

ANGOLA TOUR REPORT 2023

17 September - 4 October 2023

BY MARK VAN BEIRS

The magnificent Braun's Bushshrike, the unique White-headed Robin-Chat, the captivating Angolan Cave Chat, the rare Brazza's Martin and the alluring Red-crested Turaco were the favourites of our recent tour to Angola. Most people and birders have heard about Angola, but know very little about this country, torn by civil war. The older generation will remember the news about the ever-ongoing conflict between the UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola) and the MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola) after the country gained its independence from Portugal in 1974. This civil war was a really messy affair and was complicated by the fact that several factions were aided by the USA, Cuba, the USSR and South Africa in their geopolitical games. Meanwhile the country was covered with millions of lethal mines till peace finally arrived in 2002 when Jonas Savimbi, the charismatic leader of UNITA was shot. Angola is slowly recovering from this awful period and with its large deposits of oil, gas and diamonds is heavily courted by the Chinese, whose influence is visible all over the country. Although the country has many riches, they are very unevenly distributed and most of the population is still extremely poor. For the international birder Angola holds an interesting range of specialities and a vast array of habitats: from the Namibe desert in the extreme south to the humid lowland forests of the Congo basin in the extreme north with in between vast swathes of miombo woodland. Most of the endemics occur in the escarpment forests and mountain habitats of the central plateau which constitutes the Western Angolan Endemic Bird Area which harbours 13 Restricted Range species (of which 7 are threatened). Conservation is definitely not a priority of the government as we could witness in the ongoing sad destruction of habitats everywhere. Especially the fragile montane forests which are now restricted to just a handful of narrow, steep gullies are highly threatened. Angola is a really beautiful country which holds amazing scenery like the spectacular Tundavala escarpment and the imposing Calandula Falls, one of the largest waterfalls by volume in Africa. For all of us it was very strange to be in Africa and not to see many mammals. Our 4×4 vehicle coped easily with the sometimes-atrocious roads and in contrast to previous tours to this country, we never encountered any real police hassle.

The tour started in earnest at the truly impressive Tundavala escarpment, just outside the southern Angolan town of Lubango. At a viewpoint overlooking the mighty 1,000-meter-high cliffs, we obtained excellent looks at several attractive, much wanted Angola Cave Chats hopping about. We also observed lots of Alpine and Bradfield's Swifts, Rock Kestrel, Lanner Falcon, Rock Martin, Short-toed Rock Thrush, Ludwig's Double-collared Sunbird, Cinnamon-breasted Bunting and Damara Ground Squirrel. The bushy surroundings of the nearby kopjes gave us Red-eyed and Ring-necked Doves, Augur Buzzard, Rufous-naped Lark, African Red-eyed and Dark-capped Bulbuls, a fabulous Rockrunner, Wailing Cisticola,

Oustalet's Sunbird and African Pipit. We took a walk to a well forested valley, but, sadly, couldn't locate the often-present White-headed Barbets. White-rumped Swift, Little and White-fronted Bee-eaters, Black-collared Barbet, Angola Batis, Greater Striped Swallow, Tinkling Cisticola, Angola Slaty Flycatcher, Sooty Chat, Buffy Pipit, Yellow-crowned Canary and Malbrouck Monkey offered some consolation. After a break in the middle of the day with Hamerkop, endemic Red-backed Mousebirds and Variable Sunbird in the gardens of our hotel, we explored a small lake that held Red-billed Teal, African Palm Swift, Little Grebe and Wire-tailed Swallow. Another visit to the scenic escarpment added African Harrier-Hawk, a pair of beautiful Verreaux's Eagles, Peregrine and several Bush Hyraxes to the list. Our first day ended with glimpses of a Freckled Nightjar at dusk.

Our long daytrip into the semi desert of southern Angola was filled with birds, as we visited several different habitats. We crossed the escarpment at the Leba Pass and first birded the lush forest at the base of the cliffs where we noted lots of Grey Go-away Birds, Schalow's Turaco, African Green Pigeon, a perched Gabar Goshawk, Pearl-spotted Owlet (being mobbed by 15 different species of birds ... just brilliant), Red-backed and Red-faced Mousebirds, Striped Kingfisher, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Pririt Batis, gorgeous White-tailed Shrikes, Black-backed Puffback, a lovely Cape Penduline Tit, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, Long-billed Crombec, Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush, Scarlet-chested, White-bellied and Purple-banded Sunbirds, White-throated Bush Sparrow, Southern Grey-headed Sparrow, Holub's Golden, Southern Masked and Red-headed Weavers, Red-billed Quelea, Orange-cheeked Waxbill, Blue Waxbill, Green-winged Pytilia, Jameson's and Brown Firefinches, Kinda Baboon and several Congo Rope Squirrels. As we travelled westwards the vegetation became sparser and sparser offering us Namaqua Dove, Chestnut-vented Warbler (ex Parisoma), Chat Flycatcher and White-browed Sparrow-Weaver. Eventually we reached the semidesert where the very special *Pachypodium* plants drew our attention. A very cooperative female Namaqua Sandgrouse and a couple of Rüppell's Korhaans stole the show, but we also saw Double-banded Courser, Spike-heeled, Sabota and Benguela Long-billed Larks, Karoo and ghostly Tractrac Chats, Mountain Wheatear, Lark-like Bunting and an unexpected flock of 20 Springbok.

The next morning, we drove to the coastal town of Benguela. We enjoyed our picnic breakfast in a patch of miombo woodland where Klaas's Cuckoo, Monteiro's and Southern Yellow-billed Hornbills, Sharp-tailed Starling and Yellow-fronted Canary obliged. We arrived at our hotel at midday, but the extremely slow check in and lunch service were exasperating. In the afternoon we visited the saltmarshes and ponds of the Lobito area which proved to be very birdy, all be it in a rather unpleasant environment of port buildings and industry. Here we noted White-faced Whistling Duck, Blue-billed and Cape Teal, Little Swift, Coppery-tailed Coucal, Common Moorhen, Red-knobbed Coot, Black-necked Grebe, Greater and Lesser Flamingos, Water Thick-knee, Black-winged Stilt, Pied Avocet, Grey, Common Ringed, Kittlitz's and Three-banded Plovers, Blacksmith Lapwing, African Jacana, Eurasian Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone, Ruff, Curlew and Temminck's Sandpipers, Little Stint, Common, Marsh and Wood Sandpipers, Common Greenshank, Kelp Gull, African Darter, Reed and White-breasted Cormorants, African Sacred and Glossy Ibises, African Spoonbill, Black-crowned Night Heron, Squacco, Black and Purple Herons, Great, Intermediate and Little Egrets, Great White Pelican, Pied Kingfisher, Olive Bee-eater, Banded Martin and Zitting Cisticola.

