. The IOC places this species in the genus *Platysteira*.

Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye *Dyaphorophya concreta*: Super views of this intensely coloured and simply stunning bird on Mount Kupe. The IOC places this species in the genus *Platysteira*.

Common Wattle-eye *Platysteira cyanea*: We had a number of chances to get good views of this attractive species.

Banded Wattle-eye *Platysteira laticincta*: We had great views of this endangered species at two localities in the Bamenda area. Some authorities lump this species with Black-throated Wattle-eye *P. peltata*. If kept separate it becomes a Cameroon endemic. Classified as 'Endangered' by BirdLife International, its habitat was reduced by half in the period between 1965-1985 and the species is now restricted to an area no bigger than 500 square kilometres. The total population is estimated to be between 2,500 - 10,000 adults.

Senegal Batis *Batis senegalensis*: Small numbers of these dapper little birds were seen in Bénoué National Park.

Western Black-headed Batis *Batis erlangeri*: A pair was seen at Ngaoundaba. This form has recently been split from Eastern Black-headed Batis *B. minor* with the name Black-headed Batis having previously been used for the enlarged species.

West African Batis *Batis occulta*: Several sightings of birds but always high in the canopy near Yaoundé and on Mount Kupe.

#### PICATHARTIDAE

Red-headed Picathartes *Picathartes oreas*: Perhaps the reason to come on this the tour for many people was to have the chance to encounter this almost legendary species. Unfortunately the species is most easily seen in the rainy season when access to their nest sites is at its most difficult and when one risks causing the most disturbance to breeding birds. Our visit was in the dry season and at this time the birds disappear for longer into the forest but apparently stay within about 300m of the nest-sites all year round. Their mud-cup nests are found cemented to the sides of huge boulders deep in the forest and it was under several of these that we sat and waited. As this species seemed to be a priority for everyone, we made a special effort to try for this bird at a site in Campo Ma'an National Park. The rocks where the birds nest are an easy 15 minute walk from where we leave the vehicles and we visited the site on both afternoons during our stay and were fortunate to watch the birds over the period of one hour on each occasion. The birds seemed to accept our presence and we were able to watch up to 15 of these wonderful creatures bouncing over the boulders in front of us and even visiting the nests. Repeated and prolonged showings meant that everyone had seen the species extremely well. It is difficult to sum up in words the atmosphere of the situation or the bizarre character of these unique birds but some wonderful 'snap-shot' pictures of the experience are ingrained in the memory. A certain spiritual feeling is definitely enhanced by the silence and the cathedral-like qualities of the giant boles of the ancient trees surrounding the monolithic rock formations. The alternative name of Grey-necked Picathartes does not do this incredible creature justice and refers more to the sorry skins of dead birds in the museum than to the crazy, vivid colours of the bird in life! The species is known only to occur in Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Bioko and is classed as 'Vulnerable' by BirdLife International. The main threats to the species are from forest clearance and human disturbance and the population is estimated to be less than 10,000 mature individuals. It is sometimes placed in the family *Timaliidae*.

#### TIMALIIDAE

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

Pale-breasted Illadopsis *Illadopsis rufipennis*: One of the most regularly seen illadopsises in Korup National Park.

Brown Illadopsis *Illadopsis fulvescens*: We saw the brown-throated race *iboensis* in Korup National Park that has been treated in the past as part of a separate species, Moloney's Illadopsis *Trichastoma moloneyanum*. In the past experiments with these birds have shown little interest in playback of 'normal' brown illadopsis but responded aggressively to their own voices. Perhaps there was something to be recommended by that split after all? Sir Cornelius Alfred Moloney (1848-1913) was a British civil servant working in The Gambia and Nigeria in the late 1800's.

Blackcap Illadopsis *Illadopsis cleaveri*: One was seen briefly in Korup National Park.

Grey-chested Illadopsis *Kakamega poliothorax* (H): Also known as Grey-chested Babbler, this notorious skulker was often heard in its montane habitat but nothing that we could do could persuade one to show itself.

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

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

Spotted Thrush Babbler *Ptyrticus turdinus*: A wonderful bird with an unforgettable song that made us work hard for our views at Ngaoundaba.

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

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

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

#### PARIDAE

White-bellied Tit *Parus albiventris* (NL): Two sightings in the Bamenda highlands but neither stayed for long.

