

Birdfinders

Ghana Eclipse

Trip report



14th-29th March 2006

Ghana Tour report compiled by Richard White

Tour Participants: Alf Mullins, Gayle and Spencer Radnich, Lee Chua, Adrian Hayward, Steve Lister, Karen Halliday and John Coupe.

Tour Leaders: Richard White and Stephen Bailey

Tour summary

By late evening on the 14th all participants had arrived safely without hiccup, quite a feat for an arrival in any West African destination! We began the next day with an exploration

of Shai Hills Reserve not far from the vibrant capital of Accra. This savanna reserve holds a number of interesting species and makes for a fun mornings birding. Highlights included Double-toothed Barbet, Violet Turaco, Greater Honeyguide and both Brown and Blackcap Babbler. Our next stop was the Volta river where we managed to find our sought-after target, the beautifully elegant White-throated Blue Swallow. We finished the day off birding Sakumo Lagoon near Accra where we saw a fine selection of waterbirds and had views of Black-faced Quailfinch.

On day two we left the capital and made for some salt works where we bumped up our waterbird list with Temmink's Stint being notable. Further west, the Winneba Plains produced a female Black-bellied Bustard, thanks to Steve Lister and a beautiful Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike. A roadside pan just before Cape Coast held African Pygmy-goose, Orange Weaver and African Swamphen, a rare bird in Ghana. It should be noted that these first two days of the tour were relatively cool in comparison with the rest of the tour, overcast skies helping to keep the fierce West African sun at bay. In the late afternoon we arrived at our hotel near Cape Coast, our base for the next six nights.



Our full five days in this area were used to explore the wonders of Kakum National park and the surrounding areas. We spent our time birding the canopy walkway, forest trails, surrounding forest patches and visited the wonderful Elmina Castle, a fascinating slave fort and the oldest of its kind in Africa. The canopy walkway is the best place to get views of forest canopy species and we spent most of our time on the more productive towers 1,2 and 3. Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, Cassin's Hawk-

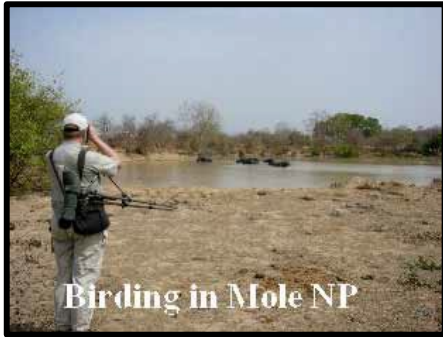
eagle, Little Green Woodpecker, White-headed Woodhoopoe, Rosy Bee-eater and West African Batis were memorable sightings. The forest trails were a little difficult and challenging at times because of the extreme heat yet despite this we did manage to bag some real beauties like Black Dwarf Hornbill, Fire-crested [White-tailed] Alethe, Forest Robin and Rufous-sided Broadbill. We spent a wonderful day in the Aboabo reserve a fairly long drive from Kakum but worth every minute of it. A big flock soon after arrival proved very exciting and we had great views of Blue Cuckooshrike, Forest Woodhoopoe and Preuss's Weaver (Steve Bailey's 5000 bird!). The star bird of the day also made an appearance here, African Piculet. This is a very rare bird anywhere in West Africa and this species represents a seldom seen subspecies. We had incredible views of two birds very close in an open tree sitting long enough to be filmed. The day ended well with the dazzling Black Bee-eater and Preuss's Swallow on the ride home. The Antikwaa section of the reserve proved as exciting with Forest Penduline-tit, another rare bird, being spotted soon after arrival followed by Magpie Mannikin. White-spotted Flufftail was seen well by some, providing for some rather nail-biting birding. Additional highlights in this area were African Finfoot found at a nearby reservoir and a fantastic Green Bush Viper next to the trail to the tower. Birding around our hotel was also fun



and we managed to see goodies like Red-winged Prinia, Piping Hornbill, Marsh Tchagra and Guinea Turaco.

An overnight stay in the Kumasi area broke our journey north and we used spare time in this area to visit the lovely Bobiri Butterfly Reserve. Here we had views of Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill and the stunning Narina Trogon.

Mole National Park was the first stop for us in the northern region. The extreme heat (we



recorded 44 degrees in the shade at one point!) meant that we used the cool hours of the morning and the late afternoon to explore. On arrival we did a bit of casual birding from the pool area and managed to see Stone Partridge and indeed find a new species for Ghana in the way of Ortolan Bunting. The bird was 'scoped and we enjoyed extended views, a dull bird for some but none-the-less a very good find indeed! On our first morning we found Black-faced and Black-bellied Firefinches, Brown-backed

Woodpecker, Long-tailed Glossy-starling, Pygmy and Beautiful Sunbirds and Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, while the afternoon provided great views of Pel's Fishing-owl, a highly-sought-after species, and a female White-fronted Black-chat. A short walk on the morning of departure produced White-crowned Robin-chat and Oriole Warbler.

Continuing north we made a quick stop at the White Volta and had excellent views of Egyptian Plover, an uncommon bird in Ghana and only the second sighting on our tours in this country. We based ourselves in the small town of Bolgatanga in order to bird the far northern Sahelian Zone. Birds like Sun Lark, Speckle-fronted Weaver, Chestnut-bellied Starling, Black Scimitarbill and Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark were enjoyed by all.

It was then time to head south to the town of Nkawkaw. Here we spent a day birding Atewa Forest and although we did add a few new species it was difficult birding. It did, in addition, provide a back-up for spot for many species not seen by all of the group up to this point. Red-rumped Tinkerbird, Melancholy Woodpecker, Black-capped Apalis and Tit Hylia were seen by all.

On the final day of the tour we made for Aburi, an east-facing slope not far from the capital in order to appreciate the total solar eclipse due for 9:10 am that morning. On arrival at the site the moon had already begun to creep its way across the sun. A solar scope and correct viewing equipment allowed us to safely view the build up to what was to be an unbelievably amazing eclipse. Bang on time the moon covered the sun and yells of joy and amazement rang out from the group. The unexpectedly-striking structure of the pearly corona vividly displayed the sun's magnetic field. What a memorable sight and the best possible way to spend the morning of the final day of a very successful trip! En-route to our hotel we stopped in at Sakumo Lagoon for a last look and were treated to great views of several Black Egrets 'mantling'.



Annotated List of Bird Species recorded

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows J. F. Clements *Birds of the World: A Checklist 5th Edition* (2000) Ibis Publishing Company, with current updates.

Cormorants & Shags *Phalacrocoracidae*

Long-tailed (Reed) Cormorant

Phalacrocorax africanus

Seen at wetlands throughout the country, with the highest count of 100+ at the Densu Delta.

Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns *Ardeidae*

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

A well-known, widespread heron, recorded in small numbers throughout Ghana.

Black-headed Heron

Ardea melanocephala

Small numbers species noted in grasslands at Mole NP and Tono Dam.

Purple Heron

Ardea purpurea

Singletons seen at the Densu Delta and Mole NP.

Great (White) Egret

Ardea alba

This familiar species was seen at the Sakumo Lagoon, Densu Delta and other wetlands.

NOTE: The nominate Old World Great Egret may be split from the New World A. a. egretta which would become American Egret. This split is as yet not recognized by Clements.

Black Heron

Egretta ardesiaca

This uncommon species, world-famous for its umbrella-feeding technique was observed at Sakumo Lagoon where we saw a total of four birds.

Intermediate (Yellow-billed) Egret

Egretta intermedia

Generally the least common of the three white, aquatic egrets but seen at several wetlands throughout the tour.

NOTE: This group may be split into 3 species, Yellow-billed Egret E. brachyrhyncha (which is what we recorded in Ghana), Plumed Egret E. plumifera and the nominate Intermediate Egret. This split is as yet not recognized by Clements.

Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

Common in wetlands throughout.

Western Reef-egret

Egretta [garzetta] gularis

Commonly seen at coastal sites in the south, highest count being 50+ at the Densu Delta. Most individuals were of the dark morph.

(Common) Squacco Heron

Ardeola ralloides

Seen at a number of water bodies throughout Ghana.

Cattle Egret

Bubulcus ibis

Ubiquitous, conspicuous and seen on all but one day of the tour.

NOTE: This group may be split into 2 species, the nominate Common Cattle Egret and the Asian/Australasian Eastern Cattle Egret E. coromanda. This split is as yet not recognized by Clements.

Striated (Green-backed) Heron

Butorides striatus

Recorded in small numbers at most wetlands.

NOTE: This species group is treated by Clements as 2 species, the nominate Striated Heron and B. virescens Green Heron of North America but he lumped B. sundevalli Lava Heron of the Galapagos. Other authorities lump all three forms into a single species, called Green-backed Heron (as per Handbook of Birds of the World.)

