



## GHANA COASTAL FORESTS REPORT 21st - 28th Sept 2015

### TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Either for rarity value, excellent views or simply a group favourite.

- Hartlaub's Duck
- Cassin's Hawk-Eagle
- Long-tailed Hawk
- Black-bellied Bustard
- White-spotted Flufftail
- Senegal Lapwing
- Great Blue Turaco
- Yellow-billed Turaco
- Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo
- Black-throated Coucal
- Fraser's Eagle Owl
- Red-chested Owlet
- White-bellied Kingfisher
- Chocolate-backed Kingfisher
- Black Bee-eater
- White-crested Hornbill
- Black Dwarf-Hornbill
- Bristle-nosed Barbet
- African Piculet
- Fire-bellied Woodpecker
- Rufous-sided Broadbill
- Red-cheeked Wattle-Eye
- Red-billed Helmetshrike
- Sabine's Puffback
- Blue Cuckooshrike
- Yellow-headed Picathartes
- Western Nicator
- White-throated Blue Swallow
- Preuss's Swallow
- Tit-Hylia
- Honeyguide Greenbul
- Yellow-bearded Greenbul
- Grey Longbill
- Chestnut-capped Flycatcher
- Sharpe's Apalis
- Rufous-crowned Eremomela
- Puvel's Illadopsis
- Violet-backed Hyliota
- Fraser's Forest Flycatcher
- Oriole Warbler
- White-tailed Alethe
- Forest Robin
- Finsch's Flycatcher Thrush
- Reichenbach's Sunbird
- Buff-throated Sunbird
- Red-headed Malimbe
- Yellow-mantled Weaver
- Chestnut-breasted Negrita
- Red-fronted Antpecker
- Black-bellied Seedcracker

### SUMMARY:

With a short 6 hour direct flight from the UK leading you to the bird-rich coastal forests of Ghana and with a long tour scheduled for late October 2016, I had an opportunity to spend a few days exploring the area. This was a real eye-opener for me as these lush forests were simply alive with birds and I cannot think of anywhere where you can see so many birds in such dense forests anywhere in the world. I visited Shai Hills, several sections of Kakum National Park, Antekwa, camped in Ankasa forest for two nights, Abrafo, Bonkro and Bobiri forests. My focus was on exploring these sites as fully as possible and not building up a big list, as well as trying to get to grips with some of the regionals more difficult skulkers. The highlight was undoubtedly the famous Canopy Walkway at Kakum – an amazing experience with so many local, rare and stunning species appearing at regular intervals. Oh and a magical few hours alone with a pair of Yellow-headed Picathartes or White-necked Rockfowl. Simply amazing!

## Day 1 - Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September

Flew with British Airways on a direct flight to Accra that took a little over 6 hours. Upon arrival I was greeted by my driver Prince and superb local guide Victor from Ashanti Tours and we drove 45 minutes to our hotel.

## Day 2 Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September

Breakfast was at 5.15am and we were soon off on the 20 minute drive to Shai Hills where we spent a pleasant morning's easy birding, following a track through grassland and dense bushes with some taller trees interspersed as well. I was feeling very relaxed and enjoyed getting nice scope views of species such as **African Grey Hornbill**, **Viellot's Barbet**, **Senegal Parrot**, **Splendid Sunbird** and **Violet-backed Starlings**. A little closer was a pair of **Northern Puffbacks**, although I much preferred a **Yellowbill** that came in quite close to us and posed out in the open briefly. Just around the corner in an area of dense bushes with some rocks below we had a mad little session with several **Yellow-throated Leafloves** moving around us, followed by my first lifer – **Simple Leaflove**. Then a **Grey-headed Bristlebill** appeared for a short while, with **Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat**, **Cardinal Woodpecker**, **Blue-spotted Wood-Dove**, **Grey-backed Cameroptera**, an **African Thrush** and a pair of **Oriole Warblers** as well. It was a very exciting 20 minutes and in the end everything showed really nicely.

Further on we scanned some cliffs in the hope of seeing **White-crowned Cliff-Chat**, but nothing was showing except a **Lead-coloured Flycatcher** and a superb **Violet Turaco** that flew a long way over the grassland to land in a nearby tree. Then a **Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird** began calling and I eventually managed to get the scope on it, and a little further on a **Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird** showed well, along with a **Black-necked Weaver**. We walked further on and on reaching some more open grassland habitat managed to sort out both **Croaking** and **Siffling Cisticolas**. Further scanning revealed the first of 3 **Blue-bellied Rollers** seen this morning, along with **Tawny-flanked Prinia** and a pair of **Yellow-throated Longclaws**. So by now it was 9am and was starting to get hot although we had some nice cloud cover that certainly kept the temperature bearable. Then we drove quite a long way along the dirt track towards a cave and along the way we saw **White-shouldered Black Tit**, **Gabar Goshawk**, **Flappet Lark** and a family of **Lesser Black-winged (Senegal) Lapwings**. I was very pleased with the latter species as it was a new bird for me, and it was nice to watch them from the minibus as they didn't seem to mind our presence and I fired off a nice sequence of photos.

Up at the cave there was nothing happening but we did get a reply to the **African Barred Owlet**, which seems to be the standard thing according to other trip reports. So we drove back to the cliffs, seeing a cracking **Black-bellied Bustard** along the way and this time truly nailed **White-crowned Cliff Chat** with a pair flying in and landing high above us – another lifer as this is now split from Mocking Cliff Chat. The same area also had a pair of **Lanner**, and incredibly both **Double-toothed** and **Bearded Barbets** to round off a very enjoyable morning. We also saw a **Rufous-crowned Roller** and several **Woodland Kingfishers** on telegraph wires as we drove back to the hotel.