The following day, just after dawn, we watched the antics at some nearby saltworks which gave us Sanderling, Greyheaded Gull and Caspian, West African Crested, Sandwich and Common Terns. We drove inland to a beautiful area with fantastic Baobabs and scenic kopjes where we located a cracking male Hartlaub's Spurfowl (prolonged scope views) and also Damara Red-billed and Southern Yellow-billed Hornbills, Acacia Pied Barbet, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Browncrowned Tchagra, a party of cute White-crested Helmetshrikes, Southern White-crowned Shrike, Carp's Tit, Miombo Wren-Warbler and Smith's Bush Squirrel. The rest of the day was spent driving, but a short stop at a bridge gave us lots of Little Swifts, White-browed Coucal, Bateleur, Red-necked Buzzard, many Red-throated Cliff Swallows, Greater Swamp and Common Reed Warblers, Red-faced Cisticola and Hartlaub's Babbler.

We started very early next morning, as we wanted to reach the submontane forest of Angola's highest mountain soon after dawn. On the latter part of the drive a party of Red-necked Spurfowl, Black-winged Kite, Black-chested Snake Eagle and Lizard Buzzard were seen. Famous Mount Moco (2,620m) still holds a few patches of beautiful and birdy submontane forest where we heard Swierstra's Spurfowl and observed lovely Schalow's Turacos, Western Tinkerbird, Black-backed Barbet, the adorable Red-throated Wryneck, African Paradise Flycatcher, White-tailed Blue Flycatcher, Angola Lark, the strange Black-collared Bulbul, Yellow-throated Leaflove, Black Saw-wing, Grey-rumped and Mosque Swallows, Rock-loving and Snuffeling Cisticolas, Grey Apalis, Violet-backed Starling, Bocage's Akalat (great looks), Familiar Chat, Bronzy and the very localized Bocage's Sunbirds, Spectacled Weaver, Yellow Bishop, Fawn-breasted Waxbill, Dusky Twinspot, Striped Pipit and Brimstone Canary. In late afternoon we returned to our base entertained by a Miombo Scrub Robin and a really heavy shower.

Next day we explored some nice, remote miombo forest and an adjacent dambo where Dark Chanting Goshawk, a displaying Black-bellied Bustard, African Wattled Lapwing (dive bombing us), Anchieta's Barbet, Miombo Pied Barbet, Greater and Lesser Honeyguides, Souza's Shrike, Flappet and Red-capped Larks, exquisite Black-and-rufous Swallows, Pearl-breasted Swallow, Stout Cisticola, Neddicky, Green-capped Eremomela, Northern Yellow White-eye, Southern Black Flycatcher, Pale and Böhm's Flycatchers, African Stonechat, Amethyst Sunbird, the very localized Bocage's Weaver, Marsh Widowbird, Quailfinch, Fülleborn's Longclaw and Plain-backed Pipit showed well. We were truly impressed by the magnificent Black-and-rufous Swallows as they foraged low over the grassy plain or perched on low plants allowing excellent scope looks. On the return journey we made a few stops in different patches of miombo and at bridges finding

Common Swift (large flocks, seemingly just arrived), Levaillant's Cuckoo, African Marsh Harrier, Pale-billed Hornbill, Whitethroated Swallow, Chirping Cisticola and Yellow-bellied Hyliota.

The following morning, we were planning to enjoy our packed breakfast at a bridge over a little river in a miombo forest covered valley and within minutes upon arriving we were already admiring several rarely-observed Brazza's Martins fluttering nearby. We obtained brilliant looks at this mega speciality. Nearby we found Brown-hooded Kingfisher, Tropical Boubou, Copper Sunbird, Angola Waxbill, Cape Wagtail and Wood Pipit. We explored several other patches of miombo forest where Black Cuckoo, Brubru (a subspecies without the rufous flanks), African Golden Oriole, Rufous-bellied Tit, Southern Hyliota, a showy African Spotted Creeper and Ashy Flycatcher performed. In late afternoon we arrived at our cosy lodgings near the Kumbira Forest, where dinner was a tasty affair.

We birded the few remaining patches of escarpment forest which is the Kumbira Forest for a whole day. The old coffee plantations, the shade trees and the few patches of shrubby growth is all that remains ... poor endemics... how long will they last? Here we admired gorgeous Red-crested Turacos, Blue-spotted Wood Dove, Long-crested Eagle, Lizard Buzzard (on its nest amongst a colony of Vieillot's Black Weavers), Crowned Hornbill, African Pygmy Kingfisher, Naked-faced Barbet (the Pale-throated form), Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, African Broadbill, Angola Batis, Black-throated and Yellow-bellied Wattle-eyes, the magnificent Monteiro's Bushshrike, Gorgeous Bushshrike (wow), Pink-footed Puffback, Gabela Bushshrike (all too brief, sadly), African Blue Flycatcher, Falkenstein's, Yellow-whiskered and Pale-olive Greenbuls, cooperative Pulitzer's Longbills, Bubbling Cisticola, Hartert's Camaroptera, Gabela Akalat, Collared, Green-headed, Olive, Carmelite, Olive-bellied and Superb Sunbirds, Black-necked Weaver, Bronze Mannikin, Grey Waxbill and a smart Red-headed Bluebill.