Black-crowned Night-heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

Up to 7 birds flushed at Hans Cottage Botel with additional sightings of smaller numbers at wetlands in Mole NP.

Hamerkop *Scopidae*

Hamerkop

Scopus umbretta

This bizarre bird, forming a monotypic family endemic to the Afrotropics, was found to be fairly common in the north of Ghana with many seen in the Mole NP and Tono Dam.

Storks *Ciconidae*

Woolly-necked Stork

Ciconia episcopus

A single bird was seen well at Mole NP.

Saddle-billed Stork

Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis

Two adults and two juveniles of this thoroughly impressive species were seen at Mole NP.

Ibises & Spoonbills *Threskiornithidae*

Hadada Ibis

Bostrychia hagedash

Hadadas were commonly found in Mole NP.

Swans, Geese & Ducks *Anatidae*

White-faced Whistling-duck

Dendrocygna viduata

A flock of 40+ seen at Brimsu Reservoir, and flocks of over a thousand at Tono Dam and Sakumo Lagoon.

Spur-winged Goose

Plectropterus gambensis

A large flock of around 50 birds was seen at Tono Dam.

African Pygmy-goose

Nettapus auritus

One bird located at a roadside wetland on the way to Kakum National Park.

Garganey

Anas querquedula

A small flock of these migrants was seen by Steve Lister at Sakumo Lagoon.

Hawks, Kites, Eagles & Vultures *Accipitridae*

Black-shouldered (-winged) Kite

Elanus caeruleus

Small numbers recorded occasionally in open habitats throughout.

Black [Yellow-billed] Kite

Milvus [migrans] aegyptius

This ubiquitous, fork-tailed raptor was found in good numbers throughout the country and recorded on every day.

NOTE: Many authorities treat the resident African subspecies of this raptor as a separate species, Yellow-billed Kite M. aegyptius. This was the only form that we recorded in Ghana.

Palm-nut Vulture

Gypohierax angolensis

Two were seen at Mole NP.

Hooded Vulture

Necrosyrtes monachus

The common vulture around human habitation, with large numbers recorded almost daily.

(African) White-backed Vulture

Gyps africanus

The common vulture in savanna areas, we recorded small numbers each day during our stay in Mole NP.

Beudouin's Snake-Eagle

Circaetus beudouini

We were lucky to get good views of a single bird on our way into Mole NP.

Bateleur

Terathopius ecaudatus

The “tightrope-walker” of the raptor world is a handsome species that we found in small numbers in Mole NP.

Western Marsh-Harrier

Circus aeruginosus

We enjoyed regular sightings of this migrant at various wetlands.

- African Harrier-Hawk (Gymnogene)** *Polyboroides typus*
A pair was resident around the Kakum Canopy Walkway, affording superb views, and up to four were in sight simultaneously from platform three.
- Lizard Buzzard** *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*
Single individuals of this unusual bird were seen in dry woodlands with a total of six sightings.
- Dark Chanting-goshawk** *Melierax metabates*
First found near Mole NP and another seen in the Tono Dam area.
- Gabar Goshawk** *Micronisus gabar*
Three of our group saw one individual in woodland near Tono Dam.
- Red-chested Goshawk** *Accipiter toussenelii*
This forest *Accipiter* was seen in display several times over our accommodation near Kakum NP.
NOTE: Most authorities consider this species to be a West African form of African Goshawk A. tachiro.
- Shikra (Little Banded Goshawk)** *Accipiter badius*
Not an uncommon raptor in dry country sites. We enjoyed sightings of small numbers at Shai Hills and Mole NP.
NOTE: We recorded the Northern Shikra A. b. sphenurus, which some authorities consider distinct from the southern African Southern Shikra A. b. polyzonoides. These forms may also be split from the Asian nominate A. b. badius and other Asian forms. Clements does not as yet recognize any of these splits.
- Black Goshawk (Sparrowhawk)** *Accipiter melanoleucus*
Steve Lister got views of a single bird on our way back from Atewa Forest to Nkawkaw.
- Grasshopper Buzzard** *Butastur rufipennis*
Only found in the north of the country good numbers in and near Mole NP and at Tono Dam.
- Red-necked Buzzard** *Buteo auguralis*
A handsome buzzard is pleasantly common throughout Ghana. Our most memorable views were had in the Kakum area.
- Cassin's Hawk-eagle** *Spizaetus africanus*
A pair of this forest-dwelling eagle was seen from the Kakum Canopy Walkway.
- Martial Eagle** *Polemaetus bellicosus*
We saw a single individual in flight in Mole NP.

Falcons & Caracaras Falconidae

- Eurasian (Common) Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*
Seen at several sites throughout especially in the vicinity of towns.
- Grey Kestrel** *Falco ardosiaceus*
We had our first sighting of a single bird at Shai Hills and had additional sightings of small numbers at several other sites throughout.
- Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus*
We had a couple of sightings in the Mole area and a final sighting en route to Nkawkaw from Bolgatanga.
- Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*
A single individual was seen from our Hotel in Accra.

Pheasants & Partridges Phasianidae

- Double-spurred Francolin** *Francolinus bicalcaratus*
This francolin was encountered at Shai Hills, the Winneba Plains, Hans Cottage Botel and Mole NP.
- Stone Partridge** *Ptilopachus petrosus*
We had a couple of sightings in the Mole area with our most memorable being three birds on our first afternoon in that area.

Guineafowl *Numididae*

Helmeted Guineafowl

Numida meleagris

Commonly observed in the Mole NP.

NOTE: The nominate N. m. meleagris (Helmeted Guineafowl) of East Africa, is sometimes regarded as distinct from the western N. m. galeata (West African Guineafowl – the form we recorded in Ghana) and the southern N. m. mitrata (Tufted Guineafowl.) Clements does not as yet recognize these splits.

Rails, Gallinules & Coots *Rallidae*

White-spotted Flufftail

Sarothrura pulchra

This secretive, forest rallid's hooting call was heard in several forests and some of the group managed to get views in the Antikwaa section of Kakum.

Nkulengu Rail

Himantornis haematopus

This bird's bizarre call was heard at dusk in Kakum NP.

Black Crake

Amaurornis flavirostra

Observed at wetlands near Cape Coast and Mole NP.

African Swamphen

Porphyrio porphyrio

This is a rare bird in Ghana and we managed to get views of two individuals at a wetland near Cape Coast.

Eurasian Moorhen

Gallinula chloropus

Five birds noted at a wetland near Cape Coast.

Finfoots *Heliornithidae*

African Finfoot

Podica senegalensis

A female was seen well in the early evening at Brimsu Reservoir.

Bustards *Otididae*

Black-bellied Bustard

Lissotis melanogaster

Thanks to Mr Lister's vigilance we managed to get good views of a female on the Winneba Plains.

White-bellied Bustard

Leupodotis senegalensis

We flushed three of these in the late afternoon at the airstrip near Bolgatanga.

Jacanas *Jacanidae*

African Jacana

Actophilornis africanus

A widespread and characteristic wader, conspicuous in wetlands throughout the tour.

Stilts & Avocets *Recurvirostridae*

Black-winged Stilt

Himantopus himantopus

Common on the shores of large water bodies, especially the Densu Delta and Sakumo Lagoon.

Thick-knees *Burhinidae*

Senegal Thick-knee

Burhinus senegalensis

This bird was fairly common around water bodies in Mole NP.

Spotted Thick-knee

Burhinus capensis

We were lucky to find two individuals in the Tono Dam area.

Couriers & Pratincoles *Glareolidae*

Egyptian Plover

Pluvianus aegyptius

This is not a common bird in Ghana and is a highly sought after species. We had great scope views of a single bird on the White Volta just south of Tamale.

Collared (Red-winged) Pratincole

Glareola pratincola

The pratincole of wetland margins, we had good numbers at Sakumo Lagoon and the Densu Delta.

Plovers & Lapwings *Charadriidae*

Spur-winged Lapwing

Vanellus spinosus

The northern counterpart of the familiar Blacksmith Plover, these vociferous birds were common and conspicuous in the north at Tono Dam and Mole NP. Our final sightings were had at Sakumo Lagoon.

Black-headed Lapwing

Vanellus tectus

Two individuals were a good find at Tono Dam. This attractive species inhabits particularly dry country.

Wattled Lapwing (Plover)

Vanellus senegallus

This grassland-dwelling lapwing was found in small numbers at wetlands in Mole NP.

Black-bellied (Grey) Plover

Pluvialis squatarola

30+ birds seen at both Sakumo Lagoon and the Densu Delta.

Common Ringed Plover

Charadrius hiaticula

Good numbers of this species were recorded at Sakumo Lagoon and the Densu Delta.

Kittlitz's Plover

Charadrius pecuarius

Small numbers seen at Sakumo Lagoon and the Densu Delta.

Sandpipers & Allies *Scolopacidae*

Black-tailed Godwit

Limosa limosa

Steve Lister spotted a small flock of these at Sakumo Lagoon.

