

Tropical Birding Tours

Ghana: Picathartes and Egyptian Plover
with Pre-Extension to Atewa Hills



Black Bee-eater (Voted BIRD OF THE TRIP) - Photo by guide: Ben Knoot

TB Tour Guide: Ben Knoot

***Note:** Tropical Birding runs this tour through an amazing local tour agency. Tropical Birding guides are here to facilitate these guides and make sure the guests are comfortable and enjoying themselves as much as possible. A big thanks to our local guide Paul and his team for an extremely efficient and well run tour with some incredible birds.

Photos in this report were captured by guide Ben Knoot

Tour Introduction

Ghana...the gateway to Africa again proved to be a very challenging but rewarding tour. This family of four got to experience the wonderful people, stunningly dense forests and expansive African Savana that Ghana has to offer. Over the course two and a half weeks we covered an incredible distance and percentage of this country. Long days with tough (but satisfying) birding and a more rustic version of Africa than you might be used to in the south or east make this a tougher tour than most but for those who embrace it, it is quite a trip. Overall, due mostly to exceptional knowledge of our team in Ghana, the sharp eyes of the guests and their sheer drive to see as much as possible, this tour I thought was a resounding success.

This tour unlike last years tour, began with the extension to Atewa Hills. Located just northwest of Accra, we said hello to our first set of thick, lush forests, heat and humidity, a beast of a hill, slippery and sticky red African mud and neck breaking binocular views. Here we encountered some fantastic birds despite unfortunately missing out on the Blue-mustached Bee-eater which seems to be getting harder and harder here with the increasing illegal logging and hunting. After a quick rest back in Accra we began the main portion of this tour.

Travel to Kakum NP was relatively smooth but slow. We first set our eyes on the engineered suspension bridges, lush forests and birds like Blue-throated Roller and Black-casqued Hornbills. Then several trips out to the farmland for more open country birds lead to sightings of birds like White-spotted Flufftail and Forest Penduline Tit. The Canopy walk was a real highlight for me personally and will remain in my eyes one of the coolest locations on this tour for the views and overall experience of birding within a canopy.

After Kakum NP we visited another densely vegetated national park, Ankasa. Here, the forest skulkers reign supreme. Birding was tough but some small forest ponds also held unique treasures we enjoyed getting our bins on. It also needs to be said that the Ankasa Lodge was by far the most luxurious accommodation we experienced, which I absolutely love. Awesome place!

Next up was the famed 'Picathartes Hike'. This excursion did not disappoint as we had an active White-necked Rockfowl all to ourselves for a good few hours before we needed to make our way back down the hill and continue on with our adventure.

Time to switch things up. The dry and open savanna of Mole NP. Here our necks had a little bit of a break which was appreciated but just about all of us. We got to enjoy stunning birds Abyssinian Ground Hornbill and the comical White-throated Francolin as well as searching for night skulkers like the stunning Northern White-faced Owl. From here, a quick trip up North towards White Valto River near Burkina Faso for the monotypic Egyptian Plover. A really quite brilliant way to cap off a lovely trip through Ghana.



Itinerary

July 25th.....	Guest Arrival (No birding this day)
July 26th.....	Legon Botanic Gardens & Shai Hills Afternoon
July 27th.....	Shai Hills Morning & Lower Atewa Hills Afternoon
July 28th.....	Atewa Hills
July 29th.....	Atewa Hills to Accra
July 30th.....	Accra to Kakum via Winneba Lagoon
July 31st.....	Kakum NP Canopy Walk (all-day)
August 1st.....	Farmland N. of Kakum NP & Pare River
August 2nd.....	Farmland N. of Kakum & Bokru Marsh to Ankasa
August 3rd.....	Ankasa Reserve
August 4th.....	Ankasa Reserve to Kakum
August 5th.....	Kakum to Picathartes Site
August 6th.....	Picathartes Site to Mole NP (mostly travel day)
August 7th.....	Mole NP
August 8th.....	Mole NP
August 9th.....	Mole NP to Bolgatanga
August 10th.....	Bolgatanga to White Valto River and Tono Dam
August 11th.....	Tamale Flight to Accra/Departures-END OF TOUR

Tour Summary

Day 0: Early Arrival in Accra - July 25th

Guests arrived this afternoon/evening. No scheduled activities for the day.

Day 1: Legon Botanical Gardens and Shai Hills - July 26th

Today was the first day of the tour and we were all excited to get started. We began with a fun location called [Legon Botanical Gardens](#). This is an interesting local city park that hosts a variety of attractions like a small canopy walk, lagoon canoeing and a few interpretive signs that keep guests entertained. We were entertained thoroughly with an introduction to the local birds like; African Thrush, Guinea Turaco, Green Woodhoopoe, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, White-crowned Robin Chat, Oriole Warbler, Brown Babbler, Western Plantain-eater, Purple Starling, African Gray and Northern Red-billed Hornbill, Woodland Kingfisher, Broad-billed Roller and Splendid Sunbird. The lagoon itself hosts a variety of fun nesting waders like; Black-crowned Night Heron, Western Cattle Egret and Long-tailed Cormorant. Around the lagoon we also added Squacco Heron, Striated Heron and a surprise Black Heron. A very nice morning indeed!