Senegal Lapwing

After lunch we set off to Sakumono Lagoon where **Kittlitz's Plover**, a flock of **Collared Pratincoles** and a few **Black Herons** were the highlight. It was really hazy, but it was 1pm and rather hot. There were lots of other species present but viewing in these conditions wasn't great but for the record there was also: **Eurasian Wigeon**, **White-faced Whistling-Duck**, **Squacco Heron**, **Western Reef Egret**, **Ethiopian Swallow**, **Little Swift**, **African Palm Swift** and others....

The drive through Accra wasn't fun and I dozed off to the melodic strains of Nirvana from my iphone! Luckily I woke just in time for our arrival at Winneba Lagoon and its flock of 40+ **Royal Terns** and a few common waders, which did include a **White-fronted Plover**. The nearby Winneba Plains was our last stop in the late

afternoon and although we didn't spend long here the views of two different **African Moustached Warblers** were great, whilst there was also **Yellow-mantled Widowbird** and **Red-faced Cisticola** to entertain us as well. Glad we saw the lapwing and bustard earlier today as the grass was really tall here and there's no chance of seeing them here at present.

So that was our day and all that remained was a two hour drive to the Rainforest Lodge, my base for the next 2 nights to explore Kakum. Can't wait...

### **Day 3 Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September**

Have been struggling to come up with a way to adequately describe today's proceedings but suffice to say it was, for me, one of the finest days birding I have experienced for quite a long time. Don't get me wrong, I thoroughly enjoy the tours I lead (and I wouldn't do them if I didn't!) but I'm just looking at this personally because I had 47 lifers today! That is probably more than I've had for the past 3 years combined!

Anyway, what to say about Kakum Canopy Walkway, apart from it being an engineering masterpiece? Whilst perusing other trip reports I have to say I was in no way prepared for the walkway and didn't know what to expect and I think most other trip reports just gloss over or take a swift detour when it comes to the facts. Here is what I observed today: this walkway is suspended up to 40m above the forest floor, it consists of a series of wooden platforms fixed around some pretty thick tree trunks (all very safe and well maintained), joined by a series of walkways. These walkways are basically what seemed to me super long aluminium ladders fused together for say 200 yards (the distance between each platform) with planks of wood bolted over the rungs of these ladders, all surrounded by a thick rope mesh. So you can't fall and it is perfectly safe, however the walkway moves and is **UNDULATING**, which means that certain parts, usually near each end, are on a little incline. There you go. Maybe I'm a big girl, maybe not but that's how I saw it today.

If you can overcome your nerves then the view amongst the canopy is superb and the birding is fantastic. I spent over 4 hours and notched up a lot of great birds, but I did sneak off trail and grab some delightful views of my Desirable Species No 1 – **Rufous-sided Broadbill** in the gloom of the forest first. Anyway, personal favourites from my time here were a gang of **Red-billed Helmetshrikes**, the stunning **Preuss's Golden-backed Weaver**, **Black Dwarf-Hornbill**, **Brown-cheeked Hornbill**, **White-crested Hornbill** complete with an extraordinarily long tail, **Violet-backed Hyliota**, **Sabine's Puffback**, the really cool **Chestnut-capped Flycatcher**, **Yellow-spotted Barbet**, **Naked-faced Barbet**, **Finsch's Flycatcher-**



**Black Dwarf-Hornbill**

**Thrush** feeding on berries just below the walkway, **Rufous-capped Eremomela**, **Yellow-billed Turaco**, and a pair of totally awesome **Black Bee-eaters**. This latter species may well be a "tarts tick" but I was over the moon to have caught up with it and spent a magical 20 minutes scoping them from one of the platforms. Oh and I didn't carry the scope up here, my amazingly sharp local guide Victor did! Other species I saw up here included: **Yellow-throated Tinkerbird**, **Fire-bellied**, **Little Green** and **Melancholy Woodpeckers**, **Black-winged** and **Western Black-headed Orioles**, **Grey Longbill**, **Crested** and **Blue-billed Malimbos**, **Little Green**, **Johanna's**, **Collared**, **Blue-throated Brown**, **Western Olive** and **Tiny**

Sunbirds, Red-tailed, Yellow-whiskered, Honeyguide, Little Grey, Ansorge's, Western Bearded and Slender-billed Greenbuls, Fraser's Forest Flycatcher, a distant Piping Hornbill, Klaas's Cuckoo, Green Hylia, Cassin's Spinetail, Speckled Tinkerbird, Palm-nut Vulture, Yellow-mantled Weaver, Ussher's Flycatcher, West African Wattle-eye, Yellowbill, Red-bellied Paradise-Flycatcher, Forest Chestnut-winged Starling, and both White-breasted and Grey-headed Negrita. Phew – good birds huh?

We walked along some of the trails on the way back to the parking area and managed to see **Swamp Palm Greenbul**, a pair of **Sharpe's Apalis**, **Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher**, a cracking **White-tailed Alethe** skulking in the leaf litter, and an even more skulking **Western Forest Robin** that took me ages to get a good view of. Leaving here we drove to the Pra River and saw **Rock Pratincole** and **White-bibbed Blue Swallow** straight away, and driving back to the lodge a mixed flock of **Preuss's Cliff Swallows** and **Ethiopian Swallows** on some telegraph wires in a village.

