

MALAWI TOUR REPORT 2023

5 - 18 November 2023

by Pete Morris

Malawi proved to be a lovely destination for a couple of weeks of diverse birding, with a few excellent localized targets thrown in for good measure. "The warm heart of Africa" as Malawi is often called is a friendly though poor, little-known, small, land-locked country in southern central Africa. It offers an excellent variety of habitats and therefore diversity of birds in a country that has a surface area only four times that of Belgium. The dominant vegetation is (or at least used to be) miombo (*Brachystegia*) woodland, but there are also small patches of montane evergreen forest, mopane forest, open montane grasslands, verdant floodplains and marshy dambos. We managed to gather an excellent list of birds (just over 400 species recorded between us), and mammals during our short visit. We also experienced mostly excellent accommodation, superb tasty food and largely good roads. Sadly, like in so many countries, Malawi has a burgeoning population (20 million people) and the inevitable pressure on natural habitats is plain for all to see. The environmental devastation which we witnessed throughout the trip was so sad to see, but with poverty levels as they are, it is also sadly inevitable. The woodlands and forests are being 'harvested' at a frightening rate and the stories we heard about poaching were somewhat depressing. Some areas and reserves are already almost devoid of mammals and birds, and one has to wonder how much longer the unique wildlife of Malawi will survive for. That said, there was still plenty for us to enjoy, let's just hope some of the protected areas are maintained.

The extensive Miombo woodlands were explored at length, and we certainly had to work hard to tease a suite of endemics out of this tricky to bird habitat. The mountains in the south yielded many of their good birds in the small patches of remaining habitat, whilst Liwonde National Park was a real treat with abundant birdlife and a great diversity of mammals. We also spent some days in the high Nyika Plateau in the north, where again we found a suite of specialities in the montane grasslands, proteas and patches of Afromontane Forest. The bird highlights of our tour were many and varied, but particular mention should go to the lovely little endemic Yellow-throated Apalis and a fantastic male Pennant-winged Nightjar, sat out in broad daylight, our two favourite birds of the tour! Other great birds included a cracking little Buff-spotted Flufftail, Red-chested Flufftail, an endearing juvenile African Barred Owlet with its parents, fabulous Bohm's Bee-eaters, the much-wanted Racket-tailed Roller, and a suite of miombo birds including the scarce Babbling Starling, Souza's Shrike, Boulder Chat, Rufous-bellied, Cinnamon-bellied and Miombo Tits, Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Weaver, and the splendidly colourful Anchieta's Sunbird. In the southern highlands we found superb White-winged Apalises and the rare Thyolo Alethe, whilst in the north, brilliant Montane Widowbirds displayed over the dambos, Scarlet-tufted Sunbirds foraged in the proteas and stately Denham's Bustards strode across the plains. Mammals were good too, from the tiny Four-toed Sengi (Elephant-Shrew) to the huge African Elephants and Hippo sunsets! The Lions

roaring just outside our cabins were something else too! This of course is just scratching the surface! Read on for more details...

We all assembled at the rather quiet Lilongwe International Airport from where we made our way to the relatively nearby Dzalanyama Forest. As we got closer to the forest we began to see more and more bicycles with strange structures behind their saddles. Those travelling in the same direction as us looked like they had a ladder on the back of the bike, whilst those travelling against us were stacked high with wood, that was going to be made in to charcoal. These guys cycle 60km each way between Dzalanyama and Lilongwe, a three day round trip, to make a few dollars each time, and there were hundreds of them. This was our first indication of the pressures on Malawi's remaining habitats, as the miombo was literally being transported past us!

We noted a few common birds along the way, including our first colourful Lilac-breasted Rollers, and we also bumped into a small termite hatch which was attracting a number of common species such as Blue Waxbill, the smart Green-winged Pytilia, Bronze Mannikins and others. Heading further on, once we got into the forest, we encountered numerous vivid Violet-backed Starlings, our first localized Black-eared Seedeaters, a trio of smart Rufous-bellied Tits, a singing Stierling's Wren-Warbler which showed very well, and our first Grey Tit-Flycatcher. It was heading for dusk when we arrived at our lodge set in the heart of the forest.

We were up early with a coffee on the veranda, where we were entertained by a lovely pair of Red-throated Twinspots foraging just below us. We made our way on foot into the miombo, listening for any indications of bird activity, and were delighted to soon hear the hooting of the often elusive Miombo Pied Barbet. As is their way, they were elusive again as we chased the sound around for a while, before being treated to great views of this attractive species. Also in the flock were Little Spotted Woodpecker, an elusive Stierling's Woodpecker (a female), White-breasted Cuckooshrike, African Golden Oriole, noisy Green-capped Eremomelas, smart Yellow-bellied Hyliotas, the lovely African Spotted Creeper, a cracking Miombo Scrub Robin (great song), and Golden-breasted and Cabanis's Buntings. A nearby dambo held a fantastic male Anchieta's Sunbird and White-tailed Blue Flycatchers whilst other species seen included African Cuckoo, Wahlberg's Eagle and Shikra.

After an excellent start, we retired to the lodge for breakfast, but were soon out again, though by now it was warming up somewhat. We climbed up a bit of a hill to a rocky area, where the hoped for Boulder Chat failed to materialize, despite our efforts, and birding in the heat was hard-going though we did find some fine Striped Pipits as well as Levillant's Cuckoo and Augur Buzzard.

After lunch, and a bit of a siesta, we returned to the forest for an afternoon session, and this time climbed to another rocky area, where we were richly rewarded with great views of the scarce and localized Boulder Chat. Here we also encountered an entertaining group of Pale-billed Hornbills and our first Reichard's Seedeaters as well as more widespread species such as Gabar and African Goshawks, and White-necked Ravens. After dinner and a beer or two, a fine pair of African Wood Owls paid us a visit, and it wasn't too long before we had them fixed in the spotlight for some lovely views.

Early the following morning we were back out on the veranda, coffees in hand. The twinspots were again present, and both Red-chested and African Emerald Cuckoos showed well from the veranda. We then made our way back into the miombo, soon finding a few species we'd not seen the day before including Red-capped Crombec and Southern Hyliota, and we managed some great views of several Stierling's Woodpeckers, one of the most localized specialities of this forest! Nearby we

visited the dambo again, and this time we found a brilliant male Lesser Seedcracker, as well as Trumpeter Hornbill and Scaly-throated Honeyguide, and, just as we were leaving, a male Red-chested Flufftail crossed the track in front of us! We continued our exploration of the miombo after breakfast finding the smart Bohm's Flycatcher and our first White Helmetshrikes, whilst in the more degraded areas at the edge of the forest we found the much hoped-for Shelley's Sunbird, as well as Green Wood Hoopoe, and a fine yellow-shouldered Black Cuckooshrike.

After lunch we continued our explorations of some areas out towards the forest edge, and with some success as we finally tracked down a male Eastern Miombo Sunbird and a cracking male Souza's Shrike, as well as Brown-necked (Grey-headed) Parrots, some showy Schalow's Turacos, African Wattled Lapwing, and Grey-headed, Woodland and African Pygmy Kingfishers.

We had one final early morning to explore the miombo at Dzalanyama, seeking just a couple of rare and unlikely targets which once again eluded us. We did find many of the regular miombo birds again, and added our first Greater Honeyguides, but it was soon time to move on. We paused at a nearby wetland where we added a few common waterbirds, and headed on to Lilongwe and beyond. By late morning we arrived at the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife, and made our way up the slopes above the college to the rocky grassland. Here we located our first Whyte's Barbet in a dead tree and also found Red-winged Starlings on the rocks and a pair of Lazy Cisticolas in the grassland. It took a fair amount of searching but eventually we found a smart Vincent's Bunting, though sadly this form has once again been downgraded to a subspecies of Cape Bunting. After a successful mission, we made our way back down and ate our lunch whilst being entertained by a Brown Parisoma in a nearby acacia tree. The journey on to Blantyre was largely uneventful, although we did briefly pull over in Mozambique and see our only Brown Snake Eagle of the trip, and just before dusk we pulled into the rather grand Huntingdon House, our luxurious base for the night.

