

FORESTS OF GHANA

15 – 25 APRIL 2009

TOUR REPORT

LEADER: NIK BORROW

This was the third Birdquest tour to Ghana, once known as the Gold Coast and situated in the very heart of West Africa. The country's growing tourist industry has much to offer to visitors with its colourful and vibrant culture, a turbulent history and a coast lined with beautiful beaches and numerous slave forts still left standing to remind visitors of a grim past. However we were here to discover its avian riches and instead of trying to 'clean up' in this interesting country this short and sweet tour focused on a great selection of Upper Guinea forest endemic birds and one very special species in particular; the strange and bizarre Yellow-headed Picathartes or 'rockfowl'. Our success at seeing this often elusive and furtive creature was relatively easy, total and absolute! The views were prolonged and we really couldn't have wished for better and of course, it was the highlight of the tour! We also remixed the itinerary this year in light of new information and paid a visit to the beautiful forest at Ankasa and the butterfly sanctuary at Bobiri. The rains were just beginning and unfortunately, we lost a little birding time due to early morning rain and witnessed an impressive downpour on our final afternoon as we made our way back to the airport. We managed to amass a very respectable 309 species of which all but nine were seen and a good supporting cast of specialties included Dwarf Bittern, Hartlaub's Duck, Congo Serpent Eagle, Red-chested Goshawk, Long-tailed Hawk, Stone Partridge, Brown-necked Parrot, Violet Turaco, Yellow-throated Cuckoo, Brown Nightjar, Black Spinetail, Blue-bellied Roller, Forest Wood-hoopoe, Brown-cheeked and Black-casqued Hornbills, Bristle-nosed and Hairy-breasted Barbets, Little Green, Melancholy and Fire-bellied Woodpeckers, Preuss's Cliff Swallow, White-throated, Western Bearded and Yellow Bearded Greenbuls, Green-tailed and Grey-headed Bristlebills, Western Forest Robin, White-tailed Alethe, Finsch's Flycatcher Thrush, White-crowned Cliff Chat, Sharpe's Apalis, Kemp's Longbill, Nimba, Little Grey and Ussher's Flycatchers, Red-cheeked Wattle-eye, Senegal Batis, Rufous-winged Illadopsis, Forest Penduline Tit, Buff-throated Sunbird, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Red-billed Helmet-shrike, Copper-tailed Glossy Starling, Maxwell's Black Weaver and Red-vented Malimbe.

The main question on everyone's lips as we arrived in Accra in Ghana was "will we see it?" We had billed the tour as a 'picathartes special' and so the pressure was definitely on to deliver the goods. We arrived in the evening for an overnight stop and a short night's sleep in our comfortable hotel on the outskirts of Accra for we were up early the next day at five with coffee and biscuits and driving on towards the Shai Hills an interesting area of open grasslands and rocky inselbergs. We found a few Helmeted Guineafowl upon arrival but sadly the trip did not get off to a good start as the wind

instantly whipped up and an approaching storm turned into a tropical downpour. The dirt roads here soon turn to treacherous mud and as we couldn't risk getting the vehicle stuck, we beat a hasty retreat to more solid ground and waited for the weather to improve.

Despite this frustrating start, we notched up a great selection of new birds. Beneath the sheer rock-faces of a high wooded hill, we gazed upwards to where a smart male White-crowned Cliff Chat appeared on the huge boulders whilst Rock Martins glided overhead and Senegal Parrots screeched past. A pair of Oriole Warblers put in an appearance and several Blue-bellied Rollers were much enjoyed. A flock of Piapiacs, a soggy Lizard Buzzard and Shikra were found and as the rains subsided a wealth of small birds were waking up with species such as Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Senegal Eremomela, Senegal Batis and Vinaceous Dove all making an appearance in quick succession. A Puvel's Illadopsis was heard but was sadly too deep within the thickets for us to reach. The piping calls of African Grey Hornbills sounded across the rocks, as did the cacophonous cries of a group of Stone Partridges that after a tug of war were persuaded to show themselves well. Colourful Violet Turacos and shaggy-crested Western Grey Plantain-eaters were spotted feeding in fruiting trees. African Pygmy Kingfisher, Vieillot's and Double-toothed Barbets, Red-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike, Snowy-crowned Robin Chat and Yellow-crowned Gonolek delighted. An African Hobby zipped by and was gone all too quickly and other species here included Grey Kestrel, African Hobby, Red-eyed Dove, Black-billed Wood Dove, Senegal Coucal, African Palm and Little Swifts, African Greater and Lesser Honeyguides, Tree Pipit, African Thrush, Singing and Short-winged Cisticolas, Grey-backed Camaroptera, Northern Black and Lead-coloured Flycatchers, Common Wattle-eye, Blackcap and Brown Babblers, Black-crowned Tchagra, Northern Puffback, Brubru, Fork-tailed Drongo, Copper, Splendid and Scarlet-chested Sunbirds and Purple Glossy Starling.

After a welcome brunch, we headed back towards Accra via Sakumono Lagoon where there were some Black Herons and lingering Palearctic shorebirds and terns that included Sandwich, Common and Black. The heavy traffic in and around the capital consumed us and the only birds apparent were numerous Laughing Doves, Common Bulbuls, Northern Grey-headed Sparrows, Yellow-billed Kites, Hooded Vultures and the ubiquitous Pied Crow.

We finally escaped the long queues of traffic ate a late lunch and then spent a couple of hours birding on the Winneba Plains. Although the rains had started, the breeding activity was not yet in full swing and it was a little quiet. Upon arrival, we found Mosque Swallow and Black-shouldered Kite perched on the roadside wires and albeit distantly a Red-chested Goshawk glided slowly away over the plains. Our ramblings over the open grasslands where Flappet Larks were displaying flushed a female Black-bellied Bustard. A showy Red-winged Warbler was watched and pairs of Levaillant's Cuckoo and glorious Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrikes were found. Other species here included African Harrier Hawk, African Wattled Lapwing, Yellow-throated Longclaw, Red-faced and Croaking Cisticolas, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Whinchat, Yellow-billed Shrike, Black-necked Weaver and Yellow-mantled Widowbird. The last species of the day was a pair of Green Turaco that was very shy but were eventually coaxed into view. We left and drove the remaining distance to the pleasantly eccentric Hans Cottage Botel for a three nights stay. The 'botel' is set in attractive surroundings on a lake complete with some ridiculously tame crocodiles and is something of a tourist attraction in itself!

Our second full day was spent in the famous Kakum National Park. Although the park was created in 1932, it wasn't officially opened to the public until 1994. Covering an area of 347 square kilometres, it is a mixture of semi-deciduous and semi-evergreen rain forest although this has been 'selectively' logged in the recent past and anyone expecting pristine forest would be sadly disappointed. The park is perhaps most famous for it being the site of Africa's first and only rain forest canopy walkway. Constructed in 1995 it is comprised of about 350 metres of bridges suspended between six tree platforms that reach a height of up to 40 metres above the forest floor. Officially, it opens to a stream of tourists at 8.30 a.m. but we had arranged early entry into the park from dawn onwards that meant we had the place to ourselves.

A pair of Red-chested Goshawks were displaying high over the visitors centre before we started climbing the stone steps that led us up the hillside to the start of the walkway itself. On the way, nervous long-tailed White-crested Hornbills dashed to-and-fro in the early morning half-light and we saw the first of several rather unobliging White-throated Greenbuls before reaching the walkway entrance. It was a strange feeling to be suspended underneath the main canopy and amongst the boughs of the medium sized trees but high above the tops of the vine covered trunks and shrubbery below us. The walkway bounced and the platforms creaked and shifted and to be truthful not everyone was entirely comfortable with the height. However at least some fear was forgotten as it was a fine morning and our birding got off to a good start as the sun got up. First of all garrulous White-headed Wood-hoopoes worked their way through the canopy of one of the largest trees and shortly after a pair of the smaller Forest Wood-hoopoe put in an appearance for good comparison. A Long-tailed Hawk was heard calling and eventually it graced us with its presence choosing to sit up on a bare snag. White-throated Bee-eaters gathered in flocks on the high branches, African Pied and Piping Hornbills were both seen and Blue-throated Rollers hawked overhead. As they chose prominent perches, Black-winged Oriole, Velvet-mantled Drongo, Yellow-mantled Weaver and Red-headed Malimbos were all very prominent species. A solitary Hairy-breasted Barbet was picked out as punkish-looking Naked-faced and a pair of Bristle-nosed Barbets also feasted on the ripening fruits. A lovely Blue Cuckoo-shrike was enticed in to the trees around us and we found ourselves surrounded by goodies with pretty Violet-backed Hyliotas, Grey Longbill and Rufous-crowned Eremomelas working their way through the foliage high above our heads along with a family of Lemon-bellied Crombecs, four Forest Penduline Tit and even the tiny Tit-hylia. A male Sabine's Puffback was found and we had great looks at regional endemics such as the rather unassuming Sharpe's Apalis, Melancholy Woodpecker, the vaguely hirundine-like Ussher's Flycatcher and the drop-dead gorgeous Buff-throated Sunbird. Grey-crowned and White-breasted Negrofinches were both relatively easy to see as we were almost on their treetop level. In the skies above, two Palm-nut Vultures flew over, Red-necked Buzzard was seen as well as Palearctic migrant Common Swifts and lingering Barn Swallows alongside the resident Lesser Striped Swallows. It certainly felt as if we were being bombarded by new birds and the time flashed past. Other species seen before the sweat bees and the encroaching hordes of tourists appeared included African Green Pigeon, Yellowbill and Little Green, Superb, Collared and Western Olive Sunbirds.