Woodland Kingfisher - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

We took a short break for lunch and to let the heat of the day dissipate. Around about 3:30pm, we set off for a very cool open area called [Shai Hills](#). The massive cliffs, foothill evergreen forests and open areas provided us with some great birds like: [Copper Sunbird](#), [Mocking Cliff Chat](#) (the white crowned race), a distant soaring [African Harrier Hawk](#), [Croaking Cisticola](#), [Double-spurred Spurfowl](#), [Northern Puffback](#), [Senegal Eremomela](#), [Senegal Coucal](#), [Vieillot's Barbet](#), [Northern Crombec](#) and the gigantic [Mosque Swallow](#). We weren't quite done with Shai Hills yet. We sat and waited for dusk, among the calling African Scops Owl we did manage to see [Long-tailed](#) and [Plain Nightjars](#) on the drive out of the park. A nice first day!



Splendid Sunbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 2: Shai Hills to the Atewa Hills Area - February 27th

We had a great start to the morning when right from the hotel parking lot we had our first great views of [Yellow-crowned Gonolek](#). We then ventured out to [Shai Hills](#) again to see what else we could find after yesterday afternoons success. After a great walk through the hills, we managed some better views of some of the species we had previously as well as adding views of; [Siffling Cisticola](#), [White Helmet-shrike](#), [Violet Turaco](#), [Yellow-throated Greenbul](#), [Tambourine Dove](#), and a cute little [Brown-throated Wattle-eye](#). We also enjoyed a massive troop of [Vervet Monkey](#). This is definitely the best location for this funny looking but ultimately very cool monkey.



Vervet Monkey - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Much of the afternoon was then spent driving towards our main location for the extension, the Atewa Hills region. The drive itself proved somewhat fruitful, netting us some cool birds but nothing we wouldn't see again and again during the main tour. However, after a nice lunch, right after talking about it with one of the younger birders on the trip, he then spotted a lone Black Kite circling. This time of year these are not very common and this would indeed be the only sighting for this bird during the trip! Well spotted. Upon arrival at our hotel, we had a few hours of free time so a few of us decided to walk the [gardens of the K'Archy Lodge](#) where we found what we later dubbed, "the magic tree". A small fruiting tree in the back of the property that was bringing in some great birds...some that were usually a little tough to see! In those few hours we tallied up; [Northern Yellow White-eye](#), [Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird](#), [Speckled Tinkerbird](#), [Red-rumped Tinkerbird](#), [Chestnut-breasted Nigrita](#), [Gray-headed Nigrita](#), [Common Bulbul](#), [Olive-naped Weaver](#), [Laughing Dove](#), and the oh so common, [Green-backed Camaroptera](#). Away from the tree we also noted, [African Palm Swift](#), [Blue-headed Coucal](#), [Northern Gray-headed Sparrow](#), [Splendid Starling](#), [Pied Crow](#) and [Pin-tailed Whydah](#). Now it was time to head out to our primary location for the afternoon, the [lower farmlands and open country of Atewa Hill](#).



Speckled Tinkerbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Northern Yellow White-eye - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

This is quite an interesting area as it is sort of disturbed farmland right on the edge of pristine forest. Because of this you get a cool mix of birdlife that is sometimes hard to see in the denser forests and you also get some great open species. During the first part of our afternoon, we added; **African Green Pigeon, Blue-throated Brown Sunbird, Buff-throated Sunbird, Crested Malimbe, Little Bee-eater, Little Greenbul, Simple Greenbul, Black-and-White Mannikin, and Black-headed Paradise Flycatcher.** As we walked closer to **the start of the hill climb (the gate),** one of our primary targets for this area started to call. A few teaser flight views later, and we finally had some great perched views of the secretive little **Yellow-throated Cuckoo.** Such an awesome bird and it was definitely a great feeling to finally get eyes on it.



Red-rumped Tinkerbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot

We had two night targets to go for and one was extra important for me. Last year I got some fleeting views of this bird that just simply weren't good enough so I had some unfinished business to attend to. I am happy to report that from the keen eyes of the training guide, we were treated to some spectacular views of a **Fraser's Eagle Owl.** And a special shout-out to one of the guest's fantastic flashlights for lighting up the bird so well at a pretty substantial distance! We come to rely on his flashlight for the rest of the tour! Unfortunately, we missed out on our other target, the Brown Nightjar but we'd try for these again another night. A great day all around!



Fraser's Eagle Owl - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 3: Atewa Hill - July 28th

After a nice early morning breakfast at our hotel, we packed up the backpacks with waters, to go lunches and set off up the slippery slope of [Atewa Hill](#). The start of the morning was dark and a near constant cloud cover right up through lunch kept things pretty cool and overall quite pleasant. We even had a light drizzling of rain to cool us off for a brief moment! This climb can be tough but these guests handled it like pros, soldiering on all the way to the top and beyond in search of some special west African rainforest birds. Overall, the birding here is tough...very tough. Birds often present themselves momentarily from the depths of the forests and the large trees mean a lot of our viewing is “up” and somewhat backlit. Even with those challenges we did very, very well. Unfortunately, we were not able to locate the Blue-mustached Bee-eater. Our local guide has noticed this bird becoming increasingly difficult due to the illegal logging and hunting in the area but reckons sightings might return to a more stable rate when the area is turned into a national park within the next few years...only time will tell.