A very early start (the earliest of the tour) took us to the slopes of the scenic Namba Mountains. A Spotted Eagle-Owl was noted on the drive. The boulder-strewn slopes and the edge of the patches of montane forest gave us a terrific selection of specialities. We obtained fair looks at a Finsch's Francolin, but only heard the endemic Swierstra's Spurfowl. Ross's Turaco, Secretarybird, Palm-nut Vulture, Margaret's Batis (heard by everyone, only seen by the leader), Cabanis's Greenbul, African Hill Babbler, Black-faced Canary and Blue Monkey were additions to the list. In the afternoon a stretch of miombo woodland gave us Grey-headed Kingfisher and Kurrichane Thrush.

The following day we returned in the early morning to the Kumbira forest and added African Goshawk and Yellowthroated Nicator to the tally. In mid-morning we started driving northwards to the town of N'Dalatando stopping at bridges and a lake on the way. Yellow-billed Duck, Rock Pratincole and African Pied Wagtail were the only birds of note. In late afternoon we had our first taste of the well-preserved Tombingo forest where no fewer than 55 African Pied Hornbills and a few Piping Hornbills were found, next to Naked-faced Barbet, Speckled Tinkerbird, Chestnut Wattle-eye, Black-winged Oriole and a tiny Tit Hylia.

Dawn found us again in the Tombingo forest, where African Emerald Cuckoo, Woodland Kingfisher, Yellow-crested Woodpecker, Green Crombec, Fraser's Rufous Thrush, Grey Tit-Flycatcher, Dusky-blue Flycatcher and Red-headed Malimbe were observed. We then drove to the famous, 105m high Calandula Falls, which never fail to impress. They are really extraordinary and the sight of a powerful Peregrine Falcon perched above the falls added to the experience. Late afternoon found us at a bridge observing the antics of hirundines and swifts. A Black Coucal in non-breeding plumage and lots of Red-throated Cliff Swallows were much appreciated.

The highlight of our day in the miombo and the gallery forest at Kinjila was the fabulous and extremely localized Whiteheaded Robin-Chat. We encountered several family parties of this exquisite species, which gave a sterling performance. We also obtained good looks at Black and African Cuckoos, Broad-billed Roller, European Bee-eater, Meyer's Parrot, Blackcrowned Tchagra, Retz's Helmetshrike, Petit's Cuckooshrike, Common Square-tailed Drongo, Moustached Grass Warbler, Grey-winged Robin-Chat and Dark-backed Weaver. A skulking White-spotted Flufftail played hide and seek in a dense patch of stream vegetation. At dusk we obtained really nice looks at a Fiery-necked Nightjar and a cute African Scops Owl.

We paid another visit to the Kinjila miombo next morning, but it was cool and misty, so very quiet bird wise. Persistence paid off with nice Red-crested Turacos, Shikra, African Hoopoe, Meyer's Parrot (4 perched), a showy Retz's Helmetshrike (on its nest) and a cracking Grey-headed Bushshrike. In the afternoon we drove northwards to the town of Uige and nothing of note was seen on the journey.

Our visit to the remnants of the once extensive Damengola Forest started with persistent rain. It remained rather gloomy throughout the day, but luckily the birds remained active. The indisputable highlight was the cracking Braun's Bushshrike, that showed so very well. Wow wow wow. It definitely is one of the best Angolan endemics. We also identified beauties like Great Blue Turaco, Guinea Turaco, Gabon Coucal (often heard, briefly seen), Blue Malkoha, Tambourine Dove, Black Beeeater, European Bee-eater (flock), Bristle-nosed Barbet, Olive Woodpecker, Red-fronted Parrot, Bocage's Bushshrike, Purple-throated Cuckooshrike, Velvet-mantled Drongo, Yellow-throated Nicator (great looks), Red-tailed Bristlebill, Red-breasted Swallow, Forest Swallow, Green Hylia, Banded Prinia, Buff-throated and Lowland Masked Apalises, Splendid Starling, Brown-backed Scrub Robin, Little Green Sunbird, Black-necked Weaver, Red-headed and Crested Malimbes, Black-winged Red Bishop, Red-collared Widowbird, Grey-headed Nigrita and African (Landana) Firefinch. A nearby lake and adjoining savanna gave us White-backed Vulture, Speckled Mousebird, Slender-billed and Compact Weavers and Yellow-mantled Widowbird.

Another early morning in the Damengola Forest produced scope views of Yellow-billed Barbet, Slender-billed Greenbul and a Crested Malimbe at its nest. We continued travelling south and a stop at a bridge gave us Giant Kingfisher, Cassin's

Flycatcher and a nice selection of hirundines, including some strange Forest Swallows and attractive, glorious Whitethroated Blue Swallows. A picturesque stretch of Baobab forest held smart Orange-breasted Bushshrikes, an endemic White-fronted Wattle-eye and a cooperative trio of wonderful, endemic Gabela Helmetshrikes. In late afternoon we continued to our accommodation at the edge of the Kissama National Park via the hubbub of the enormous city of Luanda.

Next day we birded the scenic Baobab forests and the floodplain of the mighty Kwanza River. Our main target was the shy Grey-striped Spurfowl, and luckily it didn't take too long to obtain decent views of this wary, endemic gamebird. We also found Spur-winged Goose, Square-tailed Nightjar, Böhm's Spinetail, Mottled Swift, Yellow-billed Stork, African Openbill, Little Bittern, Little Sparrowhawk, African Fish Eagle, lots of Red-backed Mousebirds, Black Scimitarbill, Lilac-breasted Roller, Grey Kestrel, White-fronted Wattle-eye, Swamp Boubou, White-winged Widowbird and a family of impressive Marsh Cane Rats.

On the final morning of the tour, we drove from east to west through the Baobab studded bush country of the Kissama National Park. Several stops yielded goodies like Helmeted Guineafowl, a perched Rüppell's Parrot, Red-billed Buffalo Weavers at their enormous nests and the endemic Golden-backed Bishop in non-breeding plumage. The mouth of the powerful Kwanza River gave us Osprey, Rosy-faced Lovebird, a colony of Lesser Masked Weavers and a couple of well-behaved Long-legged Pipits. Further north we explored the muddy shores of the Mussola Bay where lovely Kittlitz's Plovers (with tiny chicks), White-fronted Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit and a couple of Gull-billed Terns were identified amongst the many other waders and waterbirds. A bout of seawatching added marvels like Damara Terns, a couple of Wilson's Storm Petrels, several Sooty Shearwaters and half a dozen marvellous Humpback Whales that were seen breaching and frolicking about. We had wanted to spend a bit more time checking out more spots, but, sadly, the international flight of one of the tour participants had been changed to an earlier departure time, so we drove earlier than expected to the airport in Luanda, where the tour ended.

