

15 Days/14 Nights Kenya Birding Wilderness Safari

DAY 01:

You will board your night flight bound for Nairobi, Kenya from Europe

DAY 02: NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK

A smooth flight will see you arrive at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport JKIA Nairobi at about 8.30 am and once through the formalities of immigration we collected our luggage and met our guides and good friends Joseph & Nico. Once outside the airport we introduce to you our drivers who will skilfully load your luggage's into the vehicles. With most of us still trying to get our binoculars out of our hand luggage a Black-chested Snake Eagle flew over and several Red-winged Starlings and Little Swifts were spotted. No time to mess around we were straight into our great African safari. A short drive took us to the entrance to Nairobi National Park and the birding began. We will soon introduce ourselves to some of the commoner species such as Rufous Sparrow and Yellow-rumped Seedeater and as some of the group spotted their first Masai Giraffe from the washrooms the rest of us watched close Lesser Striped and Red-rumped Swallows. We will all took our positions in our respective vehicles, the roofs will be raised and into the park we head. Several Masai Giraffe towered over the open bush and our first Coke's Hartebeest and Masai Ostrich will be seen. Huge Banded Martins put in an appearance and groups of Long-tailed Fiscals started to be seen everywhere. An enormous Lappet-faced Vulture set the raptor list rolling and then a pair of White-bellied Bustards. Continue on we soon notch up a few more Cisticolas with good views of Stout and Croaking. A group of Grant's Gazelles paid no attention to us while nearby we all got good views of a pair of Short-tailed Larks. Our first Yellow-necked Spurrow were seen right beside the track and groups of Northern Pied Babblers were noted. We worked our way along the dusty tracks towards our lunch time picnic spot. White-backed Vultures were easily seen as was Red-billed Quelea and then a Long-billed Pipit and a beautiful pair of Hildebrandt's Starlings showing their stunning bright red eyes. Augar Buzzards soon to be common were found, Cape Buffalo were plentiful and an Olive Baboon was watched sat in a treetop. Along the roadside we found two Zebra Waxbills a Bronze Sunbird and reasonable views of a Quail-finch, while at our Picnic stop we were treated to a great meal and several new birds which could be watched in between bites. A male Cardinal Quelea posed for us as did a White-browed Scrub Robin and another Yellow-necked Spurrow. With our lunch over we were on our way again. A nearby pool found us Black Crakes, a Malachite Kingfisher and a breeding male Holub's Golden Weaver. In the scrub we watched a superb African Moustached Warbler amongst a group of Bronze Mannikins that also contained Common and Crimson-rumped Waxbills. On a distant tree a huge Grosbeak Weaver was found and as we moved on a nice adult Bateleur put in a brief appearance. Beside a reed bed we saw very close Grey-crowned Cranes and a Little Rush Warbler was enticed to show itself. Here on a small lake an African Darter was seen roosting beside Black-crowned Night Herons and nearby Black-headed Herons and a Hadada were spotted. Several Masai Giraffe gave us excellent close views and while watching these a few Red-billed Oxpeckers were found feeding on their backs. Continuing on through the park we arrived at a grassy mound where a pride of eight Lions sat just twenty feet in front of us. After admiring these 'pussy cats' we proceed to find more Cape Buffalo, smaller Thompson's Gazelle, and some huge Eland. Amongst the birds that became to numerous to remember we found a Shelley's Francolin and then a very good bird for the park, which was a Red-and-yellow Barbet, plus we had excellent views of a perched Eastern Pale-chanting Goshawk. On a tiny pond we found a Madagascar Squacco Heron as well as a gorgeous Three-banded Plover, Red-billed Teal and some Fischer's Sparrow-larks. On another lake there were hundreds of Marabou Stork towering over the twelve Kittlitz's Plovers at their feet. While other birds here included White-faced Whistling Ducks, Blacksmith Plovers, African Spoonbill, Long-tailed Cormorants and another Three-banded Plover. Raptors by now had included many Black-shouldered Kites, and a few Tawny Eagles. Speckled Mousebirds had become a common sight; two Striped Kingfishers were spotted as well as good numbers of Little Bee-eaters. On yet another pond we saw Wire-tailed Swallows and Black Saw-wings while a large tree held a couple of Helmeted Guineafowl. Amongst the Longclaws we saw a Pair of Yellow-throated and a single Rosy-throated. A close pair of Superb Starlings were then seen as was Red-cheeked Cordon Bleu, Red-billed Firefinch, and a Cinnamon-breasted Bunting. It was now getting late so we made our way back towards one of the gates in the park but not before looking at the first two of five Marsh Owls hunting over the grasslands. Dusty and tired it wasn't long before we reached our accommodation where we cleaned up ready for our evening meal and first roll call of the tour.

DAY 03: NAIROBI - LAKE NAVAISHA

Everyone met at dawn for a couple of hours pre breakfast birding. We wandered slowly around the grounds of the academy and soon amassed a good list of birds. A family of Thompson's Gazelles fed on the grass around the dining room and just outside we watched an immature Gabar Goshawk sat in a close tree while nearby a couple Spotted Thick-knees stood in the garden quite unconcerned by our presence. Following the path around the academy's grounds we came across lots of Superb and a few Greater Blue-eared Starlings while in a grassy field sat a pair of Crowned Plovers and Hadadas had become commonplace. In the trees were Common Drongo and lots of nesting White-browed Sparrow-weavers while above us flew Rock

Martins, Lesser-striped and Wire-tailed Swallows. A dead tree beside the path held a very confident Grey Woodpecker at its nest hole and as we watched a pair of Brown Parrots came out of the same tree and promptly flew away. Down towards a small pond a Long-crested Eagle showed well as did a group of Dusky Turtle Doves. On the pond we watched a Malachite Kingfisher and Plain Martins before searching the small patch of trees behind. Here we tracked down a singing Dark-capped Yellow Warbler and after a bit of chasing around we all eventually got to see it. Moving on we found Pin-tailed Whydah, a better view of the warbler, a couple of Red-cheeked Cordon Bleus and Chinspot Batis. Nearby we had to work a little harder but soon everyone saw Brown Parisoma. As we carried on we walked a grassy track into a small area of scrub and open wood, here we saw a lot of birds with the best being Red-chested Cuckoo and a Red-throated Tit. Back outside the dining room while looking at three Spotted Thick-knees we then saw a Banded Parisoma, Cape Robin-chat, African Grey Flycatcher and a pair of Hildebrandt's Starlings. The feeders around the building attracted lots of Scarlet-chested Sunbirds and looking at these little gems with the sunlight reflecting the intense red of their throat and upper breast almost made a few of us late for breakfast. After a delicious and varied start to the day we loaded the minibuses and set off towards Limuru our first designated stop. Once here we were soon out of the vehicles and setting our telescopes up to overlook a large shallow pond. There were several target species we needed to look for and it didn't long to find both Maccoa and White-backed Ducks. A little more searching and we added Yellow-billed Duck, Southern Pochard, Hottentot Teal, lots of Red-knobbed Coots and Little Grebes. Below us on the waters edge we had good views of Lesser Swamp Warbler and some of the group saw single Striated and Madagascar Squacco Herons. A close African Stonechat looked really nice and behind us on a bank were a Hunter's Cisticola, and Baglaffeht Weaver. Leaving this productive pond behind us we continued on our way. A couple of roadside stops found us a very confident Mountain Buzzard and then a Cape Wagtail.

