

VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

NORTHERN TANZANIA
“The Greatest Wildlife Spectacle on Earth”

FEBRUARY 23 - March 11, 2005



TOUR LEADER: PETER ROBERTS

TOUR REPORT COMPILED BY PETER ROBERTS

VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS INC.
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Northern Tanzania
“The Greatest Wildlife Spectacle on Earth”

23rd February - 11th March 2005

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Daily Notes

23rd February: Departure from home: Official departure date from USA, though most had arrived in Amsterdam at least a day early to avoid the jetlag and break the long journey, while Deborah and Ricky had arrived into Arusha ahead of us.

24th February: Amsterdam to Arusha: Nine of us met up at and departed from Amsterdam, though sadly the plane was a couple of hours late leaving (in part due to icy, snowy weather in Holland). We arrived in Arusha at about 11.30pm, were quickly through immigration and customs to meet Anthony Raphael our local guide and Geitan and Arnold the safari drivers. We were whisked off in the dark to Ilboru Safari Lodge, not getting to our rooms before gone midnight, having agreed on a 7.30am breakfast. It was too late to contact Ricky and Deborah who had arrived ahead of us.

25th February: Arusha National Park: Despite not really having had a full night's sleep we were away after breakfast at about 8am towards Kingerete on the main road towards Kenya from Arusha. Here, out on dry, short grass plains we hoped to find the newly created Beesley's Lark - a split from Spike-heeled. Anthony had not seen it since November as the rains had just about failed and birds have presumably moved to pastures new. We had plenty of other good sightings in this area to keep us happy and start the bird list off. The best sighting was a phenomenal roadside view of Lammergeier. This was the first I'd ever seen in East Africa - after 25 years of regular visits! The bird was stunningly white-bodied, not the usual reddish-brown hue: it clearly had not had a chance to rub its feathers in soils and stain them with red oxides. We wandered out across the open plains trying for the lark, but finding others: Red-capped, Rufous-naped, Fischer's Sparrow-lark and (briefly) Somali Short-toed Lark. Here and in the adjacent acacia scrub were localised species such as Gray-capped Social-Weaver and more widespread species - Cape Robin-Chat, White-browed (Red-backed) Scrub-Robin, Isabelline, Capped & Northern Wheatears, plus Red-billed and Von Der Decken's Hornbills. After a bit of a set-to with local Maasai who thought our binoculars and telescopes were cameras taking pictures of them, we left the area by late morning to visit the Arusha National Park. We arrived in time to the Park entrance for our substantial picnic, then drove up to overlook Ngurdoto Crater in amongst the lovely deciduous forests. Here we pulled out flashy Hartlaub's Turacos, African Paradise-Flycatcher and Narina Trogon plus smaller goodies such as Yellow-bellied Greenbul, White-headed Barbet and Dusky Flycatcher. Apart from the special birds of this forest we were keen to find some of the mammals too. There were plenty of Blue (Syke's) Monkeys and Colobus Monkeys (one with an almost all-white baby). Also here were Bushbuck and Red (Harvey's) Duikers. Our final birding was overlooking one of the lakes where White-backed Ducks, African Fish Eagles, African Jacanas and an African Yellow Warbler were found amongst much else. Departing the Park just before "throwing out time" at 6pm we managed to rustle up the only Cisticola of the day - a dandy little Singing Cisticola - unstreaked and uninspiring for some, but a good little tick for others. After supper I tried briefly for African Wood-Owl to no effect, but we did find a cute little African Hedgehog - a new mammal for the VENT Tanzania Tour and a "lifer" for me!

26th February: To Lake Manyara: Did some pre-breakfast birding in the Lodge grounds and was delighted to find the Moustached Green Tinkerbird that some of the group had seen yesterday. After that we were packed up, unwanted luggage stowed at the lodge, and away into Arusha to get some local currency before heading off directly for Lake Manyara National Park. We were there by about 10.45am and spent until gone 4pm wandering a small part of the Park. First we birded in the lush fig forest at the base of the Rift Valley escarpments with the lovely freshwater springs, then out into the open lake edge and finally into the acacia scrub - three excellent birding habitats deserving many more hours of exploration than we could allow. However, we did our best and came

up with some first-rate sightings. As soon as we arrived at the entrance the group's interest and opinion of Baboons plummeted as a huge male leapt into the van through the opened roof to grab our picnics. He was scared off empty-handed, but the incident greatly reduced the "cuteness" factor of the huge troops we later saw, complete with babies riding on ma's back. We tried hard for Purple-crested Turaco in the fig forest, but couldn't get the bird to show. The massive Silvery-cheeked Hornbills were a fine compensation, as were the nice looks at Emerald-spotted Wood-Doves and our first ever Ovampo Sparrowhawk. Out into the acacia scrub the first Elephants showed up which understandably diverted attention away from any thoughts of the first views of the Rattling Cisticolas that we were simultaneously watching. Down at the lake edge there was almost too much to view and take in at once. A couple of great stops with scopes up had us some wonderful close views of a great range of shorebirds, ducks and herons, storks, pelicans and more. The Yellow-billed Storks and Pink-backed Pelicans were in vast numbers and in fantastic pink-tinged breeding plumage. Amidst them were several brilliant little Black Herons - only the 2nd time seen on this tour, and doing the full "umbrella-bit" with their wings. Amongst the Hottentot and Red-billed Teals, White-faced Whistling Ducks and Spur-winged Geese were full breeding-plumaged male Garganeys looking dapper in the lovely light. Unusually, Collared Pratincoles were everywhere and a special treat. We dragged ourselves away from here to a late picnic. Some good birds were found while stretching our legs, eating and looking down from our lofty viewpoint out to the distant shimmering soda lake with uncountably huge numbers (tens of thousands) of Lesser Flamingos appearing like a shimmering pink ribbon in the haze. Red and Yellow Barbets put on a colorful and noisy show. The flowering acacias were attracting Red-faced Crombees, Buff-bellied Warblers, Yellow-spotted Petronias and Gray Flycatchers, while Spotted Morning Thrush pecked about for crumbs with the Superb Starlings below the tables. A high and spectacular aerial display from a male Eastern Paradise Whydah portends well for finding birds in breeding season plumage - this impression supported by great looks at Black Bishop in full red and black dress and a bright male Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird. Time as always ran away with us. We retraced our steps to the entrance, stopping only occasionally for special birds such as Gray-headed Kingfisher. Then back to our lodge - a newly opened one called Eunoto Retreat. Apparently set up by a wealthy Texan who has hired the land in return for providing local Masai with a school and soon a medical dispensary. It was in a fine location right up against the impressive massif of the Rift Valley cliffs amongst good open acacia forest. A slight drawback were the lovely cabins stretching for a quarter mile up a steep incline: I had the furthest of all and reckoned it was a major trek to and from the lovely open dining hall overlooking a swimming pool and wide vistas onto the plains below. We fitted in a little birding just to check the place out. Best find by far being African Silverbills in a pretty little flock.

27th February: Flying to Lake Victoria: Up at 5.30am for a 6am breakfast after hearing Freckled Nightjar outside my cabin a little earlier. I had quickly put a few clothes on and cued the player, but the playback just seemed to stop the bird calling entirely and it disappeared without trace. Nevertheless it was a very good (and first) record for this tour. We were away to the Manyara airstrip by 6.30am, driving up the brand new Japanese-built road over the Rift Valley escarpment to the little airstrip. We arrived in good time to find that the little 20-seat plane was about half an hour late. Putting the time to good use we birded just outside the terminal building and found several good and new birds for the trip list: Bronze Mannikins and Bronze Sunbirds, Cutthroats, Yellow-rumped Seedeater, Winding Cisticolas, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Pin-tailed Whydah and Speke's Weaver all giving good views. The flight was 45 minutes direct to Grumeti. In clear conditions and it was fun to over-fly the Ngorongoro, Olduvai Gorge and Serengeti to see where we'd be in the next week or so.