White-shouldered Black Tit *Parus guineensis*: The first was glimpsed near Poli but we all saw more at Ngaoundaba.

#### REMIZIDAE

Sennar Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus punctifrons*: After a short search a trio was seen well in the Waza area.

#### SALPORNITHIDAE

Spotted Creeper *Salpornis spilonotus* (NL): C-G and Angie saw one at Ngaoundaba.

#### NECTARINIIDAE

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

Brown Sunbird *Anthreptes gabonicus*: A most fortunate sighting of one was obtained during our lunch break en route to Campo Ma'an.

Green Sunbird *Anthreptes rectirostris*: Seen well on Mount Kupe. The form concerned is *tephrolaema* that has historically been treated as a separate species, Grey-chinned Sunbird.

Little Green Sunbird *Anthreptes seimundi*: Sightings in Campo Ma'an, near Yaoundé and on Mount Kupe.

Fraser's Sunbird *Deleornis fraseri*: A very common and easily seen sunbird in Korup national Park that, with its long and fairly straight bill looks more like a warbler than a sunbird.

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

Green-headed Sunbird *Cyanomitra verticalis*: Widespread sightings of the confusingly blue-headed race *cynocephala*.

Blue-throated Brown Sunbird *Cyanomitra cyanolaema*: Widespread sightings through the forested south.

Cameroon Sunbird *Cyanomitra oritis*: First seen in the Bamenda Highlands then on Mount Cameroon and at Kodmin. The species is endemic to Bioko and the Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands.

Western Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra obscura*: This commonly seen forest sunbird was formerly lumped in Olive Sunbird *C. olivacea*. However, it now seems that this recent split has been pronounced invalid and most taxonomists have relumped it.

Green-throated Sunbird *Chalcomitra rubescens*: This dark sunbird was seen in Campo Ma'an, near Yaoundé, at Kodmin and on Mount Kupe.

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis*: Unusually few seen in the north.

Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris*: Commonly seen in the forested south.

Pygmy Sunbird *Hedydipna platura*: We had many chances to see this spectacular little bird (including some fine breeding plumage males) well in the north where it seemed to be very common.

Olive-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris chloropygius*: Small numbers of this colourful sunbird were seen in the forested south.

Tiny Sunbird *Cinnyris minullus*: Good views of males near Yaoundé and on Mount Kupe.

Northern Double-collared Sunbird *Cinnyris reichenowi*: The highland forest counterpart of the previous species. It was first seen at Ngaoundaba and then in the Bamenda Highlands, Mount Cameroon, Mount Kupe and at Kodmin. However numbers seemed to be down again this year. The species was formerly known as *Nectarinia preussi*.

Beautiful Sunbird *Cinnyris pulchellus*: Seen throughout the north but it was most common in Bénoué National Park where some males were in fine breeding plumage.

Orange-tufted Sunbird *Cinnyris bouvieri*: Small numbers were seen in the Bamenda highlands and again at Kodmin.

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus*: First seen at Maroua but easy to see this year in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

Johanna's Sunbird *Cinnyris johannae*: Pairs were seen in Campo Ma'an and again near Yaoundé. Johanna Verreaux was the wife of Jules P. Verreaux.

Superb Sunbird *Cinnyris superbus*: Some good looks at this stunning heavyweight sunbird in Campo Ma'an, around Yaoundé and on Mount Kupe.

Splendid Sunbird *Cinnyris coccinigaster*: Our first sighting of this colourful species was at Ngaoundaba.

Bates's Sunbird *Cinnyris batesi*: This inconspicuous and easily overlooked sunbird was identified near Yaoundé.

Ursula's Sunbird *Cinnyris ursulae*: Just two sightings of this diminutive sunbird at Kodmin. Endemic to Bioko and the Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands the species is classified as 'Near-threatened' by BirdLife International. The population is unknown but the main threat to this unassuming species is through habitat loss. Ursula Davies was the niece of the British explorer Captain Boyd Alexander who described and named the sunbird.

Copper Sunbird *Cinnyris cupreus*: A poor showing with just one male seen at Ngaoundaba and another in the Bamenda highlands.