Our next proper stop miles off the beaten track was a lovely area of mid elevation mountain forest. We parked in a clearing, which soon became a hive of activity. On the grass in front of us we watched Olive Thrushes and then we found Montane White-eyes, Black-backed Puffback and a family of White-eyed Slaty Flycatchers. A little more work and we notched up Montane Oriole, Brown-capped Weaver, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, a pair of Fine-banded Woodpeckers, a Cardinal Woodpecker and a pair of Black-throated Apalis. This area was just great for birds! African Hill Babblers showed well as did Tropical Boubou and a Chestnut-throated Apalis. A stunning White-starred Robin posed nicely for us just before we stopped and ate our picnic lunches. After lunch we went onto a track and soon had excellent views of a pair of Black-collared Apalis, a Brown Woodland Warbler and two Ruppell's Robin Chats. Further along an African Dusky Flycatcher was found as well as a Thick-billed Seedeater, Yellow-whiskered Greenbul, Grey Apalis, and Northern Double-collared Sunbirds. We carried on walking along the track and into the forest where a group of noisy Black-and-white Colobus Monkeys were found before we tracked down a pair of Black-fronted Bush-shrikes with both red and yellow phase birds being seen. Nearby a White-tailed Crested Flycatcher was eventually seen well, after which we slowly made our way back towards the vehicles. Here we tried several times to see a singing Evergreen Forest Warbler and only at our third attempt did we get views for most of the group. What a skulker! Leaving here we set off towards Lake Navaisha. A short diversion along the way found us Mountain Wagtail and then on an area of farmland we had a Capped Wheatear and some less impressive Cape Rooks. We tried to access an area of grassland but recent rains made the road impassable, it was like a muddy ice-ring. We had to turn around and made the best of it by searching an area of similar habitat where we found up to thirty Black-winged Plovers and both Grassland and Plain-backed pipit. It was time to leave so we headed to Lake Navaisha and the Lake Navaisha Country Club Hotel arriving here in the dark.

DAY 04: LAKE NAVAISHA

We were woken this morning by the wonderful call of African Fish Eagles echoing from the nearby lake. On the way to breakfast as we crossed the lush grounds of the lodge, noisy Hadadas flew down from the trees and Black-lored Babblers hopped around outside the cabins. A Common Zebra was also spotted and looked somewhat out of place at the back of the grounds. After breakfast we met up and made our way to the jetty ready for our morning boat trip on Lake Navaisha. As we walked across the lodges grounds Defassa Waterbuck came onto the lawns to feed. From the jetty a fine collection of birds were soon notched up including Giant, Malachite and lots of Pied Kingfishers, Great and Long-tailed Cormorants, Spur-winged Plovers and African Spoonbills.

A pair of African Fish Eagles looked at us from their close perch and elegant looking African Pied Wagtails ran around the jetty. Several Grey-backed Fishals then posed for us before we boarded our two boats and set off around the edges of the lake. A close Yellow-billed Stork was the first of many as was the Pink-backed Pelican floating in the water beside it. As we slowly cruised beside the reed beds, heron and duck species were seen everywhere. Several waders were new for the trip and these including Greenshank, Wood Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit and Ruff. There were lots of Lesser Swamp Warblers flitting around and then the giant of all herons a Goliath was spotted. Purple and Squacco Herons became common place and Whiskered and a single Gull-billed Tern were found. Above us, we had to work through the many swifts to find Little, Nyanza and Horus. A Purple Swamphen was seen while many White-bearded Gnu, Common Waterbuck, Common Zebra and Impala fed in the distance. A large rounded Hippo was spotted feeding out of the water and nearby a huge Saddle-billed Stork showed to us better than a very distant one seen earlier. On an area of mud we got excellent close views of three Long-toed Plovers and a single Kittlitz's Plover before it was time to turn around and head back to the lodge. Back on the jetty and we enjoyed superb close views of four Grey-rumped Swallows that Martin had just spotted, while nearby on the scrubby bushes

were several beautiful looking White-fronted Bee-eaters. Returning to our cabins we collected our luggage together and met up at the minibuses to find that one had got some electrical problems that needed fixing.

An extended look around the lodge grounds helped pass the time. A calling Black Cuckoo was the first bird we tracked down and although easily heard it took some spotting! A Klaas's Cuckoo then gave us the run around until we finally got it scoped at the top of a tree. Just outside the front of reception we watched Green Wood-hoopoes another Black Cuckoo and later a Red-chested Cuckoo. Spectacled Weaver and White-browed Robin-Chat were found as well as a pair of Amethyst Sunbirds, Red-headed Weaver, Black Cuckoo-shrike and African Black-headed Oriole. With our minibus now fixed we set off and drove to a small rocky gorge. A roadside stop just before here produced a couple of Pale Flycatchers, a stunning male Red-headed Weaver and a Golden Breasted Bunting.

Moving on we got to the gorge and soon located our target species of Schalow's Wheatear followed by a pair of Wailing Cisticolas. Our stomachs told us it must be time for our picnic lunch and as we ate, both Tawny-flanked Prinia and Grey-backed Camaroptera were spotted. Back on board the buses it was now time to set off on the drive towards Lake Baringo. We passed by wonderful views of the Great Rift Valley and a significant change in habitat took us into dry thorn scrub. A roadside stop soon made us realise that the outside temperature had increased somewhat. While stretching our legs we found a pair of Brown Parrots and a smart little Red-faced Crombec. Continuing on our first Kirk's Dikdik was seen running across the road followed by a large Leopard Tortoise which did the same but slower. Nearly to our lodge and we made a quick stop beside some open scrub where Black-headed Plovers were easily seen, a Silverbird showed well sat on a wire and our first Red-billed Hornbill's and White-bellied Go-away Birds were spotted. A Beautiful Sunbird was then seen as we finished the last part of the journey soon arriving at the Lake Baringo Country Club. After a welcome drink we were all shown to our cabins. We also spotted a huge Verreaux's Eagle-owls at in a tree just twenty feet away. What views! When everyone had settled in we met up and went straight to the tree where all of us enjoyed excellent views of a pair of these magnificent owls, including one bird which was watched eating a hedgehog. Woodland Kingfisher and a variety of weavers including Jackson's Golden-backed and Little. A group of Rufous Chatterers played around in a tangled bush as we walked out towards the lake where a nice looking Nubian Woodpecker worked its way around a dead tree. Beside the lake we searched the reed beds and found two Goliath Herons, a flying Little Bittern and several Bishops that included Orange and Yellow-crowned. An excellent day over we returned to our rooms and then met for a superb meal set out in the gardens of the lodge.

