



SOMALILAND & DJIBOUTI TOUR REPORT 2026

5 - 21 September 2026

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This was our fourth tour to the little visited countries of Djibouti and Somaliland. During our short stay in Djibouti we concentrated on getting to grips with its only endemic, the Djibouti Spur-fowl, which showed fairly soon after we had reached its favoured habitat in the Forêt du Day. We also had a good time observing waders along the coast, with fabulous Crab-plovers stealing the show. Sadly, the name Somaliland conjures up unfavourable things like pirates and fanatic Jihadis, but this independent country has nothing to do with the country of Somalia. It really felt very safe to travel around and people were friendly and welcoming everywhere. Facilities were often a bit basic, as there is virtually no tourism, but the birding was fantastic. The deserts, semi deserts and forested mountains held an excellent variety of very localized birds and mammals. The Bird of the Tour was the delightful near-endemic Little Brown Bustard which showed regularly. We also really appreciated observing attractive Somali Wheatears and elegant Lesser Hoopoe Larks. The mammal of the tour was the cute Beira, although the lovely Speke's Gundi also stole a place in our hearts. Other highlights of our travels include Heuglin's Bustard, Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse, Somali Pigeon, Saunders's Tern, Donaldson's Smith's Nightjar, Arabian Scops Owl, Somali Bee-eater, Pygmy Falcon, Barbary Falcon, Rosy-patched and Red-naped Bushshrikes, Collared, Somali and Rufous-capped Larks, Philippa's Crombec, "Daallo" Cisticola, Scaly Chatterer, Somali, Golden-breasted and White-crowned Starlings, Somali Thrush, Somali Sparrow, Somali Golden-winged Grosbeak and Warsangli Linnet. Mammals of note included Somali Sengi, Speke's Gazelle, Gerenuk, Salt's Dik-dik and the impressive Hamadryas Baboon. We recorded 244 species of birds and 16 mammals on our travels.

This rather unusual tour started around noon in the harbour town of Djibouti on a rather hot day in the beginning of September 2026. Our first outing took us in late afternoon to the Plage de Douba, just outside the city, where we had a terrific time observing waders and some widespread other species. The highlights were the splendid Crab-plovers that allowed close approach, so we were able to admire

them in detail. We counted 35 of these very attractive waders. There were also lots of hyperactive Terek Sandpipers about, as well as Marsh and lovely Curlew Sandpipers. Other waders included Eurasian Oystercatcher, Grey Plover (some still in gorgeous breeding attire), Common Ringed Plover, Spur-winged Lapwing, Tibetan Sand, Greater Sand and Kentish Plovers, Eurasian Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Common Sandpiper, Common Redshank, Common Greenshank, Ruddy Turnstone, Ruff and Sanderling. A couple of Gull-billed Terns were foraging over the sandflats and a single Little or Saunders's Tern showed, but we couldn't get close enough for identification. A few Slender-billed and Sooty Gulls were flying offshore and we also noted Hamerkop and Pink-backed Pelican. The heron family was well represented, as we found Goliath, Grey, Purple, Western Reef and Little Herons as well as Little and Western Cattle Egrets. Three Ospreys were roosting on some distant wrecks. Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters were hunting over the beach and a party of Rose-ringed Parakeets flew past. The most common bird in Djibouti is the House Crow, of which hundreds scavenge the streets, the harbour and the beaches. We also noted Laughing, Ring-necked, Namaqua and good numbers of African Collared Doves and Speckled Pigeon.

At dawn we left the sprawling city of Djibouti and made our way westwards and then northwards around the Bay of Tadjoura. The landscape was stark and intimidating, as there was almost no vegetation visible on the extensive, black lava flows. Some acacia trees and Sodom's Apple bushes managed to survive in the few wadis. We made a stop at an impressive canyon where several White-crowned Wheatears, a lone Augur Buzzard (Archer's Buzzard) and some Rock Hyraxes showed. A stop along the rocky shoreline gave us a few distant Lesser Crested Terns, Great Grey Shrike, Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark, Somali Starling, Blackstart and several Somali Sparrows. A family of impressive Hamadryas Baboons walked along the road offering excellent looks. Once we reached the foot of the Goda Mountains the road became a rough track, and it didn't take too long to reach our accommodation near the famous Forêt du Day at an altitude of 1,520m. After a tasty lunch we had a quick look in the gardens and observed more than a dozen Egyptian Vultures, both perched and in flight. Hemprich's Hornbills were decidedly common as they were attracted by a fruiting tree and by a dripping waterpipe. Fan-tailed Ravens showed off their aerial prowess and Sand Martin, Pale Crag Martin, Western House Martin and European Red-rumped and Barn Swallows flew overhead. Abyssinian Sunbirds were visiting flowering bushes and we also noted Rüppell's Weavers. Later we started our exploration of the area. We were seriously disappointed by what this once beautiful area must have looked like. Now most of the juniper trees (East African Juniper) are dead or dying and walking amongst the skeletons of these once impressive trees was a bit disheartening. Boxwood was thriving however and offered shelter to Common Hoopoe, Ethiopian Boubou, Spotted and Gambaga Flycatchers, Abyssinian White-eye, Long-billed and Tree Pipits and Yellow-rumped Seed eaters. Not a sniff was heard or seen of our main target, the Djibouti Spurfowl, so we knew what we had to do the next morning.