Even though we dipped on that bird, we did see some great stuff. Highlights included; **Puvell's Illadopsis**, **Green and Tit Hylia**, **White-breasted Nigrita**, **Plain, Golden, Western Bearded, Red-tailed, Gray, Honeyguide**, and **Slender-billed Greenbul**, **Square-tailed Sawwing**, **Red-headed and Blue-billed Malimbe**, **Black-capped and Sharpe's Apalis**, **Finsch's Flycatcher Thrush**, **Chestnut-capped Flycatcher**, **Tiny, Green, Olive and Fraser's Sunbird**, **Red-billed Helmet-shrike**, **Yellow-billed Turaco**, **Chocolate-backed Kingfisher**, **Long-tailed Hawk**, **West African Wattle-eye**, **Western Black-headed Oriole**, **Western Nicator**, **Shining Drongo**, **Maxwell's Black Weaver**, **West African Batis**, **Black Cuckoo**, **Black-throated Coucal**, **Black Bee-eater**, and finally just on the way out, a stunning little **African Pygmy Kingfisher**...an impressive list huh?! It's a tough walk and some tough birding but great overall success for the day on the hill!



West African Batis - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 4: Morning at Atewa Hill and then travel day back to Accra - July 29th

Well what can we say...we want this bird! We decided to try our luck again up [Atewa Hill](#) for another shot at the Blue-mustached Bee-eater. We knew we couldn't go all the way up because of timing reasons but we still gave it a go. On the way up the hill in some of the more disturbed habitat we started with two great birds, a [Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher](#) and a [Naked-faced Barbet](#). We continued to climb and more great birds like; [African Forest Flycatcher](#), [Ayer's Hawk Eagle](#), [Buff-spotted Woodpecker](#), [Yellow-mantled Weaver](#), [Velvet-mantled Drongo](#), and some brief but confirmative views of [White-tailed Alethe](#). We also saw some interesting insect life. Some unidentified worm type larvae doing a community style caterpillar movement kept us entertained in a freaky kind of way and a stunning moth that mimicked a dead leaf to near perfection provided some entertainment as we argued which "leaf" was actually the moth...haha - lot's of fun! When it came down to it, it was time to leave and we still couldn't find the bee-eater. Really too bad but again, a terrific effort on all accounts. Just as we were about to leave, the sharp eyes of one of the guests spotted a great bird, a stunning [Hairy-breasted Barbet](#) so we piled out of the car and had some great views of a great bird just before a long drive to back to Accra. The rest of the afternoon was spent enjoying the pool, repacking and prepping ourselves for the start of the main tour. After a nice dinner, we hit the sack.



Hairy-breasted Barbet - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 5: Accra to Kakum NP via Winneba Lagoon/START OF MAIN TOUR - July 30th

Today we begin the main tour with a trip from our hotel in Accra to [Winneba Lagoon](#). It is important to hit this area on a decent tide and we did just that. The tide was good and we were able to pick up some decent species. We started off enjoying several **Piapiac** actively cleansing a baby goat of parasites and other insects. We then saw a huge colony of **Village Weaver** the odd **Black-winged Kite** kept us entertained between the main showing of birds we were scoping from the mudflats. Here we managed to tick; **Little, West African Crested and Common Tern, Spur-winged Lapwing, Great and Little Egret, Western Reef Heron, Common Greenshank and Common Redshank, Ruddy Turnstone, Black-winged Stilt, White-fronted and Black-bellied Plover, Common Sandpiper, Pied Kingfisher, Whimbrel, and Marsh Sandpiper.**



Little Tern - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

After a tour of [Cape Coast Castle](#) where we learned a lot of slave trade and colonial history that took place in Ghana. After a nice seaside lunch and continued our journey towards Kakum NP. After a nice rest, the afternoon was spent entirely on a [forest road just north of Kakum NP](#). This road showed us the thick rainforest of this area but that didn't stop us from having a great afternoon with loads of new species. We started off by enjoying a very low down [Spotted Greenbul](#) which was a nice change of pace from the usual canopy birding. Continuing on our walk we added; [Brown-cheeked Hornbill](#), [Sabines Puffback](#), [Bronze-tailed Starling](#), [Johanna's Sunbird](#), [Yellow-spotted Barbet](#), [Bristle-nosed Barbet](#), and [Chestnut-winged Starling](#). I also took advantage of a low down [Yellow-throated Tinkerbird](#) for a great photo opportunity.



Yellow-throated Tinkerbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Nearing the end of our walk, we finally heard one of our big ticket birds. After a few minutes of searching in two teams, one team was able to location our quarry, a [Rufous-sided Broadbill](#). We spent several minutes enjoying his display and getting some great scope views of this fascinating behavior; one guests even has a fun digi-scope video of his display! As dusk started to creep in we picked up a late [Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo](#), [Cassin's Spinetail](#) and a fly over [Bat Hawk](#). Our outing of course would not be complete without a night time target. Tonight we had another owl target and it really didn't take long before our excellent local guide got us on a stunning [Akun Eagle Owl](#). A great end to a wonderful introduction to the Kakum area!

Day 6: Kakum National Park Canopy Walk (all-day) - July 31st

[Kakum National Park](#) is probably my favorite place to be on this tour. I love canopy walks... mostly because I hate the neck ache associated with the, “bird from below” method. It also just feels surreal to be up there with the birds, monkeys or whatever may show up. We started early. Mainly to get the early morning activity but also, this park can become crowded with people and they aren’t typically quiet and respectful of the animal life so it’s ideal to get there early and have the park to yourself for the morning. Besides two small groups of people, that’s exactly what we had. The morning produced some great birds including some “most wanted” for the tour. To our lists we added; **Black-casqued Hornbill, Rufous-crowned Eremomela, Black-winged Oriole, Preuss’s Weaver, Ussher’s Flycatcher, Little Flycatcher, Yellow-whiskered Greenbul, African Cuckoo-hawk, Violet-backed Hyliota, Palm Nut Vulture, Little-green Sunbird, Cassin’s and Willcock’s Honeyguide, Common Swift and Red-fronted Parrot.** I also made it a personal mission to try and capture an **African Emerald Cuckoo** simply because it is such a stunning bird. I am not overly thrilled with the results but the views were outstanding....