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED

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

BIRDS

White-faced Whistling Duck Dendrocygna viduata Spur-winged Goose Plectropterus gambensis Blue-billed Teal Spatula hottentota Yellow-billed Duck Anas undulata Cape Teal Anas capensis Red-billed Teal Anas erythrorhyncha Helmeted Guineafowl Numida meleagris Finsch's Francolin & Scleroptila finschi Good looks at this speciality in the Namba Mountain foothills. Hartlaub's Spurfowl & Pternistis hartlaubi Perfect scope views of a singing male near Benguela. Swierstra's Spurfowl & Pternistis swierstrai heard-only Grey-striped Spurfowl > Pternistis griseostriatus This endemic showed quite well in the Kissama NP. Red-necked Spurfowl Pternistis afer Fiery-necked Nightjar Caprimulgus pectoralis Freckled Nightjar Caprimulgus tristigma Square-tailed Nightjar Caprimulgus fossii Böhm's Spinetail Neafrapus boehmi Very showy in the Kissama NP. African Palm Swift Cypsiurus parvus Alpine Swift Tachymarptis melba

Mottled Swift Tachymarptis aequatorialis **Common Swift** Apus apus Bradfield's Swift & Apus bradfieldi Common at the Tundavala Escarpment. Little Swift Apus affinis White-rumped Swift Apus caffer Great Blue Turaco Corythaeola cristata Several showed well in the Damengola Forest. Grey Go-away-bird Crinifer concolor Ross's Turaco Tauraco rossae Regular encounters. Red-crested Turaco & Tauraco erythrolophus Good looks at this endemic at several venues. Guinea Turaco (Green T) Tauraco persa Schalow's Turaco Tauraco schalowi Regular, excellent sightings. Ludwig's Bustard & Neotis Iudwigii Rüppell's Korhaan ♦ Eupodotis rueppelii Nice looks in the Namibe area. Black-bellied Bustard Lissotis melanogaster A displaying male showed off near Mount Moco. Gabon Coucal & Centropus anselli Blue-headed Coucal Centropus monachus Coppery-tailed Coucal Centropus cupreicaudus White-browed Coucal Centropus superciliosus Black Coucal Centropus grillii A single showed well in its non-breeding plumage near Calandula. Blue Malkoha Ceuthmochares aereus Great Spotted Cuckoo Clamator glandarius heard-only Levaillant's Cuckoo (African Striped C) Clamator levaillantii Klaas's Cuckoo Chrysococcyx klaas African Emerald Cuckoo Chrysococcyx cupreus Black Cuckoo Cuculus clamosus **Red-chested Cuckoo** *Cuculus solitarius* African Cuckoo Cuculus gularis Namaqua Sandgrouse Pterocles namaqua Perfect close-up views of a female in the Namibe area. Rock Dove (introduced) Columba livia Afep Pigeon Columba unicincta non-leader Red-eyed Dove Streptopelia semitorquata Ring-necked Dove Streptopelia capicola Laughing Dove Spilopelia senegalensis Emerald-spotted Wood Dove Turtur chalcospilos Blue-spotted Wood Dove Turtur afer Tambourine Dove Turtur tympanistria Namaqua Dove Oena capensis African Green Pigeon Treron calvus

White-spotted Flufftail Sarothrura pulchra Common Moorhen Gallinula chloropus Red-knobbed Coot (Crested C) Fulica cristata Black Crake Zapornia flavirostra Little Grebe Tachybaptus ruficollis Black-necked Grebe Podiceps nigricollis Greater Flamingo Phoenicopterus roseus Lesser Flamingo Phoeniconaias minor Water Thick-knee Burhinus vermiculatus Spotted Thick-knee Burhinus capensis heard-only Black-winged Stilt Himantopus himantopus Pied Avocet Recurvirostra avosetta Crowned Lapwing Vanellus coronatus non-leader African Wattled Lapwing Vanellus senegallus Blacksmith Lapwing Vanellus armatus Grey Plover Pluvialis squatarola **Common Ringed Plover** Charadrius hiaticula Kittlitz's Plover Charadrius pecuarius Seen with tiny chicks near Luanda. Three-banded Plover Charadrius tricollaris White-fronted Plover Charadrius marginatus African Jacana Actophilornis africanus Eurasian Whimbrel Numenius phaeopus Bar-tailed Godwit Limosa lapponica Ruddy Turnstone Arenaria interpres Ruff Calidris pugnax Curlew Sandpiper Calidris ferruginea Sanderling Calidris alba Little Stint Calidris minuta Temminck's Stint Calidris temminckii Common Sandpiper Actitis hypoleucos Marsh Sandpiper Tringa stagnatilis Wood Sandpiper Tringa glareola Common Greenshank Tringa nebularia Double-banded Courser Rhinoptilus africanus Very nice encounters in the Namibe area. Rock Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis* Scope views at a river crossing near Calandula. Grey-headed Gull Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus Kelp Gull (Cape G) Larus [dominicanus] vetula Gull-billed Tern Gelochelidon nilotica