At dawn we were already walking in the healthiest looking stretch of the Forêt du Day and when we found tracks of our quarry, we peeled our eyes and soon obtained excellent looks of Djibouti's only endemic bird, the fabled Djibouti Spurfowl. It performed really well and we could discern all the details of its intricate plumage. We found several more of these gamebirds on our further walks through the open forest. We also found Grey-headed Kingfisher, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler and Eurasian Blackcap. Another stint in the gardens of our accommodation produced several very smart Yellow-breasted Barbets, an Isabelline Shrike and a Willow Warbler. In the afternoon we returned to the city of Djibouti without noting anything special.

The next day was a travelling day as we flew from Djibouti to Addis Ababa and onwards to Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland. We were smoothly whisked through passport control by our very efficient local guide/fixer and were soon on our way to the hotel in downtown Hargeisa.

Our Somaliland chapter started rather slow with a fairly late breakfast. Once we gathered our obligatory police escort and Ministry of Tourism representative we drove towards the port town of Berbera. Along the way, in the acacia-studded plains, we identified Mourning Collared Dove, Little Swift, Hooded Vulture, Black Kite, Blue-naped Mousebird, Somali Crow and several families of Desert Warthogs. Along the coast at Berbera and in the harbour we found a good selection of waterbirds including new species like Little Stint, Bridled, Greater Crested and Common Terns and Black Heron. A couple of Saunders's Terns showed well, allowing study of the important plumage features. At a waterfront restaurant we enjoyed a good fish lunch while watching White-eyed and Sooty Gulls at very close range together with lots of African Sacred Ibises. After a break in the humid heat of the day, we explored some nearly bare hills near the coast, but we couldn't find the hoped for Somali Pigeon. A Speke's Gundi (Speke's Pectinator) offered nice views and we also observed some Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, a Desert Lark and several Dorcas Gazelles.

Just after dawn we were overlooking a rocky valley in a stretch of bare hills near Berbera and it only took a few minutes to find the much-wanted and very localized Somali Pigeon. The bird didn't stay long though, but luckily we found several more higher up in the valley, allowing for excellent scope studies. Three birds were also seen flying off towards the plains. This endemic showed off its subtle rufous

neck and beautiful pale grey plumage as it posed in the early morning sun. We returned to Berbera for a scrumptious breakfast, adding Greater Flamingo and Lesser Black-backed (Heuglin's) Gull from the hotel garden. We then made our way into the mountains towards the town of Burco. A couple of stops in acacia habitat gave us Purple and Lilac-breasted Rollers, Northern Carmine Bee-eater, Northern Red-fronted Tinkerbird, Common Kestrel, Northern Crombec, Red-fronted Prinia, Banded Parisoma, a nice male Arabian Warbler, Violet-backed and White-crowned Starlings, African Grey Flycatcher, Eastern Violet-backed and Marico Sunbirds and White-bellied Canary. We arrived in Burco in the heat of the day, checked into our hotel and in the afternoon explored an area of acacia scrub near town, where we picked up White-bellied Go-away-bird, a lovely Buff-crested Bustard, Crowned Lapwing, Somali Bee-eater, Red-and-yellow Barbet, Cardinal Woodpecker, a pair of cracking Rosy-patched Bushshrikes, Somali Fiscal, Acacia Tit, Golden-breasted and Superb Starlings, Hunter's and Variable Sunbirds, White-headed Buffalo Weaver, Purple Grenadier, Green-winged Pytilia, Yellow-spotted Bush Sparrow, Swainson's Sparrow and a pair of adorable Salt's Dik-diks.

The following morning we continued driving southwards into acacia scrub dotted desert. After a simple, Somaliland style breakfast we explored a stretch of dense scrub, where it didn't take long to locate the near endemic Philippa's Crombec. This tiny species showed very well at very close range. We continued going further south, finding Helmeted Guineafowl, Fork-tailed Drongo and White-headed and Red-billed Buffalo Weavers and soon left the metalled road behind. A pair of much wanted Little Brown Bustard was found just next to the track. This subtly-plumaged near-endemic also posed very nicely for us. In mid-morning we stopped for a photo of an impressive termite mound and found an excellent variety of birds in the area: Eastern Yellow-billed, Northern Red-billed and Von der Decken's Hornbills, Greater Honeyguide, Brubru, Grey-headed Batis, Somali Crombec, Grey Wren-Warbler, Upcher's Warbler, Common Bulbul (of the Dodson's variety) and White-browed Scrub Robin. Double-banded Courser and numbers of Guenther's and Salt's Dik-diks were noted while driving onwards. We had lunch in the village of Shansa Caade and after a break we explored a nearby area where three Pygmy Falcons showed really well, as did Black-throated Barbet and Pale Prinia.

At dawn we found ourselves in an area of red sand covered in short, spiny vegetation. It didn't take long before we heard the distinctive song and wing rattle of a displaying Collared Lark. We were able to admire this very localized species at close range for quite a while ... an exquisite experience. Walking around the area also gave us Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Little Owl, Eastern Chanting Goshawk, Pale Prinia, Ethiopian Swallow and a party of very well-behaved Scaly Chatterers. In late morning we checked an area of taller trees where Olive Bee-eater, Nubian Woodpecker, Northern White-crowned Shrike, Wattled Starling and Lesser Masked Weavers showed. As we had seen most of the birds we wanted, we decided to move on and made our way further east. A short stop in a treeless plain produced no fewer than 18 terrific Somali Coursers resting in the shade of small bushes and a lovely, very elegant, near-endemic Lesser Hoopoe Lark. In late afternoon we scanned wide open areas near our accommodation and found Yellow-necked Spurfowl, a distant Black-chested Snake Eagle, a cracking male Somali Wheatear, elegant Speke's Gazelles and a pair of African Golden Wolves.