Whimbrel

Numenius phaeopus

Small numbers were seen at the Sakumo Lagoon and the Densu Delta.

Eurasian Curlew

Numenius arquata

A singleton was seen at the Densu Delta.

Spotted Redshank

Tringa erythropus

Several birds were seen at Sakumo Lagoon and the Densu Delta.

Common Redshank

Tringa totanus

One bird was seen at Sakumo Lagoon.

Marsh Sandpiper

Tringa stagnatilis

Another Palearctic wader; seen Sakumo Lagoon.

Common Greenshank

Tringa nebularia

Encountered in good number at Sakumo Lagoon and the Densu Delta.

Green Sandpiper

Tringa ochropus

We had our first sighting en route to Bolgatanga and an additional sighting in the Tono area.

Wood Sandpiper

Tringa glareola

Small numbers of this species were seen at several wetlands throughout.

Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

A common migrant that was seen at most water bodies throughout Ghana.

Ruddy Turnstone

Arenaria interpres

Small numbers were seen at Sakumo Lagoon only.

Sanderling

Calidris alba

Good numbers of this species were seen at Sakumo Lagoon and the Densu Delta.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Good numbers of this species were seen at Sakumo Lagoon (50+) and the Densu Delta.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Steve Lister did very well to find a single one of these at the Densu Delta.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Good numbers of this species were seen at Sakumo Lagoon and the Densu Delta. Some individuals were coming into breeding plumage.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

We observed a handful of birds at Sakumo Lagoon.

Gulls *Laridae*

Pomarine Jaeger (Skua) *Stercorarius pomarinus*

A single bird was seen soaring over the ocean near Sakumo lagoon.

Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua) *Stercorarius parasiticus*

A single bird was seen soaring over the ocean near Sakumo lagoon.

Terns *Sternidae*

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Small numbers were observed at Sakumo lagoon and off shore near Elmina Castle.

Royal Tern *Sterna maxima*

As above, small numbers at Sakumo lagoon and off shore near Elmina Castle.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

We had several birds in flight over the Sakumo Lagoon.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Good numbers were seen at Sakumo Lagoon and the Densu Delta.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

We saw four of these diminutive birds at the Densu Delta.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

We had small numbers of these birds at Sakumo Lagoon and the Densu Delta.

Sandgrouse *Pteroclididae*

Four-banded Sandgrouse *Pterocles quadricinctus*

Flocks were flushed on our nightdrive at the airstrip near Bolgatanga. We encountered 30+ birds on this evening.

Doves & Pigeons *Collumbidae*

Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia*

Common in Accra and other large towns.

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea*

A common species in the far north of Ghana with our first sightings in the town of Bolgatanga.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*

A fairly common widespread species seen throughout Ghana.

Vinaceous Dove *Streptopelia vinacea*

This richly marked dove was common in the drier areas with peak numbers in the Mole NP and Tono Dam areas.

Laughing (Palm) Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

A widespread, familiar species recorded in good numbers throughout Ghana and recorded on every day of the tour.

Black-billed Wood-dove*Turtur abyssinicus*

The common wood-dove of the dry, northern savanna especially in Mole NP and Tono Dam.

Blue-spotted Wood-dove*Turtur afer*

We had several sightings of this bird with our most memorable encounter on the shores of the Brimsu Reservoir where an obliging individual was scoped.

Tambourine Dove*Turtur tympanistria*

A forest equivalent of the wood-doves, and therefore widespread and common in Ghana, we saw small numbers at Kakum, Bobiri and Atewa Forests.

Blue-headed Wood-dove*Turtur brehmeri*

A deep forest species restricted to West Africa, this was one of the first birds we had in Kakum on our morning walk to the canopy tower. A good find indeed and a great looking bird.

Namaqua Dove*Oena capensis*

A common species in the dry north, several were seen in the Bolgatanga and Tono areas.

Bruce's Green-pigeon*Treron waalia*

We enjoyed views of several flocks in the Mole NP area.

African Green-pigeon*Treron calva*

Another common pigeon in Ghana, their distinctive lime-yellow bodies were frequently seen perched atop larger trees.

Parrots, Macaws & Allies *Psittacidae***Rose-ringed Parakeet***Psittacula krameri*

One bird was seen as it flew over the Mole River on our last morning in that area.

(African) Grey Parrot*Psittacus erithacus*

So much better to see them in the wild than as the usual cage bird! We had one bird in Antikwaa and a further four fly over the Bobiri Forest.

Red-fronted Parrot*Poicephalus gulielmi*

We had several flocks in the Kakum area and a single flock in Atewa Forest. We got decent scope views of a single bird on our morning walk on the trails at Kakum NP.

Senegal Parrot*Poicephalus senegalus*

A parrot of drier savanna and woodland commonly encountered in good numbers at Shai Hills, Mole NP and Tono Dam.

Turacos *Musophagidae***Guinea (Green) Turaco***Tauraco persa*

We encountered two pairs near Hans Cottage Botel. A forest edge and secondary growth species.

Yellow-billed (Verreaux's) Turaco*Tauraco macrorhynchus*

A commonly heard turaco of the interior forests, we had a total of three sightings at Kakum NP.

Violet Turaco*Musophaga violacea*

Another stellar turaco, we had superb views of a pair at Shai Hills and additional sightings of small numbers at Mole NP.

Western (Grey) Plantain-eater*Crinifer piscator*

This floppy-winged bird with a maniacal call was seen throughout Ghana, our first sighting was near Accra.

Cuckoos *Cuculidae***Levaillant's Cuckoo***Clamator levaillantii*

We had a brief sighting of a single individual at Atewa Forest.

Black Cuckoo*Cuculus clamosus*

An elusive cuckoo that was seen well by all at Aboabo and heard at several other forest sights.

Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo*Cercococcyx olivinus*

This elusive species was heard on several occasions in Kakum NP.

Klaas's Cuckoo*Chrysococcyx klaas*

This brood parasite favouring the cup nests of woodland birds, we heard this bird several times in the Kakum and Mole areas and got views, albeit a bit backlit, near Hans Cottage Botel.

African Emerald Cuckoo*Chrysococcyx cupreus*

Generally more shy and less common than its congeners, we saw a male and a female well from the walkway at Kakum NP.

Dideric Cuckoo*Chrysococcyx caprius*

This widespread African bird was seen/heard on several occasions in Kakum NP.

Yellowbill (Blue Malkoha)*Ceuthmochares aereus*

This peculiar, malkoha-like cuckoo was fairly conspicuous at all forest sites including Kakum NP, Bobiri and Atewa Forest. We had particularly good views at the Kakum Canopy Walkway.

Black-throated Coucal*Centropus leucogaster*

A huge, reticent West African coucal. Birds were heard at Kakum NP, Bobiri and Atewa Forest.

Senegal Coucal*Centropus senegalensis*

The most commonly encountered coucal with seen birds at most sites throughout.

Typical Owls *Strigidae***Pearl-spotted Owlet***Glaucidium perlatum*

One bird was unfortunately only heard at Mole NP.

Pel's Fishing-owl*Scotopelia peli*

We managed to get fantastic views of a single bird at Mole NP. This is a highly-sought-after and seldom-encountered species and was a tour highlight for many.

Nightjars & Allies *Caprimulgidae***Brown Nightjar***Caprimulgus binotatus*

This species was unfortunately only heard from the Kakum canopy, tapping unfortunately failed to bring the bird within view. This aberrant rainforest nightjar was discovered in Ghana in 1851 and since then, only recorded at one other site in the 1970s.

Long-tailed Nightjar*Caprimulgus climacurus*

Two observed on our nightdrive near the airstrip close to Bolgatanga.

Swamp Nightjar*Caprimulgus natalensis*

We flushed a single bird of what looked like this species in the farmbush at Hans Cottage Botel. This is an unusual record (habitat is wrong) and although we had fairly good views of the bird in flight we could have had more prolonged views to be certain of the species.

Swifts *Apodidae***Mottled Spinetail***Telacanthura ussheri*

We had a good number of sightings in the Kakum area on most of our days in that area.

Sabine's Spinetail*Rhaphidura sabini*

We had small numbers of this species at Aboabo and Antikwaa in Kakum NP.

Cassin's Spinetail*Neafrapus cassini*

This unstable-looking species, with exceptionally broad wings and short tail was seen at Aboabo, and Antikwaa and from the canopy in Kakum NP.

African Palm-Swift*Cypsiurus parvus*

Plentiful around palms throughout Ghana.

NOTE: The nominate African form of the Palm-Swift is considered to be distinct from the Malagasy form C. p. gracilis by some authorities. Clements does not as yet recognize this split.

Common Swift*Apus apus*

This species was seen on a daily basis during our days in the Kakum area. First encounters were had from the canopy walkway.