## ZOSTEROPIDAE

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

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

Mount Cameroon Speirops *Speirops melanocephalus*: We had a long climb to the tree line but we were all rewarded with some excellent views of this interesting bird on top of Mount Cameroon. BirdLife International classes this Cameroon endemic as 'Vulnerable'. The population is thought to number between 10,000-20,000. Habitat loss through burning and deforestation undertaken by hunters and farmers on the mountain is one of the biggest threats. Recent genetic evidence shows that the speirops do not constitute a natural group and this particular species is closer genetically to Forest and Montane White-eyes than the other three other Gulf of Guinea speirops. Therefore the speirops are now placed in the genus *Zosterops*.

## LANIIDAE

Northern Fiscal *Lanius humeralis*: Recently split from Common Fiscal which is now renamed Southern Fiscal *L. collaris*, we saw one at Dang Lake and two in the Bamenda highlands.

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

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

Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis*: One was seen in the Mora area.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*: A very poor showing of this Palearctic migrant with only two seen at Ngaoundaba and another in the Bamenda highlands.

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

## MALACONOTIDAE

Fiery-breasted Bush-shrike *Malaconotus cruentus*: We spent a long time trying to see a very skulking pair on Mount Kupe. These brightly coloured beasts were incredibly difficult to see as they always kept to the thickest clumps of vegetation but everyone managed some views in the end.

Grey-headed Bush-shrike *Malaconotus blanchoti*: Excellent views of this large bush-shrike in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

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

Mount Kupe Bush-shrike *Malaconotus kupeensis*: A lucky year as we ultimately saw a pair at Kodmin that demanded a lot of patience rather than a lot of effort! With perseverance everybody saw this most charismatic bird in the end. Birdquest had found a dead bird caught in a snare in 2002 at Kodmin, which at the time was a new site for the species and this locality now seems to be a fairly reliable but certainly not guaranteed place to see this once almost mythical bird. The IOC places this species in the genus *Chlorophoneus*. BirdLife International classes this Cameroon endemic as 'Endangered'.

The population is estimated to be between 50-249 individuals and habitat loss is the most obvious threat. This species is endemic to Cameroon.

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

Bocage's Bush-shrike *Malaconotus bocagei*: Seen well at Kodmin and again on Mount Kupe. The IOC places this species in the genus *Chlorophoneus*. José Vicenta Barboza du Bocage (1823-1907) was Portuguese and Director of the National Zoological Museum of Lisbon and had a specialist interest in the birds of Angola.

Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike *Malaconotus sulfureopectus*: Good views in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba. The IOC places this species in the genus *Chlorophoneus*.

Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis*: One was seen in the Bamenda highlands.

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

Sabine's Puffback *Dryoscopus sabini* (H): One was heard in Campo Ma'an.

Pink-footed Puffback *Dryoscopus angolensis*: We had several chances to see this one well on Mount Kupe and Kodmin.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### PRIONOPIDAE

White Helmet-shrike *Prionops plumatus*: Great views of the short-crested form in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

#### ORIOLIDAE

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

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

African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus*: Some fine sightings in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

#### DICRURIDAE

Square-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus ludwigii*: Several individuals of the race *sharpei* were seen at Ngaoundaba. This form, known as Sharpe's Drongo has an squarer tail and a duller, more violet gloss and may be well worthy of specific status. Richard Bowdler Sharpe (1847-1909) was an English ornithologist and curator of the British Museum bird collection. He conceived the idea of the British Ornithologists' Club.

Shining Drongo *Dicrurus atripennis*: Usually seen accompanying bird parties inside forest in Korup and again at Kodmin.

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*: A common savannah species seen in the north.

Velvet-mantled Drongo *Dicrurus coracinus*: Inexplicably scarce with singletons on the outskirts of Yaoundé, near Mundemba and on Mount Kupe.

#### CORVIDAE

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*: Common and widespread anywhere outside of the closed forest.

Piapiac *Ptilostomus afer*: We saw this pugnacious-looking bird well both at Dang Lake and around Ngaoundaba. The name is supposedly an onomatopoeic rendering of the call.

#### STURNIDAE

Narrow-tailed Starling *Poeoptera lugubris*: Flocks were seen in the late afternoon flying to roost in the Nyasoso area.

Waller's Starling *Onychognathus walleri*: First seen on Mount Cameroon with more at Kodmin. Gerald Waller was an English naturalist collecting in East Africa in the late 1800's.