Next morning we explored the extensive plains near the village of Garadag. We wandered for several hours over these sparsely vegetated expanses and came away with a rich bounty of larks. It was sweaty work, but the rewards included a fine Somali Lark, several Rufous-capped Larks, many Somali Short-toed Larks, good numbers of delightful Lesser Hoopoe Larks (they were the only ones singing and displaying), Black-crowned Sparrow Lark and Thekla's Lark. What a spectacle!! We also found a magnificent pair of Little Brown Bustards, a few Spotted Sandgrouse, quite a few Double-banded and Somali Coursers, a snake eating Black-chested Snake Eagle, a Greater Kestrel, Desert Cisticola, Desert Wheatear, several Desert Warthogs, lots of Speke's Gazelles and an Abyssinian Hare. A great yield! In late morning we started driving towards the small town of Cerivago, our base for our visits to the famous Daallo Escarpment. A few stops on the journey only produced an African Hawk-Eagle. In the afternoon our fixer and the representative of the Ministry of Tourism arranged our local permit, while we just had to hang about and wait. The lower temperature of our accommodation at 1,700 m altitude was much appreciated.

Our first full day at the very picturesque Daallo Escarpment was action packed. It was really birdy almost through the day and the temperature was delightful. The scenery was truly outstanding and the East African Junipers and the unique Dragon's Blood Trees created a wonderful habitat. Virtually the first bird we saw after getting out of the car, was the usually hard to find Warsangli Linnet. Two birds flushed along the side of the track and flew into the canopy of a juniper, where we managed to scope a male for excellent views!! What a start! We regularly encountered Somali Thrushes, including several recently fledged young birds. The still undescribed "Daallo" Cisticola showed very well at close range. We also had fantastic looks at an unexpected Arabian Scops Owl as it was mobbed by a variety of passerines. On our walks we also observed Yellow-necked Spurfowl, Red-eyed Dove, African Olive and Bruce's Green Pigeons, Alpine and Nyanza Swifts, Augur Buzzard, Bleating Camaroptera, Brown Woodland Warbler, Common and Lesser Whitethroats, Little and

Common Rock Thrushes and Brown-rumped Seedeaters.

On our second day on the Daallo Escarpment we concentrated on a different area with the same habitat consisting of a mixture of amazing Junipers and Dragon's Blood Trees, but saw mainly the same birds, obviously. We spent time at fruiting trees and at waterholes, but soon realized there were too many fruiting trees about and there was water everywhere, as it had recently rained. New birds for the trip included a splendid perched Barbary Falcon enjoying a meal, several gaudy Eurasian Golden Orioles, an African Paradise Flycatcher and a few Bush Hyraxes. We found another posing Arabian Scops Owl and could admire a beautiful immature Greater Honeyguide showing off its peachy breast. Speke's Gundis were quite active and allowed excellent views. In the afternoon the sky over the impressive cliffs darkened and we experienced an impressive rain and hail storm which put an end to our birding.

Another full day at the Daallo Escarpment finally produced the much desired Somali Golden-winged Grosbeak, although the view was a bit short as two noisy trucks (the only trucks of the whole day...) passed by just when we had located the bird... It flew off into the distance, sadly. We also found a few new species for the trip on our walks: a Black-crowned Tchagra showed beautifully, several Abyssinian Wheatears posed very nicely, a couple of Grey Wagtails flew past and several Klipspringers could be admired.

On the final morning at the Daallo Escarpment we opted for waiting and scanning at a strategic position near the rocky valley where we had seen the species the day before. It took several hours, but this strategy finally gave us good views at the Somali Golden-winged Grosbeak. The scope view was nice and it had been worth the wait. We also picked up European Roller and two perched European Red-rumped Swallows. A short stop on the Daallo plateau gave us African Hawk-Eagle and a heard only Common Nightingale. We returned to Cerigavo for lunch and in the afternoon made our way across wide plains to the village of Garadag. We made many short stops and eventually got lucky as we spotted four female Heuglin's Bustards close to the road offering great scope views. Not much later we found another party of five females. A marvelous and much appreciated observation! So nice to realize this species is still doing well here. While searching for the bustard we encountered small numbers of Double-banded and Somali Coursers, a female Pygmy Falcon, a Greater Kestrel, Red-tailed Shrike, a displaying Ashy Cisticola and a really large Leopard Tortoise.

Next day, our return journey to the town of Burco first took us across wide open plains dotted with just a few acacias. We found a modestly-clad Little Brown Bustard, which was soon followed by a pair of stately Heuglin's Bustards. Great stuff. A Spotted Thick-knee and a cute Somali Sengi (Elephant Shrew) also showed. A roadside pond held three Wood Sandpipers, a Common Greenshank and a Temminck's Stint. Further west we walked in a dense grove of acacias where new birds included several Abyssinian Scimitarbills, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Greater Blue-eared and Shelley's Starlings and Speke's Weaver. We had lunch in the town of Burco and in the afternoon visited an area of acacia scrub where the only new birds were Gabar Goshawk, Little Bee-eater and several delightful Mouse-coloured Penduline Tits. We stayed till dark, hoping for a nightjar to appear, but no such luck.