After lunch and a bit of a rest back at the lodge (loved the air-con) we drove to a different section of Kakum Forest and despite high temperatures this afternoon I was very pleased to get decent, albeit neck-breaking, views of an **Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo** overhead. There was also **Black-winged Red Bishop**, **Black-and-white Mannikin**, **Cassin's Honeybird** and a **Blue-headed Wood-Dove**. Moving to another open area at the edge of the forest we had a **Dusky-blue Flycatcher**, **Little Greenbul**, **Whistling Cisticola** and **Orange-cheeked Waxbill**. Whilst waiting for the sun to set, which seemed to take ages, several **Black-throated Coucals** were calling but we were unable to get a decent view of them. Then just after dusk Victor played the call and in flew a **Fraser's Eagle-Owl**, which landed above us and remained long enough for me to get my usual standard of owl photo ie not sharp. But whatever, I was so excited to see this beauty and was a great way to end a stunningly great day's birding.

#### Day 4 Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September

This morning we headed to an area of forest called Antekwa, which consisted of farm-bush interspersed with tall trees. A **Red-chested Goshawk** greeted our arrival and allowed us decent scope views before flying off. We then spent some time trying to call in a **White-spotted Flufftail** and **Puvel's Illadopsis**, both of which just called back but some compensation came in the shape of a lovely little **Red-cheeked Wattle-Eye** – such as exquisite bird. We then drove on a little further and spent the remainder of the morning birding in an area of taller trees, but not before securing stunning views of a much



White-spotted Flufftail

more co-operative **White-spotted Flufftail** that hung around in its damp little corner for a full ten minutes but usually obscured by vines and branches.

Continuing on a flock of **Viellot's Black Weavers** perched up in the top of a tree, an **Ashy Flycatcher** was scoped, and a **Black-throated Coucal** gave the briefest of views. I really liked the lively **Yellow-browed Cameroptera** that fed beside the track giving its very distinctive call. We tried several times for **Congo Serpent-Eagle** without any joy, but had nice looks at **Velvet-mantled Drongo**, **Red-rumped Tinkerbird** and a pair of **Hairy-breasted Barbets**. And that was our lot this morning, with the drive back to the lodge enlivened by a pair of **African Pygmy Kingfishers** perched right out in the open on telegraph wires – never seen that before!

Following lunch we set out on the 4 hour drive to Ankasa, stopping along Cape Coast to scope a few **Hartlaub's Duck** in a roadside lagoon. The same area also had **Brown Sunbird**, **Malachite Kingfisher**, **African Jacana** and a stunning male **Reichenbach's Sunbird** at point blank range. We reached Ankasa around 5pm and dropped our gear off at the campsite before driving for what felt like ages deeper into the forest to the first of a series of secluded pools. It was really quiet and apart from another **Hartlaub's Duck** and a fast-moving flock of **Red-billed Helmet-Shrikes** we didn't see anything else. Attempts at calling in **Akun Eagle Owl** only resulted in an **African Wood Owl** calling back, so we returned to the camp for dinner and a cool shower.

So 59 lifers in 3 days isn't bad considering I've birding extensively in Gambia, as well as other places such as Ethiopia, Namibia and Kenya, which just goes to show what a top destination Ghana really is. And during the night an **Akun Eagle Owl** was calling from the surrounding forest.

### Day 5 Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September

Well I survived the first night's camping! Have to say the set up here is as good as it can be with large walk-in tents, a shower & toilet block, excellent food etc. If I could only just stop sweating! But to be woken by raindrops on canvas wasn't what I wanted to hear and in fact we had light rain for the first couple of hours of daylight. But that didn't stop us and we drove along the jeep track and then walked down to the first pond where our patience was rewarded with some views of a cracking **White-bellied Kingfisher** perched on a dead snag. What a bird, but no photos as I chose to soak up the views in my bins. There was also a pair of **Chestnut-breasted Negrita**, several **Blue-billed Malimbe** and a pair of **Blue-breasted Kingfishers** present. The second pool was quiet so we walked on to the third pool and turned up **Olive-green Cameroptera** and had seconds of the delightful **Yellow-browed Cameroptera**. A cracking **Black-bellied Seedcracker** was startlingly bright, and a **Great Blue Turaco** was, well great! Leaving here, I scoped a **Copper-tailed Starling** as it sat on electricity pylons calling away.



**Rufous-sided Broadbill**

The next couple of hours were rather frustrating, as is often the way with forest birding and we walked our socks off (well I would have if they weren't fused to my skin with damp and sweat!) until we found a nice mixed flock. Pride of place went to a **Shrike Flycatcher**, **Fraser's** and **Western Olive Sunbirds**, **Shining Drongo** and several **Icterine Greenbuls** in a mixed flock. So then, having already spent the best part of an hour trying to locate a constantly calling **Chocolate-backed Kingfisher** (in vain) another began calling nearby. This one also played cat-and-mouse and somehow circled us

unseen before it flew in and landed overhead and took pride of place on my life list. What a cool bird but it was a pity it didn't hang around longer. Next up was a calling **Rufous-sided Broadbill** we tracked down to its display branch and I then spent an enjoyable half an hour scoping it and taking photos. A real privilege to watch such behaviour at leisure.

During lunch back at the lodge, after another excellent meal, I sat around camp and enjoyed watching a nice little flock passing by that included **Western Bearded Bulbul**, another **Fraser's Sunbird** and had really nice looks at a **Yellow-billed Turaco**. Then Victor and I walked some nearby trails and found the forest to be really quiet, but a family of **Cassin's Flycatchers** were seen along the river, before we trudged on further into the forest. You just never know what is around the corner and I can only describe the forest as dead – until a **Long-tailed Hawk** began calling and thanks to Victor, it flew in right above our heads in response to the tape. Well it was maybe 200 feet above us in the tallest tree this side of the Sahara, in a small gap in the canopy but there it was. In fact we had several views of it, best of all when it was flying as you could really appreciate the extraordinarily long tail. It does what it says on the tin after all!