We moved off the bouncy bridge and by working the edge of the forest, we found Chestnut-breasted Negrofinches busy nest building, Green Crombec, Simple Leaflove, Yellow White-eye and Copper Sunbird. Along some of the trails, we encountered a confusing array of greenbuls that included Little, Little Grey, Cameroon Sombre, Slender-billed and Icterine Greenbuls. Green Hylias piped out their disyllabic call from tangles that hid secretive Yellow-browed Camaropteras, Blue-billed Malimbe, Chestnut Wattle-eye and Fraser's Sunbirds. Perhaps the star of the afternoon though was the pair of superb Rufous-sided Broadbills that sat posing quietly above our heads.

We returned to the canopy walkway in the late afternoon and witnessed the arrival of a Forest Chestnut-winged Starling and a pair of Red-fronted Parrots that had chosen to sleep in the safety of a clump of epiphytes in the same tree as the platform that we were standing on. Olive Colobus, Lesser Spot-nosed and Lowe's Monkeys all showed well. Distant Black-casqued Hornbills were calling and as the sun set, so did the much hoped for Brown Nightjar but try as we might we could not see these birds. Returning down we had far better luck with a fantastic Fraser's Eagle Owl caught firmly in the torch beam for all to see. We returned to Hans Cottage tired but exhilarated by the days events.

The following morning was spent in an area on the edge of the main forest at Antwikwaa. Obviously by now we had seen a good proportion of the forest species that we were likely to see and the forest here was almost non-existent having been eaten into by cocoa farms and other cultivation. Nonetheless, we picked up a few bits and pieces such as the ever-popular Black Bee-eater with the best of the bunch being the regionally endemic Copper-tailed Glossy Starling and Red-billed Helmet-shrike. Grey Parrots screeched overhead. Speckled, Red-rumped and Yellow-throated Tinkerbirds all

popped, trilled and squeaked around us. A male Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike interrupted our picnic breakfast. Glittering examples of African Emerald, Didric and Klaas's Cuckoos were seen, Golden Greenbuls and Swamp Palm Bulbuls proved easy to see. Woodland Kingfishers trilled, a retiring Thick-billed Honeyguide was identified, the unassuming Dusky-blue Flycatcher found plenty to eat on the plantation edges, with Red-headed Quelea, Orange-cheeked Waxbill and Bronze and Black-and-white Mannikins in the seeding grasses. Sunbirds here included Green and Olive-bellied and Splendid Glossy Starlings dazzled. A flock of Red-vented Malimbos dashed past and above us were Lanner Falcon and an adult and juvenile Cassin's Hawk Eagle.

As the day was getting hotter and the humidity was rising we moved on to another area where Preuss's Cliff Swallows were breeding under a culvert. A nearby river gave us Ethiopian and shining White-throated Blue Swallows as well as a pair of Rock Pratincoles and White-headed Lapwings with their pendulous wattles. We returned to Hans Cottage for lunch and to admire the colonies of Orange, Village and Vieillot's Black Weavers of the striking *castaneofuscus* form historically treated as a separate species.

After a break, we returned to Kakum and walked the trails but there was little activity. We waited by a stream where a bird party included Buff-spotted Woodpecker, Yellow-whiskered Greenbul, White-tailed Ant Thrush and the spiky-crested Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher. We once again set out onto the walkway for dusk and this time enjoyed a pair of Great Blue Turacos, some distant but noisy Brown-cheeked Hornbills and the enormous and prehistoric-looking Black-casqued Hornbill. It looked like rain for a short while but the moment passed and this time as dusk approached the 'yapping' cries of three Brown Nightjars reached our ears and ultimately we obtained some great views of a perched bird. Elated and making our way back down we came across the stunning Pel's Anomalure and a slow-moving Potto thus rounding off another superb day.

Back in the park again the next day we chose to walk the trails in a different area. The day started well with an unusual sighting of a pair of Brown-necked Parrots flying past. However, as we entered the gloomy forest the silence was overwhelming but admittedly not totally unexpected. A pretty Western Forest Robin brightened the morning with its bright orange breast shining out from the undergrowth in the dim light. Then the calls of a Shining Drongo alerted us to the presence of a bird party and at last, we began to get better looks at species such as Red-tailed Greenbul, Red-tailed Bristlebill, Finsch's Flycatcher Thrush and Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher. It was difficult straining necks upwards and peering into the dense canopy trying to see a Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill. We had better luck with a perched Chocolate-backed Kingfisher and a smart Crested Malimbe investigating a vine tangle. Another sighting of a Long-tailed Hawk could well have been our previous bird and an excitable Black Cuckoo was another addition to the list that morning.

After lunch, we embarked on a journey further west towards the border with Ivory Coast in order to visit a new area of excellent forest. Our destination was the Ankasa Forest Resource Reserve an area of superb wet evergreen forest that between the years 1960 to 1974 only suffered relatively light logging. We were the first organised birding group to visit this forest and we had opted to stay in a hotel some distance away as accommodation in the park itself is still basic. We therefore checked in and with some daylight hours to spare, we found ourselves in the cooler forest watching African Finfoot, Shining-blue Kingfisher and a Dwarf Bittern at a forest pool. Sadly staying out until dark in the hope of finding some owls drew a blank although the following night we frustratingly heard a Sandy Scops Owl that we had no real chance of seeing.

The next full day and morning were spent exploring the trails and main track. The highlights of the stay had to be the Upper Guinea endemic Rufous-winged Illadopsis that was ultimately scoped and allowed us walk-away views. Another Upper Guinea endemic, Green-tailed Bristlebill posed for us at an ant swarm and Upper Guinea endemic White-tailed Alethes that had only been glimpsed up until now finally surrendered themselves. Upper Guinea endemic Yellow-bearded Greenbuls proved easy

to see at this site and more so than we have seen them in neighbouring Ivory Coast or Sierra Leone tours. The success of seeing these desirable species thus firmly pencils in Ankasa as a regular destination on our Ghana tours from now on. Other highlights included a pair of heavyweight Upper Guinea endemic Fire-bellied Woodpeckers playing hide and seek with each other around a tree, brilliantly coloured Yellow-billed Turacos, a Congo Serpent Eagle gliding across the track, Hartlaub's Ducks at dusk and the secretive Brown Illadopsis. Other species included Green-backed Heron, Black Crake, African Jacana, Blue-headed Wood Dove, African Wood Owl, Yellow-spotted Barbet, Square-tailed Saw-wing, Ansorge's Greenbul, Upper Guinea endemic Grey-headed Bristlebill, Western Nicator, Blue-throated Brown, Johanna's and Tiny Sunbirds and Western Black-headed Oriole.

We retraced our route back towards Hans Cottage for a brief overnight stop breaking our journey at a patch of coastal savannah. The open country was a welcome change from the enclosed forest and we found a pair of very obliging Marsh Tchagras. A male Yellow-crowned Bishop was just beginning to come into breeding plumage and other new birds for the trip included a brightly coloured pair of Blue-billed Firefinches, charming little Black-rumped Waxbills, Western Reef Egret, Little Bee-eater, Zitting Cisticola and migrant Spotted Flycatchers.

We spent the following morning birding at Aboabo on the northern edge of Kakum National Park. The forest here was in a sad state compared to the fine forest we had just seen at Ankasa. Here tall trees had been left standing proud of the surrounding logged forest but it was nonetheless very birdy and we added some excellent species. Our plans were only thwarted by bad weather and a lot of rain for the first hour or so after daybreak. Not only that but we then found ourselves right in the middle of a termite hatch and the visibility was reduced by the mass of insects all around us. Indeed everything and everyone was coated by a layer of discarded wings by the end of the event! As the rain stopped, we tried to see a White-spotted Flufftail but the bird resolutely refused to budge. A Honeyguide Greenbul showed for some, spiky-crested Black-and-white Flycatchers sang loudly from the treetops and performed their fluttering butterfly-like displays, Maxwell's Black Weavers worked their way through the tangles, both Fraser's Forest Flycatcher and Little Grey Flycatcher were seen, a Blue-breasted Kingfisher called loudly from the treetops and Sabine's Spinetails fluttered overhead. However the best prizes had to be the stunning male Yellow-throated Cuckoo that put in an appearance and a male Black Dwarf Hornbill near his nest hole.

The time had now come for us to set off to a site where we all were hoping to find the main prize of the tour, namely the totally amazing Yellow-headed Picathartes. This species is rather unfortunately named White-necked Picathartes in some lists but the neck is certainly not white as the yellow colour of the skin shines through the feathers as if lit from within. This peculiar bird nests in the rainy season and makes swallow-like mud-cup nests that it attaches to the dry overhangs of the large granitic boulders and inselbergs that are such a feature of the region. We arrived at the nearest villages that benefit from the proceeds raised by visiting birders donating to the community-based project and met up with the guides that were to lead us to the rocks where the birds nest. The tension and excitement was certainly mounting and we embarked on an hours relatively easy although undulating walk with only the last five minutes or so being a climb up the steep slope to the rocks where at least 30 nests were situated. There were birds there when we arrived and they scattered as we settled into our viewing places. However, we did not have to wait for many minutes before individuals begun to reappear and we were subsequently treated to some marvellous views. Having enjoyed some quality time with this almost legendary species, we finally admitted having had our fill and decided to leave the birds in peace. Anyone who has ever seen the picathartes well has always been overwhelmed by their beauty and oddness. Indeed there is something mysterious and even spiritual about them and it is easy to see why they are revered in certain areas.