On arrival at Grumeti we met Arnold & Geitan who quickly loaded the vehicles and set off on a bit of a game drive in the Grumeti area. It was a very full day until we reached Speke's Bay Lodge by 5.20pm with so many birds and big game to watch over such a wonderfully large area in so little time. The 7 hours were full of new sights and

experiences; from encounters with our first Lion pride (7 in an extended family all typically lazing and idle) to masses of new birds all the way along. We tried for specials such as Eastern Plantain-Eater with great success and coaxed Gray-headed Bushshrike out at the same riverside spot. The River Grumeti with its thick brown, soup-like water held some sizeable lurking Crocodiles. New raptors included Wahlberg's and Long-crested Eagles. Rueppell's and Hildebrandt's Starlings were all over the place. Everyone seemed keen and enthusiastic to keep watching and sharp eyes produced great roadside finds such as White-bellied Bustards, Double-banded Coursers, Senegal Plovers and Spotted Thick-knees. Zebra were everywhere, and mixed in were Wildebeest, Giraffes, Topi, Buffalo and our first scavengers: Spotted Hyenas and Black-backed Jackals. Endemic birds included Gray-breasted Spurfowl and Rufous-tailed Weavers - all to be seen more closely and more leisurely later. It was a rushed day but full of great finds culminating in a final short watch at lovely Speke's Bay. Apart from our first local specialties, the most exciting find was a pair of Blue-headed Coucals (first time ever for this tour) and an extraordinary mass of many thousands of Whiskered (and probably White-winged) Terns in a single vast distant flock over the immensity of Lake Victoria.

28th February: Return to the Western Serengeti: We had the morning to wander the large and productive grounds of Speke's Bay Lodge with its excellent waterfront birding made even better with the drought which has reduced the water level in the Lake to produce a good muddy shoreline. Here were several distinctive Wattled Lapwings amongst the commoner birds, plus African Open-billed Storks overhead. The grounds did us proud in a cool cloudy morning. The reed and papyrus edge and adjacent scrub held the hoped-for LBJs: Sedge, Eurasian Reed and Great Reed Warblers, plus a bonus Grosbeak Weaver. The acacia bushes and scrub patches between the large expanses of open, mown grass produced the expected flashy duetting Black-headed Gonoleks plus Dideric and Red-chested Cuckoos, Black-winged Bishops, brilliant little Red-chested Sunbirds and others. The special weavers were on good form too, with several active nesting trees full off partially built creations of woven grass from Village, Slender-billed and Yellow-backed Weavers. The Northern Brown-throated only appeared at the very last moment before lunch in front of the restaurant! Immediately outside my tent was a trio of roosting Slender-tailed Nightjars sat amongst the leaf litter. They gave some stunning close-ups in broad daylight through our scopes. Nearby we flushed a pair of brilliant little Heuglin's Coursers - always a real and rare treat to see.

After an early lunch we had to tear ourselves away from this truly pleasant spot and lovely little lodge for our long drive back into the Serengeti. Having been "bumped out" of our intended accommodation we had to make a longer journey of 125 miles to Lobo Lodge in the northern Serengeti. We left at 1.10pm and arrived 5 and a half hours later having set a good pace with stops only for exceptional stuff. "Exceptional" included a roadside pair of Saddle-billed Storks with unreal bills: false papier-mache' creations crudely painted in bright primary colors! Various raptors caused a few stops too - Brown Snake-Eagle, Martial, Bateleur & Tawny Eagles, Dark-chanting Goshawk and a melanistic Gabar Goshawk. For me, a particularly exciting find was a flock of 170 Caspian Plovers, some in full breeding plumage. All were sat quietly by the roadside offering remarkable views of a species that few could ever see on their breeding grounds of Central Asia. It was a long but inspiring drive giving us the opportunity to experience the full enormous scale and size of the Serengeti ecosystem. After a full afternoon's drive we had still only covered less than a half of the place! We paused for photo opportunities to take in passing Giraffe groups and "African scenes" of bright sky, landscapes and finally glowering rainstorms. The heavens opened into heavy rain, thunder and lightning as we arrived at Lobo, and it continued raining into the evening, making plans for tomorrow only tentative.

1st March: Exploring the Western Serengeti: Most of us were up pre-breakfast to see what the unique setting of Lobo Lodge had to offer for birders. We took a viewpoint path to the top of one of the immense granite kopjes around which the lodge is built and stood in the early morning light, letting the birds come to us. A splendid pair of Verraux's

Eagles was awakening and perched on the crown of an opposite kopje for ages - perhaps eyeing the tasty little Rock Hyraxes scurrying around us. Some good quality birds were located in this short period by peering down into the fig and acacia canopy below. Red-fronted Tinkerbird and White-headed Barbet, African Paradise-Flycatcher, Cliffchat, Rock Martin and Yellow White-eye were a fine start to the day. By 8.30am we set out in the buses in cool partially cloudy weather to take a gentle "look-see" around the nearby roads here in the northern Serengeti just 20 miles from the Kenya border and the Masai Mara. The area is predominantly undulating grassland with varying densities of open acacia scrubby forest - and of course kopjes erupting from the ground here and there. Big game was sparse, though there were scattered Grant's Gazelles, Zebra, Topi and Coke's Hartebeest, plus large herds of menacing-looking Cape Buffalo. Birds were prolific and it was delightful to have time to start and stop at will with no specific place to reach or goals to aim for. The subtle differences between Croaking, Zitting and Rattling Cisticolas, Rufous-naped Lark, Long-billed, Grassland and Tree Pipits were all taken in with due, but subdued reverence between explosions of "oohs" and "aahs" as brilliant Yellow-throated and Rosy-throated Longclaws, Pied Wheatear, Pied and Great Spotted Cuckoos, Red-rumped Swallow, Striped Kingfisher, Golden-breasted Bunting, White-winged Widowbirds, Lilac-breasted and European Rollers burst into view. We returned for a civilised lunch break by 12.30pm, with down time until our afternoon excursion at 3.30pm.

As we departed for a game drive in the late afternoon the storm clouds were gathering north of us over Kenya. Thunder, lightning and winds blew a storm south, making for a cool afternoon, but luckily raining far to the east. We just pottered about exploring side tracks and finding various items of interest. Close-ups of the herds of huge male Cape Buffalo attracted our attention. The bizarre gentle popping sound of the display calls of a roadside Black-bellied Bustard had us captivated for a while. Patricia called my attention to a small bird she didn't recognise with a reddish head which turned out to be a cisticola. We couldn't quite work it out until it turned towards us, showing a long prinia-like tail - our first ever Tabora Cisticola recorded on this tour! A short burst of Pearl-spotted Owlet playback produced only a few birds to mob the sound, but amongst them was the owl itself. A request to stop and admire a fine group of rutting Topi was interesting, but all the more so for suddenly noticing that in their midst was a little den of four Bat-eared Foxes: another wonderfully serendipitous event to round off the day.