DAY 05: LAKE BARINGO

This morning we were up at dawn for some pre-breakfast birding. As we made our way to the minibuses we passed by lots of birds in and around the gardens. There were now three Verreaux's Eagle Owls sat in a tree and lovely Northern White-crowned Shrikes and Woodland Kingfishers to be seen while a white morph African Paradise Flycatcher flew elegantly around the buses parked beside the entrance to the lodge. We then set off towards the nearby cliffs. The first stop just outside the lodge was for a Hunter's Sunbird feeding in a bush with two Beautiful Sunbirds. Along the way we stopped again as two Abyssinian Scimitar-bills flew across the road and while looking for these we found a Red-fronted Warbler and several Madagascar Bee-eaters, Blue-naped Mousebirds, a lovely pair of Dark-chanting Goshawks and a little further along a pair of African Pygmy Falcons and a single Ethiopian Swallow. Parking near to the cliffs we got out and had a good walk around. A Hemprich's Hornbill showed well soon followed by our first Jackson's Hornbill. Fan-tailed Ravens flew above us and White-rumped Swifts were also seen. Several Black-throated Barbets then put in an appearance and a Lanner Falcon showed particularly well sat on a branch sticking out from the cliff face.

Amongst the boulders strewn around at the base of the cliff we found a Brown-tailed Rock-Chat and then another of our sought after target birds a very attractive Cliff-Chat. Up to four Eastern Violet-backed Sunbirds showed well and excellent views were had of Bristle-crowned Starlings. We returned back to the lodge for breakfast after which we met by the jetty for a boat trip along the lake edge. A Crocodile lying on the end of the jetty smiled at us and invited us to enter its territory. This we did cruising slowly along the reedy edge of this immense lake. A Little Bittern flew by and huge Goliath Herons were easily seen. Both Yellow-crowned and Orange Bishop showed themselves in full breeding colours while our target species, a couple of Allen's Gallinules were eventually seen by everyone. Moving to another area of the lake birds seen included plenty of Madagascar Bee-eaters, a very confiding Goliath Heron and a few Yellow-billed Storks. As we got back towards the jetty we drifted closely past a group of Hippos that sniffed and snorted while keeping a close eye on us. A short siesta was taken before lunch after which we set off towards the cliffs again. A roadside stop soon had us walking around the dry open scrub where we watched a couple of Plain Prinia's, Yellow-vented Eremomela, White-bellied Canaries, a Brubru, African Grey Flycatchers and two Somali Tits. Moving on we stopped when three raptors were spotted. We got out and enjoyed fabulous views as these Brown Snake-eagles circled overhead. Our next stop was for one of the specialities we were hoping to find this afternoon and after following our local guide into the scrub we were soon enjoying the most fantastic views of a pair of Heuglin's Coursers.

Nearby an African Hoopoe was seen before we drove along a track to a small and very out of way gorge. Here we took a short walk to the top where we got temporarily distracted by a female Violet-backed Starling and a Blue-capped Cordon Bleu. Looking down into the gorge we were soon rewarded with views of a roosting Spotted Eagle-owl. Fantastic! Wonderful scenic views from here were then made better with excellent views of Little

Bee-eater, Pygmy Falcon and a Speckle-fronted Weaver. Moving on we stopped as a Verreaux's Eagle flew along the cliff top beside us and then in another non-descript scrubby area we followed our guide who then showed us two different Slender-tailed Nightjars roosting on the ground. A Pygmy Batis flew in and was seen well before we made our way to the next stop. A short walk here had us overlook a muddy pool where we saw Hammerkops and a Grey-headed Kingfisher. Nearby a Bee-hive in a tree proved excellent as we watched two Scaly-throated Honeyguides and both Lesser and Greater Honeyguide all beside each other.

Further along we had fabulous views of our third owl species for the day a pair of roosting Northern White-faced Scops-owls. Another Cliff-Chat was seen as well as several Jackson's Hornbills and then a very confiding pair of Red-fronted Tinkerbirds. We got back to the minibuses and then drove back to the lodge where we finished off the day with a look at a pair of nesting Red-fronted Barbets. A Nubian Woodpecker was also seen and then the half of the group that were left got to see a pair of Bearded Woodpeckers. After our evening meal and check list we watched as several Hippos walking through the hotel grounds. A little less intimidating though was the White-winged Tomb Bats that frequented the trees around our cabins.

DAY 06: KAKEMEGA

We had an early breakfast and then set off on our journey towards the Kakemega rain forest. We hadn't gone more than a couple of miles when an African Cuckoo was spotted sat on a telegraph wire. Further on a short stop was made beside a river bridge where we saw Black-and-white Cuckoo, good comparisons of Little and Horus Swifts and then excellent views of both Pearl-spotted Owllet and White-crested Helmet-shrikes. Continuing on, a few more inevitable roadside stops produced birds such as Crowned Hornbill's, a Little Rock Thrush and Purple Grenadier. Stopping on top of a high valley we searched around finding several Long-billed Pipits, Cinnamon-breasted Bunting and very good looks at Stripe-breasted Seedeater and Boran Cisticola. A few African Black Swifts flew over after which we tried another area a bit further along the road. Another Stripe-breasted Seedeater, which is a really difficult species to find, was seen, and then some of the group saw Brown Snake-eagle, and Violet-backed Starling, while we all saw Black-crowned Tchagra. Our first real stop after passing through some very impressive scenery was a superb well forested valley. Here we took a short walk and were soon finding new species. An incredibly bright Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike showed well soon followed by Red-faced Crombec and the stunning Black-headed Gonolek. A group of White-bellied Tits were found along with d'Arnaud's Barbet and then a Western Banded Snake-eagle sat in a tree being mobbed by a White-headed Barbet. Moving along we followed the call of one of our target birds and were eventually rewarded with excellent views of two White-crested Turacos. A Double-toothed Barbet then showed on the same tree and nearby we watched White-fronted Bee-eaters and an African Grey Hornbill fly over. As we returned we checked some field edges and came up with Spot-flanked Barbet, an African Pygmy Kingfisher, Village Indigobird, Black-winged Red Bishop and several White-headed Saw-wings. Still not quite back to the minibuses we added a few more species including a Common Scimitar-bill, Lead-coloured Flycatcher, White-headed Buffalo-weavers and some Brown Babblers. Once aboard our buses we continued on our journey. Our next stop beside a reedy overgrown pool didn't look very special, but it soon proved to be very special indeed! Without moving more than fifty feet we saw a couple of Ross's Turacos, Cinnamon-breasted Bee-eaters and then Double-toothed Barbet, excellent views of Red-faced Cisticola and a pair of Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrikes. After glimpsing some honeyguides we moved around and got to see two Lesser Honeyguides and with them a Pallid Honeyguide. A pair of Grosbeak Weavers showed well as did Grey-capped Warbler, Black-crowned Waxbills and several Black-and-white Mannikins. Along with Thick-billed Seedeater, Tropical Boubou and Blue-spotted Wood-dove this proved to be yet another marvellous stop. Continuing on we pulled over to look at a pair of White-naped Ravens feeding beside the road. What enormous bills they had! As we got nearer to the Rondo Retreat Centre set in the Kakemega rain forest the first minibus were lucky to see a Great Sparrowhawk sat in the middle of the road. We then pulled in to our fabulous lodgings set amongst some beautiful gardens. What perfect timing! We settled into our rooms and then met in the dining room where we all enjoyed our first Rondo meal which proved to be delicious and well presented.