And that was our day. I probably haven't done Ankasa justice as I spent far too long waiting for kingfishers today and watching the broadbill. Just to note, we also heard **Shining-blue Kingfisher**, **Green-tailed Bristlebill**, **Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo** and **Black-Casqued Hornbill** today. So this forest is home to some real gems and I'm very happy with what I've seen. If you like the whole camping experience and can put up with the humid environment and don't mind some mild discomfort then you are going to love it here. If you like your creature comforts, well... Stay well away..! Personally, I love it here.



**Ankasa Camp - my home for two nights.**

### **Day 6 Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September**

Must be getting acclimatised as last night felt a little cooler and had a really good sleep, but woken by the raucous calls of the fabled **Nkulengu Rail** from the forest behind the camp. Driving along the jeep track after breakfast we had nice looks at a **Blue-headed Wood Dove** walking in front of us, before reaching our drop-off point deep within the forest. We were on the lookout for flocks and we did encounter a few during our morning's walk. At an open area we had a **Black-throated Coucal**, a cracking **Western Nicator** and the extremely localised **Yellow-bearded Greenbul**, with a pair of hulking **Great Blue Turacos** flying over. I was also pleased to get better looks at a flock of **Red-vented Malimbe** as my views from Kakum weren't that good. So we meandered along a series of

trails and I managed to find a lovely little **Buff-throated Sunbird** in a mixed flock coming in to the owl call, and I enjoyed some nice views of an assortment of previously seen species such as **Icterine** and **Swamp Palm Bulbul**, **Blue-throated Brown Sunbird**, **Western Olive Sunbird** etc etc. We also heard **Congo Serpent-Eagle**, **Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill** and had a fleeting glimpse of a **Black-capped Illadopsis**, oh and a **Dusky Crested Flycatcher** and **Buff-spotted Woodpecker** were new trip birds. And just as we were walking back to the pick-up point I managed to get the mega **Red-fronted Antpecker** to end my time in the fabulous Ankasa forest on a huge high!

So after a quick shower and then lunch, we loaded our gear back into the minibus and set off to Brenu Beach. Glorious air-con felt sooo good, but I have to say that Ankasa is a great birding destination and there's just so much to see I only felt like I had just scratched the surface. Anyway, driving along a small roadside marsh held my first **Orange Weaver** before reaching Brenu Beach Road. This open habitat was a complete contrast to the dense forests I've been birding these past couple of days and we quickly added a few padders to the list such as **Purple Heron**, **Senegal Coucal**, **Black-shouldered Kite**, **Grey Kestrel**, **Northern Fiscal**, **Bar-breasted Firefinch** and **Black-rumped Waxbill**. We searched for **Marsh Tchagra** but didn't get a response despite staying on site

until quite late but eventually had to concede defeat and drive on to our last stop of the day. Along a dirt track a **Long-tailed Nightjar** showed well down to a few metres, and with potential other goodies here such as **Plain** and **Black-shouldered Nightjars** also possible I look forward to returning here on tour next year. From here it wasn't too long before we pulled in to the Rainforest Lodge near Kakum and a welcoming hot shower – wonderful.

### Day 7 Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September

Drove the short distance to the Abrufo section of Kakum forest and spent a productive and very nice few hours birding the farmbrush and then taller, mature forest a bit later. First goodie of the day was a **Red-cheeked Wattle-Eye** giving the best views yet and I liken this species to a miniature Bird-of-Paradise as it is so stunning. You just have to see it....! At the same spot a **Puvel's Illadopsis** skulked, but not that well and I got bins on it, but a **Blue-shouldered Robin-Chat** was a true arch-skulker and never showed but sang away from a dense area of brush. Nearby a **Brown Illadopsis** showed briefly, and then a **Black Bee-eater** posed on top of a bush – just a shame it was so overcast and dull as the photo doesn't do the bird justice at all. A **West African Wattle-Eye** also appeared, and there was a **Guinea (Green) Turaco** and some **Western Bluebills** around as well. Then a **Honeyguide Greenbul** sat out in the open, a **Superb Sunbird** appeared, and both **Green Crombec** and **Red-rumped Tinkerbird** gave repeated views.



White-tailed Alethe



Black Bee-eater

Then we followed a trail into the forest and had excellent views of a **Western Nicator** right out in the open. But I most remember this trail for the huge antswarm I stood way too close to (hence the burning sensation up my legs) whilst trying to get a photo of one of the four **White-tailed Alethe's** feasting on huge numbers of bugs, crickets and some really ugly spiders all fleeing the maelstrom of ants. Anyway, we stood out in the now beating sunshine in an open area and scoped my first **Bristle-nosed Barbet** and tinkered with a calling **Black Cuckoo** that flew low overhead a couple of times. There was also a **Naked-faced Barbet** here and a **European Honey Buzzard** flew over. Eventually we had to return to the minibus, but not before Victor spotted a **Tit Hylia** along the trail up ahead and I can't tell you how pleased I was to see this species – the smallest bird in Africa no less! And it showed really well too. So then we set out on the two hour drive to the lunch stop and from there it was another hour to the village where we walked into the forest for one of those Holy Grail birds.