African Emerald Cuckoo - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



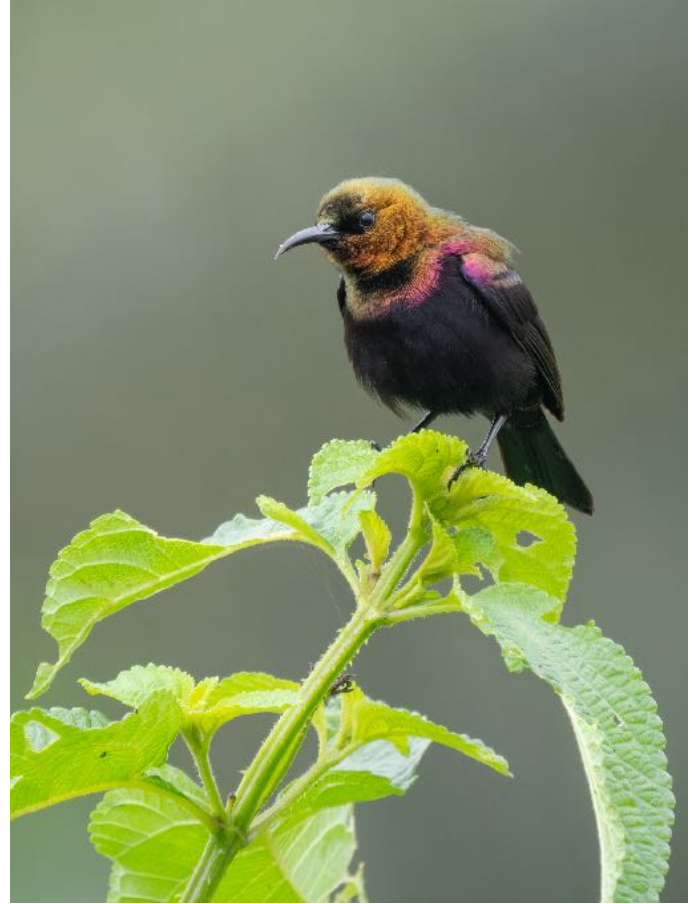
Black-casqued Hornbill - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot

Once we completed our morning here, we ventured back towards the hotel for lunch and our mid-afternoon rest. We noted a flowering tree just across the way from [Rainforest Lodge](#) that seemed to be attracting quite a few sunbirds. Among the already seen [Splendid and Copper Sunbirds](#), we also added [Green-headed Sunbird](#) and then a pair of [Magpie Mannikin](#) were discovered nesting nearby. A nice pick up before lunch!

After lunch and a short rest, we returned to [Kakum National Park](#) and the canopy walk. We had done so well with the targets in the morning, we knew the pickin's would be slimmer on this round but we were still very eager to see what we could get. The park itself is also quite a bit busier during the afternoon so in between dodging the crowds of people and waiting for the activity to pick up, we did manage to get some good looks at a striking [Yellow-billed Barbet](#) and the much plainer [Olive Sunbird](#). On our way out as it started to rain, we had a lovely surprise waiting for us just before the exit, a stunning [Western Long-tailed Hornbill](#) perched itself right up on the wire of one of the bridges. Awesome stuff! We also noted several mammals here, the [Lowe's Mona Monkey](#), [Lesser Spot-nosed Monkey](#) and a [Gambian Sun Squirrel](#). Nice stuff! As night fell, we took a chance and rushed out to find one last night target for the area. It took a little time but eventually a [Brown Nightjar](#) revealed itself, capping off a wonderful day in Kakum NP.



Green-headed Sunbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Copper Sunbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Blue Malkoha - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 7: Farmland North of Kakum and Pare River - August 1st

Feeling quite successful with our time in the rainforest, we decided to do some more open country birding this morning, particularly for one bird. In the [farmland north of Kakum](#), we added; [Blue-headed Coucal Forest Penduline Tit](#), [Pale Flycatcher](#), [Swamp Greenbul](#), [Red-vented Malimbe](#), [Piping Hornbill](#), and [Rufous-chested Swallow](#) to our growing list of birds. Unfortunately, though we heard it, we never could get yes on our main quarry, the White-spotted Fluff-tail. We would try for this bird again so we weren't worried just yet.

We then traveled to the [Pare River](#) where we had two targets. It took all of 20-seconds to find both of them. Several [Rock Pratincole](#) were hanging out on the large rocks in the middle of the river and we got to watch a family of [White-throated Blue Swallows](#) interacting for several minutes before we decided that enough was enough and it was time to return to the hotel for lunch.