The following day we drove the old road (a track really) that leads straight to the capital Hargeisa. Acacia scrub and wide, open plains alternated and gave us new species like Crested Francolin, an imposing Kori Bustard, lots of Chestnut Weavers and four elegant Gerenuks. We also found Black Kite (only the second one of the trip), a singing Rosy-patched Bushshrike, several very clean-looking Red-tailed Shrikes, another party of Mouse-coloured Penduline Tits and two Philippa's Crombecs. At midday we stopped in the village of Oodweyne. In the afternoon we explored some nearby acacia scrub, where Common Hoopoe (*senegalensis*) showed, next to a nice Gillett's Lark, a party of Red-billed Oxpeckers favouring Dromedaries and a couple of Northern Wheatears. A pair of Buff-crested Bustards performed their spectacular flight display and at dusk we finally connected with a well-behaved Donaldson Smith's Nightjar.

While the sun was fighting with the horizon we were driving to our birding spot and noted a fine female Heuglin's Bustard and a Little Brown Bustard. Shortly after dawn we were at the famous Car Tuuyo plains, where a lovely Somali Lark performed ever so well. It sang and did its flight display at very close range. Lesser Hoopoe, Somali Short-toed and Thekla's Larks were also singing. We kept our eyes open for other unusual larks, but no luck. Several Desert Cisticolas were trying to compete with the larks. A pair of adorable Little Brown Bustards played hide and seek amongst the low vegetation and a single Common Swift flew overhead. After a quick breakfast in the nearby village we birded a patch of scrub where we finally connected with a beautiful Red-naped Bushshrike. What a cracker!! There were lots of other birds about, but it soon got very hot, and as we had seen what we wanted we decided to drive to Hargeisa.

Breakfast near our hotel in the middle of the town was interrupted by a couple of Abdim's Storks roosting on a nearby building. We then visited a hilly, rocky area covered in sparse vegetation not too far from Hargeisa, where a local conservationist has been keeping an eye on a small population of lovely Beira antelope. We arrived in the early morning and our man on the spot took us confidently to a particular patch, where six beautiful Beira were foraging. A male and five females showed brilliantly at close range and we were able to

admire these rarely seen beauties for more than half an hour, without disturbing them. After this fabulous experience we had a look at the nearby famous Laas Geel rockpaintings, which were decidedly impressive. Four well-behaved Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse gave very nice views and this cracking species was the last new bird for our list. So ended a terrific tour to two very little-known countries with fantastic range of birds.

BIRDS OF THE TOUR

1st Little Brown Bustard

2nd Somali Wheatear

3rd Lesser Hoopoe Lark

4rd Heuglin's Bustard

5th Saunders's Tern

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

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 **AviList v2025** (AviList Core Team 2025. *AviList: The Global Avian Checklist, v2025*); 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.

The species names and taxonomy used in the mammal list follow the mammal list on the iGoTerra website (www.igoterra.com). This list largely follows IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) taxonomy with just a few modifications. It is listed in family order, alphabetically by genera within families. Some alternative names are given in parentheses.

BIRDS

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* A flock of c20 birds was seen south of Burco.

Crested Francolin (Kirk's F) *Ortygornis [sephaena] rostrata* A party of five showed well near Burco.

Djibouti Spurrow ◊ *Pternistis ochropectus* Excellent looks at Djibouti's only endemic in the Forêt du Day. We couldn't find it on our first afternoon, but then had multiple encounters on our walks through the sad remnants of what must have been a magnificent Juniper forest.

Yellow-necked Spurrow *Pternistis leucoscepus* Regular observations in the Daallo area.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* A single bird was found in the harbour of Berbera.

White-bellied Go-away-bird *Crinifer leucogaster* Fairly common all along our route in Somaliland.

Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori* One showed well southeast of Burco.

Heuglin's Bustard ◊ *Neotis heuglinii* No fewer than 12 sightings of this magnificent bustard. It took a while to find the first one, but then we were spoiled with excellent observations of well-behaved males and females.

Little Brown Bustard ◊ *Heterotetrax humilis* **THE BIRD OF THE TRIP.** Regular encounters with this modestly-attired species. Usually quite approachable. A splendid species.

Buff-crested Bustard *Lophotis gindiana* Several excellent observations. We were lucky enough to observe the remarkable aerial display.

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus* Regular encounters. Often at very close range.

Spotted Sandgrouse ◊ *Pterocles senegallus* Just a few sightings. There was water everywhere in the desert, so they were not obliged to concentrate at the regular drinking spots.

Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii* Four showed very well along the Laas Geel entrance track.

Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis* Common.

Ring-necked Dove *Streptopelia capicola* Common.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata* Small numbers were noted in the Daallo area.

Mourning Collared Dove *Streptopelia decipiens* Small numbers were seen in more wooded habitat.

African Collared Dove ◊ *Streptopelia roseogrisea* Quite common in Djibouti and near the coast in Somaliland.

African Olive Pigeon (Rameron P) *Columba arquatrix* Regular observations at the Daallo Escarpment.

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea* Very common.

Rock Dove (introduced) *Columba livia*

Somali Pigeon ♦ *Columba oliviae* Excellent scope views of this lovely endemic in the hills near Berbera. Six birds were seen perched and in flight.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* Common.

Bruce's Green Pigeon *Treron waalia* A few observations in the Daallo area.

Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis* Brief looks in the Garadag area.

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* Singles were noted along the beach at Djibouti and at Berbera.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* Small numbers were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* Small numbers were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus* A handful of observations at watercourses.

Crowned Lapwing *Vanellus coronatus* Regular encounters in Somaliland.