Caspian Tern Hydroprogne caspia West African Crested Tern (African Royal T) Thalasseus albididorsalis Good looks along the coast. Sandwich Tern Thalasseus sandvicensis **Damara Tern §** Sternula balaenarum A nice show of five birds near Luanda. Common Tern Sterna hirundo Wilson's Storm Petrel Oceanites oceanicus Two were seen during a bit of seawatch near Luanda. Sooty Shearwater Ardenna grisea Four were seen during a bit of seawatch near Luanda. Yellow-billed Stork Mycteria ibis African Openbill Anastomus lamelligerus African Darter Anhinga rufa Reed Cormorant (Long-tailed C) Microcarbo africanus White-breasted Cormorant Phalacrocorax lucidus African Sacred Ibis Threskiornis aethiopicus Glossy Ibis Plegadis falcinellus African Spoonbill Platalea alba Little Bittern Ixobrychus minutus Fair views of the resident race payesii along the Kwanza River. Black-crowned Night Heron Nycticorax nycticorax Squacco Heron Ardeola ralloides Western Cattle Egret Bubulcus ibis Grey Heron Ardea cinerea Black-headed Heron Ardea melanocephala Goliath Heron Ardea goliath A single bird showed along the Kwanza River in the Kissama NP. Purple Heron Ardea purpurea Great Egret Ardea alba Intermediate Egret Ardea intermedia Black Heron Egretta ardesiaca Little Egret Egretta garzetta Hamerkop Scopus umbretta Great White Pelican Pelecanus onocrotalus **Osprey** Pandion haliaetus Secretarybird Sagittarius serpentarius A new bird for this tour. One showed well in the Namba Mountain foothills. Black-winged Kite Elanus caeruleus African Harrier-Hawk (Gymnogene) Polyboroides typus The most regularly observed bird of prey. Palm-nut Vulture Gypohierax angolensis White-backed Vulture Gyps africanus Black-chested Snake Eagle Circaetus pectoralis Bateleur Terathopius ecaudatus Long-crested Eagle Lophaetus occipitalis

Wahlberg's Eagle Hieraaetus wahlbergi

Verreaux's Eagle Aquila verreauxii Good looks at a pair at the Tundavala Escarpment.

Lizard Buzzard Kaupifalco monogrammicus

Dark Chanting Goshawk Melierax metabates One showed well near Mount Moco. A new bird for this tour.

Gabar Goshawk Micronisus gabar

African Goshawk Accipiter tachiro A displaying bird showed in the scope in the Kumbira Forest.

Shikra Accipiter badius

Little Sparrowhawk Accipiter minullus

African Marsh Harrier Circus ranivorus

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius*

African Fish Eagle Haliaeetus vocifer

Red-necked Buzzard Buteo auguralis

Augur Buzzard Buteo augur

Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum*

African Barred Owlet & Glaucidium capense heard-only

African Scops Owl Otus senegalensis Brilliant looks at Kinjila.

Spotted Eagle-Owl Bubo africanus

Speckled Mousebird Colius striatus

Red-backed Mousebird & Colius castanotus Regular encounters with this Angolan endemic.

Red-faced Mousebird Urocolius indicus

Narina Trogon Apaloderma narina heard-only

African Hoopoe Upupa africana

Green Wood Hoopoe Phoeniculus purpureus heard-only

Black Scimitarbill Rhinopomastus aterrimus

Damara Red-billed Hornbill & Tockus damarensis

Monteiro's Hornbill & Tockus monteiri Several nice sightings in the south.

Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill Tockus leucomelas

Crowned Hornbill Lophoceros alboterminatus

African Pied Hornbill (Congo P H) Lophoceros [fasciatus] fasciatus Very common in the Tombingo Forest.

Pale-billed Hornbill & Lophoceros pallidirostris Good looks at this speciality near Mount Moco.

Piping Hornbill (Eastern Piping H) Bycanistes [fistulator] sharpii

Purple Roller (Rufous-crowned R) Coracias naevius

Lilac-breasted Roller Coracias caudatus

Broad-billed Roller Eurystomus glaucurus

Grey-headed Kingfisher Halcyon leucocephala

Brown-hooded Kingfisher Halcyon albiventris

Striped Kingfisher Halcyon chelicuti

Woodland Kingfisher Halcyon senegalensis

African Pygmy Kingfisher Ispidina picta Malachite Kingfisher Corythornis cristatus non-leader Giant Kingfisher Megaceryle maxima Pied Kingfisher Ceryle rudis Black Bee-eater Merops gularis Great views of this attractive species in the Damengola Forest. Little Bee-eater Merops pusillus White-fronted Bee-eater Merops bullockoides **Olive Bee-eater** Merops superciliosus European Bee-eater Merops apiaster Bristle-nosed Barbet & Gymnobucco peli Naked-faced Barbet Gymnobucco calvus Naked-faced Barbet (Pale-throated B) Gymnobucco [calvus] vernayi A few showed in the Kumbira Forest. Anchieta's Barbet § Stactolaema anchietae Regular sightings in patches of miombo woodland. Speckled Tinkerbird Pogoniulus scolopaceus Western Tinkerbird (W Green T) Pogoniulus coryphaei Perfect looks in the Mount Moco area. Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird Pogoniulus bilineatus Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird Pogoniulus chrysoconus Miombo Pied Barbet § Tricholaema frontata Scope views in a patch of miombo near Mount Moco. Acacia Pied Barbet Tricholaema leucomelas Black-collared Barbet Lybius torquatus A regular sound on most of the tour. Black-backed Barbet (Brown-faced B) Lybius [minor] minor Nice looks at Mount Moco. Yellow-billed Barbet (Eastern Y-b B) Trachyphonus [purpuratus] purpuratus Scope views at Damengola. Lesser Honeyguide Indicator minor Scaly-throated Honeyguide Indicator variegatus heard-only Greater Honeyguide Indicator indicator Red-throated Wryneck Jynx ruficollis Magnificent looks at Mount Moco. A real cracker. Golden-tailed Woodpecker Campethera abingoni Yellow-crested Woodpecker Chloropicus xantholophus Great views in the Tombingo Forest. Olive Woodpecker Dendropicos griseocephalus **Rock Kestrel** Falco rupicolus Grey Kestrel Falco ardosiaceus Lanner Falcon Falco biarmicus Peregrine Falcon Falco peregrinus Red-fronted Parrot & Poicephalus gulielmi Meyer's Parrot (Brown P) Poicephalus meyeri **Rüppell's Parrot** A **Poicephalus rueppellii** Scope views of a perched bird in the Kissama NP. Rosy-faced Lovebird & Agapornis roseicollis African Broadbill Smithornis capensis