DAY 07: KAKEMEGA

We were up at dawn for an early breakfast after which couldn't resist looking for a few species within the gardens. We must have counted around thirty huge Black-and-white-casqued Hornbills flying noisily overhead and then on a large sunlight tree in the gardens we scoped African Green Pigeons and a Green-throated Sunbird. In a closer tree we all got excellent scope views of a Southern Hyliota, a Grey-headed Negrofinch and then a few Bronze Sunbirds. We then jumped into the minibuses and drove just five minutes from our lodge. Stopping for a Red-headed Bluebill which was in the road, Joseph heard an illadopsis so we all got out and enjoyed some great birding. A Brown Illadopsis was soon tracked down and everyone got some sort of view of it. Other birds found included a Buff-spotted Woodpecker, followed by a pair of Pink-footed Puffbacks, Square-tailed Drongos, Dark-backed Weavers, Luder's Bush-shrike, Chestnut Wattle-eye and a selection of greenbul's which included Yellow-whiskered, Cameroon Sombre and Joyful. Excellent scope views were then had of two really good canopy species, a rare Hairy-breasted Barbet and a tiny Turner's Eremomela. A couple of Banded Prinia's showed very well and a few other species from our roadside stop included Black Cuckoo, Least Honeyguide, Olive Sunbird, Yellow White-eye and Black-billed Weaver. Moving on from here we stopped at the house of Wilberforce a local guide and expert on the Kakemega rain forest. Outside of his house we were soon watching a pair of Petit's Cuckoo-shrikes and a very energetic African Blue Flycatcher. David found a showy Brown-crowned Tchagra while several White-chinned Prinia's flitted about and then three White-headed Wood-hoopoes flew over. Slender-billed

Greenbul was then added to our ever growing greenbul list, soon followed by Little Greenbul, a hybrid Paradise Flycatcher and good looks of both Equatorial Akalat and Snowy-headed Robin-chat. A Uganda Woodland Warbler was found singing and a side track found us African Thrush and Brown-chested Alethe feeding in the grass. From here we took a walk to an area know as the pump house. As soon as we entered this part of the forest we found Green Hylia, Cabanis's Greenbul and a Grey-throated Barbet which showed off its strange erect tufts at the base of its bill. Carefully walking the narrow muddy trails of this excellent forest a Red-tailed Monkey was spotted and then we got good views of one of the hardest greenbuls the Toro Olive. High in the canopy a couple Stuhlmann's Starlings were found and then again high up were two very attractive Yellow-spotted Barbets. A few Unstriped Ground Squirrels diverted our attention, but not for long as a Buff-throated Apalis and Little Grey Greenbul were spotted and posed nicely for us. A little further along we got neck ache looking at a pair of Red-headed Malimbés in a tree top above us. As we watched it became apparent that they actually had a nest. Not far from here we all scoped an African Shrike-flycatcher and then walking back out of the wood to a clearing Nico in our group found a superb immature Emerald Cuckoo which showed very close. As we made our way to the buses a Western Banded Snake-eagle was seen perched on a dead tree. It was time for lunch so we returned to our tranquil retreat. Once we had eaten, several of the group took a look around the gardens which being midday were rather quiet. A Great Blue Turaco was sat on its nest but we could only manage views of its tail and its beak. Once assembled for the afternoons birding and just before getting ourselves back onto the buses we all managed to see a Grey-green Bush-shrike. Driving back to the forest and parking by the research centre it was only a few minutes before we were watching a Honeyguide Greenbul high in the canopy.

Following Wilberforce into the forest we soon located a couple of Chestnut Wattle-eyes and then I spotted a White-tailed Anthrush sunning itself right out in the open. In a clearing we could see a group of Scarce Swifts flying above us while a little further along was a Blue-headed Bee-eater flycatching from a dead branch. As the clouds darkened and spits of rain began to fall we found and scoped a Chapin's Flycatcher high in the canopy and a Western Black-headed Oriole was then seen in the same spot while lower down near the ground a couple of Red-tailed Bristlebills surprised us by allowing good views. We walked back to the buses but the rain never seemed to really get going so we decided to walk out to the pump house area again. In a small field we saw an African Pygmy Kingfisher which posed nicely for us on a small bush.

Back in the wood a Dusky Crested-flycatcher showed briefly while deeper in the wood we all got excellent looks at a very smart Yellow-billed Barbet. In another area of forest we found a Shelley's Greenbul and then watched it singing. Nico then got a recording of it, because as far as we knew it had never been heard before and was thought to be silent. Leaving the forest we headed back and tried to look for a Mackinnon's Fiscal which had been seen by a couple of the group earlier. As we unsuccessfully searched, compensation was had as a Great Sparrowhawk was seen by a few to fly past.

DAY 08: LAKE VICTORIA- KAKEMEGA

Today we had to be up early so as to get to Lake Victoria before the sun got up. A picnic breakfast and lunch was taken with us and after a long drive we arrived at our first stop which was a small fishing village. Three boats were organised and we were soon paddled out together along the edge of the Papyrus where Northern Brown-throated and Slender-billed Weavers were easily seen along with our first views of a Papyrus Gonolek. A Little Bittern was also found and then a few Greater and Lesser Swamp Warblers. We managed to see a couple of Carruthers's Cisticolas before being paddled out to an area of lilly pads. Here were lots of African Jacanas and hundreds of Whiskered Terns with just a few White-winged and Gull-billed amongst them. Returning along the edge of the lake we got better views of Papyrus Gonoleks, but frustratingly we only got to hear White-winged Warbler. Back on the jetty an African Openbill Stork was seen with a small Nile Monitor sat on a rock in front of it. We then drove to some nearby washrooms and while here we had good views of Black-billed Barbet, Red-chested Sunbirds, a Village Indigobird and both White-browed and Blue-headed Coucals. Just a short distance from here in a scrubby roadside area we got fantastic close views of more Red-chested Sunbirds and a gorgeous pair of Golden-winged Sunbirds. A few of the group saw a Papyrus Canary, but we all got onto a Fan-tailed Widowbird and in a more open area a confiding Water Thick-knee.

A nightjar was then flushed and after landing just a short distance away we relocated it and identified it as a Slender-tailed, apparently way out of its normal range. Above us we watched a Shikra and then an Abdim's Stork. Back to the washrooms, which were actually a lakeside café; we had our picnic lunches and a few cool drinks. In the grounds were two Eastern Grey Plantain-eaters and a good selection of previously seen birds that including an African Fish Eagle and Black-headed Gonolek.