Little Swift*Apus affinis*

The common urban swift seen on every day of the tour.

Trogon Trogonidae**Narina Trogon***Apaloderma narina*

One of these spectacular birds was seen on our walk in Bobiri Forest.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae**Malachite Kingfisher***Alcedo cristata*

The common, small kingfisher of aquatic habitats, recorded regularly at wetlands and rivers. Highest count of three at the Densu Delta.

African Pygmy-kingfisher*Ispidina (Ceyx) picta*

This beautiful little bird was first seen at Shai Hills, with further records from Kakum NP

Chocolate-backed Kingfisher*Halcyon badia*

Two birds were seen exceptionally well from the canopy walkway in Kakum NP. This was one of the first species we identified from the canopy walkway, a lucky find indeed. In addition we were treated to scope views of a single bird in Atewa.

Grey-headed (Chestnut-bellied) Kingfisher*Halcyon leucocephala*

We had fantastic encounters with this superb bird, up to six birds seen daily at Mole NP.

Woodland Kingfisher*Halcyon senegalensis*

One of the characteristic sounds of moist African savanna, this bird was encountered in all areas save those in the extreme north. They are especially common in secondary growth and cultivated areas.

Blue-breasted Kingfisher*Halcyon malimbica*

This forest equivalent of the Woodland Kingfisher was seen once at Mole NP and heard at Kakum NP.

Striped Kingfisher*Halcyon chelicuti*

Rather drabber than its spectacular cousins, this small, terrestrial kingfisher was seen exceptionally well in Mole NP and encountered again at the airstrip near Bolgatanga.

Giant Kingfisher*Megaceryle maxima*

The goliath of the kingfisher world, we had a single bird on several occasions at Hans Cottage Motel and enjoyed an additional sighting at Brimsu Reservoir.

Pied Kingfisher*Ceryle rudis*

The world's commonest kingfisher was seen in large numbers in wetlands throughout Ghana.

Bee-eaters Meropidae**Black Bee-eater***Merops gularis*

This truly magnificent forest bee-eater, surely one of the world's finest, was seen at several locations. We had our first encounter of a pair of birds at Aboabo and had additional sightings at Antikwaa and the Kakum Canopy.

Red-throated Bee-eater*Merops bulocki*

The northern equivalent of the more familiar White-fronted Bee-eater and every bit as beautiful, good numbers were found in Mole NP.

Little Bee-eater*Merops pusillus*

We had a pair in Mole NP and had an additional sighting in the Tono Dam area.

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater*Merops hirundineus*

This is a rather uncommon bird in Ghana and we were lucky to find a pair in Shai Hills.

White-throated Bee-eater*Merops albicollis*

This species, which breeds in the Sahelian savanna but winters in the Equatorial forest belt, was fairly common in southern Ghana.

European Bee-eater*Merops apiaster*

First encountered in Mole NP (a flock of 60+) and seen again in the Tono Dam area.

Rosy Bee-eater*Merops malimbicus*

This beautiful *Merops* was seen in small flocks from the canopy walkway in Kakum NP. This species breeds along large rivers in Nigeria and spends the non-breeding season over forests and moist savanna in Ghana.

Northern Carmine Bee-eater*Merops nubicus*

Another magnificent bee-eater, a single was seen in flight just before we climbed in the van to depart Mole NP.

NOTE: Some authorities lump this form with Southern Carmine Bee-eater M. nubicoides and use the name Carmine Bee-eater M. nubicus.

Rollers Coraciidae**Abyssinian Roller***Coracias abyssinica*

A common roller recorded throughout the dry north of the country.

Rufous-crowned Roller*Coracias naevia*

One pair was seen in Shai Hills and we had additional sightings of singletons in Mole NP and Tono Dam.

Blue-bellied Roller*Coracias cyanogaster*

This stunning roller was seen in open woodland en route from Kumasi to Bolgatanga.

Broad-billed Roller*Eurystomus glaucurus*

We had encounters with a small number of this species in Shai Hills and at Mole NP.

Blue-throated Roller*Eurystomus gularis*

Replaces Broad-billed Roller in closed forest environments and recorded in Kakum NP on all of our days in that area.

Hoopoes Upupidae**Eurasian Hoopoe***Upupa epops*

Some of the group saw a single bird in flight in the Bolgatanga area on our pm walk near the airstrip.

Woodhoopoes Phoeniculidae**Green Woodhoopoe***Phoeniculus purpureus*

A noisy family party was seen in Mole NP and we had an additional sighting in the Tono Dam area. Karen Halliday, interestingly enough, had a sighting in the Hotel grounds in Accra.

White-headed Woodhoopoe*Phoeniculus bollei*

A characterful forest bird, a pair was seen well by most of the group from the Canopy walkway.

Forest Woodhoopoe*Phoeniculus castaneiceps*

This is a relatively scarce bird in Ghana. We were fortunate to get views of a pair at Aboabo near Kakum NP.

Black Scimitarbill*Rhinopomastus aterrimus*

This species was seen twice, initially at Shai Hills and then again at the airstrip near Bolgatanga.

Hornbills Bucerotidae**White-crested Hornbill***Tockus albocristatus*

We had several frustrating encounters with this odd-looking hornbill in Kakum NP. Eventually most of the group managed to get good views but birds never sat for long and were often obscured by foliage.

Black Dwarf Hornbill*Tockus hartlaubi*

This is a very tough bird to see anywhere and we were very fortunate to find a single bird, eventually scoped, on our walk in the Kakum understorey.

Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill*Tockus camurus*

This elusive forest interior species was glimpsed in Kakum NP and then seen by most of the group in Bobiri.

Northern Red-billed Hornbill*Tockus erythrorhynchus*

Small numbers of this species were seen at Mole NP and around Tono Dam.

African Pied Hornbill*Tockus fasciatus*

This species is very common throughout forested and farmbush areas in southern Ghana.

African Grey Hornbill*Tockus nasutus*

The common savanna hornbill in Ghana, with large numbers seen in Shai Hills and the drier northern part of the country.

Piping Hornbill*Ceratogymna fistulator*

We had several sightings of small numbers near Hans Cottage Motel and a trio from the Canopy Walkway.

Barbets Capitonidae**Naked-faced Barbet***Gymnobucco calvus*

We had several encounters of small numbers in the Kakum and Atewa areas.

Bristle-nosed Barbet*Gymnobucco peli*

Generally a scarcer bird than the preceding species, this was however not the case on this tour. Encounters were had at most sites visited in the Kakum area with an additional sighting of large (nesting?) colony in a dead tree at Atewa Forest.

Speckled Tinkerbird*Pogoniulus scolopaceus*

A scruffy, ubiquitous bird in forests and forest edge in Ghana, where its purring call is one of the common background sounds. We obtained great views on many occasions at Kakum NP.

Red-rumped Tinkerbird*Pogoniulus atroflavus*

We enjoyed views of several birds at Kakum NP and Atewa Forest.

Yellow-throated Tinkerbird*Pogoniulus subsulphureus*

This bird was heard fairly often in Kakum NP and Atewa where we managed to obtain good views of several birds.

Yellow (Golden)-rumped Tinkerbird*Pogoniulus bilineatus*

A common forest-edge species. Small numbers were seen and heard in farmbush near Kakum NP.

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird*Pogoniulus chrysoconus*

A savanna species seen at Shai Hills where we had six birds with similar numbers seen at Mole NP. Also recorded at Tono Dam.

Yellow-spotted Barbet*Buccanodon duchaillui*

We enjoyed excellent scope views of one of these attractive barbets at Aboabo. Additional sightings of several birds were had at Atewa Forest.

Hairy-breasted Barbet*Tricholaema hirsuta*

This forest barbet was seen well in Kakum NP and surrounds and at Atewa.

Vieillot's Barbet*Lybius vieilloti*

A bird of more open woodland recorded on numerous occasions after our first sighting at Shai Hills.

Double-toothed Barbet*Lybius bidentatus*

We managed to get views of two birds at Shai Hills and a singleton at Winneba Plains.

Yellow-billed Barbet*Trachyphonus purpuratus*

This is an elusive forest barbet and we were lucky to get views of a single bird at Aboabo.

Honeyguides *Indicatoridae***Greater Honeyguide***Indicator indicator*

We obtained great views of this species at Shai Hills.

Lesser Honeyguide*Indicator minor*

We had a sighting of a single bird on the Mole River in Mole NP.

Woodpeckers & Allies *Picidae***African Piculet***Sasia africana*

We were very lucky to find a pair of this species at Aboabo where we enjoyed superb views. This is a very rare bird in Ghana and an excellent find.

Eurasian Wryneck*Jynx torquilla*

We were very fortunate to find a single bird on our afternoon walk at the airstrip near Bolgatanga.

Golden-tailed Woodpecker*Campethera abingoni*

We were lucky to find this species in Mole NP where it is uncommon.