After much jollity and celebration at our overnight stop in Kumasi where the Star beers flowed freely we carried on the next morning to Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary a place that was fortunately blessed with

good birds as well. The first bird on arrival was the Upper Guinea endemic Little Green Woodpecker that we watched through the scope. A hulking Blue-headed Coucal and dainty Tambourine Doves perched up for all to see and Black and Cassin's Spinetails circled over the treetops. The normally secretive Grey-throated Flycatcher, a Willcocks's Honeyguide and an Afep Pigeon posed nicely for us but a calling African Piculet was sadly and frustratingly only seen by one of our group. By late morning the butterflies had well and truly taken over and we also came across a West African Night Adder.

In the afternoon, we made our first visit to the Atewa range of hills that rise to a grand height of 770m and are classed as a Forest Reserve but there is currently some mining activity there for bauxite whilst the buzzing sound of chainsaws in the area was constantly in our ears. In the farmbrush we encountered Whistling Cisticola, Brown-crowned Tchagra and Compact Weaver. However most of our time was spent struggling in our efforts to persuade a pair of Kemp's Longbill to show themselves but the best that we achieved was a few glimpses of shapes.

On our last morning, we transferred to land rovers and drove up onto the ridge itself. The forests that clothe the ridge were a most pleasant place to go birding although it was quiet in the early morning and we battled for a while with a furtive Blackcap Illadopsis that crept across the forest floor. After a while the bird activity started to liven up and we were on the lookout for a canopy bird party and eventually various species entered into view. Many were familiar but there were views of a Many-coloured Bush-shrike for some and Black-capped Apalis, Olive-green Camaroptera, Chestnut-capped Flycatcher and Dusky Crested Flycatcher were all seen. We also saw yet another Long-tailed Hawk and managed to obtain flight views of an Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo. The icing on the cake of this exceptional tour was the discovery of a party of three Nimba Flycatchers perching and running along the branches of a relatively low tree and good views were enjoyed by all. Time was running out and the trip had come to an end so we headed down and after cleaning up and repacking ate a celebratory lunch and headed back to Accra.

Ghana is a friendly and stable country, the roads are mostly good, the food is tasty and the accommodation really quite comfortable. We saw the picathartes easily and with relatively little effort and a good number of the regional endemics made the visit more than worthwhile. With Liberia still out of the game and both Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast in a state of recovery Ghana really does offer the visitor a chance to get to grips with one of the most charismatic of all West African birds in much more comfort and less time than anywhere else presently available. This tour will surely become a classic Birdquest!

SYSTEMATIC LIST

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

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

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Long-tailed Cormorant *Phalacrocorax africanus*: Good numbers at Sakumono Lagoon with two more individuals in breeding plumage at Hans Cottage.

ARDEIDAE

Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmi*: A beautiful individual was scoped on a forest pool at Ankasa.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*: A common bird mainly seen on journeys throughout the tour.

Green-backed Heron *Butorides striata*: Also known as Striated Heron, one was seen on a forest pool in Ankasa on 20/4 (there is apparently only one previous published record for the park) and another along the Brenu Road.

Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca*: Four were seen on the Sakumono Lagoon.

Western Reef Egret *Egretta gularis*: White phase birds are very difficult to distinguish in the field from the following species and it is not clear how many we may have seen. Dark phase birds were on the lagoon at Brenu Road.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*: Due to the potential confusion of this species with the previous one this graceful egret was probably under-recorded. Our only positive identifications were at Sakumono Lagoon.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*: Also known as Yellow-billed Egret, one was seen at Sakumono Lagoon. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Mesophoyx* as DNA work suggests a closer link with *Ardea* herons than *Egretta*.

Great Egret *Egretta alba*: A couple were at Sakumono Lagoon. Recent DNA work suggests that this species shows a closer link with *Ardea* than *Egretta*. It is therefore sometimes placed in *Ardea* but more frequently in *Casmerodius*.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* (NL): One was seen by Julian on the way to Ankasa.

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*: A very distant immature bird at Sakumono Lagoon was the only sighting.

ANATIDAE

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*: Large numbers were seen in the distance at Sakumono Lagoon.

Hartlaub's Duck *Pteronetta hartlaubii*: Seen at dusk each evening at Ankasa with three the first night and a pair on the second night. Gustav Hartlaub (1814-1900) was a German physician and collector with a specialist interest in East African Birds. He became Honorary Supervisor of the Zoological Collection of the Bremen Natural History Society Museum. The species was previously classified as 'Near Threatened' in Birdlife International's *Threatened Birds of the World*. Hunting and pollution appear to be the major threats but the species has now been upgraded and removed from their list.

ACCIPITRIDAE

Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus*: A raptor flushed in Ankasa and only seen briefly was identified by Robert as this species.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*: Several were seen along the journey to and on the Winneba Plains.

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius*: A most common and ubiquitous species. The form concerned is *parasitus* that is often lumped in Black Kite *M. migrans* however recent DNA analysis suggests that the African forms are actually more closely related to Red Kite *M. milvus*. To add to the complexity of the problem, northern and southern populations of Yellow-billed Kite may in turn prove to be specifically distinct from each other.

- Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis*: Two birds were seen flying over Kakum National Park.
- Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*: A widespread and common species particularly around human habitation. Eastern and southern African populations have been treated as a separate race *N. m. pileatus* but differences are clinal being small in west to large in south and the species is perhaps best considered monotypic.
- Congo Serpent Eagle *Dryotriorchis spectabilis*: One was seen as it glided by us twice and another (presumably its mate) was heard at Ankasa on 21/4. There are only two previously published records for the reserve.
- African Harrier Hawk *Polyboroides typus*: Also known as *Gymnogene*, small numbers were noted during the tour.
- Eurasian Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* (NL): One of these Palearctic migrants was seen by Julian over the Winneba Plains.
- Red-chested Goshawk *Accipiter toussenelii*: One was seen somewhat distantly flying over the Winneba Plains. The following morning at first light, we enjoyed a pair displaying over Kakum National Park. The form concerned is *macrscelides* and it has even been suggested that this be separated from the central African populations.
- Shikra *Accipiter badius*: Two were seen at Shai Hills with a further two on the Winneba Plains.
- Black Sparrowhawk *Accipiter melanoleucus* (NL): Also known as Great Sparrowhawk, Julian saw one in Kakum National Park.
- Long-tailed Hawk *Urotriorchis macrourus*: A great showing of this magnificent raptor this year with two sightings in Kakum National Park and a juvenile at Atewa.
- Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*: Singletons at Shai Hills and en route to the Winneba Plains where we saw two more.
- Red-necked Buzzard *Buteo auguralis*: Small numbers of this handsome and distinctive raptor were seen in Kakum National Park and en route to Ankasa.
- Cassin's Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus africanus*: An adult and a juvenile were seen flying over Antwikwaa and another adult was watched circling over Ankasa. John Cassin (1813-69) was an American businessman and renowned systematic ornithologist. He became curator of ornithology and Vice-President of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences.

FALCONIDAE

- Grey Kestrel *Falco ardosiaceus*: Two were seen at Shai Hills and another was on the Winneba Plains.
- African Hobby *Falco cuvierii*: Brief views at Shai Hills and en route to the Winneba Plains.
- Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*: One was seen over Antwikwaa and a pair of these large falcons was over Kakum National Park.

PHASIANIDAE

- Stone Partridge *Ptilopachus petrosus*: They put up a bit of a fight but we all eventually managed to see these little 'rock chickens' well at Shai Hills.
- Latham's Forest Francolin *Francolinus lathamii* (H): Heard at night in Kakum National Park. Dr John Latham (1740-1837) was a British physician, naturalist and author of a *General History of Birds*.
- Double-spurred Francolin *Francolinus bicalcaratus*: A francolin that was easy to see for a change at Shai Hills and along the Brenu Road.

NUMIDIDAE

- Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*: Four were seen at Shai Hills. The race concerned is *galeata*, which has been treated historically as a separate species. It is also the ancestor of the domestic guineafowl.

RALLIDAE

White-spotted Flufftail *Sarothrura pulchra* (H): This tiny little crane frustrated us throughout the tour and was only heard. The main problem was finding a place where it occurred that was accessible as they lurked in the deepest, densest vegetation.

Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostra*: Adults and young were seen at Ankasa.

HELIORNITHIDAE

African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis*: Amazingly easy to see at Ankasa where a total of six birds were noted.

OTIDIDAE

Black-bellied Bustard *Eupodotis melanogaster*: A female was seen well in flight on the Winneba Plains.

JACANIDAE

African Jacana *Actophilornis africana*: This 'lily-trotter' was seen well at Hans Cottage and Ankasa.

RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*: At least 20 at Sakumono Lagoon.

GLAREOLIDAE

Rock Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis*: A pair of the rufous-collared race *iberiae* was seen on a river north of Kakum.