2nd March: Through the Serengeti to Ndutu: The night had been typical of the onset of the rainy season, with towering clouds, lightning, thunder and some heavy rain, clearing by dawn to leave a cool cloudy morning for the start of our travel to Ndutu. Before breakfast some of us watched a Spotted Hyena dragging a huge chunk of unspecified carcass off below the lodge; two others were seen close to the lodge as we left at 8am. This was another day of travel, though not as far as to reach Lobo. We proceeded fairly quickly towards Seronera in the central Serengeti stopping only for major sightings such as displaying Kori Bustard, large herds of Zebra and roadside Giraffes. At the Seronera Visitor Center by about 10am, I'd intended to walk the interesting little interpretive trail and do some birding as we went. A family of Lions thought otherwise! The Manager was very apologetic as he informed us the trail was temporarily closed and then showed us two cubs asleep on the wooden footbridge part of the trail, saying their mother was in there somewhere, just yards away! We turned to birding elsewhere in the grounds, but Anthony, Arnold and Geitan soon came back from refuelling the vehicles with news of possible Leopards, so it took little persuasion for us to abandon birding and quickly set off on a minor detour. Luck was with us, and we were shortly viewing two fine Leopards - probably a mother and well-grown young - up two separate trees. They were reasonable views of these gorgeous languid creatures through binocs, but even better with the help of my and Danny's 'scopes. In this area were our first large and very close mixed herds of Zebra and Wildebeest, seemingly with intentions of migrating from "A to B". We paused to admire this spectacle for a good length of time before making another brief diversion to see a large female Lion asleep in a dead tree. Then we put the foot on the pedal and zipped down the main track towards Naabi Gate and the exit out of the National Park.

Again, stops were made only for "essentials" - excellent looks at Greater Kestrels and another two roadside Lions - before reaching Naabi by just after 1pm. We ate lunch here, used the loos and I bumped into a friend from UK with a private group on tour setting off in the opposite direction: the Serengeti may be huge, but it is still a small world! We did a short walk around the trail for some exercise and birds, using the owl playback to elicit response from anything skulking in the undergrowth. We produced a few old familiars in this way, plus Red-headed Barbet and Yellow-breasted Apalis both new for the trip. We'd done much of the journey and now only had to wander the 20-25 miles on through the vast open, flat expanse of the short grass plains of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area down to Ndutu. We ambled along stopping to admire Kori Bustards, Yellow-throated Sandgrouse and Pallid Harriers on the way. It was also fascinating to watch Giraffes tucking into yummy acacia leaves; stripping them off the lethally spiky trees with their padded palate, long tongue and delicately manipulative lips in a feeding method turned into art-form. Close to the lodge as we crossed between Lakes Masek and Ndutu was our last halt - for a pride of 7 Lions. Two were adults of opposite sex, discreetly apart from the others. After I'd read from Richard Estes' marvellous Animal Behavior book about the mating habits of Lions, most folks were keen to stop and wait to see if Lions really do mate every 27 minutes! We waited, but they were obviously shy. Arrival at Ndutu by 5.30pm gave plenty of time to settle in, relax and wind down after the day's travels and travails. Before the evening meal the Common Genets made their usual appearance to take food from the feeding platform in the lounge. .

3rd March: At Ndutu: Away after a lovely breakfast at 8am to wander at will in the vicinity of Ndutu with no specific targets in mind. The cool of the morning produced a little bird activity as we drove slowly down to the edge of the two lakes where we turned onto the sand flats to see if the resident Lion pride (seen yesterday evening) was about. They were, and we watched them lounging in the low bushes and shade at the lake edge for a while. Here too, on the far side of the lake were wandering groups and lines of Wildebeest coming down to drink and playing "follow the leader". We then set off into the hinterland of acacia scrub for more birding and chance mammal encounters. The birding was nice but nothing particularly new or startling and we did chance upon a pair of Steenbuck - always a good find. Then Arnold & Geitan heard over the radio that the Lions we'd just left were active! The Wildebeest near them had decided to paddle through the shallow soda lake and then take a short cut up through the bushes. This happened to be right into the path of the Lions who did not look a gift-horse in the mouth and quickly took one hapless beast. We returned to witness the feast and stayed for much of the time until lunch as they eviscerated, gnawed, snarled and growled their way through this unexpected snack. The sated males, then one of the females with blood-stained faces left the meal and wandered directly past the vans, while the cubs continued cracking bones and having fun.

After a very pleasant lunch we were able to take some time off to relax, look at the shop, write notes or whatever. We had a short stroll in the grounds before the afternoon game drive and found a few old favorites - Grey-backed Camaroptera, Dideric Cuckoo, Rock Martins, and various warblers before a quick cuppa and cookie. Once again planned activities (to drive along the lake edges this afternoon) were changed as better, unplanned opportunities arose. Anthony and our drivers had heard of Cheetahs being seen this morning out on the open grasslands, so we were very happy to go off in pursuit. We set off through the open acacia woodland to our South-west, then on to the vast flat grassy expanse extending all the way to Maswa Game Reserve where the bulk of the Wildebeest have gone this year. On the way there we found several lovely little Temminck's Coursers before going off-road across the plains. This is a huge and fairly featureless area to cover. How the drivers manage to drive, avoid holes dug by aardvarks and Warthogs, and find the cheetahs, I'll never know. We must have driven a couple of miles, the two buses spread out to cover more ground before all of a sudden, there they were - three superb, sleek and elegant Cheetahs resting in the short grass and herbage. We spent a good while of the remainder of our time out here admiring these super animals. The plains around were dotted with substantial herds of Thompson's Gazelles

and smaller counts of Grant's: plenty of food for the Cheetahs all around them. Also here, away on further horizons were black lines of Wildebeest, perhaps slowly making their way back to where they should be, out on the nutritious short-grass plains of Ndutu? (Apparently they were here in the Ndutu area, but due to unseasonably dry weather, they wandered back west, but are really better off calving on the open plains safer from predators). We returned to the lodge by 6.30pm, very content with our short trip out.

4th March: More time at Ndutu: The Swamp beckoned and we spent the morning game drive on a journey there and back via some of the acacia woodland and shoreline of Lake Ndutu. We followed the flat sandy bed of the flood-plain stream from the lake up to the swamp stopping for anything that took our fancy. This "fancy" ranged from photo opportunities for the lowly, mundane and much maligned Helmeted Guineafowl, through "catch-up" looks for others at species not seen so well previously, up to some fine studies of really good birds. We had further Temminck's and Double-banded Coursers, excellent looks at Chestnut-bellied and Yellow-throated Sandgrouse, various shorebirds and other sundry good stuff. A particular "attraction" was a recent Zebra corpse with our first good looks at vultures doing what only they can do best. Great views were had of squabbling, feeding White-backed, Rueppell's Griffon, Hooded and Lappet-faced Vultures plus attendant Tawny Eagles and Black Kites. Their crops were full and when a National Parks helicopter flew over and spooked them, one did the classic vulture trick as it attempted to flee - vomiting up half its meal to lighten the load and get airborne! Close to the swamp the Tsetse flies became abundant and persistently vicious. Our pain was rewarded: one bus had great looks at a pair of Greater Painted Snipe, the other spied a Serval out in the rushes. Here too was Western Marsh-Harrier but not a lot else. We exited the fly-ridden swamp and made tracks back to the lake where small numbers of close inshore Greater Flamingos danced their strange foot-stamping flamencos to disturb the brine shrimps from the mud as the pumped them up into their Barby-doll pink bills. Throughout the morning other nice mammals came and went. Some perfectly framed Zebras reflected in a waterhole, Giraffes stripping acacia leaves, small distant groups of Bat-eared Foxes and finally, as we neared home for lunch, the same lolling pride of Lions that we'd seen feasting on Wildebeest yesterday, lounging on the saltbush sand-flats.