Forest Chestnut-winged Starling *Onychognathus hartlaubi*: A pair was seen at Kodmin.

Neumann's Starling *Onychognathus neumanni*: Four were seen above our hotel in Bamenda. Oskar Rudolph Neumann (1867-1946) was a German ornithologist who collected throughout Africa in the late 1800's.

Purple-headed Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis purpureiceps*: One seen in flight over Campo Ma'an and a pair near Mundemba.

Purple Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis purpureus*: Very common in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba. This species was the one with a big eye and a short tail.

Bronze-tailed Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis chalcurus*: Smaller numbers were identified at Ngaoundaba. This species was the one with a good mask and a purple tail.

Greater Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chalybaeus*: This large starling was very common in the north.

Lesser Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chloropterus*: At least three one was identified at Ngaoundaba but this species is easily overlooked amongst the hordes of other starlings.

Splendid Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis splendidus*: This large starling was easy to identify and was seen from Ngaoundaba through to the end of the tour.

Long-tailed Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis caudatus*: Some splendid tails were much admired in the extreme north and Bénoué National Park.

Chestnut-bellied Starling *Lamprotornis pulcher*: A common and very familiar starling of the far north. This species is sometimes placed in the genus *Spreo*.

White-collared Starling *Grafisia torquata*: This striking localised starling that looks rather like a Ring Ouzel proved tricky to see this year at Ngaoundaba but we finally managed scope views of perched birds.

Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*: Good numbers of this glittering starling were seen in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

## BUPHAGIDAE

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

## PASSERIDAE

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

Bush Petronia *Petronia dentata*: A very common species throughout the north. The IOC places this species in the genus *Gymnoris*.

## PLOCEIDAE

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

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

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

Baglafecht Weaver *Ploceus baglafecht*: Small numbers of the form *neumanni* were seen at Ngaoundaba, in the Bamenda highlands and at Kodmin. Baglafecht is a French name given to the weaver by de Buffon and was probably based on a supposed Amharic name.

Bannerman's Weaver *Ploceus bannermani*: We had excellent views of this Cameroonian and Nigerian highlands endemic in the Bamenda highlands. Although more common than previously thought, BirdLife International classifies this Cameroon endemic as 'Vulnerable' and understandably so as considering the pressures of the human population on the area. Its population is thought to number less than 20,000.

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

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

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis*: Just a few of this look-alike species were seen in Bénoué National Park and at Ngaoundaba.

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

Orange Weaver *Ploceus aurantius*: Just two males were seen in the small colony on the Sanaga River.

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

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

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

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



Maxwell's Black Weaver *Ploceus albinucha*: Three were seen in Campo Ma'an. Sir Hubert Eustace Maxwell (1845-1937) was a Scot, important statesman and the grandfather of Gavin Maxwell. It was Boyd Alexander who named the species after him.

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

Brown-capped Weaver *Ploceus insignis*: A pair was seen in the Bamenda highlands where they were watched inspecting the mossy boughs of the trees like creepers.

Blue-billed Malimbe *Malimbus nitens*: Also known as Gray's Malimbe, this forest weaver was regularly seen in Korup National Park. John Edward Gray (1800-75) was a British ornithologist and entomologist.

Crested Malimbe *Malimbus malimbicus*: Small numbers were seen in Korup National Park.

Cassin's Malimbe *Malimbus cassini*: A family group of seven individuals was seen well in Campo Ma'an.

Red-vented Malimbe *Malimbus scutatus*: Super views of a groups located as we left Mundemba.

Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps*: Three were seen nest building in Bénoué National Park.

Red-headed Quelea *Quelea erythrops*: A small flock of females and non-breeding plumaged males was seen at the Sanaga River.

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*: Thousands of non-breeding plumaged birds were seen in swirling flocks in the far north all forming part of the great Sahelian spectacle.

Black-winged Red Bishop *Euplectes hordeaceus*: Non-breeding plumaged birds were identified at Maroua and in Bénoué National Park.

Northern Red Bishop *Euplectes franciscanus*: Hundreds upon hundreds of non-breeding plumaged birds were seen in Waza.

Yellow Bishop *Euplectes capensis*: Small numbers of non-breeding plumaged birds were seen in the Bamenda Highlands.