After a relaxed lunch we found a Black-billed Barbet and then returned to the nearby area of scrub where everyone got good views of Yellow-backed Weavers and the race of White-bellied Canary (*S. d. dorsostriatus*) without the white belly! Moving on we drove to a nearby hotel and after gaining permission we searched their gardens and eventually saw a Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird and a Little Purple-banded Sunbird. Leaving here our next stop was on the main road overlooking an area with a few paddyfields and stands of corn. Near to a group of Hadada and an Open-billed Stork we found three Wattled Plovers and a Copper Sunbird which flew in and showed well although only briefly. Over the next forty five minutes we found a male Yellow-mantled Widowbird of the Yellow-shouldered race and then we had Southern Red Bishops, Black-winged Red Bishop and the larger Black

Bishop. We decide it was time to get out of the heat and headed back to the cooler temperature of Kakemega. Along the way we stopped for a pair of Northern Black Flycatchers and even saw one bird go to its nest. Driving along the road towards Rondo Retreat a stop was made so as we could walk a nice section within the rain forest. Quiet at first it soon picked up with Collared Sunbird, Yellow White-eye, Pink-legged and Luder's Bush-shrikes, Least Honeyguide and a Common Wattle-eye. It took us a little time to get everyone to see a male Jameson's Wattle-eye, but it was worth it as it was a fabulous little bird. Nearby Michael found an immature Emerald Cuckoo and shortly after we had close views of an adult. Next were a Toro Olive Greenbul and then a male Buff-throated Apalis and a flighty group of Dusky Tits. It then started to rain which was actually rather pleasant.

Continuing a little further in the minibuses we then got out and enjoyed fabulous close views of a pair of Chubb's Cisticolas. The rain then got harder so we got into our vehicles and drove on. Only a short distance from Rondo the rain stopped and we got out to look at a puddle in the road. An Equatorial Akalat was bathing and then as we watched a mythical bird appeared, it was a skulking Grey-chested Illidopsis that came out of the forest and bathed in the same puddle allowing everyone to scope this incredibly difficult and seldom seen bird. Several Brown-chested Alethes joined it while above us Black and White-headed Saw-wings flew around. An excellent end to another good day we returned to our lodge in time for another superb evening meal.

DAY 09: KAKAMEGA

After an early breakfast we took a stroll around the gardens. In the tall trees were Southern Hyliota and four Turners Eremomelas as well as three Black and white Colobus Monkeys and sunbirds that included Green and Green-throated. A look at the Great Blue Turacos nest gave us no better views than before with just the tail visible. Moving on to one of the short woodland trails we walked into the forest and here beside a small rocky stream Kevin in our group spotted a superb Grey-winged Robin which after initially keeping well hidden showed to us all. There was a Brown Illidopsis working its way through the leaf litter on the far bank and just a little further along some of the group managed to see a much more elusive Scaly-breasted Illidopsis. Our next challenge was to locate a calling White-spotted Flufftail so we walked back to the small stream and tried to entice it in. We never saw it but above us a Great Blue Turaco showed very well. We then tried another two areas for the flufftail and were eventually rewarded with fantastic views of a male bird sat fifteen feet in front of us in full view on a muddy bank; Fantastic!

After watching this stunning little bird we headed back to the minibuses and set off to another area of this wonderful rain forest. The track that we had to drive down got muddier the further we went, until eventually the buses became stuck. While Simon and John put on some mud chains we birded the track. Several Collared Sunbirds were found soon followed by Little and Black-billed Weavers, Luder's Bush-shrike, Equatorial Akalat, Olive-green Camaroptera and Grey-throated Barbet. We had to work a little harder before everyone got to see a Blue-shouldered Robin-chat and later three Chubb's Cisticolas performed well. With the vehicles now out of the mud and fitted with tyre chains we turned around and drove back to an area of forest called the 'Zimmerman plot'. With Wilberforce leading we entered the forests maze of trails. It wasn't long before a group of Dusky Tits were found and while watching these we got excellent views of another very rare Hairy-breasted Barbet. A Red-headed Malimbe showed particularly well as did Green-headed Sunbird. On another narrow trail we watched a Dusky-crested Flycatcher while some of the group got there second chance to see Scaly-breasted Illidopsis. It was time to complete the forests list of greenbuls and this we did in style with good views of Ansorge's, followed later by Cabanis's Greenbul. A Jameson's Wattle-eye was then spotted by a few and then another bird heard calling way into the forest was tracked until excellent views were had of West Kenya's rarest wattle-eye the Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye. We then searched everywhere trying to find Bar-tailed Trogon but were unsuccessful. Another Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye was found though! Both Blue and Red-tailed Monkeys were seen before we left the forest to check the nearby gardens around the environmental resource centre buildings where a pair of Grey-green Bush-shrikes were found and we got stunning views of a Mackinnon's Fiscal.

It was now time for lunch so we returned to Rondo. Afterwards we met up and enjoyed watching one of the Great Blue Turacos sat in a tall tree. A Vieillot's Black Weaver was then spotted singing, and after watching this we boarded our minibuses and set off towards Busia. An African Harrier-hawk was seen from the bus and shortly after we stopped at a river bridge where numerous Little Swifts could be seen and heard swirling around just below us. The target bird here was a pair of Angola Swallows which were then seen nesting under an open roof. After another drive we arrived at our second river bridge and after walking down to view the rocks in this fast flowing river we enjoyed super looks at three Rock Pratincoles, a superb bird! A Bar-breasted Firefinch was then seen as well as good numbers of Angola Swallows. Continuing on another 20km we stopped beside a smaller river this time. A couple of Black-shouldered Kites sat in a tree as a flock of Cardinal Quelea and some very good views of Copper Sunbirds were had. An adult and an immature Senegal Coucal showed reasonably well as did several Olive-bellied Sunbirds. Joseph then found us a very scarce bird, an Orange-tufted Sunbird which we all saw just ten feet away, but only briefly. Just a short distance up the road we checked another area and here David found a pair of Red-headed Lovebirds which everyone got to see well. With huge black clouds moving towards us we finished of the day with a couple of Yellow-throated Longclaws and an African Pygmy Kingfisher. The rains came and we ran back to the minibuses and set off back to Rondo and a very welcome evening meal.

DAY 10: KAKAMEGA - L. NAKURU.