After some free time and a little birding in the grounds, we drove out to see what the smaller Lake Masek had to offer this afternoon. With the rains so far poor, the water levels here too were exceptionally low and there was not as much birdlife as I've seen on previous visits. However, we did have some very close views of our main target - Chestnut-banded Plover - plus a small variety of other good birds including Saddle-billed Stork, distant Pied Avocets, excellent looks at Beautiful Sunbirds, Lesser Masked Weavers, Pale Chanting Goshawk and (on the way back) White-headed Vulture. There was nothing startling seen in the way of mammals, but it was a pleasant leisurely afternoon in cool temperatures and good company.

5th March: To Ngorongoro via Olduvai: It is always sad to leave Ndutu, but after breakfast we were packed and away to spend the day wandering eastwards across the short-grass plains of the Serengeti to Olduvai, then on to Ngorongoro. As we left Ndutu and headed to Naabi Gate to obtain National Park permits we noticed the first small trails and groups of Wildebeest emerging from their unusually far west location. A pair of Golden Jackals lazed in the morning sun on the plains dotted with hundreds of Thomson's and Grant's Gazelles, Zebras and also Ostriches and Kori Bustards. The Rufous-naped Larks called their nonchalant "tlee-tloo" song as if all was well with the world (which in their case I suppose it was?). We had a little time to stop and look at passing birds and mammals, finding excellent Green Woodhoopoes, Black-faced and Yellow-throated Sandgrouse. At Naabi we had time to quickly do the circular trail, finding many of the usual species before heading along the main road towards Olduvai. En route some of the group stopped to visit a traditional Maasai village, while others of us did a little extra birding. We all met up at the Museum at Olduvai overlooking the famous Gorge where early hominids dating back 3.6 million years had been found, along with a wonderful collection of now extinct early mammals including giant buffalo, hippo,

giraffe and rhino. After a good picnic lunch overlooking the gorge and accompanied by Black Bishops, Purple Grenadiers, Vitelline Masked Weavers, Rufous Sparrows, and Red-billed Firefinches, we delved into the museum before driving east again to the Crater. Some heavy rain as we ascended into the lush grassy highlands at over 6,000' put pay to much birding in this habitat, but it ceased by the time we reached the descent road to go down into the Crater, across, and out the other side to the Sopa Lodge. We were all excited by the stunning view down and across the 10 mile expanse of Ngorongoro. At the top Mottled and Common Swifts sped by. On the descent were families of Schalow's Wheatears. At the crater floor was another seemingly idyllic world full of birds and quietly grazing wildlife. On any Tanzania trip, the Ngorongoro visit focuses strongly on finding the Black Rhinos protected within. As we were traversing the crater floor to get to our lodge this gave us a "bonus" visit in addition to our full day tomorrow. We used this bonus well as we detoured to find an amazing 7 different Black Rhinoceroses, each one being a closer and better view. While these antediluvian beasts were the centerpiece there was much else to catch our attention. There were masses of very close gazelles, Buffaloes and Wildebeest with calves. Birds were everywhere, with over 100 Crowned Cranes, countless Abdim's Storks and Western Marsh-Harriers circling low over the grasslands. The inevitable cisticolas were politely ignored for more obvious delights. We turned up the track out of the crater to Sopa Lodge and exited the Park by 6pm, driving fast through the glorious thick forest of the crater rim to our very swish lodge (which is not 2000' above the rim, but firmly on the rim - with fantastic views - 2000' above the crater floor!)

6th March: Full day in the Ngorongoro Crater: Some brief pre-breakfast birding caught folks up with much of what Danny had found last night: lovely looks at Tacazze, Golden-winged and Eastern Double-collared Sunbirds. We also added a few more odds and ends such as frenetic little Hunter's Cisticolas in crazed duets, Broad-ringed White-eyes, Cape Robin-chats and several families of White-eyed Slaty-flycatchers. A good buffet breakfast at 7.20am and we were away towards the Crater floor for a full day of wildlife by 8.15am. Whereas most buses of "regular" tourists zip down past all that wonderful thick forest dripping with mosses and full of flowering plants and shrubs, we spent a good hour slowly driving, stopping and watching before we got onto the open plains below. This high altitude forest at 5-7'000 feet holds plenty of special birds. Birding from the vehicles with their tops popped isn't ideal, but the only way allowed. We managed to find a good selection of hoped for birds here - Red-faced Cisticola, Red-collared Widowbird (thanks to Mary), Olive Pigeon, Schalow's Turaco, Mountain Greenbul, Abyssinian Crimsonwing and more. Down on the crater floor by mid-morning, our aim was to be fairly aimless! Just a pleasant meander via particularly good spots to the picnic site by 1pm. Spotted Hyenas lolled in muddy puddles in the middle of the track giving phenomenal photo-ops. The herds of Wildebeest, Zebra, gazelles and Buffaloes all went lazily about their day as we paused and stopped for photos - our best chances on the tour. At the Hippos Pools about 10 or more vast Hippos were partially submerged, one doing a complete 360' roll at times to keep its back cool and mud-covered, exposing its fat pink underbelly as it went. Plenty of good waterbirds here included a Black-headed Heron catching and eventually eating a small snake. Further on, the soda lake edge was slightly disappointing as water levels were very low. For the first time on any of my visits here, the flamingos weren't right up close to the shore, but way out into the hazy center of the muddy lake. However, a good selection of shorebirds, egrets, and associated species were showing well. Many Blacksmith and Kittlitz's Plovers were very much "in-your-face" as were hundreds of Ruff and amongst them 5 Spotted Redshanks.

The picnic site by the lake and papyrus bed was of course full of other vehicles - the only place to stop and the only time during the day when the crater seemed full of other people. Fan-tailed Widowbirds sported in the lake-fringe like Red-winged Blackbirds and Patricia was the "sacrificial lamb", losing her chicken leg to a rapacious Black Kite in split-seconds of deft manoeuvring.

In the afternoon we split into "amblers" wanting the option of longer to ponder the wildlife and "travellers" wanting to keep moving to see what was around the next corner. Both groups reported a brilliant time and came back satisfied. The bright afternoon light and "drive-by" mixed herds made photography a must and a pleasure for all. One group found the rare Hartlaub's Bustard, the other saw a Cheetah and African Black Ducks, both saw more Black Rhinos and a group of typically idle Lions flat out asleep on their backs.

7th March: To Gibbs Farm: We had plenty of time early this morning to do some more birding in the Sopa Lodge grounds where all the regular species seen yesterday morning appeared on cue again. In addition was a fly-by of two White-necked Ravens seen by only a few of us. On our departure we asked to be escorted to the lodge garbage dump in hopes of finding them there. No luck with that, but no doubt it amused the perplexed staff that rich westerners would travel all the way to Africa to see such places!

With only a short distance to Gibbs Farm, we idled around the start of the Crater Rim road through thick and luxuriant forest hoping to find a few more birds en route. At a bend in the road with a small roadside pool we got lucky and found birds continually coming down to drink. We ended up burning all our "spare" time here as it was so productive. Although awkward to have to bird from the vehicles with their tops off, we managed some good sightings. Best of all was White-starred Robin, with African Hill-Babbler a close second. Other good stuff was brief Brown Woodland Warbler, a pair of Blackcaps, Yellow-bellied Waxbill, African Paradise-Flycatcher, Thick-billed and Streaky Seedeaters, African Citril, Mountain Greenbul and others. After a brief pause at the overlook to wave our fond farewells to the remarkable Ngorongoro Crater (spying a very distant Rhino in the process), we joined the main road, now paved since last year all the way to the start of the Conservation Area. We were at the delightful Gibb's Farm by 12.20pm, just in time for a lunch rated "best in Tanzania" and a little down time for folks to soak up the atmosphere and enjoy the gardens so brimful of sunny exotic flowers, shrubs, butterflies and ambience.