Yellow-mantled Widowbird *Euplectes macrourus*: Flocks of non-breeding plumaged birds were seen in Bénoué National Park, at Ngaoundaba and en route to Bamenda.

Marsh Widowbird *Euplectes humeralis*: A flock of eight, the males in non-breeding plumage was seen at Dang Lake and more were present on the lake at Ngaoundaba.

#### ESTRILDIDAE

Grey-crowned Negrofinch *Nigrita canicapilla*: We had many chances to get good looks of this attractive finch in the forest zone.

Pale-fronted Negrofinch *Nigrita luteifrons*: Great views of males in Campo Ma'an, Limbe Botanical Gardens and a pair on Mount Kupe.

Chestnut-breasted Negrofinch *Nigrita bicolor*: We had several sightings as we left Mundemba and on Mount Kupe.

White-breasted Negrofinch *Nigrita fusconota*: This atypical negrofinch was seen well near in Campo Ma'an and on Mount Kupe.

Shelley's Oliveback *Nesocharis shelleyi*: First seen in the Bamenda highlands but everyone had fantastic close views on Mount Cameroon of this most charming Cameroon and Bioko endemic. George Ernest Shelley (1840-1910) was an English ornithologist related to the famous poet and an authority on sunbirds. He travelled in Africa and had a specialist interest in the continent.

White-cheeked Oliveback *Nesocharis capistrata*: This attractive little estrildid was first seen at Poli but we found several more at Ngaoundaba where we watched them feeding on ripe figs.

Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba*: A pretty estrildid, also known as Melba Finch, with good numbers seen in the far north.

Yellow-winged Pytilia *Pytilia hypogrammica*: At least four were seen in Bénoué National Park.

Red-winged Pytilia *Pytilia phoenicoptera*: At least four were watched coming down to drink in Bénoué National Park on 14/3. The only other documented records from the park appear to be of a single bird seen by Birdquest in 2004 and of four in 2010.

Black-bellied Seedcracker *Pyrenestes ostrinus*: A surprising sighting of a pair in Limbe Botanical Gardens.

Green Twinspot *Mandingoa nitidula*: One of these secretive little estrildids was seen near Yaoundé.

Brown Twinspot *Clytospiza monteiri*: At Dang Lake and Ngaoundaba we were treated to some fine views of several of these birds.

Dybowski's Twinspot *Euschistospiza dybowskii*: Brief views of two at Poli of this stunning but often-elusive little estrildid. Jan Dybowski (1856-1928) was a French botanist and African explorer leading expeditions to Congo and Chad.

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

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

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

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

Blue-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubricata*: At least four were seen well at Dang Lake.

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

Black-faced Firefinch *Lagonosticta larvata*: At least six were watched coming down to drink in Bénoué National Park.

Lavender Waxbill *Estrilda caerulescens*: A pair was seen well near Maroua.

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

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

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*: Only noted en route to Bamenda and again in the Bakossi Mountains.

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

Black-headed Waxbill *Estrilda atricapilla*: C-G saw some near Yaoundé and Angie saw at least one at Mundemba.

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

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

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

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

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

## VIDUIDAE

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*: A male was seen in the Bamenda highlands. The species parasitizes Orange-cheeked and Common Waxbills.

Sahel Paradise Whydah *Vidua orientalis*: We saw two in varying stages of breeding dress in Waza National Park. The species parasitizes Green-winged Pytilia.

## FRINGILLIDAE

White-rumped Seedeater *Serinus leucopygius*: Small numbers were seen in the far north and it's not always so easy to see the white rumps! The IOC places this species in the genus *Crithagra*.

Yellow-fronted Canary *Serinus mozambicus*: Widespread sightings throughout the main tour. The IOC places this species in the genus *Crithagra*.

West African Seedeater *Serinus canicapillus*: Singletons were seen well at Poli and in Bénoué National Park. The IOC places this species in the genus *Crithagra*.

Thick-billed Seedeater *Serinus burtoni*: Singletons were seen in the Bamenda highlands and on Mount Cameroon. The IOC places this species in the genus *Crithagra*.

Oriole Finch *Linurgus olivaceus*: Excellent views of this chunky finch in the Bamenda highlands and on Mount Cameroon.

## EMBERIZIDAE

Cinnamon-breasted Rock Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi*: Seen well at widespread localities in the north.