CHARADRIIDAE

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*: A couple of these lingering Palearctic migrants were seen at Sakumono Lagoon.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*: Two of these Palearctic migrants were seen at Sakumono Lagoon.

African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus*: Three were seen on the Winneba Plains. There has been a move to rename all the *Vanellus* 'plovers' lapwings.

White-headed Lapwing *Vanellus albiceps*: A pair was seen on a river north of Kakum.

Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus*: Two were seen at Sakumono Lagoon.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*: Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants were seen at Sakumono Lagoon.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*: Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants, some in breeding plumage were seen at Sakumono Lagoon.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*: Two of these Palearctic migrants were seen at Sakumono Lagoon.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen at Sakumono Lagoon and another was at the Brenu Road.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen at Sakumono Lagoon and another was at the Brenu Road.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*: Two of these Palearctic migrants were seen at Sakumono Lagoon and another was seen by some en route to Ankasa.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*: Two of these Palearctic migrants were seen in breeding plumage at Sakumono Lagoon.

STERNIDAE

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*: At least 20 of these Palearctic migrants were seen at Sakumono Lagoon. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Thalasseus*.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*: At least five of these lingering Palearctic migrants were seen at Sakumono Lagoon.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*: At least 20 of these lingering Palearctic migrants mainly in breeding plumage were seen at Sakumono Lagoon.

COLUMBIDAE

African Green Pigeon *Treron calva*: A common and widespread species throughout the tour.

Blue-headed Wood Dove *Turtur brehmeri*: A poor showing for these beautiful but rather shy doves. We had two brief sightings and both were at Ankasa.

Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistria*: Our best views of this clean-cut dove were at Bobiri. The name refers to the bouncing rhythm of its call.

Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur afer*: Just one was seen along the Brenu Road.

Black-billed Wood Dove *Turtur abyssinicus*: One was seen by some at the Shai Hills.

Afep Pigeon *Columba unicincta*: We had great views of this subtly coloured large pigeon at Bobiri. The name 'Afep' is a name for the bird in the Cameroonian Bulu language.

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

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*: Widespread sightings. This bird sings, "I am a Red-eyed Dove".

Vinaceous Dove *Streptopelia vinacea*: A few were seen at Shai Hills and the Winneba Plains.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*: A common species mainly seen on the journeys along the coast. The name refers to its call.

PSITTACIDAE

Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus*: Small numbers were seen in flight over Kakum National Park and Bobiri.

Brown-necked Parrot *Poicephalus fuscicollis*: A lucky sighting of two flying over Kakum National Park and calling on 19/4. There have not been many records of this species in recent years from the area. The species is often lumped in Cape Parrot *P. robustus* with the name Brown-necked Parrot being used for the enlarged species.

Red-fronted Parrot *Poicephalus gulielmi*: Small numbers of this parrot were seen in and around the main forested areas of Kakum National Park and Bobiri.

Senegal Parrot *Poicephalus senegalus*: This colourful parrot was very much in evidence at Shai Hills.

MUSOPHAGIDAE

Great Blue Turaco *Corythaëola cristata*: At the end of the day a pair of these bizarre top-knotted birds was seen from the canopy walkway in Kakum National Park.

Green Turaco *Tauraco persa*: A pair was eventually coaxed into view from scrub on the Winneba Plains.

Yellow-billed Turaco *Tauraco macrorhynchus*: Commonly heard in the forests but we had to wait until Ankasa to get our best views. The Upper Guinea endemic race *verreauxii* has a red tip to the crest.

Violet Turaco *Musophaga violacea*: Good scope views of two at Shai Hills and another on the Winneba Plains.

Western Grey Plantain-eater *Crinifer piscator*: Widespread sightings of this rather dowdy, shaggy-crested cousin of the turacos. Ironically, the species is not known to actually eat plantains in the wild!

CUCULIDAE

Levaillant's Cuckoo *Oxylophus levaillantii*: Two of these large spiky-crested cuckoos were seen on the Winneba Plains. This species parasitizes babblers. François Levaillant (1753 -1824), a great French taxidermist, collector and ornithologist who had a specialist interest in the birds of southern Africa. Levaillant's reputation is somewhat marred as he was proved to be something of a 'stringer' inventing not only new species but even the journeys on which he claimed to have found them!

- Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius* (H): One was heard at the picathartes site. This species parasitizes mainly *Turdidae*.
- Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus*: One was seen in Kakum National Park. This species is known to parasitize shrikes.
- Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx olivinus*: Flight views only at Atewa. The hosts of this cuckoo are still unknown but possibly include illadopsis and flycatcher thrush.
- African Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus*: Commonly heard with several good sightings of both sexes. This species is known to parasitize bulbuls, illadopsises, flycatchers, sunbirds and weavers.
- Yellow-throated Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx flavigularis*: Great looks at a stunning male at Aboabo. The host species of this apparently uncommon cuckoo are still not known however Robert has seen them associating with Green Hylia.
- Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas*: Seen at Kakum, Bobiri and Atewa. Supposedly named by Levaillant after his servant whose wife, Narina (the name he dedicated to a most beautiful trogon), also just happened to be Levaillant's mistress! This species is known to parasitize various small, insectivorous passerines, mainly warblers and sunbirds.
- Didric Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius*: Seen at Kakum and along the Brenu Road. This species is known to parasitize mainly weavers and the name is based on an onomatopoeic rendering of the call.
- Yellowbill *Ceuthmochares aereus*: Also known as Blue Malkoha the species was frequently heard and regularly seen in the forests.

CENTROPIDIDAE

[This family is often lumped in Cuculidae]

- Black-throated Coucal *Centropus leucogaster* (H): Always a difficult bird to see, its deep sonorous hoots were often heard in the forests but we were not lucky enough to see one.
- Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis*: First seen at Shai Hills and thereafter noted at various open country locations.
- Blue-headed Coucal *Centropus monachus*: One was seen well at Bobiri.

STRIGIDAE

- Sandy Scops Owl *Otus icterorhynchus* (H): It was so frustrating to hear the cries from this difficult species in Ankasa at dusk on 20/4 with no real hope of seeing the bird although it was quite close. The tall trees and the distance we were from where we were staying that night were both against us. This appears to be the first record for the reserve.
- Fraser's Eagle Owl *Bubo poensis*: Excellent prolonged views of one at night in Kakum National Park. Louis Fraser (1819-1866) was a British museum man, naturalist, explorer, author and member of the infamous ill-fated Niger River Expedition of 1841-42. He also collected specimens from Fernando Po (Bioko) and was eventually appointed British Consul at Ovidah in West Africa.
- African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii*: One was flushed in daylight at Ankasa.

CAPRIMULGIDAE

- Brown Nightjar *Veles binotatus*: The voice of this strange little nightjar was unknown until fairly recently. Now it is known the species is becoming more widely recorded and currently Kakum is one of the easiest places to see this species as long as the canopy walkway can be braved at night! We had great views of a perched bird in the spotlight on our second attempt. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Caprimulgus*.
- Long-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus climacurus*: One flew across the road before dawn as we drove to Kakum National Park but was not seen by everyone.

APODIDAE

Sabine's Spinetail *Rhaphidura sabini*: Conny saw one over Kakum National Park but the rest of us had to wait until Aboabo. Edward Sabine (1788-1883) was an English scientist mainly interested in terrestrial magnetism and astronomy. He collected the spinetail and the puffback; both named after him, in Sierra Leone and donated them to the British Museum where J. E. Gray officially described the specimens.

Black Spinetail *Telacanthura melanopygia*: Two of these nondescript and uncommon spinetails were seen over Bobiri.

Cassin's Spinetail *Neafrapus cassini*: Two of these strange tail-less swifts over Bobiri were our only sightings. John Cassin (1813-1869) was an American businessman and renowned systematic ornithologist. He was also curator of ornithology and Vice-President of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences.

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus*: Small numbers were seen at widespread localities and often on journeys.

Common Swift *Apus apus*: Good numbers of this Palearctic migrant were still present in the country.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*: This common and widespread swift was often associated with bridges or concrete.

TROGONIDAE

Narina's Trogon *Apaloderma narina* (H): Just heard at Bobiri and Atewa. Supposedly named after the beautiful Hottentot mistress of Levaillant.

ALCEDINIDAE

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

Chocolate-backed Kingfisher *Halcyon badia*: Ann picked out our first individual high above our heads in Kakum National Park. Another at Atewa was watched in better light and at a more comfortable angle.

Blue-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon malimbica*: Two sightings of this colourful kingfisher at Aboabo and Bobiri.

Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis*: A common and familiar sight during the tour, often sitting on roadside wires.

African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ceyx pictus*: Good views of this little gem were had at the Shai Hills, Winneba Plains, Kakum National Park, Aboabo and Atewa. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Ispidina*.

White-bellied Kingfisher *Alcedo leucogaster* (H): One was heard flying past us inside the forests of Kakum National Park. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Corythornis*.

Malachite Kingfisher *Alcedo cristata*: At least one bird was always at Hans Cottage. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Corythornis*. The name derives (via Latin and French) from the Greek *molochitis* meaning "mallow-green stone".

Shining-blue Kingfisher *Alcedo quadibrachys*: Excellent views of a shining example that frequented a pool at Ankasa.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*: It is always a pleasure to see this striking kingfisher. First seen at Sakumono Lagoon and birds were also resident at Hans Cottage.