We took the walk to the Elephant Caves and waterfall in the afternoon, setting off at 2.30pm and returning just after 3 hours later. We managed to find a few of the tricky forest-dwelling species that inhabit the area, and of course missing others, but between this morning's session along the crater rim road and this afternoon, we didn't do too badly with a good representation. Black-throated Wattle-eyes were seen well and a couple of female/young Black Cuckoo-shrikes were a less common find. A pair of Common Bulbuls lumbered with a fledged Klaas Cuckoo chick foster-child was a unique sighting. Up at the caves we intended to stop and take a break, but a very large, tusked Elephant in the undergrowth just 50 yards from the caves deterred us! We were ushered away by our local escort on the basis of "better safe than sorry". At the waterfalls we had some glimpses of Mountain Wagtail before setting back with thoughts of tea on the lawn spurring us onwards. As we assembled in the cool evening darkness on the patio outside the dining room for supper, a Montane Nightjar came by and landed on a snag by us giving everyone some great looks at another new and elusive bird to finish off the day.

8th March: Gibbs Farm to Tarangire: Birding in the gardens of Gibb's before breakfast produced our greatest prize - several displaying White-tailed Blue Flycatchers - a Tanzanian endemic that I've only ever seen here at Gibb's. The birds were up in light canopy flashing their tails and wings in and out for several minutes before fading into the background of another African day. We left for Tarangire by 8.30am and made fairly steady progress along the beautifully smooth new paved road passing Manyara where we'd flown off to the Serengeti seemingly ages ago. Apart from a brief stop for our first Taita Fiscal Shrike and a Brown Snake-Eagle we were non-stop to the entrance to Tarangire National Park, reaching there by about 10.45am. The displays and observation tower (and loos) made for a welcome break from the vehicles where we found a good array of classic hot, dry acacia scrub birds. Blue-capped Cordonbleus were vivid in the sunlight, consorting with Red-billed Firefinches, Chestnut Weavers and Chestnut Sparrows. Our

first White-bellied Go-away Birds were here along with endemic Yellow-collared Lovebirds and Ashy Starlings.

Setting off towards Sopa Lodge we had 2 hours or so to travel the 20+ miles, allowing time to stop once or twice for the first Elephant groups we hope to study in more depth later. There were plenty scattered along the Tarangire River with its Borassus Palms and the hillsides dotted with obese Baobabs. A couple of Lions were spotted lazing by an Elephant group, and looking distinctly interested in a tiny calf - I trust they have more sense than to try hunting it, as the adult Elephants all round were very vigilant. A fine sub-adult African Hawk-Eagle was watched before we arrived at the lodge by just after 1pm. A poolside buffet lunch and lots of cold drinks were welcome in the 100+degree shade!

At last -Elephants! Out in the afternoon by 4pm with the intention of locating and watching Elephants. We had a few stops here and there for birds, but managed a wonderfully long time with a matriarchal group with young from a few months up to a few years. These were contentedly feeding by the roadside and we simply cruised in, stopped engines and joined them as they peacefully pulled up hanks of grass and ate. The younger ones played a little and the very smallest suckled occasionally: a very peaceful and timeless scene. Birds of note during our time out included further Woodland Kingfisher, Namaqua Dove, Rufous-crowned Roller, Crested Francolin, Brown Snake-Eagle, Red-billed Hornbill at a nest in a huge baobab (the nest all cemented up into a narrow feeding slot).

9th March: Exploring Tarangire: A number of folks were up doing their own short bit of birding before a 7am breakfast and I heard Freckled Nightjar and Pearl-spotted Owlet just pre-dawn from my bed! We made our way this morning to the eastern edge of the National Park at Silale Swamp, taking over two hours to reach the area due to the many birds. It was a slightly cooler and pleasant temperature today and birds were fairly active as were the birders, forming friendly rivalries between buses. We had some great looks at perched Red-bellied Parrots (and of course many Yellow-collared Lovebirds). Lots of additional looks at regular species and revisiting with birds not seen since early on the tour such as Foxy (Fawn-colored) and Flappet Larks, Eurasian Hoopoe, Black-headed Oriole and more. Everyone caught up with great looks at the dapper Woodland Kingfisher and some of us glimpsed a much scarcer Brown-hooded. A flurry of tiny balls of feathers from the roadside indicated African Quailfinches and we stopped to see one perched on the roadside - a young or female bird looking about as obscure and non-descript as a bird can get - (including cisticolas!). At the huge expanse of marsh grass and papyrus of Silale Swamp we paused at a picnic site for loos and tea/coffee. A yellowish-green warbler burbling away from acacia canopy turned out to be a nice little migrant Icterine Warbler. Working our way in the buses along the swamp edge road we realised there were not going to be the huge numbers of wetland birds that sometimes occur. However a few good things popped up to keep us happy and push the birdlist clearly over 400 species for this tour. In amongst the many Long-toed Plovers, Sacred and Glossy Ibis were Saddle-billed and African Open-billed Storks, passing Western Marsh-Harriers and groups of delightful feeding Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters. Anthony's sharp eyes picked out a rare Rufous-bellied Heron in a swamp-edge acacia, but the bird gave only poor silhouette views. Anthony also spotted one of the undoubted favorite birds of the morning in another acacia and giving stunning close looks - a huge Verraux's Eagle-Owl, pink eye-lids blinking in the sunlight as it peered down at us. Mammals were few this morning, though a pack of Black-backed Jackals were seen soon after leaving, and a pleasant extended family group of Elephants were munching soft, lush grasses in the swamp. A quick dash back for lunch was punctuated by few stops, though a bit of call playback for Black-headed Oriole caught us all up with great looks at this bright little bird. Down time around the lodge until 3.45pm was a welcome rest as the heat of the day cranked up and brief wanderings around the grounds produced nest-building Red-headed Weavers, Greater Blue-eared Glossy Starling and a Cliffchat - the latter in the strange subterranean part of this weird piece of architecture.

The afternoon drive took us down to the fairly dry Tarangire River, partly in search of Thick-knees (which we didn't see). A slowish start warmed up a little with the sighting of a couple of Lions ogling passing Zebra. Down by the river there was a fine fly in by a pair of Saddle-billed Storks who quickly displaced a loitering Marabou. Further meanderings eventually took us towards some small groups of Elephants, which we ended up watching in detail by popular request for a good long time. Time now to about turn and head back towards the lodge, after a cool, peaceful late afternoon contemplating our last close and gentle encounter with the elephants. This was a fine finish - but it wasn't the end! Further along we drew to a halt for our second Verraux's Eagle-Owl of the day (and trip). It sat peering down with a superior gaze and when I played some of its call another bird came into view and stared equally disdainfully. This was the icing on the cake and we began to speed back to the lodge already technically out of time for a 6.30pm return. Closer still and very suddenly our two buses veered away from the lodge down another track; clearly something good afoot! The most impossibly perfect finale' to a trip awaited us. A gorgeous Leopard was posed, lain out on an exposed bare arch of a dead tree backlit by the setting sun and pink and blue skies. "Totally awesome" was the most popular spontaneous verdict! We watched in disbelief as it yawned and stretched then arched its back as it stood, posing in a display of powerful superiority before quietly scrambling down from the tree to slink away into the tall grass for its evening's hunt. An unbelievably magical moment; we all returned to the lodge by 7.15pm high on the experience and speechless with the broadest grins on our faces. Our final supper was a very pleasant occasion with good food and some lovely singing from a group of the staff as we ate.