Thankfully, it was a much shorter walk to the picathartes stake-out than I anticipated and after a 30 minute walk through the forest (and a **Cassin's Hawk-Eagle** soaring overhead) we arrived at the small cliff and as we rounded a corner a flipping **Yellow-headed Picathartes** shot out from the shadows and off into the forest. Damn! So I settled into a groove behind a tree where I had a view of the whole arena below the overhanging cliff where one nest was visible. It was 3.20pm and I thought I'd made a mistake in not sitting down but at 3.50pm some movement off to the right caught my eye and I froze as sure enough there was a picathartes

standing amongst the tangle of vines and leaves. Wow! I daren't move and could hardly breathe as it made a few hops and came out into the open a bit more before pausing once again. After several minutes had passed I slowly moved the camera and fired a few shots, and the bird didn't seem bothered by this – but it was only maybe 9 or 10 metres away. Still not moving I waited and waited and thankfully the bird moved up onto a rock in full view and began to preen – holy cow! Then, over the course of the next 40 minutes I was fully able to enjoy the whole 'picathartes experience'. A second bird also came in, and I was really lucky they had arrived early as the light was still good enough to get some decent shots (well I was shooting on f2.8 at iso 1250 giving me 1/20<sup>th</sup>) but on the tripod it was good enough. At one stage, and I'm guessing it was the male, hopped right up to me until just a metre away and looked me right in the eye. How stunningly incredible was that? Even more incredible was that 'he' came back around 5 minutes later and did exactly the same thing. I must admit I thought I was being reasonably inconspicuous and barely moved the entire time I was here, and using the wireless shutter remote with LiveView worked a treat – thank you Nikon. Well at 4.30pm both birds melted back into the forest and I did the decent thing and retreated as well. Walking back towards the village a **Red-chested Owlet** began calling and amazingly I spotted it perched high overhead in the foliage of a super tall tree. What an afternoon. All that remained was to drive a couple of hours to my last night's hotel and count up my 86 lifers scored in just 6 days birding here so far...



The incomparable Yellow-headed Picathartes

### Day 8 Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September

My last morning's birding was at nearby Bobiri Forest and as soon as I stepped out of the minibus a **Blue Cuckooshrike** was calling and we had good scope views as it sat calling from a tall tree. The surrounding area was very active and we also had great looks at the superb **Buff-throated Sunbird**, which is a really rubbish name for such a stunning bird. Also seen here was a pair of **Little Green Woodpeckers**, a flock of **Red-billed Helmet-Shrikes**, **Klaas's Cuckoo**, **Yellow-mantled Weaver**, **Slender-billed Greenbul** and a pair of **Tit Hylas**. Working our way slowly along the forest track I think the low cloud, mist and drizzle was literally dampening down bird activity as we saw not a lot else for quite a while until entering a clearing where we had the first **Green Sunbird** of the trip, along with a **Hairy-breasted Barbet** and **Grey-headed Negrita**. So we decided to



retrace our steps and along the way a burst of activity produced **Sharpe's Apalis**, **West African Wattle-eye**, **Blue-throated Brown Sunbird**, and best of all a pair of **African Piculets**. And that was a fitting end to an all too brief six and a half days birding of Ghana's forests that had given me 88 lifers amongst 233 species seen but above all that some much needed and valuable experience.

I have to thanks Ashanti for setting this up for me, to Prince for being an excellent driver, and Victor for being an incredible guide. It was a perfect few days and I cannot wait to return in 2016.

Nick Bray.



**Tit-Hylia**



**Chocolate-backed Kingfisher**



**Black-bellied Bustard**



**Reichenbach's Sunbird**



## SYSTEMATIC LIST – GHANA COASTAL FORESTS SEPTEMBER 2015

### **ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae**

White-faced Whistling Duck  
Hartlaub's Duck  
Eurasian Wigeon

*Dendrocygna viduata*  
*Pteronetta hartlaubii*  
*Anas penelope*

### **GALLIFORMES: Numididae**

Helmeted Guineafowl

*Numida meleagris*

### **GALLIFORMES: Odontophoridae**

Stone Partridge (H)

*Ptilopachus petrosus*

### **GALLIFORMES: Phasianidae**

Double-spurred Francolin

*Pternistis bicalcaratus*

### **PODICIPEDIFORMES: Podicipedidae**

Little Grebe

*Tachybaptus ruficollis*

### **PELECANIFORMES: Threskiornithidae**

Spot-breasted Ibis (H)

*Bostrychia rara*

### **PELECANIFORMES: Ardeidae**

Squacco Heron  
Western Cattle Egret  
Grey Heron  
Purple Heron  
Great Egret  
Black Heron  
Little Egret  
Western Reef Heron

*Ardeola ralloides*  
*Bubulcus ibis*  
*Ardea cinerea*  
*Ardea purpurea*  
*Ardea alba*  
*Egretta ardesiaca*  
*Egretta garzetta*  
*Egretta gularis*

### **SULIFORMES: Phalacrocoracidae**

Reed (Long-tailed) Cormorant

*Microcarbo africanus*

### **ACCIPITRIFORMES: Accipitridae**

Black-winged Kite  
African Harrier-Hawk  
Palm-nut Vulture  
European Honey Buzzard  
Hooded Vulture  
Cassin's Hawk-Eagle  
Gabar Goshawk  
Long-tailed Hawk  
Red-chested Goshawk  
Yellow-billed Kite

*Elanus caeruleus*  
*Polyboroides typus*  
*Gypohierax angolensis*  
*Pernis apivorus*  
*Necrosyrtes monachus*  
*Aquila africana*  
*Micronisus gabar*  
*Urotriorchis macrourus*  
*Accipiter toussenelii*  
*Milvus aegyptius*

### **OTIDIFORMES: Otidae**

Black-bellied Bustard

*Lissotis melanogaster*

### **GRUIFORMES: Sarothruridae**

White-spotted Flufftail

*Sarothrura pulchra*

### **GRUIFORMES: Rallidae**

Nkulengu Rail (H)