MEROPIDAE

Black Bee-eater *Merops gularis*: An adult was a welcome addition to the list at Antwikwaa. We also saw a juvenile at Ankasa.

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus*: Several were seen along the Brenu Road.

White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis*: Some large flocks were seen with many individuals in pristine plumage and they could be encountered anywhere and everywhere. They were presumably getting ready to move north to breed in the Sahel with the onset of the rains.

CORACIIDAE

Blue-bellied Roller *Coracias cyanogaster*: Much to our delight no less than five of these stunning rollers were seen at Shai Hills.

Blue-throated Roller *Eurystomus gularis*: Best views were obtained from the canopy walkway in Kakum National Park.

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus* (NL): One was seen by Julian on the journey to Hans Cottage.

PHOENICULIDAE

Forest Wood-hoopoe *Phoeniculus castaneiceps*: A good showing with pairs of these sometimes-elusive wood-hoopoes from the canopy walkway in Kakum National Park and at Bobiri. With the structure of the bill and the calls this species is surely more better suited to being placed with the scimitarbills in the genus *Rhinopomastus*. The wood-hoopoes form one of the few families that are endemic to Africa.

White-headed Wood-hoopoe *Phoeniculus bollei*: A pair was seen from the canopy walkway in Kakum National Park.

BUCEROTIDAE

White-crested Hornbill *Tropicranus albocristatus*: Ghana seems to be a place where this distinctive and impressive hornbill is pretty easy to see. Even so the birds this year were often very nervy.

Black Dwarf Hornbill *Tockus hartlaubi*: Things were made easy for us this year as Robert had a nest hole staked out for us and we saw the attendant male. This is perhaps the hardest of all the African hornbills to see.

Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill *Tockus camurus*: Noisy and responsive birds that chose to stick to the high canopy in the forests at Kakum National Park and Ankasa.

African Pied Hornbill *Tockus fasciatus*: A common and widespread species. The particular race concerned, *semifasciatus* has been historically treated as a separate species, Allied Hornbill. Who knows it may well be again!

African Grey Hornbill *Tockus nasutus*: This savannah species was seen well at the Shai Hills.

Piping Hornbill *Bycanistes fistulator*: Flight views only at Kakum National Park, Antwikwaa, Ankasa and Bobiri. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Ceratogymna*.

Brown-cheeked Hornbill *Bycanistes cylindricus*: Libby and Ann first saw these Upper Guinea Forest endemics in Kakum National Park. The rest of us caught up with three distant birds seen from the walkway the following evening. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Ceratogymna*.

Black-casqued Hornbill *Ceratogymna atrata*: A number of these huge hornbills were seen in Kakum NP.

CAPITONIDAE

[Sibley and Monroe place the African barbets in their own family, Lybiidae.]

Bristle-nosed Barbet *Gymnobucco peli*: A pair of these punkish birds were first seen in Kakum National Park. About ten more were feeding in a fruiting tree in Ankasa on 20/4. These seem to be the first records for the reserve.

Naked-faced Barbet *Gymnobucco calvus*: Much more common and widespread through the forests than its unshaven cousin.

Speckled Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus scolopaceus*: A very common species in the forests and farmbrush but as with all tinkerbirds more often heard than seen.

Red-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus atroflavus*: We had some good looks at this handsome barbet at Antwikwaa. A long series of regular 'pooops' or trills typify the voice of this bird.

Yellow-throated Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus subsulphureus*: This tinkerbird with the fast succession of 'pooops' was a very common species in the forests and farmbrush.

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus*: Seen well at the Shai Hills.

Yellow-spotted Barbet *Buccanodon duchaillui*: It was obviously a common bird because its mournful hooting calls were far more often heard than the bird was seen at Ankasa and Atewa. This call is completely different from the snoring call of those populations further east in spite of there being no subspecific differences.

Hairy-breasted Barbet *Tricholaema hirsuta*: We had several opportunities to see this handsome barbet well. The eastern forms are sometimes split from this, the nominate race thus making it an Upper Guinea Forest endemic.

Vieillot's Barbet *Lybius vieilloti*: This colourful barbet was seen well at the Shai Hills. Louis Jean Pierre Vieillot (1748-1831) was a French businessman forced to take refuge in the United States during the French Revolution and because of slave rebellions on San Domingo where he had his business in the spice trade. He had a consuming passion for ornithology dedicating his life to it.

Double-toothed Barbet *Lybius bidentatus*: A pair of these intensely coloured barbets were scoped at the Shai Hills.

INDICATORIDAE

Cassin's Honeybird *Prodotiscus insignis*: Robert saw one in Kakum National Park but it disappeared before anyone else could get onto it. The species parasitizes flycatchers, warblers, sunbirds and probably white-eyes.

Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator*: A male was seen well at Shai Hills. The species is known to parasitize no less than thirty-nine hole-nesting species.

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*: A singing bird was seen at Shai Hills on 16/4. There appears to be only one other published record for the park. This species is known to parasitize a variety of hole-nesting species.

Thick-billed Honeyguide *Indicator conirostris*: A poor view of one seen briefly at Antwikwaa. The species parasitizes *Gymnobucco* barbets.

Willcocks's Honeyguide *Indicator willcocksii*: One was scoped at Bobiri on 23/4. There are still very few records for Ghana although it is obviously more common than was once thought and has been historically overlooked. The host species remain unknown but probably includes Speckled Tinkerbird. General Sir James Willcocks (1847-1926) commanded the expedition to suppress the Ashanti rebellion of 1900.

PICIDAE

African Piculet *Sasia africana*: Very frustrating as we heard this species at both Aboabo and Bobiri but it was only Julian who managed to see it briefly at the latter site.

Little Green Woodpecker *Campethera maculosa*: Good scope views of this Upper Guinea Forest endemic at Bobiri.

Buff-spotted Woodpecker *Campethera nivosa*: Seen several times in bird parties at Kakum National Park, Ankasa and the picathartes site.

Melancholy Woodpecker *Dendropicos lugubris*: We managed some great sightings of this Upper Guinea Forest endemic from the canopy walkway and again at Antwikwaa. The form responds well to the voice of Gabon Woodpecker *D. gabonensis* with which it is often lumped.

Fire-bellied Woodpecker *Dendropicos pyrrhogaster*: We saw a pair of these handsome Upper Guinea Forest endemics well at Ankasa where they played hide and seek with each other around a dead tree.

EURYLAIMIDAE

Rufous-sided Broadbill *Smithornis rufolateralis*: As the birds were very silent this year it took some time to locate one in Kakum National Park but finally Robert spotted a female sat quietly and it wasn't long before the male came to join her and although he wasn't displaying we all had excellent prolonged views.

ALAUDIDAE

Flappet Lark *Mirafr rufocinnamomea*: One was watched in display flight on the Winneba Plains. The name refers to the noise made at this time.

HIRUNDINIDAE

Square-tailed Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne nitens*: Small numbers were seen at Ankasa and one at Atewa.

Common Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* (NL): Julian saw one of these Palearctic migrants at Shai Hills.

Mosque Swallow *Hirundo senegalensis*: This large almost raptor-like swallow was first seen near the Winneba Plains and subsequently noted at various other locations.

Lesser Striped Swallow *Hirundo abyssinica*: A common and widespread species throughout this tour.

Preuss's Cliff Swallow *Hirundo preussi*: A large colony had chosen a culvert to nest under north of Kakum. We also saw good numbers along the Brenu Road. Paul Preuss (1861-1926) was a Polish-born German naturalist who collected in West Africa between 1886-98. He was responsible for constructing the botanical gardens at Limbe (formerly Victoria) in 1901.

Rock Martin *Hirundo fuligula*: A pair was seen flying around the Shai Hills.

White-throated Blue Swallow *Hirundo nigrita*: A shiny pair of these gorgeous swallows were watched on a river north of Kakum.

Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo aethiopica*: A widespread species often seen around human habitation on journeys throughout this tour.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*: Numbers of this Palearctic migrant decreased throughout the tour.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum* (NL): Julian saw one of these Palearctic migrants north of Kakum.

MOTACILLIDAE

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*: Widespread sightings but there was always a resident pair at Hans Cottage.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen at Shai Hills.

Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus*: One scoped on the Winneba Plains was the only sighting.

CAMPEPHAGIDAE

Red-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga phoenicea*: Two males and one female were seen well at Shai Hills.

Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga quiscalina*: A male disrupted breakfast time at Antwikwaa.

Blue Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina azurea*: We obtained good views of this much-wanted cuckoo-shrike from the canopy walkway in Kakum National Park.

PYCNONOTIDAE

Little Greenbul *Andropadus virens*: An abundant forest edge and farmbush species but far more often heard than seen.

Little Grey Greenbul *Andropadus gracilis*: This unassuming greenbul was first seen well in Kakum National Park.

Ansorge's Greenbul *Andropadus ansorgei*: Best identified by its distinctive rattling call and seen at Ankasa and Atewa. Dr William John Ansorge (1850-1913) was an English explorer and collected in Africa.

Cameroon Sombre Greenbul *Andropadus curvirostris*: Also known as Plain Greenbul we saw a few in Kakum National Park.