10th March: Return to Arusha and flights homeward: Up pre-dawn to try and catch nocturnal stuff such as the African Scops-Owl and Freckled Nightjar heard here earlier in our stay. No luck there, and all generally quite quiet, so most went in for breakfast by 7am, while others caught up with Red-headed Weaver and Danny found himself an African Golden Oriole - surprisingly the first time the species has, ever been recorded on this tour. We departed the Sopa Lodge and headed for the main exit gate by 8.15am, with plenty of time to stop for anything that might come by. It was sad to think that the same large herds of Elephant we passed would be happily munching their way through life oblivious of the fact that we'd no longer be there to appreciate them. A small pack of Black-backed Jackals escorted us away from the lodge and a little group of Bat-eared Foxes was a bonus later on down the road. At the exit by 10.30am we had a good birding session around the information trail. A dripping water tanker produced a small pool that was a magnet for local birds. Whilst watching here we had stunning final looks at many bright little birds that had grown to be familiar friends: both Cordonbleus, Chestnut Sparrows, Cut-throat, Red-billed Firefinches and Green-winged Pytilia. Abyssinian Scimitarbills were amongst a good haul of species attracted in by the final playing of owl playback and the final new bird of the trip popped into view about now - a great look at a fairly drab and aptly named Grey Wren Warbler.

It was a fast and uneventful return from here to Arusha where we'd set out 2 weeks back. The Cultural Heritage emporium provided lunch (where we all toasted Patricia's birthday) and a fairly substantial final bout of shopping for many. From here it was back to Ilboru Lodge for day-rooms, wash and change, re-packing and away after a light meal by 7pm. I tried one last time for Moustached Tinkerbird for David who'd missed it previously. The bird called, came in, but gave only the briefest of views. We said our final farewells to Anthony, Geitan and Arnold who had been such easy-going, helpful and interesting local travelling companions, drivers and guides. Check-in was smooth, the plane early and the flight back a long one!

11th March: Home: Into Amsterdam on time we all went our separate ways to connect with onward travel arrangements.

Postscript: Despite not quite meeting up with the main herds of calving Wildebeest due to unusually dry weather (the first time this has happened in 12 visits), I think the trip was hugely successful and enjoyable. We recorded 418 species (411 seen + 7 heard only) which is just about best ever. We added 8 species to the cumulative bird list – species never recorded on this tour previously. The bird sightings were plentiful, with good prolonged views of many – always a bonus of birding in East Africa where so much is spectacular and easily seen out in the open. Mammal sightings were just about as good as it gets – missing a few thousand wildebeest maybe, but the variety was all there and the long studies of Elephants, multiple Lion sightings, those beautiful Cheetahs and the wonderful Leopard to finish the tour were all memorable in my books. Again, although due to excessive demand on accommodations, we'd been moved about from one lodge to another, I don't think it made any material difference to the quality of the tour – popping up to Lobo lodge added a few rarely seen birds, and we never felt overcrowded or marginalised. Our local guide Anthony and his two drivers Arnold & Geitan were very pleasant and added greatly to our tour with their insights into Tanzanian life, their sharp eyes finding wildlife for us and fantastic driving abilities. Best of all for me is having some keen and enthusiastic travelling companions. I've stopped working for companies whose clients were consistently “disinterested” in their surroundings! VENT usually provides me with a great bunch of folks to show birds and wildlife to – this year was exceptional: I've never enjoyed the company of a group so much. Everybody got along so well and was such good company, enthusiastic and fun in their own complementary ways. Patricia's exuberance and love of life; Deb's sense of fun and eagerness to learn; Bill's excitement at all that new birding stuff on his first wildlife trip; Rosalie's love of elephants! David's quiet, easy-going nature; Judy's great knowledge and insights; Danny's non-stop scope-birding and ability at getting to grips with a whole new bird fauna; Sue's good nature, elegance and humor; Mary's understated ability to find some great birds; Ricky's knack of making his love of photography and huge amounts of camera gear become part of the fun of the trip in a considerate and totally unobtrusive way.

The following checklist is fairly self-explanatory: Dates are along the top, approximate numbers in the columns below. * = seen, usually commonly, but not counted. H = heard only. Names in () are alternatives found in field guides, otherwise everything follows a fully up to date Clement's taxonomy. (Remember – Foxy Lark is the split from Fawn-colored!). Reptiles are named from the recent (2002) “*Reptiles of East Africa*” by Spawls, Howell, Drewes & Ashe. Mammal names are those found in Kingdon's *African Mammals*.

And finally: “vitelline” according to my dictionary relates to yolks of eggs – and the bright yellow color. So Vitelline Masked Weaver simply refers to its bright yellow body color. Those expressing an interest in how and why birds were named after people (Rueppell, Klaas, Schalow, Hartlaub, Speke etc) – and who these people were may be interested in the following books:

- *Whose Bird?* – Bo Beolens & Michael Watkins, 2003. Christopher Helm Press. This gives brief biographies and relevant notes to just about every person ever mentioned in a bird's name – common and scientific.
- *Biographies for Birdwatchers* – Barbara & Richard Mearns, 1988. Academic Press. This gives interesting accounts of the people in bird names for people occurring in European bird names.
- *From Audubon to Xantu* – Barbara & Richard Mearns, 1988. Academic Press. This gives interesting accounts of the people in bird names for people occurring in North American bird names.

My entries for the Cisticola Limerick contest (can't do Haikus !):

A cisticola from far Tarangire
Had a name that was terribly dreary

Then he was taxonomically split -
It didn't hurt him a bit
And his song became really quite cheery

OR

The cisticolas in swampy Speke's Bay
All gathered in protest one day
"Someone must have been joking
To call us Rattling or Croaking
We demand new names – or we'll all fly away"

2005 Checklist of Birds, Mammals and other animals

SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	25	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Red-knobbed Coot	<i>Fulica cristata</i>	25									1				
Bustards	Otididae														
Kori Bustard	<i>Ardeotis kori</i>						12	8		20	12				
White-bellied Bustard	<i>Eupodotis senegalensis</i>			5				2	2						
Black-bellied Bustard	<i>Lissotis melanogaster</i>				2	4				2	2				
Hartlaub's Bustard	<i>Lissotis hartlaubii</i>										2				
Jacanas	Jacanidae														
African Jacana	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>	6	*	*							1				
Painted-Snipes	Rostratulidae														
Greater Painted-snipe	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>								2						
Stilts & Avocets	Recurvirostridae														
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>		10		15			10	*	*				15	
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avocetta</i>								2		8				
Thick-knees	Burhinidae														
Spotted Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus capensis</i>			2											
Couriers & Pratincoles	Glareolidae														
Temminck's Courser	<i>Cursorius temminckii</i>							3	4						
Double-banded Courser	<i>Smutornis africanus</i>			3	2				8	1					1
Three-banded (Heuglin's) Courser	<i>Rhinoptilus cinctus</i>				2										
Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i>		100								25				
Plovers & Lapwings	Charadriidae														
Long-toed Lapwing (Plover)	<i>Vanellus crassirostris</i>		15								10			35	
Blacksmith Plover	<i>Vanellus armatus</i>		12				4	6	*	*	*		*	*	10
Spur-winged Plover	<i>Vanellus spinosus</i>		10		3										
Senegal Lapwing (Plover)	<i>Vanellus lugubris</i>			4											
Crowned Lapwing (Plover)	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>		10	10	2		6	10	*	*	20				
Wattled Lapwing (Plover)	<i>Vanellus senegallus</i>				4				1						
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>			1	15				15						
Kittlitz's Plover	<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>								2		25				
Three-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>		1	1		2	2	2	6				1		
Chestnut-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius pallidus</i>								12						
Caspian Plover	<i>Charadrius asiaticus</i>				170										
Sandpipers & Allies	Scolopacidae														
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>		1	2											
Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>			1							5				
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>		10		4				6		10			3	
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>		1	4	5				h				1		1
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>			1	2			1		1	1		2	3	1
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>		h	2	1		2		4				2	5	1
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		5	10	6						1		1		
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>		100	10	45		5		*		*			10	
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>		50		5		2		25	10	*		1	5	
Gulls	Laridae														
Gray-headed Gull	<i>Larus cirrocephalus</i>				25						5				
Terns	Sternidae														
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>		6	15	25			30	15	20	25				
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>			*	*									1	
Sandgrouse	Pteroclididae														
Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles exustus</i>						1		10	2					
Yellow-throated Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles gutturalis</i>				10		4	10	6	30					
Black-faced Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles decoratus</i>								1	2			2		2
Pigeons & Doves	Columbidae														
Rock Pigeon (I)	<i>Columba livia</i>		*	*											
Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>		4	6		5	2				10	5		5	5