Little Green Woodpecker*Campethera maculosa*

This is also an uncommon species and we did well to get scope views of a single bird at the canopy walkway.

Buff-spotted Woodpecker*Campethera nivosa*

We had great views of this good-looking species in farmbrush at Antikwaa.

Cardinal Woodpecker*Dendropicos fuscescens*

We had a single bird in Shai Hills and had an additional sighting in Mole NP.

Melancholy Woodpecker*Dendropicos lugubris*

A single bird was seen well by all in Atewa.

NOTE: This species is sometimes lumped in Gabon Woodpecker D.gabonensis.

Fire-bellied Woodpecker*Dendropicos pyrrhogaster*

We had brief views of a single bird in Kakum NP. A much better sighting of a pair was enjoyed by all at Bobiri.

Grey Woodpecker*Dendropicos goertae*

Several individuals located in the dry north at Mole NP.

Brown-backed Woodpecker*Dendropicos obsoletus*

One of these diminutive, dry country woodpeckers was seen well at Mole NP.

Broadbills *Eurylaimidae***Rufous-sided Broadbill***Smithornis rufolateralis*

Another trip highlight was excellent scope views of a displaying individual on the interior trails of Kakum NP. Its noisy, circular display flight was marvelous indeed.

Larks *Alaudidae*

Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix leucotis*

A common species of the dry north, with thirty + seen around Tono Dam.

Sun Lark *Galerida modesta*

We enjoyed several sightings of these birds near Tono Dam and at the airstrip near Bolgatanga.

Swallows *Hirundinidae*

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Good numbers of this species were recorded throughout Ghana.

NOTE: This cosmopolitan species complex is likely to be split based on the Old World nominate form and its congeners, which would become Eurasian Swallow H. rustica and the New World Barn Swallow H. erythrogaster. Further splitting within the group may also be done e.g. the distinctive H. r. savignii, which breeds in the Nile Valley and would be named Egyptian Swallow. We only recorded representatives of the Palearctic migrant Barn/Eurasian Swallow. Clements does not as yet recognize any of these splits.

Red-chested Swallow *Hirundo lucida*

This swallow was seen around the ancient mosque at Laribanga and around Tono Dam.

Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo aethiopica*

We had sightings of small numbers in the south of the country especially near settlements and coastal areas.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*

Several birds were seen over a water body near Mole NP.

NOTE: This species complex is likely to be split based on the African nominate form which would become African Wire-tailed Swallow and the Asian Wire-tailed Swallow which would be H. filifera. Clements does not as yet recognize this split.

White-throated Blue Swallow *Hirundo nigrita*

This is a very beautiful and sought-after species. We were blessed with views of two birds over the Volta River north of Shai Hills.

Lesser Striped-swallow *Hirundo abyssinica*

A widespread African swallow that is fairly common in Ghana and seen almost daily.

Mosque Swallow *Hirundo senegalensis*

We had sightings of several birds in the south of the country most notably in the Kakum and coastal areas.

Preuss's (Cliff-) Swallow *Hirundo preussi*

We enjoyed a couple of hundred birds coming into roost in a culvert at Ntafriwaso on our way back from Aboabo.

Common House-martin *Delichon urbica*

We had singletons at Kakum NP, Mole NP and at Atewa.

Wagtails & Pipits *Motacillidae*

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*

A common and familiar African bird that we found on many days.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

A common Palearctic migrant recorded at most wetland sites throughout Ghana.

Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus*

We had a single bird in the grassy areas on the edge of Sakumo Lagoon.

Plain-backed Pipit*Anthus leucophrys*

As above, a single seen on the grassy areas on the edge of Sakumo Lagoon.

NOTE: A. l. goodsoni of central and SW Kenya may be split off from the nominate group A. leucophrys. The Ghanaian races we recorded would probably remain within the nominate complex. Clements does not recognize this split.

Tree Pipit*Anthus trivialis*

We heard this species at Shai Hills but failed to locate it as were distracted by a flock of more interesting species!

Cuckoo-shrikes *Campephagidae***Blue Cuckooshrike***Coracina azurea*

Seen at both the canopy walkway and Aboabo, Kakum NP. One of West Africa's most beautiful forest birds.

Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike*Campephaga phoenicea*

We had good views of a pair of these at the Mole River in Mole NP. The male was of the yellow-shouldered variety!

Bulbuls *Pycnonotidae***Common Bulbul***Pycnonotus barbatus*

A ubiquitous species and one of the few birds to be recorded on almost every day of the trip, with high daily tallies.

NOTE: Another very confusing polytypic species complex. Several Asian and African forms have already been recognized as distinct species within the super-species. The form that we saw in Ghana, P. b. inornatus may be split as White-vented Bulbul, Clements does not recognize this split.

Little Greenbul*Andropadus virens*

This, the commonest forest edge greenbul was heard/seen on numerous occasions at all forest sites.

(Little) Grey Greenbul*Andropadus gracilis*

We had several encounters with this species at Kakum and at Atewa.

Plain (Cameroon Sombre) Greenbul*Andropadus curvirostris*

We encountered small numbers of this species in Kakum and at Atewa Forest.

Slender-billed Greenbul*Andropadus gracilirostris*

The common greenbul of forest canopy, regularly seen in Kakum NP and at Atewa.

Yellow-whiskered Greenbul*Andropadus latirostris*

Two birds were seen on separate occasions from the canopy walkway, Kakum NP.

Golden (Serine) Greenbul*Calyptocichla serina*

We had four birds during our time in the Kakum area and two at Atewa. An uncommon and unique greenbul, the only one sporting a pink bill.

Honeyguide Greenbul*Baeopogon indicator*

We had several encounters in the Kakum area with our best view being had at Antikwaa where we had a bird feeding in an open fruiting tree. Also recorded at Atewa.

Spotted Greenbul*Ixonotus guttatus*

Steve Bailey saw a single bird in a mixed feeding flock in the understorey in Kakum NP.

Simple Greenbul*Chlorochicla simplex*

A secondary growth species; first seen on the Winneba Plains and again in farmbush at Atewa.

Swamp (~Palm) Greenbul*Thescelocichla leucopleura*

This large noisy greenbul was seen at both Kakum NP and Atewa Forests.

Icterine Greenbul*Phyllastrephus icterinus*

We had several parties of these birds in the understorey in Kakum NP.

Yellow-spotted (Western/Common) Nicator *Nicator chloris*

This vociferous songster was seen briefly at Kakum and Bobiri Forests. We all however finally got good views at Atewa Forest.

Western Bearded-greenbul *Criniger barbatus*

Another difficult forest understorey species, which we unfortunately only heard in Kakum NP and Atewa.

Thrushes & Allies *Turdidae*

Finsch's Flycatcher-Thrush *Neocossyphus finschii*

Most of the group had excellent views of this species at very close quarters on the canopy walkway. We had an additional and certainly inferior sighting in Atewa.

African Thrush *Turdus pelios*

We obtained sightings of this species in Accra, near Hans Cottage and at Mole NP.

Fire-crested Alethe *Alethe diademata*

This elusive, ant-swarm attending species was seen very well by the group in Kakum NP.

NOTE: The East African form is sometimes split from the nominate White-tailed Alethe of West Africa (which we recorded in Ghana), becoming A. castanea.

Cisticolas & Allies *Cisticolidae*

Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops*

This moist grassland and swamp dwelling cisticola was heard in moist farmbrush on several occasions and seen at Hans Cottage Motel.

Whistling Cisticola *Cisticola lateralis*

A secondary growth and cultivation species, we had good views of two birds at Antikwaa.

Winding Cisticola *Cisticola galactotes*

At least a half dozen of these wetland cisticolas were seen at Densu Delta.

NOTE: This widespread African species complex has been proposed for multi-species splitting and the Ghanaian form C. g. amphilecta is likely to remain within the nominate grouping.

Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis*

We had two of these large Cisticolas at Shai Hills and a further three at the Winneba Plains.

Siffling (Short-winged) Cisticola *Cisticola brachypterus*

Three birds were seen well at the Winneba Plains.

Rufous Cisticola *Cisticola rufus*

One of these uncommon birds seen at Mole NP.

Zitting (Fan-tailed) Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*

The world's most widespread Cisticola, first seen at the Densu Delta and then again at Tono Dam.

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava*

Another noisy and familiar African warbler, we recorded this species in small numbers at most sites.

Red-winged Prinia (Warbler) *Heliolais erythroptera*

This attractive species was seen well in scrubby vegetation at Hans Cottage Motel and again in the Mole NP and Tono areas.

Black-capped Apalis *Apalis nigriceps*

A beautifully marked, canopy Apalis. Seen briefly at Kakum NP but encountered more regularly and better seen at Atewa Forest.

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida*

This is a strangely rare bird in Ghana. We were lucky to get two birds at close range in Mole NP.