Slender-billed Greenbul *Andropadus gracilirostris*: A conspicuous species usually seen in the canopy throughout the forests.

Yellow-whiskered Greenbul *Andropadus latirostris*: Like so many other forest species, this common bird was heard far more often than it was seen.

- Golden Greenbul *Calyptocichla serina*: This more brightly coloured greenbul was seen well at Antwikkwa and Atewa.
- Honeyguide Greenbul *Baeopogon indicator*: We had several opportunities to see this attractive greenbul well but the species wasn't particularly obliging. The name derives from the presence of white in the outer tail feathers being a similar feature to that of honeyguides.
- Spotted Greenbul *Ixonotus guttatus* (H): Heard in Kakum National Park. The problem was that we were always under the thick canopy when the flocks flew over!
- Simple Leaflove *Chlorocichla simplex*: A skulking species typically seen in farmbrush.
- Swamp Palm Bulbul *Thescelocichla leucoptera*: A large, noisy and conspicuous greenbul first seen well in Kakum National Park.
- Icterine Greenbul *Phyllastrephus icterinus*: Commonly encountered in the forests.
- White-throated Greenbul *Phyllastrephus albigularis*: First seen in the early morning half light in Kakum National Park. This skulking species never proved easy to see well.
- Red-tailed Bristlebill *Bleda syndactylus*: Poor views of this striking greenbul in Kakum National Park and at Ankasa.
- Green-tailed Bristlebill *Bleda eximius*: Excellent views of this Upper Guinea Forest endemic at Ankasa at an ant swarm. Finding an ant swarm is definitely the easiest way to see these heavy-billed skulkers!
- Grey-headed Bristlebill *Bleda canicapillus*: Generally poor views of this Upper Guinea Forest endemic in the various forests.
- Western Bearded Greenbul *Criniger barbatus*: This Upper Guinea Forest endemic with its spiky yellow beard was seen particularly well in Kakum National Park and again at Ankasa and Atewa.
- Red-tailed Greenbul *Criniger calurus*: The smaller greenbul with a bright white puffy throat seen in Kakum National Park and Ankasa.
- Yellow-bearded Greenbul *Criniger olivaceus*: Also known as Yellow-throated Olive Greenbul, this Upper Guinea Forest endemic proved pretty easy to see at Ankasa. The species is classified as 'Vulnerable' in Birdlife International's *Threatened Birds of the World*. The world population is thought to number less than 10,000 and habitat loss appears to be the main threat.
- Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*: A common and familiar species in open habitats throughout the tour.
- Western Nicator *Nicator chloris*: A skulking bird with a loud song but it showed itself well at Ankasa. The nicators have also been placed with the bush-shrikes but DNA evidence suggests that they are more closely linked with the bulbuls. The name *Nicator* is a combination of Greek and Latin and can be interpreted as 'conquest doer'.

TURDIDAE

[The genera *Luscinia*, *Cossypha*, *Cercotrichas*, *Saxicola*, *Oenanthe* and *Myrmecocichla* are sometimes placed in the family Muscicapidae.]

- Western Forest Robin *Stiphornis erythrorhax*: These pretty little robins with their sweet voices were reluctant to show themselves but we all successfully got views in Kakum National Park. There has been a move to split the various populations within the complex and if this treatment is followed, this form becomes an Upper Guinea Forest endemic with a range reaching Cameroon. However, both plumages and voices of the various populations are highly variable and it would seem best to treat them as races rather than separate species until more evidence is accrued.
- Snowy-crowned Robin Chat *Cossypha niveicapilla*: A showy trio were much enjoyed at Shai Hills.
- White-tailed Alethe *Alethe diademata*: Although reluctant to show itself at first we ended up all having some excellent views of this good-looking bird at Ankasa with several birds including youngsters present at an ant swarm. The form concerned which is treated here as an Upper Guinea Forest endemic is sometimes lumped with Fire-crested Alethe *A. castanea* with the name Fire-crested Alethe being used for the enlarged species.

According to recent DNA analysis, this species pair remains the only representatives of the genus *Alethe* contra Sinclair & Ryan's *Birds of Africa South of the Sahara* that incorrectly places them in the genus *Pseudalethe*.

White-tailed Ant Thrush *Neocossyphus poensis*: We had glimpses of one in Kakum National Park.

Finsch's Flycatcher Thrush *Stizorhina finschi*: This Upper Guinea Forest endemic was often heard in the forests but was ultimately seen well in Kakum National Park. Friedrich Hermann Otto Finsch (1839-1917) was a German ethnographer and naturalist who travelled widely. He was appointed Imperial Commissioner for the German colony known as 'Kaiser-Wilhelmland' that is now PNG. He was also co-author of *Die Vogel Ost Afrika* with Gustav Hartlaub.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen on the Winneba Plains.

White-crowned Cliff Chat *Myrmecocichla coronata*: Scope views of a dapper male at Shai Hills. Not all males show the white crown and this is often used as a reason to keep the species conspecific with Mocking Cliff Chat *M. cinnamomeiventris*.

African Thrush *Turdus pelios*: Seen at Shai Hills and on the Winneba Plains.

SYLVIIDAE

[The genera *Cisticola*, *Prinia*, *Heliolais*, *Spiloptila*, *Apalis*, *Hypergerus* and *Camaroptera* are sometimes placed in a separate family, Cisticolidae]

Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops*: A distinctive cisticola with a strident song that was first seen well on the Winneba Plains.

Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans*: Its simple song belies its grander name! Seen at Shai Hills, the Winneba Plains and along the Brenu Road.

Whistling Cisticola *Cisticola lateralis*: This chunky cisticola was first seen well at the picathartes site and again at Atewa.

Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis*: This heavyweight cisticola was easy to see on the Winneba Plains.

Short-winged Cisticola *Cisticola brachypterus*: A small and unassuming cisticola seen at Shai Hills, on the Winneba Plains and along the Brenu Road.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*: A pair was seen along the Brenu Road.

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

Red-winged Warbler *Heliolais erythroptera*: Seen well on the Winneba Plains and along the Brenu Road.

Black-capped Apalis *Apalis nigriceps*: A male was seen in the canopy bird party at Atewa.

Sharpe's Apalis *Apalis sharpii*: The bird's repetitive cry was a familiar sound throughout the forests and we had several chances to get good looks at this Upper Guinea Forest endemic. Richard Bowdler Sharpe (1847-1909) was a British zoologist with a specialist interest in classification and described over 200 species of birds.

Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brevicaudata*: We had several widespread sightings of this somewhat under-rated bird which is really rather attractive when seen well.

Yellow-browed Camaroptera *Camaroptera superciliaris*: More often heard than seen but we did get some good views in Kakum National Park and at Bobiri.

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

Kemp's Longbill *Macrosphenus kempii*: This proved to be a tough one to see, extremely skulking and we only managed to get glimpses of shapes of this Upper Guinea Forest endemic whose range actually reaches South-westernmost Cameroon. Robin (or Robert) Kemp (1871-?) was an accountant and amateur ornithologist and worked for a company building a railway in Sierra Leone where he collected during the years 1902-04.

Grey Longbill *Macrosphenus concolor*: In contrast this sibling vine-tangle loving species was extremely vocal and far more common and proved easy to see in the forests on several occasions.

- Senegal Eremomela *Eremomela pusilla*: A family party of these attractive little warblers was seen well at Shai Hills.
- Rufous-crowned Eremomela *Eremomela badiceps*: We had several chances to see this dainty little warbler well in the forests.
- Green Crombec *Sylvietta virens*: Often heard and seldom seen but we all had great views on the edge of Kakum National Park. The form concerned has historically been treated as a separate species, Yellow-bellied Crombec *S. flaviventris*.
- Lemon-bellied Crombec *Sylvietta denti*: Great views of a family group from the walkway in Kakum National Park that put us right up in the canopy alongside these tiny little birds. Another pair was seen at Aboabo.
- Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen in the treetops at Atewa.
- Oriole Warbler *Hypergerus atriceps*: The alternative name of Moho is a far more interesting choice for this beautiful bird. We had great looks at a pair at Shai Hills. A strange bird of 'uncertain affinities' it makes a suspended nest like a sunbird, looks like a babbler or an Asiatic bulbul and has a rich warbler-like song.
- Violet-backed Hyliota *Hyliota violacea*: An obliging pair was seen well from the walkway in Kakum National Park and another female (the more colourful of the pair) was seen at Atewa. Taxonomically the hyliotas have had a varied history having been placed with flycatchers, monarchs and the birds build a nest like a wattle-eye.
- Green Hylia *Hylia prasina*: We often heard the disyllabic call but we also got great looks at this common but often-elusive warbler in the forests.