Blue-headed Coucal - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot



Rock Pratincole - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

After a great rest we spent the entire afternoon in [another farm area north of Kakum](#). Here we had one target, another try at the skulking White-spotted Flufftail. On our way to our spot, we didn't see too many new birds, only the strikingly beautiful **African Jacana**. This "Jesus Bird" really is a natural marvel, even if we only saw it walking around with some chickens and not strutting its stuff on the nearby lily pond. Time for the main show. After a fairly short walk and some ducking in and around palm trees, we arrived at a muddy little creek with a small viewing area. It took several minutes of waiting and after very very quick glimpses we finally were able to have an only "quick" (rather than very very quick!) glimpse of the beautiful **White-spotted Flufftail**.

Night came quickly so we ventured up towards the home of our local guide just near our hotel in Kakum. We waited about 45-min for the skies to darken enough to give our next target a try. After trying for quite some time we surrendered without having found our bird, the Fiery-necked Nightjar. Even though we were unable to see this bird, we were still quite thrilled with our day when we returned to the hotel for our last evening in the Kakum area.

Day 8: Another Farm Area North of Kakum to Ankasa - August 2nd

What a fun morning. We returned back to “another farm area north of Kakum”, mostly to try and get some better views of the flufftail but also to try for some other open country birds we missed the previous afternoon. I particularly like open country stuff for the photo opportunities, which were fairly numerous today! En route along the highway, we added a fun; **Black-winged Bishop** and **Bronze Mannikin** to our now extensive bird list.



Klaas's Cuckoo - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

After trying and failing on better views of the White-spotted Flufftail, we continued birding the farm and open areas and was able to add; **African Firefinch, Klaas's Cuckoo, Fire-bellied Woodpecker, Whistling Cisticola, Wilson's Indigobird, African Goshawk, Lesser-striped Swallow, Red-cheeked Wattle-eye, Western Bluebill** and some pretty great looks at the sulky **Lowland Sooty Boubou**. After lunch in the hotel, we packed up, said goodbye to Kakum and headed off towards Ankasa. This is a big travel day but we worked in a few stops along the way.



Bronze Mannikin - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot



Black-winged Bishop - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot



Woodland Kingfisher - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot



Fire-bellied Woodpecker - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot

As I mentioned above, we made a few stops en route to Ankasa. The first was to [Bokru Marsh](#), a terrific little wetland area right along the side of the road, conveniently located to give us and our driver a nice break and a place where we can pick up a few new species...which we did! Here we added; [Black-bellied Seedcracker](#), [African Pygmy Goose](#), [Tawny-flanked Prinia](#), [Purple Heron](#), [Orange Weaver](#) and a pair of [White-faced Whistling Duck](#). It was also nice to spend a few minutes with a mixed colony of [Black-and-chestnut](#) and [Village Weavers](#). These two species were sharing a small clump of palm trees next to the marsh. Last stop before we made our final push was a [river crossing with mangroves](#) and immediately we picked up a cute [Mouse-brown Sunbird](#), our main target. Back up to the van and continuing on to Ankasa...



Black-and-Chestnut Weaver - Photo by Guide: Ben Kroot

Now at the terrific [Ankasa Reserve Lodge](#) (the best accommodation on the tour in my opinion) we took advantage of the free hour or so before dinner to see if we could pick up any last minute species. We started off strong with a new sunbird, the [Reichenbach's Sunbird](#). Then, a little time spent standing around at the bridge over the river revealed two species of kingfisher. Two [Giant Kingfishers](#) gave us a few flyby views and our sharp young birder had a quick but confirmative view of [Shining Blue Kingfisher](#). As it was now getting quite dark, the frogs started to sing and the birds quieted down for the night, we retired to our lovely cabins, prepped for dinner and enjoyed our first night in Ankasa Lodge...Oh, you thought we were done?! No way. Around 9:00pm plus or minus a few inconsequential minutes, we all received a knock on our doors asking if we wanted to go for a bit of a night drive in [Ankasa Reserve](#) to see a pretty odd but special bird for this area. Luckily, it was relayed to us that the driver and our guide had already located the target so it was really just a matter of getting out of bed, throwing some clothes on, grabbing the torches and heading out...which of course, we did! A little bit of a drive and a very short walk through a dark forest during a light evening rain shower revealed FOUR [Nkulengu Rail](#) sitting side by side. Very fun way to end the day and indeed, worth getting out of bed for.

Day 9: Full Day in Ankasa Reserve - August 3rd

The day started with a delicious early morning breakfast. After we had had our fill, we piled into an old 4x4 Land Rover, picked up our local ranger protection and headed into the [Ankasa Reserve](#). It was a bit of a drive to get where we wanted to go and the road was not good to say the least so it took about an hour so. We even had a bit of a delay as we got stuck for a few minutes, nothing some skilled recovery driving couldn't solve. We arrived at a clearing where we'd begin our walk to several ponds dotted within this thick West African rainforest. The first pond proved to be the most fruitful, netting us; [White-bellied and Blue-breasted Kingfisher](#) and a very quick look at [African Finfoot](#). Continuing on through the morning, we dodged little rain showers and worked hard to get on the birds. Birds like; [Orange-breasted Forest Robin](#), [Rufous-winged](#) and [Black-capped Illadopsis](#) were our skulking forest highlights while the [Sabines Spinetail](#) enchanted us from the skies above. Photographically, I enjoyed a sweet little [African Pygmy Kingfisher](#) that sat long enough for a few snaps. Very sweet! A little trouble on the way out of the reserve when we got seriously stuck but again, a little team work and finagling and we were freed and off to a delicious lunch...the pizza was calling, and I was going to answer!