We were up early the following morning, but the weather wasn't on our side, with plenty of mist and rain swirling around. We supped our coffees on the veranda whilst being entertained by smart Livingstone's Turacos and hungry White-eared Barbets in a nearby fruiting tree. We then made our way up the Thyolo Mountain, but this proved to be premature, as we were soon forced back down by the weather and instead birded below the lodge. This proved to be the correct decision as we were soon watching a brilliant pair of White-winged Apalis, as well as more widespread birds such as White-browed Scrub Robin and Dark-backed Weaver. We then paused for breakfast, and fortunately the weather began to clear. We made our way up the Thyolo Mountain once more, this time with much more success. We fairly soon found the star of the show, the rare Thyolo Alethe, a pair of which showed brilliantly. Also here was the range restricted Olive-headed Greenbul as well as other tricky forest species such as a perched Lemon Dove, a smart singing Orange Ground Thrush and a group of Green Twinspot feeding furtively in the canopy. Other additions included Yellow-streaked Greenbul and Black-headed Apalis, but we saved the best until last, when a cracking little male Buff-spotted Flufftail popped up in front of us and showed superbly to a happy group!

Heading back to Huntingdon House for lunch, we added our first Burchell's Coucal, and after a fine meal, we headed off. We paused at a forest patch where we found an impressively large Silvery-cheeked Hornbill and several Southern Citrils, before making our way up to the Zomba Plateau. We paused for a roadside Tambourine Dove before arriving at our pleasant base for the night. Before settling in to the comfort of the hotel, we made a short walk, and soon found the stunning

Yellow-throated Apalis, Malawi's only endemic, as well as a smart White-starred Robin, a pair of Forest Double-collared Sunbirds and several impressive African Olive Pigeons.

We again explored the area around the hotel the following morning, finding a few more for our ever-growing list, including some showy Evergreen Forest Warblers, subtle Placid Greenbuls, and colourful Spectacled Weavers. After breakfast we explored some degraded areas lower down where we eventually found a family of range-restricted Bertram's Weavers. Heading on we stopped in another miombo patch at the Machinga Forest Reserve which, despite the heat, turned out to be pretty birdy. Fairly soon we were surrounded by a mixed flock which included smart Retz's Helmetshrikes, Grey-headed Bushshrike and a pair of Pale Batis, whilst further explorations yielded the hoped-for Cinnamon-breasted Tit, as well as Red-headed Weaver, our first Miombo Blue-eared Starlings, and a colourful pair of Orange-winged Pytilias.

After our successful stop, we continued on, eventually arriving at the entrance to the fantastic Liwonde National Park. Once we had signed in and completed the bureaucracy, we took a boat across the river and settled in for lunch. As we crossed the river we noticed a number of waterbirds, including Water Thick-knee, as well as our first Hippopotamuses. Around our luxurious cabins we soon became acquainted with stunning Bohm's Bee-eaters, and bold Collared Palm Thrushes, and as the day cooled, we boarded our vehicle to take our first game drive. It was quite stormy, with intermittent rain, though we still managed some great sightings including our first Lilian's Lovebirds and Speckle-breasted Woodpeckers, as well as Arnot's Chat and Livingstone's Flycatcher and a fantastic pair of Southern Ground Hornbills. We also saw a young Martial Eagle, Crested Barbet, and numerous Meves's Starlings, and mammals were conspicuous, with good numbers of Impala and Greater Kudu amongst others. As the sun slipped away, we sipped gin and tonics by the river, watched a Bat Hawk drift by and saw singing Square-tailed Nightjars. As we headed back we saw a few Rusty-spotted Genets, but the continuing rain thwarted us!

Early the following morning we crossed the river and explored an area of riparian forest opposite the camp. Here, one of our targets, the localized Brown-breasted Barbet showed well, and other new species included Purple-crested Turaco, a smart pair of Green Malkohas, Klaas's Cuckoo, and a fine pair of Saddle-billed Storks. After breakfast we took to the river in a boat, and had an enjoyable couple of hours watching great numbers of waterbirds and mammals. Here, numerous African Elephants foraged along the banks, whilst noisy gangs of hippos wallowed in the river! A flock of African Skimmers were much appreciated, Long-toed Lapwings and Collared Pratincoles showed well, good numbers of waterfowl included plenty of Knob-billed Ducks, Yellow-billed and Open-billed Storks were dotted along the riverbanks alongside Intermediate and Great Egrets (compared side-by-side), Black Herons doing their umbrella thing, a single stately Goliath Heron, a Pink-backed Pelican, several Black Crakes, and, overhead, a couple of increasingly rare White-backed Vultures.

Lunch and siesta followed, and just before setting off for the afternoon, we watched a sweet-singing Bearded Scrub Robin at the camp. The afternoon game drive proved to be a challenge as some species still eluded us, though we did get much better views of Speckle-breasted Woodpecker, saw some intricately marked Plains Zebras and smart Sable Antelopes, and added other species such as Brown-headed Parrot and Orange-breasted Bushshrike. Sunset at the river was totally spectacular, as hippos wallowed with a red-sky backdrop, and heading back to camp we found a Fiery-necked Nightjar as well as a smart Four-toed Sengi and a Cape Porcupine.

A final early drive did yield two of our top targets. Some palms quite near the lodge were home to a smart pair of Dickinson's Kestrels, and, after hours of searching, we finally found the elusive Racket-tailed Roller, a trio of which called and displayed around us, but moved on at high speed! An exciting five minutes or so! Sadly, our all-too-short stay at the luxurious Mvuu camp was over and we once again crossed the river, boarded our trusty Landcruiser, and headed north. It was a long and largely uninteresting drive along the side of Lake Malawi, though it was quite incredible to see the dense clouds of lake flies that made it look as though dense black smoke was coming off the surface of the lake! And this was visible from miles away... just how many billions of flies must have been involved was hard to comprehend!

In the late afternoon we arrived at our base for the night, the pleasant Chintcheche Inn, set on the shores of the huge Lake Malawi. In the garden we found a couple of African Barred Owlets, including the cutest of cute juveniles sat on a fence just a couple of metres away, and we also found Eastern Golden Weavers, a few Purple-banded Sunbirds, and, on the lake itself, a few Grey-headed Gulls.

The African Barred Owlets were still doing their thing in the garden the following morning, and we also got some good looks at a pair of Magpie Mannikins. We moved north and explored a small patch of forest set in the middle of a rubber plantation, and here we admired some displaying African Broadbills, as well as Black-throated Wattle-eyes, and an all-too-brief East Coast Akalat. We didn't stop for too long as we needed to continue our journey to Nyika National Park, and the last bit on dirt roads was fairly slow. Once inside the park, the weather was not the best, though we made a stop at a forest patch where we found a few new species including Brown-headed and Bar-throated Apalises, Black-lored Cisticola, and Bronzy and Whyte's Double-collared Sunbirds. An Amur Falcon flew over, and a Grey Waxbill popped up for some, and as we made our way across the plains we found our first stunning Blue Swallows as well as a pair of Waller's Starlings. Nearing Chelinda, mammals became more apparent, and included good numbers of smart Roan Antelopes. Having settled in to our rather special lodge, with great vistas across the grasslands and Blue Swallows flitting around, we embarked upon a night drive, where highlights included several Montane Nightjars and Spotted Eagle-Owls.