Tibetan Sand Plover *Anarhynchus atrifrons* Fair numbers were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Greater Sand Plover *Anarhynchus leschenaultii* Small numbers were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Kentish Plover *Anarhynchus alexandrinus* Just a few were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* Small numbers were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* Very small numbers were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* Small numbers were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* Regular and hyperactive at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Small numbers were noted along our route.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis* Single birds were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* Three were noted at a small waterhole near Garadag (Somaliland).

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* Three were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti).

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* Very small numbers were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti), in the Berbera area and near Garadag.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Small numbers were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax* Two were found at Douda Beach (Djibouti).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* Small numbers were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* A single bird was identified at a waterhole near Garadag.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* Small numbers were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta* Two were found in the harbour of Berbera.

Crab-plover ♦ *Dromas ardeola* Fabulous encounters with these magnificent birds at Douda Beach (Djibouti), and also at Berbera. We counted 35 at the Douda Beach and they allowed us to study them at close range.

Double-banded Courser *Smutsornis africanus* Regular encounters in the Somaliland deserts.

Somali Courser ♦ *Cursorius somalensis* Regular encounters in the Somaliland deserts.

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* Three were seen off the Berbera coast.

Saunders's Tern ♦ *Sternula saundersi* Two were identified at Berbera.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* Regular at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Greater Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii* Four showed well along the Berbera coast.

Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis* Regular along the Djibouti and Somaliland coasts.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Just a few were seen off the Berbera coast.

Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei* Two were noted at Douda Beach (Djibouti).

White-eyed Gull ♦ *Ichthyaelus leucophthalmus* Three showed well at Berbera.

Sooty Gull ♦ *Ichthyaelus hemprichii* Small numbers were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (Heuglin's G) *Larus [fuscus] heuglini* A single bird was found in the Berbera harbour.

Abdim's Stork ♦ *Ciconia abdimii* A single bird was seen at Berbera and two were roosting near our hotel in Hargeisa.

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* Common at the Berbera waterfront.

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* A single bird was seen in Djibouti.

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* Three sightings along the coast of Djibouti and Somaliland.

Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca* Two were seen in the Berbera area.

Western Reef Heron *Egretta gularis* Regular at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* A single bird was noted in Djibouti.

Little Heron *Butorides atricapilla* We saw a few in Djibouti.

Yellow-billed Egret *Ardea brachyrhyncha* A single bird was seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti).

Western Cattle Egret *Ardea ibis* Regular in Djibouti, but only a few in Somaliland.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* A flock of 21 arrived just at dusk at Douda Beach (Djibouti).

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala* A single bird flew over the town of Cerivago, at the base of the Daallo Escarpment.

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* A single bird showed well at Douda Beach (Djibouti).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* Single birds were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti) and in the Berbera area.

Donaldson Smith's Nightjar *Caprimulgus donaldsoni* Excellent looks in the semi desert near Oodweyne.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* Several nice flocks were noted over the Daallo Escarpment.

Little Swift *Apus affinis* Common at Hargeisa and at the Laas Geel rock paintings.

Nyanza Swift *Apus niansae* Several nice flocks were noted over the Daallo Escarpment.

Common Swift *Apus apus* A single migrant flew over the Car Tuuyo plain on 20/9.

Little Owl ♦ (Ethiopian L O) *Athene [noctua] spilogastra* Good looks at this cutie near Taallo Buur and near Oodweyne. They favour the enormous termitaries.

Arabian Scops Owl ♦ *Otus pamela* Excellent day time views at the Daallo Escarpment.

Osprey *Pandion [haliaetus] haliaetus* Three were seen at Douda Beach (Djibouti).

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* Common in the Forêt du Day area (Djibouti).

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus* A few were seen in Hargeisa and in Burco.

Black-chested Snake Eagle *Circaetus pectoralis* Seven sightings of this attractive bird of prey in Somaliland.

African Hawk-Eagle *Aquila spilogaster* Two observations in the Daallo area.

Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar* A single bird was seen near Burco.

Eastern Chanting Goshawk *Melierax poliopterus* Five nice observations in the Somaliland semi desert.

Shikra *Tachyspiza badia* Three observations of this widespread bird of prey.

European Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* A female was noted just outside Djibouti city on 6/9.

Black Kite (Yellow-billed K) *Milvus migrans* Just three observations.

Augur Buzzard ♦ (Archer's B) *Buteo [buteo] archeri* A single in Djibouti and four at the Daallo Escarpment.

Blue-naped Mousebird *Urocolius macrourus* Common in the Djibouti and Somaliland semi desert.

Common Hoopoe *Upupa [epops] epops* A single observation in Djibouti and five sightings along our route in Somaliland.

Common Hoopoe (Central African H) *Upupa [epops] senegalensis* A pair of the resident race showed well near Oodweyne.

Abyssinian Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus minor* Common in the Somaliland semi deserts.

Hemprich's Hornbill ♦ *Lophoceros hemprichii* Common at the Forêt du Day (Djibouti) and small numbers along our route in Somaliland.

Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill *Tockus flavirostris* Regular sightings in Somaliland.

Von der Decken's Hornbill *Tockus deckeni* Just a few in the Collared Lark area of southern Somaliland.

Northern Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus erythrorhynchus* Regular in Somaliland.

Purple Roller (Rufous-crowned R) *Coracias naevius* Four observations in Somaliland.

Lilac-breasted Roller *Coracias caudatus* Five sightings of this well-known species in Somaliland.