Sharpe's Apalis *Apalis sharpii*

A forest species that was seen or heard on all visits to Kakum NP. Also seen at Atewa. This good-looking bird is an Upper Guinea endemic.

Oriole Warbler*Hypergerus atriceps*

One of these unusual creatures was located in Mole NP but unfortunately not seen by all.

Green-backed (Grey-backed) Camaroptera *Camaroptera brachyura*

The bleating calls of this common bird were heard in moist wooded habitat throughout Ghana, with sighting from Hans Cottage Botel, Mole NP and Tono Dam.

NOTE: Most authorities now recognize the nominate green-backed forms of this widespread African warbler as distinct from the grey-backed forms C. brevicaudata. We encountered the grey-backed form in Ghana. Clements still lumps these two groups.

Yellow-browed Camaroptera*Camaroptera superciliaris*

This handsome warbler was seen at Aboabo and Kakum NP and heard at most other forest sites.

Olive-green Camaroptera*Camaroptera chloronota*

Another skulking camaroptera, its piercing calls were heard at all forest sites and it was seen on several occasions in Kakum NP.

Old World Warblers *Sylviidae***Senegal Eremomela***Eremomela pusilla*

A common species recorded in woodlands throughout Ghana. We first recorded this species at Shai Hills and had additional sightings in Mole NP and Tono Dam.

NOTE: This species is sometimes lumped into the East African E. pusilla (Green-backed Eremomela.).

Rufous- (Brown-) crowned Eremomela*Eremomela badiceps*

A common forest canopy species, we enjoyed exceptionally close views from the canopy walkway, with further sightings from Atewa Forest.

Green Crombec*Sylvietta virens*

The commonest and most widespread forest crombec, though small and inconspicuous (except by call). We heard and/or saw this species almost daily in the Kakum area.

Lemon-bellied Crombec*Sylvietta denti*

We had two sightings of this bird. Initially in good forest above Nkawkaw and again at Atewa Forest.

Northern Crombec*Sylvietta brachyura*

The crombec of dry *Acacia* woodland, seen well, surprisingly enough, only once at Mole NP.

Kemp's Longbill*Macrosphenus kempii*

We had very poor views of this rare and elusive warbler at Kakum NP.

Grey Longbill*Macrosphenus concolor*

Another secretive species that was seen poorly on several occasions in the Kakum area. Fortunately by the time we had left the area we had all had good views of this frustrating and rather drab little critter.

Green Hylia*Hylia prasina*

Its "HEE-lia!" call was one of the common background sounds at all the forest sites on the tour, with most of our sightings had in the Kakum NP area.

Willow Warbler*Phylloscopus trochilus*

We saw this bird once in the Tono area.

Wood Warbler*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

We enjoyed several sightings of this bird in the Kakum and Atewa areas.

Violet-backed Hylia*Hylia violacea*

A beautiful canopy dweller usually found in mixed species flocks and restricted to West Africa. Pairs were seen at Antikwaa and from the canopy walkway, and a single at Bobiri.

Old World Flycatchers *Muscicapidae*

- Pale Flycatcher** *Bradornis pallidus*
One bird was seen well in Mole NP.
- Northern Black-flycatcher** *Melaenornis edolioides*
A common species in Mole NP (up to 10+ daily) but first seen in Shai Hills.
- African Forest-flycatcher** *Fraseria ocreata*
We had a total of three birds in the Kakum area.
- Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*
This Palearctic migrant was seen on several occasions in the south of the country.
- Ussher's Flycatcher** *Muscicapa ussheri*
A swallow-like bird often seen perched in groups on dead snags high above the forest canopy, small numbers seen daily at Kakum NP and Atewa.
- Olivaceous Flycatcher** *Muscicapa olivascens*
This is a very rare bird and seldom seen species. Some of the group managed to get views in Atewa Forest.
- Dusky-blue Flycatcher** *Muscicapa comitata*
We found a pair, possibly nesting, on more than one occasion in a palm tree at the tourist center in Kakum NP.
- Tessmann's Flycatcher** *Muscicapa tessmanni*
Steve Lister had one of these from the canopy at Kakum NP, this is a particularly rare and little known species.
- Ashy Flycatcher** *Muscicapa caerulescens*
This widespread bird was seen well at Antikwaa and at Atewa.
- Grey Tit- (Lead-coloured/Fantailed) flycatcher** *Myioparus plumbeus*
This species was unfortunately only heard at Shai Hills.
- European Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*
A common Palearctic migrant recorded regularly in Mole NP.
- Forest Robin** *Stiphornis erythrothorax*
After much trying we all got superb views of this stunning little bird on the Kakum trails.
- Snowy-crowned Robin-chat** *Cossypha niveicapilla*
A single bird was seen in Mole NP.
- White-crowned Robin-chat** *Cossypha niveicapilla*
A pair was seen in gallery forest on the Mole River in Mole NP.
- Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*
Two birds were seen on the Winneba Plains. Also at Mole. A Palearctic migrant.
- White-fronted Black-chat** *Myrmecocichla albifrons*
We were lucky to get views of a female after our successful hunt for Pel's Fishing-owl in Mole NP. We had excellent views of this elusive species.

Wattle-eyes *Platysteiridae*

- Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher** *Bias musicus*
We had frustrating views of a single female at Antikwaa and then better views, with a scope, outside our hotel in Kumasi.
- Brown-throated (Common) Wattle-eye** *Platysteira cyanea*
This is a fairly commonly heard bird in much of Ghana, our most memorable encounter was a pair of rather vocal birds in farmbush near Hans Cottage Hotel.
- Chestnut Wattle-eye** *Platysteira castanea*
We had a total of four birds during our time in Kakum NP.
- Senegal Batis** *Batis senegalensis*
This attractive species was seen in Shai Hills and daily in Mole NP.

West African Batis*Batis occulta*

We were lucky to see this seldom observed canopy species, initially from the walkway and then again in Atewa Forest.

NOTE: This species is sometimes lumped into the Bioko Batis B. poensis

Monarch Flycatchers *Monarchidae***Chestnut-capped Flycatcher***Erythrocercus mccallii*

A snappy-looking, sprightly flycatcher recorded in small groups at Kakum NP, with superb close encounters from the canopy walkway. We had additional sightings in the Atewa area.

African Blue Flycatcher*Elminia longicauda*

Another lively bird, which constantly fans and wags its tail, we had sightings of a single bird at Mole NP.

Blue-headed Crested-flycatcher (Monarch) *Trochocercus nitens*

Another shy forest flycatcher, but with a strange *Glaucidium* owlet-like call. Only some of the group, that braved the forest during the heat of the day managed to see this elusive species.

Black-headed (Red-bellied) Paradise-flycatcher *Terpsiphone rufiventer*

Common in all forests but none-the-less a wonderful-looking bird.

African Paradise-flycatcher*Terpsiphone viridis*

A handsome bird recorded on several occasions in Mole NP with a notable sighting of a white-phase male.

NOTE: The northern races of this widespread African species which include the nominate form are likely to be separated from the southern races which would become Grey-headed Paradise-Flycatcher T. plumbeiceps. The subspecies that we recorded in Ghana, T. v. ferreti will fall within the northern African Paradise-Flycatcher complex T. viridis if the group were to be split. Beside plumage and distributional differences, only the northern forms display polymorphism in males and we observed an example of this phenomenon in Ghana. Clements does not as yet recognize this split.

Babblers *Timaliidae***Blackcap Babbler***Turdoides reinwardtii*

One family group was seen by all at Shai Hills.

Brown Babbler*Turdoides plebejus*

One family group was seen by all at Shai Hills and we had an additional sighting en route to Cape Coast.

Chickadees & Tits *Paridae***White-shouldered Black-tit***Melaniparus guineensis*

We had a sighting at Shai Hills and small numbers were seen daily in Mole NP.

Penduline-tits *Remizidae***Tit-hylia***Pholidornis rushiae*

This delightful little bird was seen in Kakum NP and at Antikwaa. We also had a single bird at very close quarters in Atewa Forest. Africa's smallest bird!

Forest Penduline-tit*Anthoscopus flavifrons*

This is a very seldom-recorded species and a very special find indeed. We enjoyed extended views, with occasional scope looks, at Antikwaa.

Sunbirds & Spiderhunters *Nectariniidae*

Scarlet-tufted (Fraser's) Sunbird *Deleornis (Anthreptes) fraseri*

Not uncommon in forests in the south favouring tangled vines. We had several encounters at most sites in the Kakum area and at Atewa.

NOTE: The species is sometimes lumped with the East African Grey-headed Sunbird D. axillaris.

Seimund's (Little Green) Sunbird *Anthreptes seimundi*

Small numbers were recorded on several occasions in Kakum NP with additional sighting of about six birds on our day in Atewa. A non-descript canopy species.