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Rameron (Olive) Pigeon	<i>Columba arquatrix</i>										5	2			
Dusky Turtle-Dove	<i>Streptopelia lugens</i>									25	10	10			
African Mourning Dove	<i>Streptopelia decipiens</i>			*	*	*	*	*	*						
Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>	*	*	*		*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*
Ring-necked Dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*
Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>		1	4	6	*	*			*			*		*
Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove	<i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>		10												
Tambourine Dove	<i>Turtur tympanistria</i>		2												
Namaqua Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>				1					1			1	1	4
Macaws, Parrots & Allies	Psittacidae														
Fischer's Lovebird	<i>Agapornis fischeri</i>			5	6		10	*	*	*					
Yellow-collared Lovebird	<i>Agapornis personatus</i>												*	*	*
Meyer's Parrot	<i>Poicephalus meyeri</i>			1									1	2	
Red (Orange)-bellied Parrot	<i>Poicephalus rufiventris</i>													8	4
Turacos	Musophagidae														
Schalow's Turaco	<i>Tauraco schalowi</i>										1	1			
Hartlaub's Turaco	<i>Tauraco hartlaubi</i>	3													
Bare-faced Go-away-bird	<i>Corythaixoides personatus</i>			4	2	2							10	6	6
White-bellied Go-away-bird	<i>Corythaixoides leucogaster</i>												4	2	
Eastern Plantain-eater	<i>Crinifer zonurus</i>			3											
Cuckoos	Cuculidae														
Pied (Jacobin) Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>					2				1					
Great Spotted Cuckoo	<i>Clamator glandarius</i>					4	1						1		
Red-chested Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>		1	h	1							h	h	1	
Black Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus clamosus</i>		1												
African Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus gularis</i>							1	1					2	1
Klaas' Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>		1									1	3		
African Emerald Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx cupreus</i>									1					
Dideric Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>			2	2			3	4	2					
Blue-headed Coucal	<i>Centropus monachus</i>			2											
White-browed Coucal	<i>Centropus superciliosus</i>			6	4	2	1	2	2	2	1			4	2
Typical Owls	Strigidae														
African Scops-Owl	<i>Otus senegalensis</i>														h
Verreaux's Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo lacteus</i>													3	
Pearl-spotted Owlet	<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>			h		1		h	h	h				h	
Nightjars & Allies	Caprimulgidae														
Abyssinian (Montane) Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus poliocephalus</i>														
Freckled Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus tristigma</i>		h											h	
Slender-tailed Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus clarus</i>			3	3							1			
Swifts	Apodidae														
African Palm-Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	2	2											10	5
Mottled Swift	<i>Tachymarptis aequatorialis</i>									1					
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>									10	8				
African Swift	<i>Apus barbatus</i>		15			4									
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	*		*	*	*	*						*	*	
Horus Swift	<i>Apus horus</i>					10									
White-rumped Swift	<i>Apus caffer</i>	*				10									
Mousebirds	Coliidae														
Speckled Mousebird	<i>Colius striatus</i>	8	*	*	*				2	2	15	*	*	*	10
Blue-naped Mousebird	<i>Urocolius macrourus</i>			10	3									5	
Trogon	Trogonidae														
Narina Trogon	<i>Apaloderma narina</i>	2													
Kingfishers	Alcedinidae														
Malachite Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo cristata</i>				1						1				

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Great Reed-Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>				2										
Eastern Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Hippolais pallida</i>												1	2	1
Icterine Warbler	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>													1	
African Yellow Warbler	<i>Chloropeta natalensis</i>	1													
Buff-bellied Warbler	<i>Phyllolais pulchella</i>		4	2	2	2	1	6	4	4				4	
Red-faced Crombec	<i>Sylvietta whytii</i>		4		2										
Brown Woodland Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus umbrovirens</i>											1			
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>			1	4	4	5	5	2	2	6	5	4	10	6
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>											2			
Greater Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>														1
Banded Warbler (Parisoma)	<i>Parisoma boehmi</i>	2	2	2									1		
Old World Flycatchers	Muscicapidae														
Silverbird	<i>Empidonax semipartitus</i>			5	2	2			1						
Pale Flycatcher	<i>Bradornis pallidus</i>					2	6	4		4				4	4
African Gray Flycatcher	<i>Bradornis microrhynchus</i>	2	6				1								
White-eyed Slaty-Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis fischeri</i>										10	*	10		
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>				2	2	2		3	1			5	6	
Swamp Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa aquatica</i>			4	15										
African Dusky Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>	1									6	*			
White-starred Robin	<i>Pogonocichla stellata</i>											1			
Common Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchus</i>									h					
Cape Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha caffra</i>	2									5				
Rueppell's Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha semirufa</i>											4	1		
White-browed Robin-Chat	<i>Cossypha heuglini</i>		1				1								
Spotted Morning-Thrush	<i>Cichladusa guttata</i>		2	1	6										2
Red-backed (White-brow.) Scrub-Robin	<i>Cercotrichas leucophrys</i>	2											4	2	1
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>													1	
African Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	6								3	*	10			
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	2	4	2		6					1				
Mourning (Schalow's) Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe lugens</i>			1						6					
Pied Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>					10									
Capped Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe pileata</i>	10	6	4				1	4	*	2				
Isabelline Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	1							1	2					
Northern Anteater-Chat	<i>Myrmecocichla aethiops</i>					2				4	8				
Sooty Chat	<i>Myrmecocichla nigra</i>					6									
Mocking Cliff-Chat	<i>Thamnotula cinnamomeiventris</i>					4	4							1	
Wattle-eyes	Platysteiridae														
Black-throated Wattle-eye	<i>Platysteira peltata</i>											3			
Chin-spot Batis	<i>Batis molitor</i>			1		1				2		1			
Monarch Flycatchers	Monarchidae														
White-tailed Blue-Flycatcher	<i>Elminia albicauda</i>												4		
African Paradise-Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	2		1		1						8	2		
Babblers	Timalidae														
African Hill Babbler	<i>Illadopsis abyssinica</i>											2			
Black-lored Babbler	<i>Turdoides sharpei</i>				1			1	15						
Northern Pied-Babbler	<i>Turdoides hypoleucus</i>												5	15	4
Arrow-marked Babbler	<i>Turdoides jardineii</i>					6						1			
Chickadees & Tits	Paridae														
Red-throated Tit	<i>Melaniparus fringillinus</i>			2				6		1					
Sunbirds	Nectarinidae														
Kenya (East.) Violet-backed Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes orientalis</i>		3											1	
Collared Sunbird	<i>Hedydipna collaris</i>		2									2			
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>			1		1	2	1	4	2					
Tacazze Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia tacazze</i>									1	4	6			