*Himantornis haematopus*

**CHARADRIIFORMES: Recurvirostridae**

Black-winged Stilt

*Himantopus himantopus***CHARADRIIFORMES: Charadriidae**

Spur-winged Lapwing

*Vanellus spinosus*

Senegal Lapwing

*Vanellus lugubris*

African Wattled Lapwing

*Vanellus senegallus*

Grey Plover

*Pluvialis squatarola*

Common Ringed Plover

*Charadrius hiaticula*

Kittlitz's Plover

*Charadrius pecuarius*

White-fronted Plover

*Charadrius marginatus*

Kentish Plover

*Charadrius alexandrinus***CHARADRIIFORMES: Jacanidae**

African Jacana

*Actophilornis africanus***CHARADRIIFORMES: Scolopacidae**

Whimbrel

*Numenius phaeopus*

Marsh Sandpiper

*Tringa stagnatilis*

Common Greenshank

*Tringa nebularia*

Wood Sandpiper

*Tringa glareola*

Common Sandpiper

*Actitis hypoleucos*

Sanderling

*Calidris alba***CHARADRIIFORMES: Glareolidae**

Collared Pratincole

*Glareola pratincola*

Rock Pratincole

*Glareola nuchalis***CHARADRIIFORMES: Laridae**

Royal Tern

*Thalasseus maximus*

Sandwich Tern

*Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Little Tern

*Sternula albifrons*

Black Tern

*Chlidonias niger***COLUMBIFORMES: Columbidae**

Rock Dove

*Columba livia*

Red-eyed Dove

*Streptopelia semitorquata*

Laughing Dove

*Spilopelia senegalensis*

Blue-spotted Wood Dove

*Turtur afer*

Blue-headed Wood Dove

*Turtur brehmeri*

African Green Pigeon

*Treron calvus***MUSOPHAGIFORMES: Musophagidae**

Great Blue Turaco

*Corythaeola cristata*

Guinea Turaco

*Tauraco persa*

Yellow-billed Turaco

*Tauraco macrorhynchus*

Violet Turaco

*Musophaga violacea*

Western Plantain-eater

*Crinifer piscator***CUCULIFORMES: Cuculidae**

Black-throated Coucal

*Centropus leucogaster*

Senegal Coucal

*Centropus senegalensis*

Blue-headed Coucal

*Centropus monachus*

Blue Malkoha (Yellowbill)

*Ceuthmochares aereus*

Klaas's Cuckoo

*Chrysococcyx klaas*

African Emerald Cuckoo (H)

*Chrysococcyx cupreus*

Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo (H)

*Cercococcyx mechowi*

Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo

*Cercococcyx olivinus*

Black Cuckoo

*Cuculus clamosus*

**STRIGIFORMES: Strigidae**

Fraser's Eagle-Owl  
Akun Eagle-Owl (H)  
African Wood Owl  
Red-chested Owlet  
African Barred Owlet

*Bubo poensis*  
*Bubo leucostictus*  
*Strix woodfordii*  
*Glaucidium tephronotum*  
*Glaucidium capense*

**CAPRIMULGIFORMES: Caprimulgidae**

Long-tailed Nightjar

*Caprimulgus climacurus*

**APODIFORMES: Apodidae**

Cassin's Spinetail  
African Palm Swift  
Little Swift

*Neafrapus cassini*  
*Cypsiurus parvus*  
*Apus affinis*

**CORACIIFORMES: Coraciidae**

Purple (Rufous-crowned) Roller  
Blue-bellied Roller

*Coracias naevius*  
*Coracias cyanogaster*

**CORACIIFORMES: Alcedinidae**

Chocolate-backed Kingfisher  
Blue-breasted Kingfisher  
Woodland Kingfisher  
African Pygmy Kingfisher  
White-bellied Kingfisher  
Malachite Kingfisher  
Shining-blue Kingfisher (H)  
Pied Kingfisher

*Halcyon badia*  
*Halcyon malimbica*  
*Halcyon senegalensis*  
*Ispidina picta*  
*Corythornis leucogaster*  
*Corythornis cristatus*  
*Alcedo quadibrachys*  
*Ceryle rudis*

**CORACIIFORMES: Meropidae**

Black Bee-eater

*Merops gularis*

**BUCEROTIFORMES: Bucerotidae**

African Pied Hornbill  
African Grey Hornbill  
Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill (H)  
Piping Hornbill  
Brown-cheeked Hornbill  
Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill  
Black-casqued Hornbill (H)  
Black Dwarf Hornbill  
White-crested Hornbill

*Lophoceros fasciatus*  
*Lophoceros nasutus*  
*Lophoceros camurus*  
*Bycanistes fistulator*  
*Bycanistes cylindricus*  
*Bycanistes subcylindricus*  
*Ceratogymna atrata*  
*Horizocerus hartlaubi*  
*Horizocerus albocristatus*

**PICIFORMES: Lybiidae**

Bristle-nosed Barbet  
Naked-faced Barbet  
Speckled Tinkerbird  
Red-rumped Tinkerbird  
Yellow-throated Tinkerbird  
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird  
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird  
Yellow-spotted Barbet  
Hairy-breasted Barbet  
Vieillot's Barbet  
Double-toothed Barbet  
Bearded Barbet

*Gymnobucco peli*  
*Gymnobucco calvus*  
*Pogoniulus scolopaceus*  
*Pogoniulus atroflavus*  
*Pogoniulus subsulphureus*  
*Pogoniulus bilineatus*  
*Pogoniulus chrysoconus*  
*Buccanodon duchaillui*  
*Tricholaema hirsuta*  
*Lybius vieilloti*  
*Lybius bidentatus*  
*Lybius dubius*