Green Sunbird *Anthreptes rectirostris*

We saw about three of these attractive birds in Atewa.

NOTE: This species is sometimes split into two forms, the Eastern Grey-chinned Sunbird A. tephrolaemus and the nominate Western Yellow-chinned Sunbird (we recorded the latter form in Ghana.)

Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris*

The commonest forest sunbird in Ghana, recorded on all forest excursions.

Pygmy Sunbird *Hedydipna platura*

We had these birds on two days in the Mole area where they were not uncommon.

Green-headed Sunbird *Cyanomitra verticalis*

We had superb views of several birds at Hans Cottage Botel.

Blue-throated Brown Sunbird *Cyanomitra cyanoaema*

Our only sighting of this bird was at Aboabo.

Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra obscura*

Several birds were seen or heard at Kakum, Bobiri and Atewa.

Buff-throated Sunbird *Chalcomitra adelberti*

This stunning sunbird, restricted to West Africa, was not as common as we usually experience on this tour. Views we had by some at Kakum, Hans Cottage, Kumasi and finally at Atewa where all managed to connect with this wanted bird.

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis*

A common bird in northern Ghana where we recorded it on many occasions.

Olive-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris chloropygius*

A forest edge species seen on several occasions in Kakum NP.

Tiny Sunbird *Cinnyris minullus*

A diminutive canopy-dwelling double-collared sunbird that was seen from the canopy walkway, Kakum NP, on several occasions and at Atewa.

Beautiful Sunbird *Cinnyris pulchellus*

This exquisite sunbird is common only in the drier northern savanna and was seen regularly in Mole NP.

Splendid Sunbird *Cinnyris coccinigastrus*

This stunning bird was seen well at Shai Hills and by some at the hotel where we had lunch in Tamale.

Superb Sunbird *Cinnyris superbus*

Another stunning sunbird, seen well at Antikwaa and Atewa.

Copper Sunbird *Cinnyris cupreus*

We obtained excellent views of several birds especially at Hans Cottage Botel.

White-eyes *Zosteropidae*

African Yellow White-eye *Zosterops senegalensis*

The only white-eye in Ghana, we had a pair at the tourist center in Kakum.

Old World Orioles *Oriolidae*

African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus*

One bird was seen by most of the group in Mole NP.

Western Black-headed Oriole*Oriolus brachyrhynchus*

Seen once at Kakum from the walkway and several times in Atewa Forest.

Black-winged Oriole*Oriolus nigripennis*

Commoner than the above species; small numbers of this forest edge species were seen on most days at Kakum NP and at Atewa.

Shrikes *Laniidae***Common Fiscal***Lanius collaris*

A widespread species of scrub and farmlands in southern Ghana, we first recorded it en route to Hans Cottage Botel.

Woodchat Shrike*Lanius senator*

We enjoyed views of this Palaearctic migrant at Mole NP and at the airstrip near Bolgtanga.

Yellow-billed Shrike*Corvinella corvina*

Seen most en route to Hans Cottage from the Capital and near Shai Hills. We got our best views however at the Winneba Plains.

Bushshrikes & Allies *Malaconotidae***Brubru***Nilaus afer*

A widespread African bird seen in dry savanna in Mole NP and in the Tono area.

NOTE: This previously monotypic genus might be split 4 ways: Northern Brubru N. afer, Black-browed Brubru N. nigritemporalis, Angola Brubru N. affinis and Southern Brubru N. brubru. Only the Northern Brubru occurs in Ghana. Clements does not as yet recognize these splits.

Northern Puffback*Dryoscopus gambensis*

We had a pair at both Shai Hills and Hans Cottage and three birds in Mole NP.

Sabine's Puffback*Dryoscopus sabini*

We had several memorable encounters from the Kakum canopy walkway.

Marsh Tchagra*Tchagra minuta*

This is a rather uncommon bird in Ghana and we were fortunate to get views of a pair in the farmbush behind Hans Cottage Botel.

Black-crowned Tchagra*Tchagra senegala*

The most widely distributed tchagra, seen at several sites throughout.

NOTE: Moroccan Tchagra T. s. cucullata of north-west Africa may be split from the nominate form which we recorded in Ghana. Clements does not as yet recognize this split.

Brown-crowned Tchagra*Tchagra australis*

We had poor views of one bird at Hans Cottage Botel.

Tropical Boubou*Laniarius aethiopicus*

We unfortunately only heard this species at Hans Cottage Botel.

Yellow-crowned Gonolek*Laniarius barbarus*

A brilliantly coloured bush-shrike that was seen at the Shai Hills, the Winneba Plains and Mole NP.

Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike*Telophorus sulfureopectus*

Another widespread African savanna species that was seen initially at the Winneba Plains and again at Mole NP.

Grey-headed Bushshrike*Malaconotus blanchoti*

Alf saw one of these on his morning walk around Hans Cottage Botel.

Helmetshrikes & Allies *Prionopidae***White Helmetshrike***Prionops plumatus*

We were lucky to get a flock of five of these stunning birds at Shai Hills.

Red-billed Helmetshrike*Prionops caniceps*

We had really good views of a flock of about 8 birds at Aboabo.

Drongos *Dicruridae***Square-tailed Drongo***Dicrurus ludwigii*

We had a pair of these in gallery forest along the Mole River.

Shining Drongo*Dicrurus atripennis*

We had a pair of these noisy critters in an understorey flock in Kakum NP.

Fork-tailed Drongo*Dicrurus adsimilis*

We had a couple sightings of these in Mole NP.

Velvet-mantled Drongo*Dicrurus modestus*

This recently split forest equivalent of the Fork-tailed Drongo was found to be common at all forest sites. Birds were conspicuous around the canopy walkway.

NOTE: Older versions of Clements lump this species within Fork-tailed Drongo D. adsimilis but the split has been recognized in recent Clements updates.

Crows, Jays & Magpies *Corvidae***Piapiac***Ptilostomus afer*

A flock of four individuals of this aberrant corvid were seen at Shai Hills. We had additional sightings in the Bolgatanga area.

Pied Crow*Corvus albus*

A common and familiar crow, recorded in good numbers on our first day and seen daily thereafter.

Starlings *Sturnidae***Bronze-tailed Starling***Lamprotornis chalcurus*

We enjoyed a sighting of this bird in the capital, Accra.

Splendid Starling*Lamprotornis splendidus*

This spectacular, large starling was seen in the capital and at Hans Cottage Motel. We had an additional sighting in the Kumasi area.

Purple Starling*Lamprotornis purpureus*

We had sightings in Accra, near Hans Cottage and additional encounters at Mole NP.

(Northern) Long-tailed Glossy-Starling*Lamprotornis caudatus*

Small numbers located at Mole NP, the most impressive of Africa's long tailed starlings.

Chestnut-bellied Starling*Lamprotornis pulcher*

We enjoyed a sighting of about a half dozen of these birds at Tono Dam.

Violet-backed (Plum-coloured/Amethyst) Starling*Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*

This stunning bird was seen in woodlands in Mole NP and at Tono Dam.

(Forest) Chestnut-winged Starling*Onychognathus fulgidus*

One of these was seen at the canopy walkway in Kakum NP and a pair was scoped at Hans Cottage.

Old World Sparrows *Passeridae***(Northern) Grey-headed Sparrow***Passer griseus*

Ghana's commonest sparrow and plentiful throughout the country.

NOTE: The Grey-headed Sparrow complex P. griseus has been split into five full species with the Ghanaian form being retaining in the nominate grouping with the same nomenclature.

Bush Petronia*Petronia dentata*

Very common in the north of the country, we had our biggest numbers in Mole NP.

Weavers & Allies *Ploceidae***Speckle-fronted Weaver***Sporopipes frontalis*

We enjoyed several sightings of this wonderful species in the Tono Dam area, an attractive Sahelian bird at the very edge of its range.

Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-weaver*Plocepasser superciliosus*

We had regular encounters with this species at Mole NP and Tono Dam.

Slender-billed Weaver*Ploceus pelzelni*

Small numbers seen in riverine vegetation at the Densu Delta and near Cape Coast.

Little Weaver*Ploceus luteolus*

A dry-country woodland weaver seen on several occasions in Mole NP.

Black-necked Weaver*Ploceus nigricollis*

Small numbers in forest edges and moist scrub in the south of the country and Mole River.

Orange Weaver*Ploceus aurantius*

A beautiful bird seen first at a wetland near Cape Coast and again at Hans Cottage Botel.

Village Weaver*Ploceus cucullatus*

One of Ghana's most conspicuous birds, with large colonies found in many places.

NOTE: This widespread African complex is also a candidate for multi-species splitting and the nominate subspecies which we recorded in Ghana will remain within the nominate Village Weaver P. cucullatus group. These splits are not as yet recognized by Clements.

Vieillot's (Black) Weaver*Ploceus nigerrimus*

Flocks of this beautiful species were noted at many localities in the south of Ghana.