African Pygmy Kingfisher - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Well what can you say, sometimes birding is just slow. Our afternoon was that way as we re-entered [Ankasa Reserve](#). This time, we walked a good portion of the road. We picked up almost nothing new visually except a very brief flight view of [Congo Serpent Eagle](#). Lots of new “heard-only” birds but nothing in the way of new species were seen. This happens sometimes and the only thing you can do is return to the lodge and enjoy a nice dinner. So we did! Then the afternoon was saved when the training guide came running up to us and said we should follow him. He and our main local guide had found a stunning, low down, out in the open [African Wood Owl](#). A fantastic way to cap off a great dinner and a great bird to “save” an otherwise slower afternoon. That’s birding for ya!



African Wood Owl - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot

Day 10: Ankasa to Kakum - August 4th

Before we head off today, we spent another morning in [Ankasa Reserve](#). After spending a few minutes on the main track, we dipped in to the forest where the majority of our time was spent on a few of the park trails. During our morning we encountered several great new birds like; [Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill](#), [Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher](#), [Yellow-bearded Greenbul](#) and [Pale-breasted Illadopsis](#).

After lunch we started back towards Kakum. We stopped off again at “[river crossing with mangroves](#)” where we added a [Yellow-billed Egret](#).

Our last stop before arriving at our hotel for the evening was the same [random open country road](#) I visited last year. This time, like last, it was just as productive, granting us views at some great birds. [Singing Cisticola](#), [Yellow-mantled Widowbird](#), [Northern Fiscal](#), [Snowy-crowned Robin Chat](#), [Bar-breasted Firefinch](#), [Dideric Cuckoo](#), [Red-winged Prinia](#), [African Gray Woodpecker](#) and a close proximity fly-over [African Hobby](#) were very welcome additions to our lists.



Red-eyed Dove - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Dideric Cuckoo - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Yellow-mantled Widowbird - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Bar-breasted Firefinch - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Northern Fiscal - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 11: Kakum to “Picathartes site” - August 5th

We spent another what turned out to be a very productive morning again on a [forest road north of Kakum](#). This was the same forested road we did on our first afternoon and evening in Kakum so we knew we were going to get something good, we would just have to find out what. During our 2.5hr walk we added four great birds to our list. Those were; [Lemmon-bellied Crombec](#), [Yellow-casqued Hornbill](#), [Red-thighed Sparrowhawk](#) and a [Western Dwarf Hornbill](#)...a few mega birds for our memory banks. Onwards now towards lunch and the ["Picathartes site"](#).

After a quick 1hr rest at the Picathartes Guest House, we hit the [trail behind the lodge](#) for a fairly easy 2km walk through a cocoa plantation and thick forest that revealed a giant rock with a significant overhanging section; our stage for the show. It took a bit of time but eventually **FOUR** [White-necked Rockfowl](#) (commonly referred to as “Picathartes”) showed themselves and entertained us for a good few hours before we decided to head out of the forest and back to the lodge. Early to bed, tomorrow we head to Mole...about a 9hr drive...



White-necked Rockfowl (Picathartes) - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



White-necked Rockfowl (Picathartes) - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Day 12: Picathartes Site to Mole (Travel Day) - August 6th

BIG travel day today. We got up early, had breakfast early and left early to get started on our 9hr+ journey north to Mole NP. There was no birding in between leaving the hotel and lunch, merely stops for a quick bathroom break and to refuel the vehicle. After a quick (and I mean quick like a 20-min) road lunch, we continued on towards our destination.

As the journey neared 80% completion, we started to keep our eyes out for any potential new bird. We had entered our last habitat type for this tour, a largely savanna type structure hosted a vast array of new species for us. Our first new vbirds spotted while driving were; **Red-chested Swallow, Rufous-crowned Roller and Bearded Barbet**. Just a few minutes later we arrived at a **small roadside pond** where we got our first looks at; **Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Red-cheeked Cordonbleu, Bruce's Green Pigeon, and Little Weaver**. As we still had a few hours of driving to do, our 20-min time limit was up so we piled back into the van and continued on towards Mole. We made it just meters down the road before pulling over for a surprise **Northern Carmine Bee-eater** a sunning **Black-rumped Waxbills**. Onward...



Northern Carmine Bee-eater - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Continuing on towards Mole we picked up several more really nice birds from the road. A **Wire-tailed Swallow** and **Yellow-billed Oxpecker** were welcome binocular viewing breaks during our long journey. We were now arriving in Mole NP...

Right from [the gate of Mole National Park](#) we had some great views of our first of many **Stone Partridge**. We entered the park and just meters in we had our first sightings of **Bushbuck**, **Common Warthog** and **Kob**, some fun mammals to add to our growing bird list. Then, a MEGA. A stunning male **Abyssinian Ground Hornbill** right alongside the road...epic. Now it was time to head into the hotel, check in and get settled after that long day. We arrived around 4:30pm so we had about an hour plus to do a little birding around [Mole Motel](#). Here we found; **Pearl-spotted Owlet**, **White-shouldered Black-tit**, **Chestnut-crowned Sparrow Weaver**, **Hadada Ibis**, **Hammerkop**, **Red-chested Cuckoo** and a female **Senegal Batis**. A great start to our savanna birding for sure. Time for bed to prep for an early morning and a full day in Mole NP tomorrow!