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Bronze Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia kilimensis</i>			1		1									
Golden-winged Sunbird	<i>Drepanorhynchus reichenowi</i>									2	8	1			
Eastern Double-collared Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris mediocris</i>									2	12	15			
Beautiful Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris pulchellus</i>							2	6	4					
Mariqua Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris mariquensis</i>			1											
Red-chested Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris erythrocerca</i>			1	4										
Variable Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris venustus</i>	4	6							2		5			4
White-eyes	Zosteropidae														
African Yellow White-eye	<i>Zosterops senegalensis</i>					6									
Broad-ringed (Montane) White-eye	<i>Zosterops poliogaster</i>										4	15			
Old World Orioles	Oriolidae														
African Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus auratus</i>														1
African Black-headed Oriole	<i>Oriolus larvatus</i>	1		h										1	
Shrikes	Laniidae														
Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i>			1											
Rufous-tailed (Isabelline) Shrike	<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>				1				2						
Gray-backed Fiscal	<i>Lanius excubitoroides</i>			*	*	*	*								
Long-tailed Fiscal	<i>Lanius cabanisi</i>		1	4	2									1	1
Taita Fiscal	<i>Lanius dorsalis</i>												3		
Common Fiscal	<i>Lanius collaris</i>	5	6	*						10	10	10	5		
Magpie Shrike	<i>Corvinella melanoleuca</i>				6	10	6						10	15	*
White-rumped (Wh.-crowned) Shrike	<i>Eurocephalus rueppelli</i>		4	*	*	*	*	10	*				*	*	*
Bushshrikes & Allies	Malaconotidae														
Brubru	<i>Nilaus afer</i>	h				1	2		2	1				1	
Black-backed Puffback	<i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>			1	1		1					1			
Black-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra senegala</i>			h											
Brown-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra australis</i>				2	1	2			2				2	
Tropical Boubou	<i>Laniarius aethiopicus</i>		2								4	10	h		
Black-headed Gonolek	<i>Laniarius erythrogaster</i>				4										
Slate-colored Boubou	<i>Laniarius funebris</i>	h	2	h	1	1		1	h					2	
Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike	<i>Telophorus sulfureopectus</i>		h	1											
Gray-headed Bushshrike	<i>Malaconotus blanchoti</i>			1											
Drongos	Dicruridae														
Fork-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	6	*	*	4		2		2					10	
Crows, Jays & Magpies	Corvidae														
Cape Crow (Cape Rook)	<i>Corvus capensis</i>						5			2					
Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	2	*												1
White-necked Raven	<i>Corvus albicollis</i>											2			
Starlings	Sturnidae														
Wattled Starling	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>		12		*	*	*	*	*	*					
Greater Blue-eared Glossy-Starling	<i>Lamprotornis chalybaeus</i>													4	5
Rueppell's (Long-tailed) Glossy-Starling	<i>Lamprotornis purpuropterus</i>			*			10								
Superb Starling	<i>Lamprotornis superbus</i>	5	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hildebrandt's Starling	<i>Lamprotornis hildebrandti</i>		4	10		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Violet-backed Starling	<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>		10			1								10	1
Ashy Starling	<i>Spreo unicolor</i>												*	*	*
Red-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>	1	6			2								6	6
Waller's Starling	<i>Onychognathus walleri</i>											2	10		
Kenrick's Starling	<i>Poeoptera kenricki</i>	h													
Red-billed Oxpecker	<i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>			1					2						
Yellow-billed Oxpecker	<i>Buphagus africanus</i>				1	*	*		10	4	*				
Old World Sparrows	Passeridae														
House Sparrow (I)	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	5	*												
Kenya Rufous Sparrow	<i>Passer rufocinctus</i>						1			2					2

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Gray-headed Sparrow	<i>Passer griseus</i>		*	*											
Swaheli Sparrow	<i>Passer suahelicus</i>				*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Chestnut Sparrow	<i>Passer eminebey</i>				5		2						4		25
Yellow-spotted Petronia	<i>Petronia pyrgita</i>		4			4									
Weavers & Allies	Ploceidae														
Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver	<i>Bubalornis niger</i>			*	30	10	*	*	*	*			10	10	
White-headed Buffalo-Weaver	<i>Dinemellia dinemelli</i>	3	1	5	5	*	*	*						10	*
Speckle-fronted Weaver	<i>Sporopipes frontalis</i>			1			12	*		5					
Rufous-tailed Weaver	<i>Histurgops ruficauda</i>			10	10	10	*	*	*	*	*				1
Gray-headed Social-Weaver	<i>Pseudonigrita araudi</i>	4		*	*		*			10					
Baglafaecht Weaver	<i>Ploceus baglafaecht</i>	*	*	*						10	*	*	*		
Slender-billed Weaver	<i>Ploceus pelzelni</i>			*	*										
Lesser Masked-Weaver	<i>Ploceus intermedius</i>								5						
Spectacled Weaver	<i>Ploceus ocularis</i>			1									2		
Holub's Golden-Weaver	<i>Ploceus xanthops</i>									1	1				
Northern Brown-throated Weaver	<i>Ploceus castanops</i>				1										
African (Vitelline) Masked-Weaver	<i>Ploceus (velatus) vitellinus</i>		20				5	10	5	15	*	15	10		
Village Weaver	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>			15	*										
Speke's Weaver	<i>Ploceus spekei</i>			2											
Black-headed (Yellow-backed) Weaver	<i>Ploceus melanocephalus</i>			6	10										
(Jackson's) Golden-backed Weaver	<i>Ploceus jacksoni</i>			1	2										
Chestnut Weaver	<i>Ploceus rubiginosus</i>	1											1		
Red-headed Weaver	<i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>													1	2
Red-billed Quelea	<i>Quelea quelea</i>		20	20											
Black Bishop	<i>Euplectes gierowii</i>		2							2					
Black-winged Bishop	<i>Euplectes hordeaceus</i>				3		5								
(Southern) Red Bishop	<i>Euplectes orix</i>			4									2		2
Yellow Bishop	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>	1		2											
Fan-tailed Widowbird	<i>Euplectes axillaris</i>										10				
White-winged Widowbird	<i>Euplectes albonotatus</i>					50									
Red-collared Widowbird	<i>Euplectes ardens</i>										1				
Grosbeak Weaver	<i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>				1								20	5	
Waxbills & Allies	Estrildidae														
Green-winged Pytilia	<i>Pytilia melba</i>		2										2		4
Abyssinian Crimson-wing	<i>Cryptospiza salvadorii</i>										2				
Red-billed Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>		2		4		1			4		4	10	10	12
African Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>	6	2												
Red-cheeked Cordonbleu	<i>Uraeginthus bengalus</i>		2	6										2	4
Blue-capped Cordonbleu	<i>Uraeginthus cyanocephalus</i>		2		*			6			10		*	*	*
Purple Grenadier	<i>Uraeginthus ianthinogaster</i>						4			6					
Yellow-bellied Waxbill	<i>Estrilda quartinia</i>										6	4			
Crimson-rumped Waxbill	<i>Estrilda rhodopyga</i>	1													
Black - (faced) cheeked Waxbill	<i>Estrilda erythronotos</i>				4				3	4					
African Quail-Finch	<i>Ortygospiza fuscocrissa</i>					6								10	
African Silverbill	<i>Euodice (Lonchura) cantans</i>		15												
Bronze Mannikin	<i>Spermestes (Lonch.) cucullata</i>			6	15								2		
Cut-throat	<i>Amadina fasciata</i>			2											1
Indigobirds	Viduidae														
Village Indigobird	<i>Vidua chalybeata</i>		1	2											1
Straw-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua fischeri</i>						2								
Pin-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>			4	5	2	6	1	1				1	1	
Eastern Paradise-Whydah	<i>Vidua paradisaea</i>		2		1	1	4								
Siskins, Crossbills & Allies	Fringillidae														
Southern Citril	<i>Serinus hypostictus</i>	1											6		