Yellow-billed Barbet

*Trachyphonus purpuratus*

**PICIFORMES: Indicatoridae**

Cassin's Honeybird

*Prodotiscus insignis*

**PICIFORMES: Picidae**

African Piculet

*Sasia africana*

Little Green Woodpecker

*Campethera maculosa*

Buff-spotted Woodpecker

*Campethera nivosa*

Cardinal Woodpecker

*Dendropicus fuscescens*

Melancholy Woodpecker

*Dendropicus lugubris*

Fire-bellied Woodpecker

*Dendropicus pyrrhogaster*

**FALCONIFORMES: Falconidae**

Grey Kestrel

*Falco ardosiaceus*

Lanner Falcon

*Falco biarmicus*

**PSITTACIFORMES: Psittacidae**

Senegal Parrot

*Poicephalus senegalus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Eurylaimidae**

Rufous-sided Broadbill

*Smithornis rufolateralis*

**PASSERIFORMES: Platysteiridae**

African Shrike-flycatcher

*Megabyas flammulatus*

Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher (H)

*Bias musicus*

Senegal Batis

*Batis senegalensis*

Chestnut Wattle-eye

*Dyaphorophya castanea*

West African Batis

*Batis poensis occulta*

Brown-throated (Common) Wattle-eye

*Platysteira cyanea*

Red-cheeked Wattle-eye

*Platysteira blissetti*

**PASSERIFORMES: Prionopidae**

Red-billed Helmetshrike

*Prionops caniceps*

**PASSERIFORMES: Malaconotidae**

Orange-breasted Bushshrike (H)

*Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus*

Black-crowned Tchagra

*Tchagra senegalus*

Sabine's Puffback

*Dryoscopus sabini*

Northern Puffback

*Dryoscopus gambensis*

Lowland Sooty Boubou (H)

*Laniarius leucorhynchus*

Yellow-crowned Gonolek

*Laniarius barbarus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Campephagidae**

Blue Cuckooshrike

*Coracina azurea*

**PASSERIFORMES: Laniidae**

Northern Fiscal

*Lanius humeralis*

**PASSERIFORMES: Oriolidae**

Western Black-headed Oriole

*Oriolus brachyrynchus*

Black-winged Oriole

*Oriolus nigripennis*

**PASSERIFORMES: Dicruridae**

Shining Drongo

*Dicrurus atripennis*

Fork-tailed Drongo

*Dicrurus adsimilis*

Velvet-mantled Drongo

*Dicrurus modestus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Monarchidae**

Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher  
Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher

*Trochocercus nitens*  
*Terpsiphone rufiventer*

**PASSERIFORMES: Corvidae**

Pied Crow

*Corvus albus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Picathartidae**

Yellow-headed Picathartes

*Picathartes gymnocephalus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Stenostiridae**

Dusky Crested Flycatcher

*Elminia nigromitrata*

**PASSERIFORMES: Paridae**

White-shouldered Black Tit

*Melaniparus guineensis*

**PASSERIFORMES: Nicatoridae**

Western Nicator

*Nicator chloris*

**PASSERIFORMES: Alaudidae**

Flappet Lark

*Mirafra rufocinnamomea*

**PASSERIFORMES: Pycnonotidae**

Common Bulbul  
Slender-billed Greenbul  
Little Greenbul  
Little Grey Greenbul  
Ansorge's Greenbul  
Yellow-whiskered Greenbul  
Honeyguide Greenbul  
Simple Greenbul  
Yellow-throated Leaflove  
Swamp Palm Bulbul  
Icterine Greenbul  
Red-tailed Bristlebill (H)  
Grey-headed Bristlebill  
Western Bearded Greenbul  
Red-tailed Greenbul  
Yellow-bearded Greenbul

*Pycnonotus barbatus*  
*Stelgidillas gracilirostris*  
*Eurillas virens*  
*Eurillas gracilis*  
*Eurillas ansorgei*  
*Eurillas latirostris*  
*Baeopogon indicator*  
*Chlorocichla simplex*  
*Atimastillas flavicollis*  
*Thescelocichla leucopleura*  
*Phyllastrephus icterinus*  
*Bleda syndactylus*  
*Bleda canicapillus*  
*Criniger barbatus*  
*Criniger calurus*  
*Criniger olivaceus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Hirundinidae**

Square-tailed Saw-wing  
Barn Swallow  
Ethiopian Swallow  
White-throated Blue (White-bibbed) Swallow  
Lesser Striped Swallow  
Mosque Swallow  
Preuss's Cliff Swallow

*Psalidoprocne nitens*  
*Hirundo rustica*  
*Hirundo aethiopica*  
*Hirundo nigrita*  
*Cecropis abyssinica*  
*Cecropis senegalensis*  
*Petrochelidon preussi*

**PASSERIFORMES: Macrosphenidae**

African Moustached Warbler  
Kemp's Longbill (H)  
Grey Longbill  
Green Crombec

*Melocichla mentalis*  
*Macrosphenus kempii*  
*Macrosphenus concolor*  
*Sylvietta virens*

**PASSERIFORMES: Erythroceridae**

Chestnut-capped Flycatcher

*Erythrocerus mcallii*

**PASSERIFORMES: Incertae Sedis 1**

Green Hylia  
Tit Hylia

*Hylia prasina*  
*Pholidornis rushiae*

**PASSERIFORMES: Cisticolidae**

Red-faced Cisticola  
Singing Cisticola  
Whistling Cisticola  
Croaking Cisticola  
Siffling (Short-winged) Cisticola  
Tawny-flanked Prinia  
Red-winged Warbler (H)  
Sharpe's Apalis  
Oriole Warbler  
Grey-backed Camaroptera  
Yellow-browed Camaroptera  
Olive-green Camaroptera  
Rufous-crowned Eremomela