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

Cabanis's Bunting *Emberiza cabanisi*: Great looks at this handsome bunting in Bénoué National Park. Jean Louis Cabanis (1816-1906) was a German ornithologist. Reichenow, his son-in-law, described the bunting that is also named after him.

## MAMMALS

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

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

Drill *Mandrillus leucophaeus*: An incredible encounter with these rare primates on Mount Kupe with prolonged scope views of a troop seemingly unaware of our presence.

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

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

Mona Monkey *Cercopithecus mona* (H): Heard in Korup National Park.

Putty-nosed Monkey *Cercopithecus nictitans*: Seen in Campo Ma'an.

Moustached Monkey *Cercopithecus cephus*: Small numbers were seen in Campo Ma'an.

Potto *Perodicticus potto*: One was seen at night in Campo Ma'an.

Elegant Needle-clawed Galago *Euoticus elegantulus*: One was seen at night in Campo Ma'an.

Allen's Squirrel Galago *Galago alleni*: Two were seen at night in Campo Ma'an.

Senegal Galago *Galago senegalensis*: Two were seen at dusk at Ngaoundaba.

Demidoff's Galago *Galagoides demidoffi*: Three were seen at night in Campo Ma'an and heard at night in Korup National Park.

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

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

Hammer Bat *Hypsignathus monstrosus*: Two were seen at night in Campo Ma'an.

Franquet's Fruit Bat *Epomops franqueti*: Large fruit bats seen in Garoua were thought to be this species.

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

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

African Pygmy Squirrel *Myosciurus pumilio*: One of these tiny little squirrels was seen in Campo Ma'an.

Ribboned Rope Squirrel *Funisciurus lemniscatus*: One was seen in Campo Ma'an.

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

Lady Burton's Rope Squirrel *Funisciurus isabella*: Several were seen on Mount Cameroon.

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

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

Gambian Sun Squirrel *Heliosciurus gambianus*: Sightings at Ngaoundaba.

Red-legged Sun Squirrel *Heliosciurus rufobrachium*: Seen near Yaoundé.

African Giant Squirrel *Protoxerus stangeri*: Widespread sightings in forested areas.

Beecroft's Anomalure *Anomalurus beecrofti*: An individual was seen well in daylight at Kodmin.

Rusty-nosed Rat *Oenomys hypoxanthus*: Two were seen on Mount Cameroon.

Peters's Hump-nosed Mouse *Hybomys univittatus* (NL): Yvon saw one on Mount Cameroon.

Common Jackal *Canis aureus*: Small numbers were seen in Waza National Park.

Sand Fox *Vulpes pallida*: Four were seen at night at Waza.

Slender Mongoose *Herpestes sanguinea*: One was seen near Maroua.

White-tailed Mongoose *Ichneumia albicauda*: One was seen at night at Waza.

Common Genet *Genetta genetta*: Six were seen at night at Waza.

African Palm Civet *Nandinia binotata*: One was seen at night in Campo Ma'an.

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

Western Tree Hyrax *Dendrohyrax dorsalis*: Seen in Campo Ma'an and heard at night in Korup National Park and at Nyasoso.

Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius*: About 20 were seen wallowing in the river in Bénoué National Park.

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

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

Central Bushbuck *Tragelaphus phaleratus*: A male was seen in Bénoué National Park. Recently split from *Tragelaphus scriptus*.

Western Blue Duiker *Philantomba congica* (H): heard only in Korup National Park. Taxonomic changes in the bovine world have led to the renaming of this species. It was previously known as Blue Duiker *Cephalophus monticola*.

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

Sudan Oribi *Ourebia montana*: Two pairs were seen in Bénoué National Park. Recently split from *Ourebia ourebi*.

Loder's Kob *Kobus loderi*: Numbers were low again this year in Waza and in Bénoué National Parks. Recently split from *Kobus kob*.

Korrigum *Damaliscus korrigum*: Numbers were dramatically down with perhaps no more than 13 seen in Waza National Park. Recently split from Topi *Damaliscus lunatus*.

Western Hartebeest *Alcelaphus major*: Eight were seen in Bénoué National Park. Recently split from Kongoni *A. buselaphus*.

Roan Antelope *Hippotragus equinus*: A herd about 40 strong was seen in Waza National Park with at least eight in Bénoué National Park.