NOTE: The distinctive West African form of this weaver is sometimes split off as Black-and-chestnut Weaver P. castaneofuscus.

Yellow-mantled Weaver*Ploceus tricolor*

A forest canopy species encountered in small numbers in mixed species flocks at all forests visited.

Maxwell's Black Weaver*Ploceus albinucha*

This diminutive forest canopy weaver was seen from the canopy walkway, Kakum NP and at Atewa.

Preuss's (Golden-backed) Weaver*Ploceus preussi*

This stunning weaver was seen well by the whole group at Aboabo.

Red-vented Malimbe*Malimbus scutatus*

We had excellent views of 4 of these beautiful weavers at Aboabo.

Blue-billed Malimbe*Malimbus nitens*

A single seen from the forest trails in Kakum, an uncommon interior species.

Crested Malimbe*Malimbus malimbicus*

We had two sightings of this uncommon species, initially at Kakum NP and then again at Atewa.

Red-headed Malimbe*Malimbus rubricollis*

The most numerous and conspicuous malimbe, recorded almost daily in all forests visited.

Red-billed Quelea*Quelea quelea*

We found small numbers of the "African avian locust" near Tono Dam.

Black-winged (Red) Bishop*Euplectes hordeaceus*

We had two sightings of this species, both of singletons, at Hans Cottage Botel and Atewa.

Orange Bishop*Euplectes franciscanus*

Our best sighting of this species was in cultivation near Antikwaa where we had about a half dozen birds.

Yellow-mantled Widowbird*Euplectes macrourus*

We had about thirty of these attractive birds at the Winneba Plains and an additional sighting in Mole NP.

NOTE: This species is an excellent candidate for a two-way split, the Ghanaian nominate E. m. macrourus would be called Yellow-mantled Widowbird and the eastern E. m. macrocerus would acquire the common name of Yellow-shouldered Widowbird

Waxbills & Allies Estrildidae**White-breasted Nigrita***Nigrita fusconota*

We had several encounters with this species from the walkway in Kakum NP and at Atewa.

Chestnut-breasted Nigrita*Nigrita bicolor*

This attractive seedeater was seen almost daily in Kakum NP and at Atewa.

Grey-headed (-crowned) Nigrita*Nigrita canicapilla*

The commonest nigrita and seen in all forests visited. Its sad whistled song was a constant background sound.

Western Bluebill*Spermophaga haematina*

A bird seen briefly by Steve Bailey on our way back from Aboabo. A seldom observed forest seedeater.

Bar-breasted Firefinch*Lagonosticta rufopicta*

Seen well near Hans Cottage, Bobiri Forest and in Mole NP.

Red-billed Firefinch*Lagonosticta senegala*

We had around three birds in Mole NP.

Black-bellied Firefinch*Lagonosticta rara*

Four of these rare seedeaters were seen drinking at a small waterhole at Mole NP.

African (Blue-billed) Firefinch*Lagonosticta rubricata*

Seen by some of the group near the hotel in Kumasi.

Black-faced Firefinch*Lagonosticta larvata*

A very rare Firefinch, small numbers seen in Mole NP.

Red-cheeked Cordonbleu*Uraeginthus bengalus*

A common bird of savanna throughout northern Ghana.

Lavender Waxbill*Estrilda caerulescens*

We had wonderful encounters with this very attractive bird feeding on the lawns at Mole Motel with less satisfying views had in woodland at Mole NP.

Orange-cheeked Waxbill*Estrilda melpoda*

A common and widespread species seen in scrubby habitat throughout.

Black-rumped Waxbill*Estrilda troglodytes*

We had several sightings of flocks at Tono Dam.

Black-faced Quailfinch*Ortygospiza atricollis*

We had about a half dozen of these birds in grassy areas at Sakumo Lagoon.

NOTE: This species complex might be split into two, the Ghanaian form would remain African Quailfinch and the highland Ethiopian isolate would become Ethiopian Quailfinch O. fuscocrissa.

Bronze Mannikin*Lonchura cucullata*

Ubiquitous in scrub throughout Ghana. Highest count was 50+ daily in Mole NP.

Black-and-white Mannikin*Lonchura bicolor*

We had two birds, seen well, in the farmbrush at Atewa.

NOTE: This complex may be split two-ways, the southern and eastern Brown-backed Mannikin L. nigriceps and the northern and western nominate group which would remain as Black-and-white Mannikin. The latter is the form we recorded in Ghana. Clements does not as yet recognize this split.

Magpie Mannikin*Spermestes fringilloides*

We had good views of a small flock of these rare birds at Antikwaa.

Cut-throat (Finch)*Amadina fasciata*

Several were seen in the Tono Dam area, a rare bird in Ghana.

Indigobirds *Viduidae*

Pin-tailed Whydah

Vidua macroura

This familiar bird, which parasitises small seedeaters, was seen on many occasions in the southern part of the country.

Siskins, Crossbills & Allies *Fringillidae*

Yellow-fronted Canary

Serinus mozambicus

This species was common in the dry north at Mole NP and Tono Dam.

Buntings *Emberizidae*

Cinnamon-breasted (Rock) Bunting

Emberiza tahapisi

Found in small numbers on rocky ridges at Mole NP.

Ortolan Bunting

Emberiza hortulana

We had a single bird perched and scoped from the swimming pool at the Mole Motel, Mole NP. This was a very good find indeed and a new bird for Ghana!

Annotated List of Mammal Species recorded

Taxonomy and nomenclature follows that of BirdArea/BirdBase software with taxonomic differences to 'The Kingdon Field Guide to African Mammals' by Jonathan Kingdon, Academic Press, 1997 highlighted.

Hares & Rabbits *Leporidae*

African Savanna (Scrub) Hare *Lepus [saxatilis] victoriae*
One seen at night, Mole NP and one at Tono Dam.

Squirrels *Sciuridae*

Red-legged Sun Squirrel *Heliosciurus rufobrachium*
We had good views of two of these attractive mammals in Kakum NP.

Slender-tailed Squirrel *Protoxerus aubinnii*
We had two separate sightings of this critter in Kakum NP.

Western Palm Squirrel *Epixerus ebii*
One of these seldom-encountered squirrels was seen in Kakum NP.

Green Bush Squirrel *Paraxerus poensis*
We had good views of this squirrel at Kakum NP and Atewa.

Genets & Civets *Viverridae*

Panther (Blotched) Genet *Genetta maculata (tigrina)*
We had brief views of one of these on our nightdrive in Mole NP.

Mongoose *Herpestidae*

Slender Mongoose *Herpestes sanguinea*
Three of these cute creatures dashed across the trail in front of us in Kakum NP.

Fruit Bats *Pteropodidae*

Straw-colored Fruit Bat *Eidolon helvum*
Hundreds of these were seen at their roost site in Accra.

Lorisids *Loridae*

Senegal Galago *Galago senegalensis*
One seen on each of our nightdrives in Mole NP and Tono Dam.

Cheek-Pouch Monkeys *Cercopithecidae*

Olive Baboon *Papio papio*
Small numbers seen daily in Mole NP.

Lowe's [Mona] Monkey *Cercopithecus [mona] lowei*
Eight were seen from the Canopy Walkway, Kakum NP.

Lesser White-nosed (Spot-nosed) Monkey *Cercopithecus petaurista*
Eight were observed in the forest canopy around the canopy walkway, Kakum NP.

Callithrix [Vervet] Monkey *Cercopithecus [aethiops] sabaesus*
These Savanna Monkeys are, with the *Papio* baboons, the most widely distributed primates in

Africa, inhabiting woodland and savanna habitats throughout the continent. We observed small numbers daily in Mole NP.

Patas Monkey

Erythrocebus patas

Several of these were seen on consecutive days in Mole NP. This colourful monkey is largely terrestrial.

Pigs Suidae

Common Warthog

Phacochoerus africanus

Another familiar savanna animal that we found in Mole NP. A particularly tame family group remained close to the hotel.

Bovids & Horned Ungulates Bovidae

Bushbuck

Tragelaphus scriptus

We had several encounters of this species in Mole NP.

Waterbuck

Kobus ellipsiprymnus

Several seen in Mole NP.

Kob

Kobus kob

We had good numbers of this species in Mole NP.

Roan Antelope

Hippotragus equinus

This is a rare antelope in Ghana and some of the group were very lucky to see it dash across the road in Mole NP.

Red-flanked Duiker

Cephalophus rufilatus

Some of us had brief views of this tiny antelope in Mole NP.

Hyraxes Procaviidae

Western Tree Hyrax

Dendrohyrax dorsalis

The loud screams of this tiny animal were heard at night resounding from the forests in Kakum NP.

Elephants Elephantidae

African Elephant

Loxodonta africana

Thirty seen at close quarters in Mole NP, these are the “tamest” wild elephants in Africa.