This mornings early breakfast was followed by a quick look around the gardens which produced Southern Hylia again! There were a couple of Mosque Swallows on a dead tree, the Great Blue Turaco was seen and we had excellent looks at an Olive Pigeon. Driving a short distance to where the road passed through the rain forest we got out of our vehicles and were greeted by the call of a Pale-breasted Illadopsis. By walking a narrow trail into the forest we managed to see two of these little skulkers. A Black-faced Rufous Warbler was then found by David and most of the group saw it well. Those that never caught up with it were lucky when another two showed better on the other side of the road. A few other birds were also seen but we had specific targets this morning so we moved on. A quick stop was made in an open area where a pair of Yellow-throated Leaf-loves were seen very well sat in the sunlight. After quite some time we located a pair of Bar-tailed Trogons deep in the forest, here I set the scope up for everyone to enjoy the stunning male bird. Leaving this magical forest we made our way back to Rondo where we packed everything together, and set off on the long drive to Nakuru. A short stop beside a stream where numerous butterflies were coming down to the muddy edges managed to get us excellent views of a Green Sunbird which can often be difficult as it is a Canopy species.

A roadside stop just after lunch time at a marshy lake then found us two new species including the very localised Levaillant's Cisticola and a Tacazze Sunbird. containing hundreds of Speckled Pigeons also had two Tawny Eagles in it and then a Lanner shot through and tried to take out one of the pigeons. We were soon at the entrance gate to Nakuru National Park and while some of us made use of the washrooms several new species were found. A group of Arrow-marked Babblers were first followed by Green Wood-hoopoes, Common Scimitar-bill, a nice Diederik Cuckoo and a Speke's Weaver. Black-faced Vervet Monkeys were common and as we drove into the park a troop of Olive Baboons were passed.

With our roofs up and everyone positioned for action we slowly made our way through the woodland. Amongst the first birds we saw were a pair of Hildebrandt's Francolins walking along the road in front of us. Barry then spotted a fantastic looking Red-throated Wryneck which gave us great views and then amazingly was joined by a second bird which it displayed to and then mated with. A little further along we came across a group of the threatened and near endemic Grey-crested Helmet-shrikes. After superb views of these we moved on to a more open area. Here we saw lots of Northern Anteater Chats and then a Long-crested Eagle followed by a group of Cut-throats, Pin-tailed Whydah and the display flights of several tiny Pectoral-patch Cisticolas. Nico then found a couple of Red-capped Larks which we all saw alongside a Plain-backed Pipit. From here we drove to the edge of Lake Nakuru and in front of us was what has been described as one of nature's greatest spectacles.

Over a million Lesser Flamingos made the edges of the lake look an intense pink as far as the eye could see. It's just a pity that photos cannot do it justice. Amongst the Lesser Flamingos were a few Greater, while along the lake edges we saw an African Fish Eagle and lots of dainty Kittlitz's Plovers. Great White Pelicans and Marabou Storks were numerous and looked magnificent flying over the mass of noisy flamingos. Further along we got out of the buses, set up the scopes and proceeded to search through the groups of wading birds. Curlew Sandpipers were fairly numerous and a few little Stints were found hiding amongst them. We then had Ruff, Greenshanks and Black-winged Stilts but pride of place went to David when he found a full breeding plumage Dunlin the fifth record ever for Kenya and only the sixth record for the whole of East Africa. Amongst the other birds we spotted were Sacred Ibis, Yellow-billed Storks, African Spoonbills and a lovely pair of Cape Teal. Mammals were well represented and included Defassa Waterbuck, Common Zebra, Grant's and Thompson's Gazelle's and Impala. Leaving the lake we drove back into the forest and along a narrow road we watched as a single Lioness crossed and then disappeared into thick cover. With the light beginning to fade a Martial Eagle was spotted perched in a close tree, we all had excellent views of this bird before driving to our lodge which overlooked the lake. After our meal and log call we all set off to our cabins. Kathy then managed to find a few of us and took us to see a superb Little Rock Thrush roosting under the roof of their cabin.

DAY 11: LAKE NAKURU - MT KENYA

After an early breakfast we set off on a drive through the park. It was a surprisingly chilly to start with but the sun was coming up. As we drove along we passed through an area of tall trees and here we found one of our target species a pair of Levaillant's Cuckoos. A little further on amongst the long grass we counted up to 30 Jackson's Widowbirds along with a few Long-tailed Widowbirds several Yellow Bishops and then a couple of Masai Ostrich. Down beside a small pool we found a pair of Striped Kingfishers and on a distant bush another male Long-tailed Widowbird was seen. Another small pool held some distant waders that included Marsh Sandpipers and a Spotted Redshank. As we went out onto the open grasslands mammals became more obvious with lots of Cape Buffalo, Impala, Grant's and Thompson's Gazelles.

We had fabulous close looks at a family group of White Rhino and also saw a few Warthogs. Northern Anteater-chats were seen everywhere and while stopping to look at several very close individuals we then spotted a pair of beautiful Rosy-throated Longclaws while above the cliff top a Verreaux's Eagle was being mobbed by an African Hawk-eagle. Passing through an area of forest we found a pair of White-tailed Barbets and then on the road we saw an African Firefinch and then a Tambourine Dove. As we drove past some more cliffs two Black-chested Snake-eagles were seen and in the grass beside us were three Chandler's Reedbucks. We watched as a procession of Common Zebra walked past and a little further along a

couple of Lions were seen including one which was sat up a tree.

Continuing our journey our next find was a magnificent looking Secretary Bird feeding its young on a nest and nearby both Broad-billed and Lilac-breasted Rollers were seen in perfect sunlight. In the open grasslands we came across a group of four Southern Ground-hornbills with a line of Rothschild's Giraffes walking behind them. A fantastic sight! It was time for lunch so we hastily returned to our lodge. In the grounds most people saw Little Rock Thrush and Speke's Weaver while White-rumped Swifts patrolled overhead. After lunch we packed our bags and moved out. A last visit was made to the lake shore to refresh our memories with the incredible spectacle of million's of Lesser Flamingos.

On the ground sat a huge immature Martial Eagle which then, flew off and circled the forest only to be joined by an adult. Amongst the waterbirds were hundreds of White Pelicans, Yellow-billed Storks, Sacred and Glossy Ibis, African Spoonbills, Marabou, terns, gulls and commoner shorebirds. Two white-phase Dimorphic Egrets caused a little debate and then we said farewell to one of the most amazing scenes on Earth. Setting off towards Mt Kenya a stop was made along the way at the famous Thomson Falls where we hoped to see Sharpe's Starling. It was really too early in the day for them, but compensation for not seeing them was had when two huge African Crowned Eagles came soaring out of the wooded valley below and rose up to give some great views of this very impressive bird. We continued our drive with another roadside stop made when Joseph spotted a Black-bellied Bustard stood on a grassy mound. Our next stop was a small quarry where we searched the entire rock face to try and find our next target species but only saw Red-winged Starlings and Little Rock Thrush. We then set our telescopes on a fantastic Mackinder's Eagle-owl in full view on the rock face.

After taking a few record photos we completed the last leg of our journey to the Naro Moru River Lodge. Yet another great location we enjoyed a super evening meal and then after our regular log-call we retired to our cabins. During the night the sounds of Tree Hyrax outside our cabins sounded like something from a horror movie!!

DAY 12: MT KENYA - SAMBURU.