European Roller *Coracias garrulus* Just two observations of this Palearctic migrant.

Somali Bee-eater ♦ *Merops revuillii* Regular observations of this subtly-plumaged species.

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus* Just two sightings of this widespread species.

Northern Carmine Bee-eater *Merops nubicus* Several nice encounters in Somaliland. All the birds were moulting.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* Small numbers in Djibouti and a few on our first day in Somaliland.

Olive Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus* Two were seen in the Collared Lark area.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus* We saw 20 of these jewels in the Djibouti city area.

Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala* Good looks at a single bird in the Forêt du Day (Djibouti).

Red-and-yellow Barbet *Trachyphonus erythrocephalus* Small numbers were found in the Collared Lark area in southern Somaliland.

Yellow-breasted Barbet ♦ *Trachyphonus margaritatus* Good looks at this smart bird in the Forêt du Day (Djibouti) and also in the hills south of Berbera.

Northern red-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus uropygialis* Regular encounters in Somaliland.

Black-throated Barbet *Tricholaema melanocephala* Two encounters in acacia scrub in Somaliland.

Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator* Four sightings of this unique species. A beautiful youngster showed very well.

Nubian Woodpecker *Campethera nubica* Regular encounters.

Cardinal woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens* Regular sightings.

Pygmy Falcon *Polihierax semitorquatus* This dashing little falcon showed very well on several occasions.

Greater Kestrel *Falco rupicoloides* Two observations in the Somaliland plains.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Just two sightings of this well-known species in Somaliland.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* A single migrant flew over the town of Burco at dawn.

Peregrine Falcon (Barbary F) *Falco [peregrinus] pelegrioides* Excellent views of a perched individual on the Daallo Escarpment.

Red-bellied Parrot *Poicephalus rufiventris* Six encounters with this lovely species in Somaliland.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* Regular in Djibouti city.

Brubru *Nilaus afer* Regular in the Somaliland acacia scrub.

Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus* Nice looks at several on the Daallo escarpment.

Rosy-patched Bushshrike ♦ *Rhodophoneus cruentus* This beauty performed very well on several occasions in the Somaliland semi desert.

Red-naped Bushshrike ♦ *Laniarius ruficeps* Good looks at this beautiful species in acacia scrub near Oodweyne.

Ethiopian Boubou ♦ *Laniarius aethiopicus* Seen well in Djibouti and heard near Burco.

Grey-headed Batis ♦ *Batis orientalis* Regular in the Somaliland scrub.

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* Two of these Palearctic migrants were seen at the Daallo escarpment.

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* Regular in the Somaliland bush.

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis* A male showed well at the Daallo Escarpment.

Somali Fiscal ♦ *Lanius somalicus* Common all along our route in Somaliland.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius [excubitor] aucheri* A handful of observations in both countries.

Isabelline Shrike (Daurian S) *Lanius isabellinus* Four sightings of this migrant.

Red-tailed Shrike (Turkestan S) *Lanius phoenicuroides* Several showed well during the latter part of our trip.

Northern White-crowned Shrike *Eurocephalus ruppelli* Seen well on two occasions in dense acacia scrub.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* Only two observations of this well-known species in Somaliland.

Somali Crow ♦ (Dwarf Raven) *Corvus edithae* Common all over Somaliland.

Fan-tailed Raven *Corvus rhipidurus* A handful of observations of this distinctive corvid in Djibouti and in northern Somaliland.

House Crow *Corvus splendens* Very common along the Djibouti and Somaliland coast.

Mouse-coloured Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus musculus* Several excellent encounters in the Burco area.

Acacia Tit (Northern Grey T, Somali T) *Melaniparus thruppi* Three sightings of this plucky species in Somaliland shrub.

Lesser Hoopoe Lark ♦ *Alaemon hamertoni* This delightful species was regularly encountered in the Somaliland plains. A marvelous display.

Desert Lark *Ammomanes deserti* Small numbers were noted in the Somaliland deserts.

Chestnut-headed Sparrow-Lark ♦ *Eremopterix signatus* Several were seen in the Garadag area.

Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix nigriceps* Regular encounters.

Gillett's Lark ♦ *Calendulauda gilletti* A single singing bird was seen near Oodweyne.

Collared Lark ♦ *Amirafra collaris* Fantastic looks at this adorable species in the red sand area of southern Somaliland. What a magnificent display!!

Somali Lark ♦ *Corypha somalica* We found this species both in the Ban Cade plains and in the Car Tuuyo plains. It also showed off its wonderful display.

Short-tailed Lark ♦ *Spizocorys fremantlii* Just a few in the Ban Cade plains near Garadag.

Thekla's Lark *Galerida theklae* Regular all along our route.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*: A single bird was seen near the coast in Djibouti.

Rufous-capped Lark ♦ *Calandrella eremica* Three were identified in the Ban Cade plains.

Somali Short-toed Lark ♦ *Alaudala somalica* Regular observations all along our route in Somaliland.

Northern Crombec *Sylvietta brachyura* A few sightings of this tiny, well-known species.

Philippa's Crombec ♦ (Somali Short-billed C) *Sylvietta philippae* Great looks at this speciality on several occasions.

Somali Crombec ♦ *Sylvietta isabellina* Two were found in a patch of dense acacia scrub south of Burco.

Yellow-vented Eremomela ♦ *Eremomela flavicrissalis* A few showed well in the Collared Lark area.

Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis* Regular observations in the Somaliland bush.

Grey Wren-Warbler *Calamonastes simplex* Regular sightings in the Somaliland bush.