Margaret's Batis Batis margaritae Sadly, only seen by the leader in the Namba Mountains. Chinspot Batis Batis molitor Pririt Batis & Batis pririt Angola Batis & Batis minulla Regular encounters. Western Black-headed Batis Batis erlangeri non-leader White-tailed Shrike & Lanioturdus torguatus Excellent looks at several venues. A marvellous species. Chestnut Wattle-eye Platysteira castanea Black-throated Wattle-eye Platysteira peltata White-fronted Wattle-eye > Platysteira albifrons Great looks at this endemic near Luanda. Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye Platysteira concreta Monteiro's Bushshrike ♦ Malaconotus monteiri An excellent performance in the Kumbira Forest. Grey-headed Bushshrike Malaconotus blanchoti Bocage's Bushshrike (Grey-green B) Chlorophoneus bocagei Orange-breasted Bushshrike (Sulphur-b B) Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus Gorgeous Bushshrike Telophorus viridis This exquisite species showed well in the Kumbira Forest. Brown-crowned Tchagra Tchagra australis Black-crowned Tchagra Tchagra senegalus Pink-footed Puffback Dryoscopus angolensis Black-backed Puffback Dryoscopus cubla Braun's Bushshrike & Laniarius brauni The Bird of the Trip. Perfect views in the Damengola Forest. Gabela Bushshrike & Laniarius amboimensis Good looks for some in the Kumbira Forest. Not cooperative... **Tropical Boubou** Laniarius major Swamp Boubou & Laniarius bicolor Common in the Kissama NP. Brubru Nilaus afer White-crested Helmetshrike (White H) Prionops plumatus Retz's Helmetshrike Prionops retzii On the nest near Kinjila. Gabela Helmetshrike ♦ Prionops gabela Lovely encounters with this endemic near Luanda. White-breasted Cuckooshrike Ceblepyris pectoralis non-leader Petit's Cuckooshrike Campephaga petiti Purple-throated Cuckooshrike Campephaga quiscalina Southern White-crowned Shrike Eurocephalus anguitimens Souza's Shrike & Lanius souzae This miombo speciality showed well near Mount Moco. Northern Fiscal Lanius humeralis Black-headed Oriole (Eastern B-h O) Oriolus larvatus Black-winged Oriole Oriolus nigripennis African Golden Oriole Oriolus auratus Very nice looks near Cassongue. Velvet-mantled Drongo Dicrurus modestus Fork-tailed Drongo Dicrurus adsimilis

Common Square-tailed Drongo Dicrurus ludwigii African Paradise Flycatcher Terpsiphone viridis Pied Crow Corvus albus African Blue Flycatcher Elminia longicauda White-tailed Blue Flycatcher Elminia albicauda Carp's Tit Melaniparus carpi Nice views in Baobab dominated forest near Benguela. Rufous-bellied Tit § Melaniparus rufiventris A showy pair in miombo near Cassongue. Cape Penduline Tit & Anthoscopus minutus Seen very well in the Namibe area. Yellow-throated Nicator § Nicator vireo Seen well at several venues. Spike-heeled Lark Chersomanes albofasciata Perfect encounters near Namibe. Benguela Long-billed Lark ♦ Certhilauda benguelensis Perfect encounters near Namibe. Sabota Lark & Calendulauda sabota Rufous-naped Lark Mirafra africana Flappet Lark Mirafra rufocinnamomea Angola Lark ♦ Mirafra angolensis Several showed well in the Mount Moco area. Red-capped Lark Calandrella cinerea Slender-billed Greenbul Stelgidillas gracilirostris Black-collared Bulbul ♦ *Neolestes torquatus* Good looks in the Mount Moco area. Red-tailed Bristlebill (Common B) Bleda syndactylus Yellow-throated Leaflove Atimastillas flavicollis Falkenstein's Greenbul (Yellow-necked G) Chlorocichla falkensteini First seen well at Kumbira. Yellow-bellied Greenbul Chlorocichla flaviventris Simple Greenbul (S Leaflove) Chlorocichla simplex Little Greenbul Eurillas virens Yellow-whiskered Greenbul Eurillas latirostris Cabanis's Greenbul Phyllastrephus cabanisi Pale-olive Greenbul & Phyllastrephus fulviventris Good looks at this endemic at Kumbira. Also seen later. African Red-eyed Bulbul Pycnonotus nigricans Dark-capped Bulbul Pycnonotus tricolor Black Saw-wing Psalidoprocne pristoptera Banded Martin Neophedina cincta Brazza's Martin ♦ Phedinopsis brazzae Marvellous views of this speciality in the Mount Moco area. Grey-rumped Swallow Pseudhirundo griseopyga Rock Martin Ptyonoprogne fuligula Black-and-rufous Swallow Hirundo nigrorufa Very nice encounters with this gorgeous bird near Mount Moco. Pearl-breasted Swallow Hirundo dimidiata White-throated Swallow & Hirundo albigularis Wire-tailed Swallow Hirundo smithii

Angola Swallow Hirundo angolensis

White-throated Blue Swallow Hirundo nigrita 10 showed well at a river near the Damengola Forest.

Red-breasted Swallow (Rufous-chested S) Cecropis semirufa

Mosque Swallow Cecropis senegalensis

Lesser Striped Swallow Cecropis abyssinica

Greater Striped Swallow Cecropis cucullata

Forest Swallow & Petrochelidon fuliginosa A few in the northern forests. Some strange ones near Damengola...

Red-throated Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon rufigula* **Common at several bridges along our route.**

Moustached Grass Warbler (African M W) Melocichla mentalis

Rockrunner ♦ *Achaetops pycnopygius* Scope views at Tundavala. A cracker.

Yellow Longbill Macrosphenus flavicans heard-only

Pulitzer's Longbill & Macrosphenus pulitzeri This endemic showed very well in the Kumbira Forest.

Long-billed Crombec Sylvietta rufescens

Red-capped Crombec Sylvietta ruficapilla non-leader

Green Crombec Sylvietta virens

Green Hylia Hylia prasina

Tit Hylia Pholidornis rushiae A single bird was noted in the Tombingo Forest.