After breakfast we met up in the lodge grounds where it didn't take too long before we were looking at a fabulous male Narina Trogon. Taking a short walk along the river we located a couple of Mountain Wagtails, a Long-crested Eagle and a superb Hartlaub's Turaco just a few feet away. After seeing a few other species such as Eastern Double-collared Sunbird, Tacazze Sunbird, Tropical Boubou and Cape Robin-chat, we then loaded the minibuses and moved out. As we drove towards the impressive peak of Mt Kenya an impromptu roadside stop found us the difficult white-throated race of Black-lored Babbler. Continuing on we got to the entrance gate of Mt Kenya National Park and birded the woodland edge here. A Red-fronted Parrot sat in the top of a tree and an adult Martial Eagle soared overhead. There were lots of Hunter's Cisticolas around and a pair of Yellow-bellied Waxbills were much appreciated, as was our first Mountain Yellow Warbler. We then drove into the park and started to make our way up and through the forest. Our first stop was for Abyssinian Crimsonwings, shortly followed by a Jackson's Francolin and then a Mountain Buzzard. We continued driving up to 10,000ft where we stopped at the Met Station. The weather was now decidedly cooler, but this was soon forgotten as we got out of the buses and immediately found the two species we were looking for. Very tame Alpine Chats sat around on the short plants and several gorgeous Abyssinian Ground Thrushes came out of the bamboo and fed

Hartlaub's Turacos were seen and most of the group got to see a Cinnamon Bracken Warbler. A couple of Cape Canaries were then added to our list while Montane White-eye, Olive Thrush and Tacazze Sunbird showed well. We then headed back down towards the gate for our picnic lunch. Along the way we had the inevitable stops which this time included three Silvery-cheeked Hornbills and then a pair of Grey Cuckoo-shrikes. Back at the gate we had our picnic lunch and while eating Michael spotted a raptor in the distance; it eventually appeared very close right above our heads and was a magnificent adult African Crowned Eagle. This excellent bird was so close that every single bit of detail could be seen. Wow! After lunch we set off on our drive to Samburu.

Not too much was seen along the way but the temperature changed from cool to hot. As we neared the park gate a stop was made beside some very short grass and here we watched a pair of Somali Coursers with a juvenile close beside them. A couple of White-eared Mousebirds were then spotted before finally arriving at the gate. As our entrance passes were being sorted we got out and watched hundreds of Little Swifts which were flying to and fro from their nests under the gate buildings. Our first Von der Decken's Hornbill's posed for the scopes but an adult Gabar Goshawk was much less showy. Driving through this park was typical of all the wildlife films you see on TV; Dry open thorn scrub with a backdrop of mountains, it was truly beautiful scenery. We soon started seeing birds such as White-headed and Red-billed Buffalo-weavers, Northern White-crowned Shrikes, Superb Starlings, more hornbills and then a nice Pink-breasted Lark. White-bellied Bustards were quite common and we enjoyed excellent views including a family of four right in front of our bus. In all we reckon we must have seen 12 on our journey to the lodge. Our first Gerenuks, Grevy's Zebras and Besia Oryx were seen well and then a pair of Black-faced Sandgrouse allowed us to drive right along side.

Moving on we next found several pairs of Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse and a group of Donaldson-smith's Sparrow-weavers. A lone African Elephant

was our first, and it was very much appreciated. It was now getting late in the day and Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse started to appear on the tracks. We got really close views of these excellent birds and then we found five more Somali Coursers! A Verreaux's Eagle-owl was spotted looking down on us as we crossed a small stream and shortly after we arrived at the Samburu Serena River Lodge. We settled into our cabins and later met for the evening meal. As we sat down to eat I casually mentioned that I could see a Leopard on the other side of the river, it had come down to some meat that had been put out by the lodge staff. Eventually someone else looked and I was believed! We quickly collected a couple of scopes and set them up to get good views. In between courses we took turns at having great views of this impressive mammal, in fact everyone in the hotel seemed to leave their meals as well and have a look!

DAY 13: SAMBURU.

After an early breakfast it was time for a quick look around the lodge grounds. Beside the river were a group of surprisingly beautiful Vulturine Guinea-fowl while in a tree above us was a Bearded Woodpecker. Taking a walk out to the front of the lodge we tried to find a Grey-headed Bush-shrike. We never saw or heard one but we did see Spotted Mourning Thrush, Northern Brownbills and excellent views of a Bare-eyed Thrush. Just as we were about to leave John spotted a raptor flying over; we ran to an open area to get better views and were rewarded with an excellent sighting of a Bat Hawk. We then got into our minibuses and set off into the park. Almost immediately a Palm-nut Vulture was spotted flying on our left, lots of Slate-coloured Boubous were seen and heard and we found a Grey Wren-warbler, Chestnut Sparrows, Southern Black Flycatcher and Chestnut Weavers.

Moving on through an area of grassland near to the river we were very pleased to find a superb Leopard lying down just 20ft away. While watching and photographing this, one of our most sought after mammals it then sat up and looked at us for a while before lying back down. What a magnificent animal and close enough for everyone to get a memorable photo. Moving on from here we slowly followed the river and saw Three-striped Tchagra, Orange-bellied Parrots, African Hoopoe, a superb Grey-headed Bush-shrike and Black-bellied Sunbird.

Nearby were a small herd of African Elephants including several that were very young and here in the bushes we got to see several Black-faced Waxbills. There was a small Nile Crocodile on the shallow river bed and further along on the other side a pride of Lions relaxed together. We continued around the park seeing more Impala, Gerenuks and tiny Kirk's Dikdiks. A tree full of Red-billed Hornbills also held two Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbills while above us flew both African Harrier-hawk and a Bateleur. We found another good area and watched Somali Bee-eaters and a Taita Fiscal together, while nearby Ashy Prinia and a Fawn-coloured Lark were found. Barbets included both Black-throated and d'Arnaud's while White-headed and Blue-naped Mousebirds showed well. In the understory we had fabulous views of good numbers of Crested Francolin and Yellow-necked Spurfowl while half hidden under a tree was a Somali Ostrich. At a road bridge we got good views of two huge Mottled Swifts amongst the many Little Swifts. Returning to the lodge for lunch we then took a short siesta. In the lodge grounds before we left for our afternoon drive there was a pair of Northern Puffbacks, several Dodson's Bulbuls which are a distinct race of Common Bulbul and two Golden Palm Weavers. In the park we took a different route and soon caught up with Rosy-patched Bush-shrike, yet another beautiful bird! More Pink-breasted Larks were seen, lots of Black-capped Social Weavers and then our first of three Somali Long-billed Crombecs and extremely local and scarce species. Moving on, apart from the regular White-backed Vultures, we saw a huge Lappet-faced and then a Verreaux's Eagle.