Bleating Camaroptera *Camaroptera [brachyura] brevicaudata* Regular at the Daallo Escarpment and only one or two elsewhere.

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flava* Regular in the Somaliland bush.

Pale Prinia ♦ *Prinia somalica* Fairly common in the Collared Lark area.

Red-fronted Prinia *Prinia rufifrons* Small numbers were noted in acacia scrub in Somaliland.

Ashy Cisticola *Cisticola cinereolus* A single displaying bird in plains near Cerigavo.

Desert Cisticola *Cisticola aridulus* A handful of encounters in the Somaliland plains.

Daallo Cisticola ♦ (undescribed form) *Cisticola sp.* Just a few of these unobtrusive birds on the Daallo Escarpment. They are still waiting for a formal description.

Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida* Two encounters with this distinctive Palearctic migrant.

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna pallida* Five sightings of this Palearctic migrant.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* Small numbers were noted along our route.

Pale Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne obsoleta* Regular in rocky habitat, both in Djibouti and in Somaliland.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Small numbers were seen along our route.

Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo aethiopica* A handful of observations in Somaliland.

Western House Martin *Delichon urbicum* Just a few of these Palearctic migrants were seen.

European Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis rufula* A single at the Forêt du Day (Djibouti) and two at the Daallo Escarpment.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* Two observations of this Palearctic migrant.

Brown Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus umbrovirens* Regular at the Daallo escarpment.

Common Bulbul ♦ (Dodson's B) *Pycnonotus [barbatus] dodsoni* Common in the eastern part of Somaliland.

Common Bulbul ♦ (Somali B) *Pycnonotus [barbatus] somaliensis* Common in Djibouti and in the western part of Somaliland.

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* A female was seen in the Forêt du Day (Djibouti).

Banded Parisoma *Curruca boehmi* Common in the Somaliland acacia scrub. A distinctive voice.

Lesser Whitethroat *Curruca curruca* A single observation at the Daallo escarpment.

Arabian Warbler ♦ *Curruca leucomelaena* A single sighting of a male north of Burco.

Common Whitethroat *Curruca communis* Regular observations of this Palearctic migrant in the Somaliland bush.

Abyssinian White-eye ♦ *Zosterops abyssinicus* A single bird in the Forêt du Day (Djibouti) and common at the Daallo Escarpment.

Scaly Chatterer ♦ *Argya aylmeri* Fantastic close up looks at a party of four at the Collared Lark area.

Red-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhyncha* Several were foraging on dromedaries in the Oodweyne area.

Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea* Regular encounters in Somaliland.

Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* Just a few sightings in the Somaliland bush.

Somali Starling ♦ *Onychognathus blythii* This lovely species was common all along our route in Djibouti and Somaliland. It was especially common at the Daallo Escarpment.

Shelley's Starling ♦ *Lamprotornis shelleyi* Four sightings of this orange eyed breeding visitor in Somaliland.

Greater Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chalybaeus* Just a few observations of this widespread species.

Golden-breasted Starling ♦ *Lamprotornis regius* Regular sightings of this magnificent species in the Somaliland bush. A real jewel!!

Superb Starling *Lamprotornis superbus* Common in the Somaliland bush.

White-crowned Starling ♦ *Lamprotornis albicapillus* Regular in the Somaliland semi deserts. Another fine-looking species!!

Somali Thrush ♦ *Turdus ludoviciae* Regular in the juniper forest of the Daallo escarpment. There were quite a few recently fledged birds about.

Black Scrub Robin ♦ *Cercotrichas podobe* Two were seen in acacia scrub south of Berbera.

Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin (Rufous-tailed Bush Chat) *Cercotrichas galactotes* Scattered records in Djibouti and Somaliland.

Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin ♦ (African S R) *Cercotrichas [galactotes] minor* Regular observations, although not all the birds seen were identified to race.

White-browed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas leucophrys* Regular observations in the Somaliland bush.

African Grey Flycatcher *Bradornis microrhynchus* Regular.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* The most commonly encountered Palearctic migrant, both in Djibouti and in Somaliland.

Gambaga Flycatcher ♦ *Muscicapa gambagae* Three nice observations in the Forêt du Day (Djibouti).

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* (H) We heard the distinctive call emanate from dense undergrowth at the Daallo Escarpment.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* A single bird was noted in Djibouti.

Little Rock Thrush ♦ *Monticola rufocinereus* Regular and showy at the Daallo Escarpment.

Common Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis* Several of these Palearctic migrants showed well near the Daallo Escarpment.

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti* Six observations of this Palearctic migrant.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* Just three observations of this well-known species.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* Small numbers were seen along our route, both in Djibouti and in Somaliland.

Somali Wheatear ♦ *Oenanthe phillipsi* Regular observations of this delightful species in Somaliland. One of the favourites of the tour.

Blackstart ♦ *Oenanthe melanura* Small numbers were noted in both countries.

White-crowned Wheatear ♦ *Oenanthe leucopyga* Good looks at several in a rocky gorge on our way to the Forêt du Day (Djibouti).

Abyssinian Wheatear ♦ *Oenanthe lugubris* A few were noted at the Daallo escarpment.

Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird *Anthreptes orientalis* Regular observations of this attractive species in the Somaliland bush.

Hunter's Sunbird ♦ *Chalcomitra hunteri* Small numbers were seen in the Somaliland bush. The male is a real cracker.

Marico (Mariqua) Sunbird *Cinnyris mariquensis* Two were seen in acacia bush just north of Burco.