Following breakfast we headed to a forest patch which was actually well into Zambia! An excellent patch with a number of great birds, though sadly our time was somewhat limited when the rain set in by mid-morning. However, in the time we had, we found several of our targets including the localized Black-browed and Sharpe's Greenbuls, our first Malawi Batis, a couple of very smart Olive-flanked Ground Robins, a sneaky little Sharpe's Akalat, and a couple of smart Black-fronted Bushshrikes, though sadly we only heard the White-chested Alethe. Along the road we found African (Jackson's) Pipit, Angola and Red-rumped Swallows, a wing-tagged White-backed Vulture, Churring and Wailing Cisticolas, and our first spectacular Montane Widowbird, but with continuing poor weather, we headed back to the lodge for lunch. Fortunately things brightened up after lunch, and a walk below the lodge yielded a number of excellent birds including Fülleborn's Boubou, a smart male Bar-tailed Trogon, a couple of noisy Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawks and our first Baglafaecht Weavers. We then jumped back in the vehicle and headed up into the grasslands where we found a spectacular displaying Denham's Bustard as well as our only (Nyika) Rufous-naped Lark, and a few Dusky Turtle Doves. An extended stop around some low protea shrubs initially seemed quiet in the windy conditions, but before too long we found our quarry, the spectacular Scarlet-tufted Sunbird, several of which showed well, even revealing their scarlet tufts occasionally. After that success we headed back, picking up some smart Red-winged Francolins, a fine male Pallid Harrier, and a couple of Side-striped Jackals as we went.

The following morning we headed back out to a few forest patches, though birding was a bit tough. One of our main targets, the White-chested Alethe, was again elusive, and although seen briefly a couple of times, never really settled. By way of compensation, we did get some fine views of Moustached Tinkerbird and White-tailed Crested Flycatcher, and saw our first pair of Chapin's Apalises. We explored areas nearer to our lodge after lunch, and here we found Giant Kingfishers, a singing Mountain Yellow Warbler, surprisingly showy Cinnamon Bracken Warblers, White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher, more lovely Montane Widowbirds, and, after a bit of a search, the localized Yellow-browed Seedeater. We then drove across the grasslands once more, seeing more Red-winged Francolins, and spectacular Denham's Bustards, and, in a deep gorge, saw a few Slender-billed Starlings.

Leaving the lovely Chelinda Lodge behind us, we retraced our steps through Nyika National Park and made our way down to Vwaza Game Reserve, where we arrived in time to eat our packed breakfast before heading in to the miombo woodland. We soon started adding new species such as Collared Flycatchers that called and flicked around in the canopy and our first localized Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Weavers. A fantastic male Pennant-winged Nightjar, which showed superbly was a real highlight of the morning, and after much searching, we found the other target, the scarce and localized Babbling Starling, just one of which gave some great views. Heading back to the gate we also found a pair of Bennett's Woodpeckers. With the job done, we made our way south, and at a brief lunch stop, had some excellent looks at some Grey-olive Greenbuls and a pair of Mocking Cliff Chats.

We arrived at the lovely Luwawa Forest Lodge in time for a brief exploration nearby. The gorgeous Chapin's Apalis showed brilliantly in the garden. Gorgeous Bertram's Weavers showed well at the marsh, and other species included , African Marsh Harrier, Copper Sunbird, Thick-billed Weaver, and Holub's Golden Weaver, though sadly the calling African Rails just a few metres away remained hidden in deep cover.

The following morning we were back out around the lodge. The rails remained well concealed, but we did see a Black Sparrowhawk pass over, watched a pair of Olive Woodpeckers, and saw a Fan-tailed Grassbird displaying. We then embarked upon a bit of a longer than anticipated walk in order to see Trilling Cisticola and Moustached Grass Warbler!! After breakfast we headed to Chimaliro Forest, another patch of miombo forest which did its best to conceal its birds. We worked hard, gradually adding a few new species such as Coqui Francolin, Common Scimitarbill, Bearded Woodpecker and Lesser Honeyguide, but we had to go into overtime before a feisty little Pearl-spotted Owlet lured in the Miombo Tit that we'd been striving for much of the tour to see! Success finally, and as we ate our lunch, we also enjoyed some more views of Whyte's Barbet, a speciality that had been fairly elusive for us!

We then headed south again and stopped at a couple of wetlands. A brief look at the first, Kasungu Dam, yielded Red-billed Teal, Southern Pochard, and our first excellent Lesser Jacana. A little further south we stopped along the Rusa Floodplain, which we viewed from various spots. Here we added Kittlitz's, Three-banded and Blacksmith Plovers, a fine Greater Painted-snipe, more cracking Lesser Jacanas, and a colourful Rosy-breasted Longclaw. It was beer o'clock by the time we arrived at our lodge in Lilongwe.

On our final morning, we just had time to make a pre-breakfast excursion in the Lilongwe area. At our first stop, a small dambo that was being rapidly cultivated, we were delighted to find several small flocks of tiny Locust Finches, some of which even showed on the ground (despite the fact

they could vanish in grass about 3cm high!!). Here there were also good numbers of Orange-breasted Waxbills as well as Croaking Cisticolas and a single Black Coucal in non-breeding plumage. With quick success we had time for one final stop at Lilongwe Wildlife Sanctuary. Here, by the river, we first found a smart African Black Duck, and then a fine pair of White-backed Night Herons roosting in bushes just a few metres away, a fitting finale to the tour!

We made our way back for breakfast and packing before heading out to Lilongwe Airport for our flights home. It had been an action-packed tour that seemed to flash by in no time. We had been excellently looked after and driven around by our excellent man on the spot Abasi, stayed in some wonderful places, and enjoyed many of Malawi's avian treasures together. It really had been an excellent journey around the 'warm heart' of Africa, that certainly left us with a warm feeling about this little gem of a country.

BIRD OF THE TOUR

- 1ST= YELLOW-THROATED APALIS**
- 1ST= PENNANT-WINGED NIGHTJAR**
- 3rd BUFF-SPOTTED FLUFFTAIL**
- 4th Babbling Starling**
- 5th Scarlet-tufted Sunbird**
- 6th Boulder Chat**

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).

The species names and taxonomy used in the bird list follows Gill, F., Donsker, D., & Rasmussen, P. (Eds). **2023. IOC World Bird List (v13.2)** (this was the current version when the checklist for the tour report was created).

Where the subspecies seen is/are known, these are often given in parentheses at the end of the species comment.

BIRDS

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata* First seen along the river in Liwonde National Park.

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis* First seen along the river in Liwonde National Park [nominate].

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* A few flocks seen along the river in Liwonde National Park.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* First seen along the river in Liwonde National Park.

African Black Duck *Anas sparsa* One seen well at Lilongwe Wildlife Sanctuary [*leucostigma*].

Yellow-billed Duck *Anas undulata* A few seen, with biggest numbers at Kasungu Dam [nominate].

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha* Good numbers seen at Kasungu Dam.

Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophthalma* Several seen well at Kasungu Dam [*brunnea*].

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* First seen along the river in Liwonde National Park [*mitratus*].

Coqui Francolin *Campocolinus coqui* Good views of a singing male at Chimaliro Forest [nominate].

Red-winged Francolin ♦ *Scleroptila levaillantii* Excellent views of several in Nyika National Park [*crawshayi*].

Hildebrandt's Spurfowl (H Francolin) *Pternistis hildebrandti* One flushed and seen briefly at Dzalanyama Forest. Also seen in flight at the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife [*johnstoni*].

Fiery-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus pectoralis* A couple seen on the track above Huntingdon House. Also seen well near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [*crepusculans*].

Montane Nightjar ♦ (Rwenzori/Usambara N) *Caprimulgus poliocephalus* Many seen well around Chelinda Lodge in Nyika National Park [*guttifer*].

Square-tailed Nightjar (Mozambique N, Gabon N) *Caprimulgus fossii* Seen well near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [*welwitschii*].

Pennant-winged Nightjar *Caprimulgus vexillarius* Great views of a male, perched and in flight, near the Kawiyo Gate in Vwaza Game Reserve.

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*myochrous*].

Common Swift *Apus apus* A few flocks seen.

Little Swift *Apus affinis* Common [*aerobates*].

Grey Go-away-bird (G Lourie) *Crinifer concolor* First seen near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [nominate].

Purple-crested Turaco (P-c Lourie) *Gallirex porphyreolophus* First seen near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [*chlorochlamys*].

Livingstone's Turaco ♦ *Tauraco livingstonii* First seen, very well, around Huntingdon House on the Thyolo Mountain [nominated].