Red-chested Cuckoo - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 13: Mole National Park - August 7th

Today was our first full day in **Mole NP**. We had an early breakfast, picked up our local armed ranger (required) and hit the road into the park. We walked a nice loop within the park to pick up; **White-breasted and Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike, Black-faced and Red-billed Firefinch, Rufous Cisticola, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Lavender Waxbill, Northern Black Flycatcher, Red-billed Quelea, Beautiful Sunbird, Helmeted Guineafowl, Black-billed Wood Dove, Black-capped Babbler, Malachite Kingfisher, Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike, Sahel Bush Sparrow, White-backed and Hooded Vulture, Sharpe's Drongo, Western Violet-backed Sunbird, Village Indigobird, and a stunning male Yellow-crowned Bishop**. Whew! Quite a nice morning right?!? We certainly thought so.



Yellow-crowned Bishop - Photo by Guide: Ben Kroot



Northern Black Flycatcher - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

After a really nice break and lunch, we hit the road again, being sure to pick up our ranger friend and his bolt action protective gear. The afternoon was a bit slower but then again, they always are. We went into more of the grassland areas where we were really introduced to the Tsitzy Fly population of Mole NP. We persevered through the flies to tick; **Sun Lark, Forbe's Plover, Brown-rumped Bunting, Striped Kingfisher, White-fronted Black Chat, White-throated Francolin**, and the striking **Black-crowned Tchagra**.

As per usual, our day would not be complete without targeting some night time critters. We took a short drive over to an area near the hotel where after a short walk we picked up our first bird, a stunning **Northern White-faced Owl**. After trying for the second and failing, we decided to call it a night. While driving back we got a wonderful surprise as our second target flew by our car and perched beautifully for some great views, a gorgeous **Grayish Eagle Owl**...love it when stuff like that happens! We called it a night after this wonderful encounter.



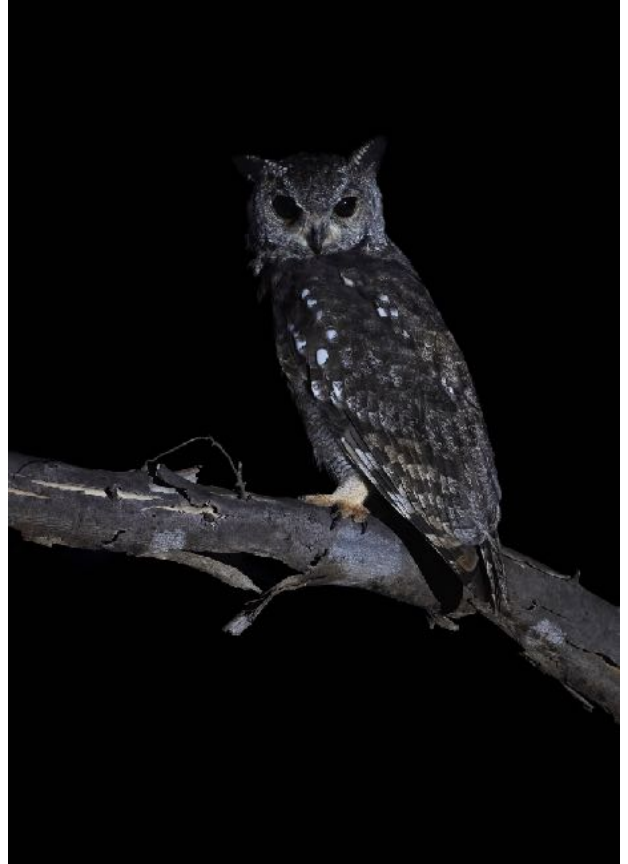
Forbe's Plover - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot



Brown-rumped Bunting - Photo by Guide: Ben Knot



White-throated Francolin - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Grayish Eagle Owl - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Northern White-faced Owl - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 14: Mole National Park (2nd Full Day) - August 8th

This, our second full day in [Mole NP](#) was more of a target chase sort of day rather than a flurry of new species as was the day before. We walked the [road towards the airstrip](#) where we found; [Dorst's Cisticola](#), [Fine-spotted Woodpecker](#), [Brown-backed Woodpecker](#), [Lesser Blue-eared Starling](#) and a [Mustached Grass Warbler](#).



Mustached Grass Warbler - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoop



Fine-spotted Woodpecker - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoop

Now on one of the [main ring-roads in Mole NP](#) we continued our search for new targets. We added a really nice pair of [Levaillant's Cuckoo](#) and some nice [Variable Sunbirds](#) but other than that, we were reconnecting with species we had already seen before like [Blue-bellied Roller](#), [Lizard Buzzard](#), [Yellow-billed Shrike](#), [Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird](#), etc. One last stop off at [Mognori River](#) to pick up [African Blue Flycatcher](#) and some stunning [Northern Red Bishops](#) and then we were off back to the hotel for lunch and our afternoon break.



Levaillant's Cuckoo - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Northern Red Bishop - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

This afternoon was quite slow. We had done so well in the park that we were just now looking for very tough species. We spent the majority of the afternoon looking for African Spotted Creeper but unfortunately came up short during our search. We spent a few hours walking a section of road that by all means had quite a bit of activity on it but not much new, which at this stage is expected. Sorting through all of our usual Mole birds we added two new birds; **Swallow-tailed Bee-eater** and **African Golden Oriole** to the list. As night set in, we hit the airstrip to wait for our night-time target to make its presence known. It took all of about 30-min for us to get our bins on a cute little **African Scops Owl**. Very nice to catch up with this bird since we only had it down on our list previously as a heard-only way back during our time in Shai Hills at the beginning of the tour. We returned back to the hotel for our dinner and then hit the hay, ready to venture up towards the Burkina Faso border tomorrow to look for a very special bird.