Abyssinian Sunbird ♦ *Cinnyris habessinicus* The most common and widespread sunbird of the tour.

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus* Regular encounters with the white bellied race *albiventris* in the Somaliland bush.

White-headed Buffalo Weaver *Dinemellia dinemelli* Regular and attractive in the Somaliland bush.

Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger* Regular in small numbers in the Somaliland bush.

Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius* A handful of observations in the Somaliland bush.

Rüppell's Weaver ♦ *Ploceus galbula* A few sightings, both in Djibouti and in Somaliland.

Speke's Weaver *Ploceus spekei* Four were found in a patch of acacia scrub near Garadag.

Chestnut Weaver *Ploceus rubiginosus* Regular in the Burco area.

Purple Grenadier *Granatina ianthinogaster* Good looks at a pair near Burco. A beauty!!

Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba* Four encounters with this unobtrusive species in Somaliland.

Yellow-spotted Bush Sparrow *Gymnoris pyrgita* Small numbers were noted in the Somaliland bush.

Swainson's Sparrow ♦ *Passer swainsonii* Common in Somaliland. Usually in or near villages.

Somali Sparrow ♦ *Passer castanopterus* Nice looks at several near the coast in Djibouti and two near Garadag.

House Sparrow (introduced) *Passer domesticus* We only saw this well-known species at Berbera.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* Two migrants were seen on the Daallo Escarpment.

Western Yellow Wagtail (form unidentified) *Motacilla flava* A single bird was found along the Djibouti coast.

Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* Several at the Forêt du Day (Djibouti) and at the Daallo Escarpment.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* Ten of these Palearctic migrants were seen in the Forêt du Day (Djibouti).

Somali Golden-winged Grosbeak ♦ *Rhynchostruthus louisae* It took a while, but eventually we obtained scope views of this endemic at the Daallo escarpment.

Yellow-rumped Seedeater ♦ (White-throated S) *Crithagra xanthopygia* Several showed very well in the Forêt du Day (Djibouti).

White-bellied Canary *Crithagra dorsostrigata* Regular in the Somaliland bush.

Brown-rumped Seedeater ♦ *Crithagra tristriata* Regular at the Daallo Escarpment.

Warsangli Linnet ♦ *Linaria johannis* We managed to scope a male of this much wanted endemic at the Daallo Escarpment.

MAMMALS

Bush Hyrax *Heterohyrax brucei* Two were seen at the Daallo escarpment.

Rock Hyrax *Procavia capensis* Several scattered records on our travels.

Somali Sengi (S Elephant Shrew) *Galegeeska revollii* Great looks at this cute mammal in acacia scrub near Garadag.

African Golden Wolf *Canis lupaster* Several showed well in the Ban Cade plains.

Desert Warthog *Phacochoerus aethiopicus* Regular observations, often in very arid habitat.

Beira *Dorcatragus megalotis* This delightful mammal showed very well on the final morning of the tour. A real beauty.

Dorcas Gazelle (Pelzelin's G) *Gazella [dorcasi] pelzelni* Small numbers were seen in the northern plains of Somaliland.

Speke's Gazelle *Gazella spekei* Fairly common in the central and southern plains of Somaliland.

Gerenuk *Litocranius walleri* Several of these marvelous antelopes showed well between Burco and Hargeisa.

Guenther's Dik-dik *Madoqua guentheri* Small numbers were seen in the Somaliland bush.

Salt's Dik-dik *Madoqua saltiana* These delightful creatures were commonly encountered in the Somaliland bush.

Klipspringer (Somali K) *Oreotragus [oreotragus] somalicus* A few were seen at close range on the Daallo escarpment.

Hamadryas Baboon (Sacred B) *Papio hamadryas* These impressive monkeys were commonly seen in Djibouti and in Somaliland. Often in large gatherings.

Abyssinian Hare *Lepus habessinicus* A handful of observations in Somaliland.

Speke's Gundi (S's Pectinator) *Pectinator spekei* Regular observations in rocky areas in Somaliland. This strange rodent belongs in the small Ctenodactylidae family and is the only representative of its genus.

Unstriped Ground Squirrel *Xerus rutilus* Regular encounters.

REPTILES

Leopard Tortoise *Stigmochelys pardalis* Three encounters with these large animals.

Agama : Several showed beautifully at the Daallo escarpment.



White-bellied Go-away-bird (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Little Brown Bustard (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Collared Lark (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Beira (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Lesser Hoopoe Lark (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Somali Starling (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Somali Fiscal (image by Mark Van Beirs)



female Heuglin's Bustard (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Arabian Warbler (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Somali Bee-eater (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Hamadryas Baboons (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Abyssinian Sunbird (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Rosy-patched Bushshrike (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Donaldson Smith's Nightjar (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Yellow-breasted Barbet (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Philippa's Crombec (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Desert Warthog (image by Mark Van Beirs)



White-crowned Wheatear (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Speke's Gundi (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Buff-crested Bustard (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Somali Coursers (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Hemprich's Hornbill (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Arabian Scops Owl (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Pygmy Falcons (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Djibouti Spur-fowl (image by Mark Van Beirs)



White-eyed Gull (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Little Rock Thrush (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Crab-plover (image by Mark Van Beirs)



White-crowned Starling (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Golden-breasted Starling (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Abdim's Stork (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Somali Lark (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Leopard Tortoise (image by Mark Van Beirs)



Banded Parisoma (image by Mark Van Beirs)