We then stopped when a Buff-crested Bustard was heard calling and after some intense scanning and almost at the point of giving up we found it and got some super views as walked about the grass with all its' crest raised. A long drive around got us very close to the pride of Lions that we saw in the morning but we only managed distant views of a group of Reticulated Giraffes. A White-winged Scrub-robin showed well, but a real highlight was a Kori Bustard which slowly walked between our two buses followed by two little chicks. As we headed back towards the lodge our last stop had us look at two Ruppell's Griffon Vultures sat with a group of White-back's, while below there was a tree filled with White-throated Bee-eaters. Back at the lodge we enjoyed another good evening meal and later that night after looking for African Scops-owl some of us saw a Striped Hyena under the lights of the baited Leopard tree.

DAY 14: SAMBURU - MT KENYA.

Today we had a quick coffee and then went out before breakfast on a drive into the park. There's nothing quite like the atmosphere of early morning and this morning we hadn't gone far when a Leopard was spotted walking through the scrub. Continuing on we crisscrossed the grasslands soon finding an adult and a young Buff-crested Bustard. We later had excellent views of another male which walked right past the buses. All the regular mammals were easily seen and a nice find were three Golden Pipits which showed well with a full adult being particularly handsome. Other birds seen included Black-chested Snake-eagle, two Heuglin's Coursers, Chestnut-bellied, Black-faced and Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse and then a small flock of Fischer's Starlings. As we returned we stopped and watched a young Lion which had its sights fixed on an Impala. It carefully stalked it and then sprinted towards its victim, but the Impala spotted it and was too quick! Back towards the lodge we saw White-backed, Ruppell's and three very close

Lappet-faced Vultures sat in some low trees.

A group of Reticulated Giraffes were then spotted and we got wonderful views of these animals feeding together. As we returned for breakfast a male Black-necked Weaver was seen, ending a very productive start to the day. Afterwards we loaded the minibuses and set off out of the park. Continuing on we drove through a low grassy area and got good views of Fischer's Sparrow-larks and then nine Somali Coursers and a family of Chestnut-headed Sparrow-larks with the male seen very well. Leaving this spot we went to Buffalo Springs lodge and while enjoying a cool drink we watched several Diederik Cuckoos, Bristle-crowned Starlings, White-fronted Bee-eaters and an excellent look at a Marico Sunbird. As we left the lodge and its group of Olive Baboons, a roadside stop found us Somali Golden-breasted Bunting and then a huge Red-winged Lark later followed by Blue-capped Cordon Bleu, and Yellow-vented Eremomela. We then drove out of the gate and on towards the cooler climbs of Mt Kenya. Along the way at a petrol and picnic stop, we found several Red-collared Widowbirds. Our next stop was in the lower forest a few kilometres from Mountain Lodge where we were going to stay. A noisy group of White-headed Hoopoes were easily seen then found a pair of White-eared Barbets and we got excellent views of two Little Sparrowhawks displaying and then perching in a tree top in bright sunlight.

Moving on a little a stop was made to view and photograph Mt Kenya, just a short distance further and we arrived at the lodge. This fantastic lodge was built overlooking a natural salt lick and all of our rooms had perfect views of this animal magnet. As night fell, then spotlights strategically positioned lit up the area and as we watched wildlife started to come out of the forest. Common Bushbucks were first and then several Grey Mongoose. Our five star evening meal was pleasantly interrupted when a herd of Cape Buffalo appeared, a couple of Spotted Hyenas came in and then a wonderful Black Rhino. What a place this was! Continuing to watch after the meal added White-tailed Mongoose and two beautifully marked Common Genets, as well as two African Snipe. During the night we were all on alarm call if a Giant Bush Pig turned up, it never, so apart from Hyena and Tree Hyrax calling we got a good nights sleep.

DAY 15: MT KENYA - NAIROBI VIA WANJEE CAMP.

This morning we had a quick coffee and then a look from the roof of the lodge which not only overlooked the salt lick but all directions of the forest and superb views of Mt Kenya. Scanning the tree tops soon produced a perched Augur buzzard and then a Great Sparrowhawk. On another distant tree a Sharpe's Starling was spotted but closer and better were a small group of Abbot's Starlings. On a forest track below us we could see a couple of Tambourine Doves while over the forest canopy Bronze-naped Pigeons seemed reluctant to land anywhere. We then took a walk with an armed guard outside the lodge and along the approach road. An Oriole Finch was only seen well by Joseph, but everyone saw Eastern Double-collared Sunbirds, Ruppell's and Cape Robin-chat, a juvenile White-starred Robin and a Black-throated Barbet. Moving on we caught up with several Moustached Green Tinkerbirds and then after seeing Mosque Swallow and a brief Cinnamon Bracken Warbler we got fantastic views of an adult African Crowned Eagle flying off through the forest, only to return and perch in a tree where we set the scopes on it. Brilliant! Scaly Francolin eluded us although several were heard, but the finale of our walk was a superb White-browed Crombec called in by Nico. We returned for breakfast and then packed our luggage and set off towards Nairobi.

A roadside stop for a group of Mottled Spinetails was later followed by a stop for a Brown-hooded Kingfisher perched nicely on a telegraph wire. We had now arrived at the Wajee Nature Park and once we had located the local guide we followed him into the forest and were shown a pair of African Wood Owls on their daytime roost. Further into the wood and after a lot of hard work we were eventually rewarded with great views of up to five Hinde's Babblers a localized and threatened Kenya endemic. Very pleased we continued our journey and next called in to a hydro-electric station where we searched nearby scrub and fields. A Grey-headed Kingfisher was seen as well as Bronze Mannikins and then our target species of at least one male and a female African Golden Weaver. It was now hot so we got back into the buses and continued on. Our last stop of the day was at the Blue Post Hotel near Nairobi. A cool drink was followed by a search of the grounds. Several of the white-tailed race of White-headed Barbets were seen but the gardens were generally very quiet.

We decided to walk along the river and at the furthest point we could go, we found Cinnamon-breasted Bee-eaters, a Pygmy Kingfisher and a brief Golden-winged Sunbird. A Grey-olive Greenbul proved itself to be very elusive but a couple of Black-throated Wattle-eyes showed very well and completed our full list of Kenyan wattle-eyes! It was time to go so a quick photo of the group then saw us fight our way through the city traffic to arrive at a hotel restaurant where we had our last meal of the holiday together. With this over we went to the nearby Nairobi Airport. We said our thank you's to the drivers Simon and John who were exceptional throughout. Their superb driving skills, friendliness and keen interest in wildlife were an asset to the trip. As for Joseph & Nico they proved yet again what professionals and experts they were in all aspects of this fabulous Kenya tour. We came to see and enjoy wildlife and this is exactly what we did. The skills of these two guides were as good as it gets and their hard work and bird finding abilities were appreciated fully by everyone that wanted the best of Kenyan wildlife watching.

About the Author

The author is the Managing Director of Skyview of Africa Tours and Safaris Ltd, a leading specialist holidays tour operator in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. We offer African Wildlife Safaris, Kenya Wildlife Safaris, Tanzania Wildlife Safaris, Uganda Safaris and East Africa Wildlife Holidays and Safaris. <http://www.skyviewofafrica.com/>

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