Greater Swamp Warbler Acrocephalus rufescens

Lesser Swamp Warbler Acrocephalus gracilirostris heard-only

Common Reed Warbler (African R W) Acrocephalus scirpaceus

Little Rush Warbler Bradypterus baboecala heard-only

Red-faced Cisticola \diamond (Lepe C) *Cisticola* [erythrops] lepe

Bubbling Cisticola & Cisticola bulliens Delightfully common.

Rock-loving Cisticola (Huambo C) Cisticola [emini] bailunduensis Good looks at Mount Moco.

Tinkling Cisticola ◊ (Grey C) Cisticola rufilatus

Wailing Cisticola ♦ *Cisticola lais*

Chirping Cisticola & Cisticola pipiens Regular in reedbeds.

Stout Cisticola Cisticola robustus

Croaking Cisticola Cisticola natalensis

Short-winged Cisticola (Siffling C) Cisticola brachypterus

Neddicky (Piping Cisticola) Cisticola fulvicapilla

Zitting Cisticola Cisticola juncidis

Tawny-flanked Prinia Prinia subflava

Banded Prinia Prinia bairdii Good looks at Damengola.

Yellow-breasted Apalis Apalis flavida

Lowland Masked Apalis Apalis binotata

Buff-throated Apalis Apalis rufogularis

Grey Apalis Apalis cinerea

Grey-backed Camaroptera Camaroptera brevicaudata

Hartert's Camaroptera & (Green-tailed C) Camaroptera harterti Regular in the escarpment forests.

Yellow-browed Camaroptera Camaroptera superciliaris heard-only

Miombo Wren-Warbler \$ (Pale W-W) Calamonastes undosus

Green-capped Eremomela Eremomela scotops

African Hill Babbler Sylvia abyssinica

Chestnut-vented Warbler & Curruca subcoerulea Very nice looks in the Namibe area.

Northern Yellow White-eye Zosterops senegalensis

Bare-cheeked Babbler ♦ Turdoides gymnogenys A lovely encounter with a flock near Namibe.

Hartlaub's Babbler & Turdoides hartlaubii

Yellow-bellied Hyliota Hyliota flavigaster

Southern Hyliota Hyliota australis

African Spotted Creeper Salpornis salvadori Showy in miombo near Cassongue.

Cape Starling (C Glossy S) Lamprotornis nitens

Splendid Starling (S Glossy S) Lamprotornis splendidus

Sharp-tailed Starling ♦ Lamprotornis acuticaudus Regular encounters in the miombo woodland.

Violet-backed Starling Cinnyricinclus leucogaster

Narrow-tailed Starling Poeoptera lugubris non-leader

Yellow-billed Oxpecker Buphagus africanus

Fraser's Rufous Thrush (R Flycatcher T) Stizorhina fraseri Nice looks at Tombingo.

African Thrush Turdus pelios

Kurrichane Thrush Turdus libonyana

Forest Scrub Robin & Cercotrichas leucosticta Good views for everyone at Damengola.

Miombo Scrub Robin & Cercotrichas barbata

Kalahari Scrub Robin & Cercotrichas paena

Brown-backed Scrub Robin Cercotrichas hartlaubi

White-browed Scrub Robin Cercotrichas leucophrys

Grey Tit-Flycatcher (Lead-coloured F) Myioparus plumbeus

Angola Slaty Flycatcher ♦ Melaenornis brunneus Several encounters with this modestly-clad endemic.

Southern Black Flycatcher Melaenornis pammelaina

Pale Flycatcher Melaenornis pallidus

Chat Flycatcher Melaenornis infuscatus

Ashy Flycatcher Muscicapa caerulescens

Cassin's Flycatcher Muscicapa cassini Seen well at a bridge near Uige.

African Dusky Flycatcher Muscicapa adusta

Dusky-blue Flycatcher Muscicapa comitata

Böhm's Flycatcher ♦ Muscicapa boehmi A single bird showed quite well near Mount Moco.

White-browed Robin-Chat Cossypha heuglini

White-headed Robin-Chat Cossypha heinrichi Very nice encounters with several family parties. A speciality. **Angola Cave Chat ♦** Xenocopsychus ansorgei First seen well at the Tundavala escarpment. A cracker. Grey-winged Robin-Chat Sheppardia polioptera Bocage's Akalat & Sheppardia bocagei Good looks in the Mount Moco area. Gabela Akalat § Sheppardia gabela This endemic was seen well at Kumbira. Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush & Cichladusa ruficauda Short-toed Rock Thrush & *Monticola brevipes* African Stonechat Saxicola torquatus Karoo Chat & Emarginata schlegelii Tractrac Chat Emarginata tractrac Good looks in the Namibe desert. Sooty Chat Myrmecocichla nigra Mountain Wheatear & Myrmecocichla monticola Familiar Chat Oenanthe familiaris Little Green Sunbird Anthreptes seimundi Seen well in the Damengola Forest. Collared Sunbird Hedydipna collaris Green-headed Sunbird Cyanomitra verticalis Blue-throated Brown Sunbird Cyanomitra cyanolaema Olive Sunbird Cyanomitra olivacea Carmelite Sunbird & Chalcomitra fuliginosa Amethyst Sunbird Chalcomitra amethystina Scarlet-chested Sunbird Chalcomitra senegalensis Bocage's Sunbird & Nectarinia bocagii Good looks at this speciality at Mount Moco. Bronzy Sunbird (Bronze S) Nectarinia kilimensis Olive-bellied Sunbird Cinnyris chloropygius Western Miombo Sunbird & Cinnyris gertrudis Seen well near Mount Moco. Ludwig's Double-collared Sunbird & Cinnyris Iudovicensis Regular encounters in montane areas. Purple-banded Sunbird Cinnyris bifasciatus Superb Sunbird Cinnyris superbus **Oustalet's Sunbird & Cinnyris oustaleti** Good looks in montane flowering bushes. White-bellied Sunbird Cinnyris talatala Variable Sunbird Cinnyris venustus Copper Sunbird Cinnyris cupreus Yellow-throated Bush Sparrow Gymnoris superciliaris Northern Grey-headed Sparrow Passer griseus Southern Grey-headed Sparrow Passer diffusus House Sparrow (introduced) Passer domesticus Red-billed Buffalo Weaver Bubalornis niger White-browed Sparrow-Weaver Plocepasser mahali