Schalow's Turaco ♦ *Tauraco schalowi* First seen in Dzalanyama Forest [*marungensis*].

Denham's Bustard *Neotis denhami* Great views of several birds in the plateau grasslands in Nyika National Park [*jacksoni*].

Burchell's Coucal ♦ *Centropus burchellii* Fairly common, first seen on the way down from the Thyolo Mountain.

Black Coucal *Centropus grillii* One seen well (non-breeding plumage) at the Airport Dambo, Lilongwe.

Green Malkoha *Ceuthmochares australis* Great views of a pair across the river from Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park.

Levaillant's Cuckoo (Striped Crested C) *Clamator levaillantii* One seen at Dzalanyama Forest.

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* Many heard and one seen well across the river from Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park.

African Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus* A male seen well at Dzalanyama Forest.

Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest.

African Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis* Excellent views of one at Dzalanyama Forest.

Rock Dove (Feral) *Columba livia* 'feral'

African Olive Pigeon (Rameron P) *Columba arquatrix* Great views by the Sunbird Hotel on the Zomba Plateau. Many others seen well.

Lemon Dove (Cinnamon D) *Columba larvata* Excellent views of a perched bird at the Thyolo Mountain [nominated].

Dusky Turtle Dove (Pink-breasted T D) *Streptopelia lugens* A few seen on the high plateau in Nyika National Park.

Mourning Collared Dove (African M D) *Streptopelia decipiens* Leader only.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*

Ring-necked Dove (Cape Turtle D) *Streptopelia capicola* [*tropica*].

Laughing Dove (Palm D) *Spilopelia senegalensis* Non leader.

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos* First seen on the drive into Dzalanyama Forest.

Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur afer* First seen well on the scrubby lower slopes of the Zomba Plateau.

Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistria* First seen well on the drive up to the Sunbird Hotel on the Zomba Plateau.

African Green Pigeon *Treron calvus* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*salvadorii*].

Buff-spotted Flufftail ♦ ***Sarothrura elegans*** Brilliant views of a male at the Thyolo Mountain. Crossed a small path several times [nominate]!

Red-chested Flufftail *Sarothrura rufa* One fluttered across the track at the dambo at Dzalanyama Forest [nominate].

African Rail *Rallus caerulescens* Heard only. Several heard, a couple at close range, near to Luwawa Forest Lodge.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata*

Black Crake *Zapornia flavirostra* Plenty seen along the river in Liwonde National Park.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* [*capensis*].

Water Thick-knee *Burhinus vermiculatus* A few seen along the river in Liwonde National Park [nominate].

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* One along the river in Liwonde National Park.

Long-toed Lapwing *Vanellus crassirostris* Several seen along the river in Liwonde National Park [*leucopterus*].

Blacksmith Lapwing *Vanellus armatus* A few seen on the Rusa Floodplain.

Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus* First seen along the river in Liwonde National Park.

African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus* First seen at the edge of Dzalanyama Forest [*lateralis*].

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius* A few seen on the Rusa Floodplain.

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris* One seen on the Rusa Floodplain [nominate].

Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* Scope views of one on the Rusa Floodplain.

Lesser Jacana *Microparra capensis* Great views of one at Kasungu Dam, and then several showed brilliantly on the Rusa Floodplain.

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus* First seen along the river in Liwonde National Park.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* Great views along the river in Liwonde National Park [fuelleborni].

African Skimmer *Rynchops flavirostris* A fabulous flock seen well along the river in Liwonde National Park.

Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus* A few seen on Lake Malawi from Chintheche Lodge [pooiocephalus].

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* Several seen along the river in Liwonde National Park [nominate].

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida* A few seen along the river in Liwonde National Park.

African Openbill *Anastomus lamelligerus* Especially common along the river in Liwonde National Park [nominate].

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumenifer* One seen near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park.

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis* Good numbers seen along the river in Liwonde National Park.

Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis* A pair seen along the river in Liwonde National Park.

African Darter *Anhinga rufa* Several along the river in Liwonde National Park [nominate].

Reed Cormorant *Microcarbo africanus* Several along the river in Liwonde National Park [nominate].

White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax lucidus* Common along the river in Liwonde National Park.

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* First seen along the river in Liwonde National Park.

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash* Small numbers along the river in Liwonde National Park [nominate].

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Most common along the river in Liwonde National Park.

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba* A few seen along the river in Liwonde National Park.

White-backed Night Heron ♦ *Gorsachius leuconotus* Good views of a pair roosting in thick riverside vegetation at Lilongwe Wildlife Sanctuary.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* A few seen along the river in Liwonde National Park [nominate].

Striated Heron *Butorides striata* A few seen along the river in Liwonde National Park [atricapilla].

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* Mostly seen along the river in Liwonde National Park.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* [nominate].

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest. Fairly common and widespread.

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* One seen well along the river in Liwonde National Park.

Great Egret (Western G E) *Ardea alba* [*melanorhynchos*].

Intermediate Egret (Yellow-billed E) *Ardea [intermedia] brachyrhyncha* Nice comparative views along the river in Liwonde National Park.

Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca* A few seen well, doing their thing, along the river in Liwonde National Park.

Little Egret (Western L E) *Egretta [garzetta] garzetta*

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest. Plenty of others [nominate].

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* One seen along the river in Liwonde National Park.

Osprey (Western O) *Pandion [haliaetus] haliaetus* A few seen along the river in Liwonde National Park.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* A few, the first in Nyika National Park [nominate].

African Harrier-Hawk (A Gymnogene) *Polyboroides typus*

Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis* Just one seen near to the Zomba Plateau.

White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* First seen along the river in Liwonde National Park. Also one with yellow wing tags in Nyika National Park.

Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus* One seen well on the journey to Huntingdon House.

Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus* One seen well at dusk by the river near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [*anderssoni*].

Crowned Eagle *Stephanoaetus coronatus* A few heard.

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus* An immature bird seen near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park.

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis* One seen on the drive down from the Zomba Plateau.

Wahlberg's Eagle *Hieraetus wahlbergi* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest.

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus* Just one roadside bird [*meridionalis*].

Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest.

African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro* First seen well at Dzalanyama Forest. A few others heard and seen.

Shikra *Accipiter badius* A few, the first in Dzalanyama Forest [*polyzonoides*].

Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk *Accipiter rufiventris* Good views of a couple of perched birds close to Chelinda Lodge in Nyika National Park [nominate].

Black Sparrowhawk *Accipiter melanoleucus* Just one seen near to Luwawa Forest Lodge [nominate].

African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus* A couple seen near to Luwawa Forest Lodge.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* A fine male seen well on the high plateau in Nyika National Park.

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius* [*parasitus*].

African Fish Eagle *Ichthyophaga vocifer* Many seen along the river in Liwonde National Park.

Common Buzzard (Steppe B) *Buteo [buteo] vulpinus* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest.

Augur Buzzard *Buteo augur* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [nominate].

Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum* One seen well at Chimaliro Forest [*licua*].

African Barred Owlet *Glaucidium capense* Brilliant views of a pair and a tame fledged juvenile in the grounds of Chintheche Lodge [*ngamiense*].

African Scops Owl *Otus senegalensis* Heard only [nominate].

Spotted Eagle-Owl *Bubo africanus* Several seen well close to Chelinda Lodge in Nyika National Park.

Pel's Fishing Owl ♦ *Scotopelia peli* Heard only, distantly, from Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park.

African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii* Great views of a pair at Dzalanyama Forest [nominate].

Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus* [*berlepschi*].

Bar-tailed Trogon *Apaloderma vittatum* Great views of a male near to Chelinda Lodge in Nyika National Park.

African Hoopoe *Upupa africana*

Green Wood Hoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus* Plenty, first seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*marwitzii*].

Common Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas* Just two seen, at Chimaliro Forest [*schalowii*].

Southern Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus leadbeateri* Brilliant views of a group of three near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park.

Southern Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus rufirostris* Plenty seen near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park.

Crowned Hornbill *Lophoceros alboterminatus* Plenty seen well.

African Grey Hornbill *Lophoceros nasutus* Several seen well near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [*epirhinus*].