MUSCICAPIDAE

- Fraser's Forest Flycatcher *Fraseria ocreata*: Also known as African Forest Flycatcher we saw one at Aboabo that unusually had completely plain underparts. At Atewa we saw a normally patterned bird.
- Nimba Flycatcher *Melaenornis annamarulae*: A great trip highlight was the discovery of a trio of these unassuming birds at Atewa. They were perched in the trees directly above our heads and we even witnessed them characteristically running along the branches. This Upper Guinea Forest endemic has only recently been found in Ghana. It is classified as 'Vulnerable' in Birdlife and is obviously threatened by habitat clearance. Mount Nimba lies on the borders of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone.
- Northern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis edolioides*: Five were seen at Shai Hills.
- Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*: Two of these Palearctic migrants were seen along the Brenu Road.
- Little Grey Flycatcher *Muscicapa epulata*: Brief views of one for some of us at Aboabo.
- Dusky-blue Flycatcher *Muscicapa comitata*: All the flycatchers of this type that we saw in the Kakum area and at Bobiri were this species. It now seems that recent records by some observers of Tessmann's Flycatcher *M. tessmanni* from these places may be erroneous.
- Ussher's Flycatcher *Muscicapa ussheri*: Small numbers of these strange rather hirundine-like Upper Guinea Forest endemics were seen well in the forests. Herbert Taylor Ussher CMG (1836-1880) was at one time the Governor of Ghana (then known as the Gold Coast). His specimens were collected for him by a local man called Aubinn.
- Grey-throated Flycatcher *Myioparus griseigularis*: This is often a very difficult species to extract from the vine tangles that it favours but we found a real poser at Bobiri.
- Lead-coloured Flycatcher *Myioparus plumbeus*: One allowed good views at Shai Hills.

MONARCHIDAE

- Chestnut-capped Flycatcher *Erythrocercus mccallii*: We all saw these pretty little rufous-tailed monarchs at Atewa.
- Dusky Crested Flycatcher *Elminia nigromitrata*: One was seen at Atewa where it flaunted itself in the open for a change.

Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher *Trochocercus nitens*: This often-skulking flycatcher was seen in Kakum National Park and again in Ankasa but like so many of these forest birds they always seemed to favour the thickest tangles and you had to be sharp-eyed to see them well.

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis*: One was seen by some of the group at Shai Hills.

Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone rufiventer*: Also known as Black-headed Paradise Flycatcher, this colourful monarch was common and widespread in the forests.

PLATYSTEIRIDAE

Black-and-white Flycatcher *Bias musicus*: Also known as Vanga Flycatcher, we all had scope views of this wonderful bird with its amazing crest and strange butterfly-like display flight at Aboabo.

Chestnut Wattle-eye *Dyaphorophyia castanea*: These dumpy little birds were first seen well in Kakum National Park. The species is named after the female and these wattle-eyes are sometimes placed in the genus *Platysteira*.

Red-cheeked Wattle-eye *Dyaphorophyia blissetti*: A male dashed back and forth like a speeding bullet at Atewa and you had to be exceptionally quick to follow the movement to where the bird landed each time. This is an Upper Guinea Forest endemic whose range extends to south westernmost Cameroon.

Common Wattle-eye *Platysteira cyanea*: Also known as Brown-throated Wattle-eye which is a name that refers to the female plumage. We saw both sexes well at Shai Hills and a male along the Brenu Road.

Senegal Batis *Batis senegalensis*: Three birds were seen well at Shai Hills.

PICATHARTIDAE

Yellow-headed Picathartes *Picathartes gymnocephalus*: Perhaps the reason to come on this the tour for many people was to have the chance to encounter this almost legendary Upper Guinea Forest endemic. Our visit was timed just before the beginning of the breeding season when there is somewhat more activity around the nest site. We had to walk through cultivation but mainly forest for about an hour along narrow trails over gently rising terrain. It wasn't until we had almost reached the rocks where the birds nest that we had to climb and then only for no more than five minutes. Although we disturbed some birds on arrival we quickly settled into our places and within minutes the picathartes were back again seemingly unperturbed by our presence. We watched the birds until we had all had our fill and then moved quickly away to minimize the disturbance and leave the birds in peace once more. We had all obtained some absolutely marvellous and prolonged views of these amazing creatures thus introducing this most unusual family to the many of the group and completing the family for one lucky person! The alternative name of White-necked Picathartes seems to be erroneous as the neck is actually yellow! The species is classified as 'Vulnerable' in Birdlife International's *Threatened Birds of the World*. The world population is thought to number between 2,500 and 10,000 and habitat loss appears to be the main threat.

TIMALIIDAE

Pale-breasted Illadopsis *Illadopsis rufipennis*: Nothing more than shapes in the foliage were seen at Ankasa.

Brown Illadopsis *Illadopsis fulvescens*: Not an easy bird to see but we had some reasonable looks at Ankasa.

Blackcap Illadopsis *Illadopsis cleaveri*: Nothing more than a shape was glimpsed at Atewa as it crept through the leaf litter.

Rufous-winged Illadopsis *Illadopsis rufescens*: Nothing had prepared us for the walk-away scope views of this Upper Guinea Forest endemic that we managed to obtain almost miraculously at Ankasa. The species is classified as 'Near-threatened' in Birdlife International's *Threatened Birds of the World*. As usual, habitat loss appears to be the main threat.

Puvel's Illadopsis *Illadopsis puveli* (H): One was heard in the thickets at Shai Hills but we had no real hope of getting close enough to where it was. Little is known about Pierre Puvel but he was French and lived in Guinea-Bissau.

Brown Babbler *Turdoides plebejus*: Several groups were seen well at Shai Hills.

Blackcap Babbler *Turdoides reinwardtii*: This species was also at Shai Hills but was a little more furtive.

REMIZIDAE

Forest Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus flavifrons*: An excellent sighting of four birds together from the canopy walkway. Ghana appears to be a very reliable place to see this tiny bird.

Tit-hylia *Pholidornis rufiae*: A good showing with two from the canopy walkway, one at Ankasa and another at Atewa. Alongside Mouse-coloured Penduline Tit, this species lays claim to being the smallest African bird.

NECTARINIIDAE

[There has been a recent revision of the taxonomy of sunbirds with the result that many species have now been placed in different genera.]

Green Sunbird *Anthreptes rectirostris*: First seen well at Antwikwaa. The form concerned is the nominate race, has a yellow chin and was historically treated as a separate species and so may well be again!

Little Green Sunbird *Anthreptes seimundi*: This unobtrusive sunbird was first seen well from the canopy walkway. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.

Fraser's Sunbird *Deleornis fraseri*: Also known as Scarlet-tufted Sunbird it has a long and fairly straight bill, looks rather more like a warbler and was a regular member of the bird parties. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Anthreptes*.

Green-headed Sunbird *Cyanomitra verticalis*: Also known as Olive-backed Sunbird we saw several at Hans Cottage. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.

Blue-throated Brown Sunbird *Cyanomitra cyanoaema*: This large and rather drab sunbird was regularly encountered throughout the forests. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.

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

Buff-throated Sunbird *Chalcomitra adelberti*: We had a number of chances to see this stunning Upper Guinea Forest endemic well. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis*: A male was in the hotel garden where we had brunch at Shai Hills. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.

Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris*: A very common sunbird throughout the tour. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Anthreptes*.

Olive-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris chloropygius*: Just a few widespread sightings in small numbers. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.

Tiny Sunbird *Cinnyris minullus*: A male was seen briefly at Ankasa and Nik saw another briefly at Atewa on 24/4. There do not appear to be any published records for the species at this site. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.

Johanna's Sunbird *Cinnyris johannae*: A pair was seen at Ankasa. John compared the female to a spiderhunter. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*. Johanna Verreaux was the wife of Jules P. Verreaux.

- Superb Sunbird *Cinnyris superbus*: We had several opportunities to see this large and colourful sunbird well in the forests. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.
- Splendid Sunbird *Cinnyris coccinigaster*: A number of glittering examples were seen well throughout the tour but they were probably easiest to see at Hans Cottage. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.
- Copper Sunbird *Cinnyris cupreus*: A farm bush and savannah species. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Nectarinia*.

ZOSTEROPIDAE

Yellow White-eye *Zosterops senegalensis*: Only seen at Kakum and Atewa.

LANIIDAE

Common Fiscal *Lanius collaris*: Most commonly seen on journeys, often sitting on roadside wires.

MALACONOTIDAE

- Yellow-billed Shrike *Corvinella corvine*: About six were seen well on the Winneba Plains.
- Many-coloured Bush-shrike *Malaconotus multicolor*: Heard by all and some of us saw one briefly at Atewa.
- Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike *Malaconotus sulfureopectus*: A brightly coloured pair was seen at the Winneba Plains and a male was found along the Brenu Road.
- Marsh Tchagra *Antichromus minutus*: A pair was well watched along the Brenu Road. The species was formerly placed in the genus *Tchagra*.
- Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis*: A pair was seen at Atewa.
- Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus*: We saw this striking bush-shrike well at the Shai Hills, the Winneba Plains, along the Brenu Road and at Atewa.
- Sabine's Puffback *Dryoscopus sabini*: Also known as Large-billed Puffback, we had several chances to see this species well and our best views were probably from the canopy walkway.
- Northern Puffback *Dryoscopus gambensis*: We had good looks at Shai Hills and on the Winneba Plains.
- Yellow-crowned Gonolek *Laniarius barbarus*: This intensely coloured bush-shrike allowed some excellent views at Shai Hills and on the Winneba Plains.
- Brubru *Nilaus afer*: A male was scoped at Shai Hills.

PRIONOPIDAE

Red-billed Helmet-shrike *Prionops caniceps*: We did well to see groups of these attractive birds at most of the forest patches. This is an Upper Guinea Forest endemic whose range actually reaches south-westernmost Cameroon.