*Cisticola erythrops*  
*Cisticola cantans*  
*Cisticola lateralis*  
*Cisticola natalensis*  
*Cisticola brachypterus*  
*Prinia subflava*  
*Heliolais erythropterus*  
*Apalis sharpii*  
*Hypergerus atriceps*  
*Camaroptera brevicaudata*  
*Camaroptera supercilii*  
*Camaroptera chloronota*  
*Eremomela badiceps*

**PASSERIFORMES: Pellorneidae**

Blackcap Illadopsis  
Puvel's Illadopsis  
Brown Illadopsis

*Illadopsis cleaveri*  
*Illadopsis puveli*  
*Illadopsis fulvescens*

**PASSERIFORMES: Leiothrichidae**

Blackcap Babbler

*Turdoides reinwardtii*

**PASSERIFORMES: Hyliotidae**

Violet-backed Hyliota

*Hyliota violacea*

**PASSERIFORMES: Sturnidae**

Copper-tailed Starling  
Splendid Starling  
Violet-backed Starling  
Chestnut-winged Starling

*Hylopsar cupreocauda*  
*Lamprotornis splendidus*  
*Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*  
*Onychognathus fulgidus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Turdidae**

Finsch's Flycatcher Thrush  
African Thrush

*Stizorhina finschi*  
*Turdus pelios*

**PASSERIFORMES: Muscicapidae**

White-tailed Alethe  
Fraser's (African) Forest Flycatcher  
Grey (Lead-coloured) Tit-Flycatcher  
Northern Black Flycatcher  
Spotted Flycatcher  
Ashy Flycatcher  
Cassin's Flycatcher  
Dusky-blue Flycatcher  
Ussher's Flycatcher  
Blue-shouldered Robin-Chat (H)  
Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat  
Forest Robin  
White-crowned Cliff Chat

*Alethe diademata*  
*Fraseria ocreata*  
*Myioparus plumbeus*  
*Melaenornis edolioides*  
*Muscicapa striata*  
*Muscicapa caerulescens*  
*Muscicapa cassini*  
*Muscicapa comitata*  
*Muscicapa ussheri*  
*Cossypha cyanocampter*  
*Cossypha niveicapilla*  
*Stiphornis erythrothorax*  
*Thamnolaea coronata*

**PASSERIFORMES: Nectariniidae**

Fraser's Sunbird  
Mangrove (Brown) Sunbird

*Deleornis fraseri*  
*Anthreptes gabonicus*



Little Green Sunbird  
Green (Grey-chinned) Sunbird  
Collared Sunbird  
Reichenbach's Sunbird  
Blue-throated Brown Sunbird  
Western Olive Sunbird  
Buff-throated Sunbird  
Scarlet-chested Sunbird  
Olive-bellied Sunbird  
Tiny Sunbird  
Splendid Sunbird  
Johanna's Sunbird  
Superb Sunbird  
Copper Sunbird

*Anthreptes seimundi*  
*Anthreptes rectirostris*  
*Hedydipna collaris*  
*Anabathmis reichenbachii*  
*Cyanomitra cyanoalaema*  
*Cyanomitra obscura guineensis*  
*Chalcomitra adelberti*  
*Chalcomitra senegalensis*  
*Cinnyris chloropygius*  
*Cinnyris minullus*  
*Cinnyris coccinigastrus*  
*Cinnyris johannae*  
*Cinnyris superbus*  
*Cinnyris cupreus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Passeridae**

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow

*Passer griseus*

**PASSERIFORMES: Ploceidae**

Black-necked Weaver  
Orange Weaver  
Village Weaver  
Vieillot's Black Weaver  
Yellow-mantled Weaver  
Preuss's Weaver  
Red-vented Malimbe  
Blue-billed (Gray's) Malimbe  
Red-headed Malimbe  
Crested Malimbe  
Black-winged Red Bishop  
Yellow-shouldered Widowbird

*Ploceus nigricollis*  
*Ploceus aurantius*  
*Ploceus cucullatus*  
*Ploceus nigerrimus*  
*Ploceus tricolor*  
*Ploceus preussi*  
*Malimbus scutatus*  
*Malimbus nitens*  
*Malimbus rubricollis*  
*Malimbus malimbicus*  
*Euplectes hordeaceus*  
*Euplectes macroura*

**PASSERIFORMES: Estrildidae**

Red-fronted Antpecker  
White-breasted Nigrita  
Chestnut-breasted Nigrita  
Grey-headed Nigrita  
Black-bellied Seedcracker  
Western Bluebill  
Bar-breasted Firefinch  
Orange-cheeked Waxbill  
Black-rumped Waxbill  
Bronze Mannikin  
Black-and-white Mannikin

*Parmoptila rubrifrons*  
*Nigrita fusconotus*  
*Nigrita bicolor*  
*Nigrita canicapillus*  
*Pyrenestes ostrinus*  
*Spermophaga haematina*  
*Lagonosticta rufopicta*  
*Estrilda melpoda*  
*Estrilda troglodytes*  
*Lonchura cucullata*  
*Lonchura bicolor*

**PASSERIFORMES: Viduidae**

Pin-tailed Whydah

*Vidua macroura*

**PASSERIFORMES: Motacillidae**

Yellow-throated Longclaw

*Macronyx croceus*

## OTHER ANIMALS

Olive Baboon  
Callithrix Monkey  
Lesser Spot-nosed Monkey  
Hammer Bat  
Striped Ground Squirrel  
Fire-footed Rope Squirrel  
Red-legged Sun Squirrel  
Common Cusimanse  
Buffon Kob

*Papio anubis*  
*Cercopithecus a.sabaeus*  
*Cercopithecus c. petaurita*  
*Hypsignathus monstrosus*  
*Euxerus erythropus*  
*Funisciurus pyrropus*  
*Heliosciurus pufobrachium*  
*Crossarchus obscurus*  
*Kobus kob*



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