(Left to right) **Hartlaub's Duck** (*Pteronetta hartlaubii*) (NB), **Great Blue Turaco** (*Corythaeola cristata*) (NB), **Chattering Cisticola** (*Cisticola anonymus*) (NB), **Red-headed Picathartes** (*Picathartes oreas*) (WM), **Rock Firefinch** (*Lagonosticta sanguinodorsalis*) (WM) **Black-headed Lapwing** (*Vanellus tectus*) (WM).  
**Photos taken on this tour by Nik Borrow (NB) and Werner Mueller (WM)**





(Left to right) **Vieillot's Barbet** (*Lybius vieilloti*) (NB), **Quail Plover** (*Ortyxelos meiffrenii*) (NB), **Golden Nightjar** (*Caprimulgus eximius*) (NB), **Bronze-winged Courser** (*Rhinoptilus chalcopterus*) (WM), **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** (*Pterocles exustus*) (NB), **African Swallow-tailed Kite** (*Chelictinia riocourii*) (WM)





(Left to right) **African Collared Dove** (*Streptopelia roseogrisea*) (NB), **Bush Petronia** (*Petronia dentata*) (NB), **Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu** (*Uraeginthus bengalus*) (WM), **Kordofan Giraffe** (*Camelopardalis giraffa antiquorum*) (NB), **Sennar Penduline Tit** (*Anthoscopus punctifrons*) (NB), **Fox Kestrel** (*Falco alopex*) (NB)





(Left to right) **Heuglin's Wheatear** (*Oenanthe heuglini*) (WM), **Chad Firefinch** (*Lagonosticta umbrinodorsalis*) (WM), **Stone Partridge** (*Ptilopachus petrosus*) (WM), **White-throated Francolin** (*Fracolin albogularis*) (NB), **Black-billed Wood Dove** (*Turtur abyssinicus*) (NB), **Adamawa Turtle Dove** (*Streptopelia hypopyrrha*) (NB)





(Left to right) **Egyptian Plover** (*Pluvianus aegyptius*) (NB), **Black-faced Firefinch** (*Lagonosticta larvata*) (NB), **Pearl-spotted Owlet** (*Glaucidium perlatum*) (NB), **Hippopotamus** (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) (NB), **Brown-chested Lapwing** (*Vanellus superciliosus*) (NB), **Lizard Buzzard** (*Kaupifalco monogrammicus*) (NB)





(Left to right) **Standard-winged Nightjar** (*Macrodipteryx longipennis*) (NB), **Green-backed Woodpecker** (*Campethera cailliautii*) (NB), **Sun Lark** (*Galerida modesta*) (NB), **Yellow-billed Oxpecker** (*Buphagus africanus*) (NB), **Banded Wattle-eye** (*Platysteira laticincta*) (NB), **Bannerman's Turaco** (*Tauraco bannermani*) (NB)



(Left to right) **Bannerman's Pipit** (*Anthus bannermani*) (WM), **Cameroon Pipit** (*Anthus cameroonensis*) (NB), **Pectoral-patch Cisticola** (*Cisticola brunnescens*) (NB), **Brown-backed Cisticola** (*Cisticola discolor*) (NB), **African Stonechat** (*Saxicola torquatus*) (NB), **Yellow-breasted Boubou** (*Laniarius atroflavus*) (NB)





(Left to right) **Brown-chested Alethe** (*Alethe poliocephala*) (NB), **Black Bee-eater** (*Merops gularis*) (NB), **Naked-faced Barbet** (*Gymnobucco calvus*) (NB), **Black-bellied Seedcracker** (*Pyrenestes ostrinus*) (NB), **Sjöstedt's Owlet** (*Glaucidium sjostedti*) (NB), **Rufous-sided Broadbill** (*Smithornis rufolateralis*) (NB)





(Left to right) **Yellow-footed Flycatcher** (*Muscicapa sethsmithi*) (NB), **Bar-tailed Trogon** (*Apaloderma vittatum*) (NB), **Drill** (*Mandrillus leucophaeus*) (NB), **Yellow-spotted Barbet** (*Buccanodon duchaillui*) (NB), **Green Sunbird** (*Anthreptes rectirostris*) (NB), **African Green Pigeon** (*Treron calvus*) (NB)