Slender-billed Weaver Ploceus pelzelni Spectacled Weaver Ploceus ocularis Black-necked Weaver Ploceus nigricollis Bocage's Weaver & *Ploceus temporalis* Several nice encounters with this localized species. Holub's Golden Weaver Ploceus xanthops Lesser Masked Weaver Ploceus intermedius Southern Masked Weaver Ploceus velatus Village Weaver Ploceus cucullatus Vieillot's Black Weaver Ploceus nigerrimus Regular in the northern forests. Compact Weaver Ploceus superciliosus Good looks at several at Damengola. Dark-backed Weaver (Forest W) Ploceus bicolor Red-headed Malimbe Malimbus rubricollis Crested Malimbe Malimbus malimbicus Nest building at Damengola. **Red-headed Weaver** Anaplectes rubriceps Red-billed Quelea Quelea quelea Black-winged Red Bishop Euplectes hordeaceus Golden-backed Bishop ♦ Euplectes aureus Seen well in its distinctive non-breeding plumage at Kissama. Yellow Bishop Euplectes capensis Yellow-mantled Widowbird Euplectes macroura Marsh Widowbird Euplectes hartlaubi White-winged Widowbird Euplectes albonotatus **Red-collared Widowbird** Euplectes ardens Bronze Mannikin Spermestes cucullata Angola Waxbill & Coccopygia bocagei Excellent looks in the Namba Mountains. Grey-headed Nigrita (G-h Negrofinch) Nigrita canicapillus Grey Waxbill & (Black-tailed W) Glaucestrilda perreini Orange-cheeked Waxbill Estrilda melpoda Fawn-breasted Waxbill Estrilda paludicola Common Waxbill Estrilda astrild Quailfinch Ortygospiza atricollis Flushed in a dambo near Mount Moco. Blue Waxbill Uraeginthus angolensis Red-headed Bluebill & Spermophaga ruficapilla Excellent looks at this beauty at Kumbira. Green-winged Pytilia (Melba Finch) Pytilia melba Dusky Twinspot Euschistospiza cinereovinacea Seen very well on Mount Moco. African Firefinch (Pale-billed F, Landana F) Lagonosticta [rubricata] landanae Jameson's Firefinch Lagonosticta rhodopareia Brown Firefinch Lagonosticta nitidula Pin-tailed Whydah Vidua macroura

Cape Wagtail Motacilla capensis African Pied Wagtail Motacilla aguimp Fülleborn's Longclaw & Macronyx fuelleborni Perfect views of several near Mount Moco. African Pipit (Grassland P) Anthus cinnamomeus Wood Pipit & Anthus nyassae **Buffy Pipit** Anthus vaalensis Plain-backed Pipit Anthus leucophrys Long-legged Pipit & Anthus pallidiventris Showy near Luanda. Striped Pipit Anthus lineiventris Black-faced Canary & Crithagra capistrata Yellow-fronted Canary Crithagra mozambica Brimstone Canary Crithagra sulphurata Yellow-crowned Canary Serinus flavivertex Lark-like Bunting & Emberiza impetuani Cinnamon-breasted Bunting Emberiza tahapisi Golden-breasted Bunting Emberiza flaviventris

MAMMALS

Bush Hyrax Heterohyrax brucei Regular in rocky areas. Springbok Antidorcas marsupialis It was a nice surprise to see a small herd near Namibe. Blue Monkey Cercopithecus mitis Malbrouck Monkey Chlorocebus cynosuros Kinda Baboon Papio kindae African Savanna Hare Lepus victoriae Damara Ground Squirrel Geosciurus princeps Several in the Namibe area. Lunda Rope Squirrel Funisciurus bayonii Congo Rope Squirrel Funisciurus congicus Smith's Bush Squirrel Paraxerus cepapi Brown Rat Rattus norvegicus Greater (Marsh) Cane Rat Thryonomys swinderianus A family showed quite well at night in the Kissama NP. Humpback Whale Megaptera novaeangliae Several females with young showed well near Luanda.



Yellow-throated Nicator (image by Mark Van Beirs)



White-tailed Shrike (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Western Green Tinkerbird (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Verreaux's Eagle (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Tundavala escarpment (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Schalow's Turaco (image by Mark Van Beirs)



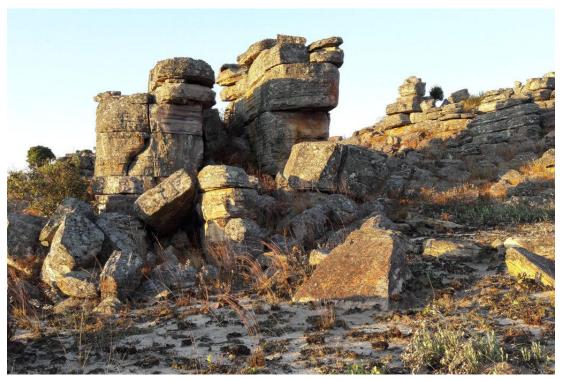
Spike-heeled Lark (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Spotted Creeper (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Tractrac Chat (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Tundavala escarpment (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Rufous-bellied Tit (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Red-crested Turaco (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Pied Kingfisher (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Peregrine Falcon (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Palm-nut Vulture (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Long-legged Pipit (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Miombo Pied Barbet (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Mount Moco (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Namaqua Sandgrouse (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Pachypodium sp (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Kinjila flower (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Hartlaub's Spurfowl (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Gabela Helmetshrike (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Fulleborn's Longclaw (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Euphorbia (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Braun's Bushshrike (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Baobab (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Bare-cheeked Babbler (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Bush Hyrax (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Calandula Fall (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Benguela Long-billed Lark (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Agama Lizard (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Angola Cave Chat (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Black-collared Barbet (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Chestnut-vented Warbler (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Congo Rope Squirrel (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Black-winged Oriole (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Angola Lark (image by Mark Van Beirs)