Pale-billed Hornbill ♦ ***Lophoceros pallidirostris*** Great views of a group of 4 at Dzalanyama Forest [*neumanni*].

Trumpeter Hornbill *Bycanistes bucinator* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest.

Silvery-cheeked Hornbill *Bycanistes brevis* Great views of one at Mwalantunzi, near to Thyolo Mountain.

Racket-tailed Roller ♦ ***Coracias spatulatus*** Eventually, a mobile and vocal group of three seen well near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park.

Lilac-breasted Roller *Coracias caudatus* [nominate].

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus* [*suahelicus*].

Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*pallidiventris*].

Brown-hooded Kingfisher *Halcyon albiventris* First seen near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [*orientalis*].

Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti* First seen at the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife [nominate].

Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*cyanoleuca*].

African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ispidina picta* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*natalensis*].

Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus* Commonly seen along the river in Liwonde National Park [*galeritus*].

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima* A pair seen at the dam near to Chelinda Lodge in Nyika National Park [nominate].

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* [nominate].

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus* Leader only.

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus* [*meridionalis*].

Böhm's Bee-eater ♦ ***Merops boehmi*** Brilliant views of good numbers around Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park. Stunners!

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* Plenty over Dzalanyama Forest. Quite a common migrant for much of the tour.

White-eared Barbet *Stactolaema leucotis* Seen well around Huntingdon House on the Thyolo Mountain [nominate].

Whyte's Barbet ◊ *Stactolaema whytii* One scoped and seen pretty well, though a fair way off, above the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife [nominated]. Later, a few seen well at Chimaliro Forest, where three or four gave some good views [*angoniensis*].

Moustached Tinkerbird ◊ *Pogoniulus leucomystax* Good views in the forest patches in Nyika National Park.

Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus* First seen well by the Sunbird Hotel on the Zomba Plateau [nominated].

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*extoni*].

Miombo Pied Barbet ◊ *Tricholaema frontata* Great views of at least one of a pair at Dzalanyama Forest.

Black-collared Barbet *Lybius torquatus* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*zombae*].

Brown-breasted Barbet ◊ *Lybius melanopterus* Good scope views of a few in the riparian forest opposite Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park.

Crested Barbet *Trachyphonus vaillantii* A couple seen, the first near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [*suahelicus*].

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor* A few seen at Chimaliro Forest [*teitensis*].

Scaly-throated Honeyguide *Indicator variegatus* One seen very well at Dzalanyama Forest.

Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator* First seen well at Dzalanyama Forest.

Bennett's Woodpecker *Campethera bennettii* Great views of a pair near the Kawiyo Gate in Vwaza Game Reserve [nominated].

Speckle-throated Woodpecker ◊ *Campethera scriptoricauda* Several seen well near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park.

Golden-tailed Woodpecker *Campethera abingoni* Just a few seen, the first at the Machinga Forestry Reserve [*suahelica*].

Little Spotted Woodpecker *Campethera cailliautii* A few seen well at Dzalanyama Forest [*loveridgei*].

Bearded Woodpecker *Chloropicus namaquus* A pair seen well at Chimaliro Forest [nominated].

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens* A few, first seen by the Sunbird Hotel on the Zomba Plateau [*hartlaubii*].

Stierling's Woodpecker ◊ *Dendropicos stierlingi* At least four, including a couple of males, seen brilliantly at Dzalanyama Forest.

Olive Woodpecker *Dendropicos griseocephalus* A couple seen well near to Luwawa Forest Lodge [*ruwenzori*].

Dickinson's Kestrel *Falco dickinsoni* Great views of three different individuals near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park.

Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis* A female/juv flew over in Nyika National Park.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* [nominate].

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* One seen at Dzalanyama Forest [nominate].

Brown-necked Parrot *(Grey-headed P) Poicephalus [fuscicollis] suahelicus* Great views of a pair in flight at Dzalanyama Forest.

Meyer's Parrot *Poicephalus meyeri* Heard and seen briefly in flight near the Kawiyo Gate in Vwaza Game Reserve [matschiei].

Brown-headed Parrot *Poicephalus cryptoxanthus* A few seen near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [tanganyikae].

Lilian's Lovebird *Agapornis lilianae* Many seen near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park, with a few seen very well.

African Broadbill *Smithornis capensis* Great views of a couple of displaying birds at Vizara Forest.

Malawi Batis *Batis dimorpha* First seen well in Manyanjere Forest on the Zambian side in Nyika National Park. A few others seen well subsequently [sola].

Chinspot Batis *Batis molitor* Many, the first seen at Dzalanyama Forest [palliditergum].

Pale Batis *Batis soror* Good views of a pair at the Machinga Forestry Reserve.

Black-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira peltata* Only seen well at Vizara Forest [mentalis].

Grey-headed Bushshrike *Malaconotus blanchoti* One seen well at the Machinga Forestry Reserve [hypopyrrhus].

Black-fronted Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus nigrifrons* A couple seen well in Manyanjere Forest on the Zambian side in Nyika National Park. One bird had whitish underparts [nominate].

Orange-breasted Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus* Seen very well near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park. Others heard [similis].

Marsh Tchagra (Anchieta's T) *Bocagia [minuta] anchietae* Non leader, seen at Luwawa Forest Lodge.

Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis* A few, the first seen at Dzalanyama Forest [minor].

Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus* Mostly heard but one or two seen, the first at the Machinga Forestry Reserve [armenus].

Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla* Common, first seen at Dzalanyama Forest [hamatus].

Fülleborn's Boubou *Laniarius fuelleborni* Great views of one near Chelinda Lodge in Nyika National Park [nominate].

Tropical Boubou *Laniarius major* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*mossambicus*].

Brubru *Nilaus afer* A few, first seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*nigritemporalis*].

White-crested Helmetshrike *Prionops plumatus* Quite a few seen, the first at Dzalanyama Forest [*poliocephalus*].

Retz's Helmetshrike *Prionops retzii* A few flocks seen well, the first at the Machinga Forestry Reserve [*tricolor*].

White-breasted Cuckooshrike *Cebalepyris pectoralis* A few seen well at Dzalanyama Forest and other miombo sites.

Black Cuckooshrike *Campephaga flava* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest, with great views of a male with bright yellow shoulders.

Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus larvatus* [*angolensis*].

African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus* Fairly common in miombo, first seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*notatus*].

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* A couple seen at Chimaliro Forest.

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* Common, first seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*fugax*].

Square-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus ludwigii* A few seen around Huntingdon House on the Thyolo Mountain [*tephrogaster*].

Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher *Trochocercus cyanomelas* Heard only [*megalolophus*].

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis* Several, first seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*plumbeiceps*].

Northern Fiscal *Lanius humeralis* Plenty, first seen on the way to Dzalanyama Forest [nominate].

Souza's Shrike ♦ *Lanius souzae* Great views of a male at Dzalanyama Forest [*tacitus*].

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* Common and widespread.

White-necked Raven *Corvus albicollis* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest. Common in Nyika National Park.

White-tailed Blue Flycatcher *Elminia albicauda* A few, the first seen at Dzalanyama Forest.

White-tailed Crested Flycatcher *Elminia albonotata* Great views in the forest patches in Nyika National Park [nominate].

White-winged Black Tit *Melaniparus leucomelas* A couple, assumed to be this species, near the Kawiyo Gate in Vwaza Game Reserve. However, we did not study them, and they may have been Southern Black Tits. This area (and altitude) seems to be right where the two species may meet [*insignis*].

Southern Black Tit *Melaniparus niger* A few seen near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [*ravidus*].

Rufous-bellied Tit ♦ ***Melaniparus rufiventris*** Excellent views of three at a stop on the drive into Dzalanyama Forest. A few others subsequently [*masukuensis*].

Cinnamon-breasted Tit ♦ ***Melaniparus pallidiventris*** Great views of a pair at the Machinga Forestry Reserve [nominate].

Miombo Tit ♦ ***Melaniparus griseiventris*** One seen briefly at Dzalanyama Forest, then, after much searching, great views of one mobbing a Pearl Spotted Owlet at Chimaliro Forest.