ORIOLIDAE

- Black-winged Oriole *Oriolus nigripennis*: Our best views were obtained in the Kakum forests.
- Western Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus brachyrhynchus*: The white spot at the base of the primaries identified this species. Heard more often than seen we had our best views at Ankasa.

DICRURIDAE

- Shining Drongo *Dicrurus atripennis*: Usually seen accompanying bird parties and always inside the forest.
- Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*: Two were seen at Shai Hills.
- Velvet-mantled Drongo *Dicrurus coracinus*: Widespread and easy to see in the forests.

CORVIDAE

- Pied Crow *Corvus albus*: Common and widespread throughout the tour.
- Piapiac *Ptilostomus afer*: A flock was present at Shai Hills and a few were seen between there and Accra. The name is supposedly an onomatopoeic rendering of the call.

STURNIDAE

Narrow-tailed Starling *Poeoptera lugubris*: Robert pointed out two at Antwikwaa but they escaped before the rest of us could see them.

Forest Chestnut-winged Starling *Onychognathus hartlaubii*: A poor showing as only one was seen at Kakum and two were found at Antwikwaa.

Copper-tailed Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis cupreocauda*: We had several chances to see these Upper Guinea Forest endemics in the Kakum forests but most views were of birds in flight and only one was seen perched in poor light. The species is classified as 'Near Threatened' in Birdlife International's *Threatened Birds of the World*. Habitat loss appears to be the major threat.

Purple Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis purpureus*: Several were seen at Shai Hills.

Splendid Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis splendidus*: Largest numbers were seen at Aboabo.

PASSERIDAE

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus*: Easy to see but mainly on journeys and around human habitation.

PLOCEIDAE

Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis*: This green-backed race *brachypterus*, sometimes known as Swainson's Weaver, was seen widely throughout the tour.

Orange Weaver *Ploceus aurantius*: A small colony was in residence at Hans Cottage.

Vieillot's Black Weaver *Ploceus nigerrimus*: This weaver was abundant outside of the forest and the colony at Hans Cottage was much enjoyed. They were of the very distinctive form *castaneofuscus* that has been treated historically as a separate species, Chestnut-and-black Weaver and so may well be again someday!

Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*: An abundant weaver throughout the tour in the open habitats. Also confusingly known as Black-headed Weaver a name usually associated with Yellow-backed Weaver *P. melanocephalus*.

Yellow-mantled Weaver *Ploceus tricolor*: Small numbers of this handsome weaver were seen in the forests and it was particularly easy to see from the canopy walkway.

Maxwell's Black Weaver *Ploceus albinucha*: This forest weaver was easy to see at Aboabo, Bobiri and Atewa. Sir Hubert Eustace Maxwell (1845-1937) was a Scot, important statesman and the grandfather of Gavin Maxwell. Boyd Alexander named the species after him.

Compact Weaver *Ploceus superciliosus*: Two were seen at Atewa.

Blue-billed Malimbe *Malimbus nitens*: Also known as Gray's Malimbe, we saw small numbers in Kakum National Park. John Edward Gray (1800-75) was a British ornithologist and entomologist and laid a claim to being the world's first stamp collector!

Crested Malimbe *Malimbus malimbicus*: It was easier to see the bird than the crest in the forests.

Red-vented Malimbe *Malimbus scutatus*: Our best views were obtained at Bobiri when the red vents could clearly be seen.

Red-headed Malimbe *Malimbus rubricollis*: The most commonly encountered malimbe and individuals were regularly seen in the forests usually working their way along the trunks and branches.

Red-headed Quelea *Quelea erythrops*: Non-breeding plumaged birds were seen at Antwikwaa and Atewa.

Yellow-crowned Bishop *Euplectes afer*: One male coming into breeding plumage along the Brenu Road was our only sighting.

Black-winged Red Bishop *Euplectes hordeaceus*: We had great views of a brightly coloured male in breeding plumage as we drove to Atewa.

Yellow-mantled Widowbird *Euplectes macroura*: Small flocks were seen on the Winneba Plains and along the Brenu Road but they were only just beginning to come into their breeding plumage.

ESTRILDIDAE

Grey-crowned Negrofinch *Nigrita canicapillus*: We had many chances to get good looks at this attractive finch throughout the tour.

Chestnut-breasted Negrofinch *Nigrita bicolor*: First seen well at Kakum National Park where they were busy nest-building.

White-breasted Negrofinch *Nigrita fusconota*: Pairs of these atypical negrofinches were seen in Kakum National Park and at Aboabo.

Bar-breasted Firefinch *Lagonosticta rufopicta*: Seen from the dining tables at Hans Cottage with more along the Brenu Road.

Blue-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubricata*: Also known as African Firefinch, a dapper pair was enjoyed along the Brenu Road.

Orange-cheeked Waxbill *Estrilda melpoda*: A common and attractive bird seen well throughout the tour.

Black-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda troglodytes*: A pair was seen along the Brenu Road.

Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullatus*: Commonly seen outside of the forest. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Lonchura*.

Black-and-white Mannikin *Spermestes bicolor*: Seen at Antwikwaa and in the farmbush at Atewa. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Lonchura*.

VIDUIDAE

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*: Small numbers including breeding plumaged males were seen during the tour. The species parasitizes waxbills.

MAMMALS

Olive Colobus *Procolobus verus*: Three were seen from the walkway in Kakum National Park.

Olive Baboon *Papio anubis*: A troop was seen at Shai Hills.

Lowé's Monkey *Cercopithecus lowei*: At least one was seen in Kakum National Park.

Lesser Spot-nosed Monkey *Cercopithecus petaurista*: Seemingly the most common monkey in Kakum National Park.

Potto *Perodicticus potto*: One was seen at night in Kakum National Park.

Demidoff's Galago *Galagoides demidoff*: Seen at night in Kakum National Park and at Ankasa.

Straw-coloured Fruit Bat *Eidolon helvum*: A couple were seen by some at our hotel in Kumasi.

Hammer Bat *Hypsignathus monstrosus* (H): Heard at night at Ankasa.

Franquet's Fruit Bat *Epomops franqueti*: The medium to large sized fruit bat seen in Ankasa was probably this species.

Striped Ground Squirrel *Euxerus erythropus*: One was seen in front of the bus as we drove from the picathartes site.

Fire-footed Rope Squirrel *Funisciurus pyrropus*: Small numbers of this attractive squirrel were seen in the forests.

Gambian Sun Squirrel *Heliosciurus gambianus*: A few were seen in the forests.

Red-legged Sun Squirrel *Heliosciurus rufobrachium*: One was seen at Ankasa.

African Giant Squirrel *Protoxerus stangeri*: One was seen at Ankasa.

Pel's Anomalure *Anomalurus peli*: This stunning creature was spotlighted at night in Kakum National Park. Certainly a trip highlight and deservedly one of Geraint's top five!

Gambian Pouched Rat *Cricetomys gambianus*: Two sightings on the roads as we left Ankasa at night were presumably this species. The closely related and very similar looking *C. emini* is supposedly only known from closed forest.

African Wood Mouse *Hylomyscus* sp.: The identification of the small little arboreal mouse that Robert disturbed from its hole is a bit of a mystery but it was probably one of this group although the fur colour isn't particularly consistent with what we saw.

African Palm Civet *Nandinia binotata*: One was seen distantly by some of us at night at Ankasa.

Western Tree Hyrax *Dendrohyrax dorsalis* (H): Heard at night in Kakum National Park.



(top) **Kakum National Park, canopy walkway** (bottom) **Ankasa forest pool and bamboo**
(All photos by Nik Borrow)



(left to right) **Bar-breasted Firefinch** (*Lagonosticta rufopicta*) **Black-rumped Waxbill** (*Estrilda troglodytes*) **Orange Weaver** (*Ploceus aurantius*) **Vieillot's Black Weaver** (*Ploceus nigerrimus*)



(left to right) **Woodland Kingfisher** (*Halcyon senegalensis*) **Pied Kingfisher** (*Ceryle rudis*) **Shining-blue Kingfisher** (*Alcedo quadibrachys*) **Chocolate-backed Kingfisher** (*Halcyon badia*)



(left to right) **White-throated Bee-eater** (*Merops albicollis*) **Marsh Tchagra** (*Antichromus minutus*)
Whistling Cisticola (*Cisticola lateralis*) **Melancholy Woodpecker** (*Dendropicos lugubris*)



The unanimously elected top four birds! (left to right) **Yellow-headed Picathartes** (*Picathartes gymnocephalus*) **Nimba Flycatcher** (*Melaenornis annamarulae*) **Fraser's Eagle Owl** (*Bubo poensis*) **Rufous-sided Broadbill** (*Smithornis rufolateralis*)



(left to right) **Chestnut Wattle-eye** (*Dyaphorophyia castanea*) **Yellow-throated Cuckoo** (*Chrysococcyx flavigularis*) **Golden Greenbul** (*Calyptocichla serina*) **Red-headed Malimbe** (*Malimbus rubricollis*)



(left to right) **Red-fronted Parrot** (*Poicephalus gularis*) **Violet-backed Hylia** (*Hylia violacea*) **Hairy-breasted Barbet** (*Tricholaema hirsuta*) **Stone Partridge** (*Ptilopachus petrosus*) **Large Fairy Hairstreak** (*Hypolycaena antifaunus*) **Common Blue-banded Forester** (*Euphaedra harpalyce*)