Rufous-naped Lark ♦ (**Nyika R-n L**) ***Mirafra [africana] nyikae*** Good views of just one bird on the way to Vhipiri Rocks on the high plateau in Nyika National Park. A potential split apparently.

Sombre Greenbul *Andropadus importunus* Heard only [*hypoxanthus*].

Yellow-bellied Greenbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris* A few seen near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [*occidentalis*].

Black-browed Greenbul ♦ ***Arizelocichla fusciceps*** Several seen in Nyika National Park where first seen well in Manyanjere Forest on the Zambian side.

Olive-headed Greenbul ♦ ***Arizelocichla olivaceiceps*** Great views of a couple at the Thyolo Mountain. Quite bright and piercing yellow eyes!

Little Greenbul *Eurillas virens* Common by voice. First seen at the Thyolo Mountain.

Terrestrial Brownbul *Phyllastrephus terrestris* Several seen well near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [*rhodesiae*].

Grey-olive Greenbul *Phyllastrephus cerviniventris* Heard, and seen briefly, at Dzalanyama Forest. Seen very well at our lunch stop on the drive down from Vwaza Game Reserve [nominate].

Placid Greenbul *Phyllastrephus placidus* Good views of a pair by the Sunbird Hotel on the Zomba Plateau.

Yellow-streaked Greenbul *Phyllastrephus flavostriatus* Several seen well at the Thyolo Mountain [*vincenti*].

Sharpe's Greenbul ♦ ***Phyllastrephus alfredi*** Several seen in Nyika National Park where first seen well in Manyanjere Forest on the Zambian side.

Dark-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus tricolor* [*layardi*].

Black Saw-wing (Eastern S-w) *Psalidoprocne [pristoptera] orientalis*

White-headed Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne albiceps* A few seen, the first at Manyanjere Forest on the Zambian side in Nyika National Park [nominate].

Banded Martin *Neophedina cincta* A few seen on the high plateau in Nyika National Park.

Grey-rumped Swallow *Pseudhirundo griseopyga* A few seen on the high plateau in Nyika National Park [nominate].

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* A few seen above the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife [nominate].

Blue Swallow ♦ ***Hirundo atrocaerulea*** Excellent views of several on the high plateau in Nyika National Park, especially around Chelinda Lodge. Amazing tails!

Pearl-breasted Swallow ♦ ***Hirundo dimidiata*** Seen well at the edge of Dzalanyama Forest [marwitzi].

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* Common in Liwonde NP [nominate].

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* A common migrant [nominate].

Angola Swallow *Hirundo angolensis* A few seen on the high plateau in Nyika National Park.

Western House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Mosque Swallow *Cecropis senegalensis* Leader only.

Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica* Fairly common and widespread [unitatis].

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* A few seen on the high plateau in Nyika National Park [emini].

Moustached Grass Warbler *Melocichla mentalis* Seen well near to Luwawa Forest Lodge. Others heard [orientalis].

Red-capped Crombec ♦ ***Sylvietta ruficapilla*** Great views of several at Dzalanyama Forest [chubbi].

Livingstone's Flycatcher ♦ ***Erythrocercus livingstonei*** A pair seen well near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [thompsoni].

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* Many seen [yakutensis].

Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris* Best views were in the marsh near to Luwawa Forest Lodge [leptorhynchus].

African Yellow Warbler *Iduna natalensis* Best views were in the marsh near to Luwawa Forest Lodge [nominate].

Mountain Yellow Warbler *Iduna similis* Great views of a singing bird near to Chelinda Lodge in Nyika National Park.

Fan-tailed Grassbird *Catriscus brevirostris* Excellent views of a few in the marsh and dambos near to Luwawa Forest Lodge [nominate].

Evergreen Forest Warbler *Bradypterus lopezi* Great views of a pair by the Sunbird Hotel on the Zomba Plateau [granti].

Cinnamon Bracken Warbler *Bradypterus cinnamomeus* Excellent views of singing birds near to Chelinda Lodge in Nyika National Park [*nyassae*].

Little Rush Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala* Several heard and a couple glimpsed, including one in the marsh near to Luwawa Forest Lodge [*tongensis*].

Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops* A few heard, and one seen in the garden at Chintheche Lodge [*nyasa*].

Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans* A few seen well, the first on the Zomba Plateau [*muenzneri*].

Trilling Cisticola *Cisticola woosnami* Good views in the miombo, a short 10 minute walk from Luwawa Forest Lodge [*lufira*]!!

Black-lored Cisticola ♦ ***Cisticola nigriloris*** Great views of several in Nyika National Park. Great song!

Lazy Cisticola *Cisticola aberrans* A pair seen at the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife [*lurio*].

Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana* A few seen, the first across the river from Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [*procerus*].

Churring Cisticola ♦ ***Cisticola njombe*** Great views of several in Nyika National Park [*mariae*].

Wailing Cisticola ♦ ***Cisticola lais*** Several seen well in Nyika National Park [*semifasciatus*].

Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis* A couple seen well at the Airport Dambo, Lilongwe [nominated].

Short-winged Cisticola *Cisticola brachypterus* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*isabellinus*].

Neddicky Cisticola *Cisticola fulvicapilla* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*muelleri*].

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* Several seen, especially on the Rusa Floodplain [*terrestris*].

Wing-snapping Cisticola *Cisticola ayresii* A few seen on the high plateau in Nyika National Park [nominated].

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava* [*mutatrix*].

Red-winged Prinia *Prinia erythroptera* Seen well at Dzalanyama Forest [*rhodoptera*].

Bar-throated Apalis *Apalis thoracica* A few seen well in the forest patches in Nyika National Park [*murina*].

Yellow-throated Apalis ♦ ***Apalis flavigularis*** Brilliant views of one by the Sunbird Hotel on the Zomba Plateau. Malawi's only endemic and a real cracker!

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flava* A few seen, the first near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [*neglecta*].

White-winged Apalis ♦ ***Apalis chariessa*** Brilliant views of a pair just below Huntingdon House on the Thyolo Mountain. Superb birds [*macphersoni*].

Black-headed Apalis *Apalis melanocephala* Great views of a singing bird at the Thyolo Mountain [fuliginosa].

Chapin's Apalis ♦ *Apalis chapini* A pair seen reasonably in a forest patch in Nyika National Park, and then brilliant views of a pair at Luwawa Forest Lodge [strausae].

Brown-headed Apalis ♦ *Apalis alticola* A few seen well at the first forest patch we stopped at in Nyika National Park [nominate].

Green-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brachyura* First seen around Huntingdon House on the Thyolo Mountain [bororensis].

Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brevicaudata* Several seen well [sharpei].

Stierling's Wren-Warbler ♦ *Calamonastes stierlingi* Excellent views of one at a stop on the drive into Dzalanyama Forest [irwini].

Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis* A pair seen at the edge of Dzalanyama Forest [helenorae].

Green-capped Eremomela *Eremomela scotops* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [pulchra].

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* Leader only.

Brown Parisoma ♦ *Curruca lugens* One seen at the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife. Also seen in Nyika National Park [jacksoni].

Southern Yellow White-eye *Zosterops anderssoni* Common and widespread [stierlingi].

Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardineii* Several seen, the first low down on the Zomba Plateau [kirkii].

Yellow-bellied Hyliota *Hyliota flavigaster* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [barbozae].

Southern Hyliota *Hyliota australis* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [inornata].

African Spotted Creeper *Salpornis salvadori* Great views at Dzalanyama Forest. Also at Chimaliro Forest [nominate].

Greater Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chalybaeus* First seen near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [sycobius].

Miombo Blue-eared Starling ♦ *Lamprotornis elisabeth* First seen at the Machinga Forestry Reserve.

Meves's Starling ♦ *Lamprotornis mevesii* Common near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [nominate].

Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* Common and widespread [verreauxi].

Red-winged Starling *Onychognathus morio* A pair seen at the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife [nominate].

Slender-billed Starling *Onychognathus tenuirostris* A pair or two seen in flight and perched briefly in Nyika National Park. Difficult to identify with certainty with my views [*theresae*].

Waller's Starling *Onychognathus walleri* Small numbers seen well in Nyika National Park [nominated].

Babbling Starling ♦ ***Neocichla gutturalis*** After a couple of hours searching, brilliant views of one, collecting food, near the Kawiyo Gate in Vwaza Game Reserve [*angusta*].

Red-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhynchus* A few seen well near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park.

Boulder Chat ♦ ***Pinarornis plumosus*** Great views of one, after a couple of attempts, at Dzalanyama Forest.

Orange Ground Thrush ♦ ***Geokichla gurneyi*** A singing male seen well in the mist at the Thyolo Mountain [*disruptans*].

Abyssinian Thrush *Turdus abyssinicus* Heard only [*nyikae*].

Kurrichane Thrush *Turdus libonyana* Common. First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*tropicalis*].

Bearded Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas quadrivirgata* Good views of a singing bird at Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [nominated].

Miombo Scrub Robin ♦ ***Cercotrichas barbata*** First seen at Dzalanyama Forest. A few others seen and heard.

White-browed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas leucophrys* First seen around Huntingdon House on the Thyolo Mountain. A few others later in the trip [*zambesiana*].

Grey Tit-Flycatcher *Fraseria plumbea* One seen well at a stop on the drive into Dzalanyama Forest.

Ashy Flycatcher *Fraseria caerulecens* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest.

White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher *Melaenornis fischeri* A few seen, in Nyika National Park and at Luwawa Forest Lodge [*nyikensis*].

Southern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis pammelaina*

Böhm's Flycatcher ♦ ***Bradornis boehmi*** Brilliant views of one at Dzalanyama Forest. Also seen at Chimaliro Forest.

African Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*subadusta*].

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* A common migrant.

White-starred Robin *Pogonocichla stellata* First seen by the Sunbird Hotel on the Zomba Plateau. A few others seen and heard [*orientalis*].

White-chested Alethe ♦ ***Chamaetylas fuelleborni*** Heard in Manyanjere Forest on the Zambian side in Nyika National Park, and glimpsed in another forest patch.

Thyolo Alethe ◊ *Chamaetylas choloensis* Brilliant views of a pair at the Thyolo Mountain [nominate].

White-browed Robin-Chat *Cossypha heuglini* A common and vocal species [nominate].

Red-capped Robin-Chat *Cossypha natalensis* Heard only.

Collared Palm Thrush *Cichladusa arquata* Brilliant views of several around Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park.

Cape Robin-Chat *Dessonornis caffer* First seen at the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife [iolaemus].

Olive-flanked Ground Robin ◊ (**Rusty-flanked G R**) *Dessonornis [anomalus] macclounii* Brilliant views of a couple in Manyanjere Forest on the Zambian side in Nyika National Park.

East Coast Akalat ◊ *Sheppardia gunningi* One heard and seen briefly, naked eye, at Vizara Forest [bensoni].

Sharpe's Akalat ◊ *Sheppardia sharpei* Good views of a singing bird in Manyanjere Forest on the Zambian side in Nyika National Park [nominate].

Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* Several seen, and heard, near the Kawiyo Gate in Vwaza Game Reserve and at Chimaliro Forest.

Miombo Rock Thrush ◊ *Monticola angolensis* Brilliant views of a male and a pair at Dzalanyama Forest [hylophilus].

African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus* Abundant in Nyika National Park [stonei].

Mocking Cliff Chat *Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris* A pair seen very well at our lunch stop on the drive down from Vwaza Game Reserve [subrufipennis].

Annot's Chat *Myrmecocichla arnotti* A few seen very well near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [nominate].

Familiar Chat *Oenanthe familiaris* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [falkensteini].

Anchieta's Sunbird ◊ *Anthreptes anchietae* Great views of a male at Dzalanyama Forest.

Western Violet-backed Sunbird *Anthreptes longuemarei* A female seen at Dzalanyama Forest. Also seen at Chimaliro Forest [angolensis].

Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris* First seen around Huntingdon House on the Thyolo Mountain [zambesiana].

Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra olivacea* Two forms seen. The form *alfredi* of the 'Eastern group' of subspecies was first seen at the Thyolo Mountain, whilst the form *ragazzii* of the 'Western group' of subspecies was seen at Nyika National Park.

Amethyst Sunbird *Chalcomitra amethystina* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [kirki].

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis* [gutturalis].

Bronzy Sunbird *Nectarinia kilimensis* Seen well low down in Nyika National Park [*arturi*].

Scarlet-tufted Sunbird ♦ ***Nectarinia johnstoni*** Brilliant views of at least a couple of pairs at Vhipiri Rocks on the high plateau in Nyika National Park. Even the tufts were visible at times [*nyikensis*].

Eastern Miombo Sunbird ♦ ***Cinnyris manoensis*** A male seen very well at the edge of Dzalanyama Forest, and a pair seen well at the Machinga Forestry Reserve, where they definitely appeared long-billed [nominate]!

Whyte's Double-collared Sunbird ♦ ***Cinnyris whytei*** A male seen in the first forest patch on the way into Nyika National Park, and others seen well around Chelinda Lodge [nominate].

Forest Double-collared Sunbird ♦ ***Cinnyris fuelleborni*** A pair seen well by the Sunbird Hotel on the Zomba Plateau. Also seen in Nyika National Park [*bensoni*].

Shelley's Sunbird ♦ ***Cinnyris shelleyi*** Brilliant views of a pair at the edge of Dzalanyama Forest.

Purple-banded Sunbird ***Cinnyris bifasciatus*** A few seen in the garden at Chintheche Lodge [*microrhynchus*].

Variable Sunbird ***Cinnyris venustus*** First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*falkensteini*].

Copper Sunbird ***Cinnyris cupreus*** Males seen twice near to Luwawa Forest Lodge [*chalceus*].

Yellow-throated Bush Sparrow ***Gymnoris superciliaris*** First seen at Dzalanyama Forest. Plenty of others.

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow ***Passer griseus*** Only one noted [*ugandae*].

Southern Grey-headed Sparrow ***Passer diffusus*** Big flocks seen near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [*stygiiceps*].

House Sparrow ***Passer domesticus***

White-browed Sparrow-Weaver ***Plocepasser mahali*** Common near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [*pectoralis*].

Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Weaver ♦ ***Plocepasser rufoscapulatus*** Great views of at least three or four near the Kawiyo Gate in Vwaza Game Reserve. Most had pink bills, but one had a black bill, presumably a breeding bird?

Thick-billed Weaver ***Amblyospiza albifrons*** A few seen well in the marsh near to Luwawa Forest Lodge [nominate].

Baglafaecht Weaver ***Ploceus baglafaecht*** Several seen well in Nyika National Park [*nyikae*].

Bertram's Weaver ♦ ***Ploceus bertrandi*** A family group seen well on the scrubby lower slopes of the Zomba Plateau, and then great views of a family party in the marsh near to Luwawa Forest Lodge. Smart birds!

Spectacled Weaver ***Ploceus ocularis*** Many heard and several seen well, the first by the Sunbird Hotel on the Zomba Plateau [*suahelicus*].

Eastern Golden Weaver *Ploceus subaureus* Seen well in the garden at Chintheche Lodge [*aureoflavus*].

Holub's Golden Weaver *Ploceus xanthops* Particularly obvious in the marsh near to Luwawa Forest Lodge.

Southern Brown-throated Weaver ♦ ***Ploceus xanthopterus*** Several seen well around Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [nominate].

Southern Masked Weaver *Ploceus velatus*

Village Weaver (Layard's) *Ploceus cucullatus* [*nigriceps*].

Dark-backed Weaver *Ploceus bicolor* First seen around Huntingdon House on the Thyolo Mountain [*stictifrons*].

Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps* Including some good males near to Mvuu, in Liwonde National Park [nominate].

Black-winged Red Bishop *Euplectes hordeaceus* Leader only.

Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix* Only noted along the river in Liwonde National Park.

Yellow Bishop *Euplectes capensis* A few seen near to Luwawa Forest Lodge [*crassirostris*].

Yellow-mantled Widowbird *Euplectes [macroura] macroura* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest.

Montane Widowbird ♦ ***Euplectes psammacromius*** Brilliant views of some stunning males around Chelinda Lodge in Nyika National Park.

Red-collared Widowbird *Euplectes ardens* Many seen in non-breeding plumage, though a few getting their long tails!

Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullata* [*scutata*].

Magpie Mannikin *Spermestes fringilloides* A pair seen well by the entrance to Chintheche Lodge.

Black-and-white Mannikin (Red-backed M) *Spermestes [bicolor] nigriceps* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest.

Yellow-bellied Waxbill *Coccygia quartinia* First seen on the scrubby lower slopes of the Zomba Plateau [*stuartirwini*].

Green Twinspot *Mandingoa nitidula* Several seen feeding in the canopy (a bit misty!) at the Thyolo Mountain [nominate].

Grey Waxbill *Glaucostriola perreini* Seen by some near the entrance to Nyika National Park.

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild* [*cavendishi*].

Locust Finch ♦ ***Paludipasser locustella*** Great views of up to 20 at the Airport Dambo, Lilongwe, including good views of males and females on the ground. Tiny [nominate]!!

Orange-breasted Waxbill *Amandava subflava* First seen on the Rusa Floodplain, then 100s seen well at the Airport Dambo, Lilongwe [*clarkei*].

Blue Waxbill *Uraeginthus angolensis* Common and widespread [*niassensis*].

Lesser Seedcracker ♦ ***Pyrenestes minor*** Brilliant views of a fine male at Dzalanyama Forest.

Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba* First seen well on the drive into Dzalanyama Forest [nominated].

Orange-winged Pytilia ♦ ***Pytilia afra*** Great views of a pair at the Machinga Forestry Reserve.

Red-throated Twinspot ♦ ***Hypargos niveoguttatus*** Great views of one by the lodge at Dzalanyama Forest, and a pair the following day. Also seen very well around Huntingdon House on the Thyolo Mountain and a few others.

Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala* First seen around Huntingdon House on the Thyolo Mountain [*rendalli*].

African Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubricata* A few seen well in Nyika National Park [*haematocephala*].

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura* First seen around Huntingdon House on the Thyolo Mountain. Plenty near to Luwawa Forest Lodge.

Broad-tailed Paradise Whydah *Vidua obtusa* A female type seen at Dzalanyama Forest. Called by Abasi, but probably not easily identifiable with certainty.

Mountain Wagtail *Motacilla clara* One seen well at Dzalanyama Forest [*torrentium*].

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp* Fairly common and widespread [*vidua*].

Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus* Seen well near to Luwawa Forest Lodge, on the Rusa Floodplain and at the Airport Dambo, Lilongwe [*vulturinus*].

Rosy-throated Longclaw *Macronyx ameliae* One seen well on the Rusa Floodplain [*altanus*].

African Pipit (Jackson's P) *Anthus [cinnamomeus] winterbottomi* Several 'Jackson's Pipits' seen well in Nyika National Park.

African Pipit *Anthus cinnamomeus* [*lichenya*].

Wood Pipit ♦ ***Anthus nyassae*** Leader only, one seen at Dzalanyama Forest [nominated].

Buffy Pipit *Anthus vaalensis* A pair seen on the Rusa Floodplain [*chobiensis*].

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* A few noted.

Striped Pipit ♦ ***Anthus lineiventris*** Great views of a couple at Dzalanyama Forest.

Southern Citril ♦ ***Crithagra hyposticta*** Great views of three at Mwalantunzi, near to the Thyolo Mountain. Many elsewhere [nominated].

Yellow-fronted Canary *Crithagra mozambica* Common and widespread [nominated].

Brimstone Canary *Crithagra sulphurata* A few, first seen at the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife [*sharpii*].

Reichard's Seedeater ♦ ***Crithagra reichardi*** A few seen well, feeding furtively at Dzalanyama Forest.

Black-eared Seedeater ♦ ***Crithagra mennelli*** Several seen well in Dzalanyama Forest, where first seen on the drive in.

Yellow-browed Seedeater ♦ ***Crithagra whytii*** Great views of a few around Chelinda Lodge in Nyika National Park.

Yellow-crowned Canary *Serinus flavivertex* A few seen well [*sassii*].

Cinnamon-breasted Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi* A couple seen at the roadside at the Machinga Forestry Reserve [nominate].

Cape Bunting ♦ **(Vincent's B) *Emberiza [capensis] vincenti*** Great views above the Malawi College of Forestry and Wildlife.

Golden-breasted Bunting *Emberiza flaviventris* First seen at Dzalanyama Forest [*kalaharica*].

Cabanis's Bunting *Emberiza cabanisi* First seen well at Dzalanyama Forest [*orientalis*].

MAMMALS

Southern Tree Hyrax *Dendrohyrax arboreus* A couple seen well in Nyika National Park.

African Savanna Elephant *Loxodonta africana* Plenty seen well in Liwonde National Park.

Four-toed Sengi *Petrodromus tetradactylus* One seen well in Liwonde National Park.

Lion *Panthera leo* Several seen well in Liwonde National Park.

Rusty-spotted Genet (Large-spotted G) *Genetta maculata* A few seen well in Liwonde National Park.

Banded Mongoose *Mungos mungo* A few seen well in Liwonde National Park.

Side-striped Jackal *Lupulella adustus* Seen well in Liwonde and Nyika National Parks.

Plains Zebra *Equus quagga* Seen well in Liwonde and Nyika National Parks.

Common Warthog *Phacochoerus africanus* Plenty seen well in Liwonde National Park.

Impala *Aepyceros melampus* Plenty seen well in Liwonde National Park.

Harvey's Duiker *Cephalophus harveyi* A couple seen well in Nyika National Park.

Roan Antelope (Roan) *Hippotragus equinus* Plenty seen well in Nyika National Park.

Sable Antelope (Southern S A) *Hippotragus niger* One herd seen well in Liwonde National Park.

Waterbuck (Ellipsen W) *Kobus ellipsiprymnus* Plenty seen well in Liwonde National Park.

Klipspringer (Zambian K) *Oreotragus oreotragus* A few on a rocky outcrop in Nyika National Park.

Southern Reedbuck (Zambian R) *Redunca arundinum* Plenty seen well in Liwonde National Park.

Bush Duiker (Common D) *Sylvicapra grimmia* One seen in Nyika National Park.

Cape Buffalo (Cape B) *Syncerus caffer* A few seen well in Liwonde National Park.

Common Eland *Tragelaphus oryx* Several seen in Nyika National Park.

Northern Bushbuck (Cape B) *Tragelaphus [scriptus] sylvaticus* Plenty seen well in Liwonde National Park.

Greater Kudu (Zambezi K) *Tragelaphus strepsiceros* Plenty seen well in Liwonde National Park.

Common Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* Plenty seen well in Liwonde National Park, including great sunset scenes!

Angolan Soft-furred Fruit Bat (A Fruit Bat) *Lissonycteris angolensis* Great views at Huntingdon House.

Thick-tailed Greater Galago (T-t Bushbaby) *Otolemur crassicaudatus* One seen in Liwonde National Park.

Blue Monkey (Sykes's M, White-throated M) *Cercopithecus mitis* Plenty seen well.

Vervet Monkey (V Monkey) *Chlorocebus pygerythrus* Plenty seen well.

Yellow Baboon *Papio cynocephalus* Plenty seen well.

African Savanna Hare *Lepus victoriae* Plenty seen well.

Cape Porcupine (South African P) *Hystrix africaeaustralis* Seen well in Liwonde National Park.

Mutable Sun Squirrel *Heliosciurus mutabilis*

Smith's Bush Squirrel (South African Tree Squirrel) *Paraxerus cepapi*

Black-and-red Bush Squirrel (Tanganyika Mountain S) *Paraxerus lucifer*