Day 15: Mole National Park to Bolgatanga - August 9th

Today was our last really big travel day. The total distance from Mole to Bolgatanga takes about 6-hrs to cover so we weren't in a huge rush to leave Mole and when we got on the way, we planned a few stops en route but mainly we just wanted to get there. Before all of that though, we had a nice birding session around the lodge. [Mole Motel](#) is actually a really nice birding destinations which is one big reason we stay here. Around the grounds we added; [Pied-winged Swallow](#), [Red-throated Bee-eater](#), [Black Crake](#), [Great Spotted Cuckoo](#), [Yellow-crowned Gonolek](#), [African Paradise Flycatcher](#) and for the last time, we enjoyed watching a group [African Elephants](#) cool themselves down in the pool below the motel.



Yellow-crowned Gonolek - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Red-throated Bee-eater - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Now it was time to say goodbye to Mole. After paying our tab and turning in our keys we set off towards our first and really only cultural stop of the tour, a 600yr old mosque just a stones throw away from Mole. This was an interesting experience to say the least and a fun look into this small villages most prized possession.

After a quick lunch and some delicious ice cream thanks to our local guide, we hit the road, continuing towards our final destination. A brief stop-off at [Nasia Wetland](#) granted us some good looks at [Black-headed Weaver](#), a [Winding Cisticola](#) and some quick flight views of a [Lesser Honeyguide](#). Time to move on towards our main birding stop for the afternoon.



Black-headed Weaver - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Our time in the [Tongo Hills](#) was extremely efficient. We picked up [Rock-loving Cisticola](#) and [Gosling's Bunting](#) almost immediately. Then, only about 5-minutes into our official quest for the main target bird, we were delighted to find it sitting on top of a nearby tree, the gorgeous [Fox Kestrel](#). 1, 2, 3 easy-peasy and off to the hotel for a nice warm shower and dinner before bed.



Fox Kestrel - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



Rock-loving Cisticola - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 15: Mole National Park to Bolgatanga - August 10th

Not only is today the last full day of birding but it is also quite a critical one! We start early and head towards the border with Burkina Faso and bird the White Valto River for a very special bird. Before that, we have to get there. Our destination is approximately two hours away from our hotel so naturally, [en route to White Valto River](#), we were able to pick up a few things. First up, a stunning **Red-necked Falcon**. Love that bird. Now in the [farmland and villages before the river](#) we added; **Greater Blue-eared, Chestnut-bellied and Bronze-tailed Starling, White-rumped Seed-eater, White-billed Buffalo-weaver, Abyssinian Roller, Red-rumped Swallow, Collared Morning Dove**, and some stunning close proximity flight views of **Rose-ringed Parakeet**.



Greater Blue-eared Starling - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Now at the [White Valto River](#), it didn't take long to find our main target for the morning and indeed the main reason for coming up to this region of the country. Foraging around the muddy banks and various sandbars we were able to see THREE **Egyptian Plovers**. This monotypic, epic bird is usually around this area until the river gets too high and then it all but vanishes. This fantastic bird was supported by the sighting of another new bird, the **White-headed Lapwing**. A wonderful morning by the river indeed.



Egyptian Plover (both) - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot



In the afternoon we were hit with a pretty serious rainstorm but we went out despite this towards our last birding location for the tour, [Tono Dam](#). When we arrived we weren't overly optimistic about our chances and indeed after a few hours of thoroughly searching as best we could during the rain, we ended up calling it quits...but not before find two new birds to wrap up this whirlwind Ghana tour. [African Silverbill](#) and [Gray-headed Kingfisher](#) were the last two birds we checked off during our final list of the tour...or so we thought...



African Silverbill - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Day 16: Bolgatanga to Tamale Flight to Accra/Departures - END OF TOUR - August 11th

There are no scheduled birding activities for the day but there is a three hour [drive to Tamale from Bolgatanga](#) where anything can happen...and something did! Our groups always sharp eyed young birder spotted a stunning [Black Coucal](#) sitting up nicely for us just an hour or so outside of the Tamale airport. A fitting last bird as not only is it a stunner but it also rounded out all of our coucals that were possible...so cool! Now at our starting hotel in Accra, we grabbed some food, and happily recounted some favorite memories of our tour before saying our goodbyes and heading our separate ways. Again, a big thanks to our local guide Paul, driver Ben and guide in training Georges, for an amazing tour and the sincere effort they all put in during this tour as well as the incredible work by all of the guests. Until next time Ghana. 🇬🇭



Black Coucal (Last bird of the trip deserves a full page spread!) - Photo by Guide: Ben Knoot

Guests Top 5 Favorite Birds

Boy-oh-boy did the guests love me for this one! What a trip to have to cull down so many amazing birds into a list of favorites but they did it and they came up with some great ones, check them out!

- 1) Black Bee-eater
- 2) White-necked Rockfowl
- 3) Egyptian Plover
- 4) Four-way-tie
 - i. Northern Red Bishop
 - ii. Yellow-crowned Bishop
 - iii. Red-cheeked Cordonbleu
 - iv. Nkulengu Rail
- 5) Northern Carmine Bee-eater

Guides Top 5 Favorite Birds

- 1) Black Bee-eater
- 2) African Emerald Cuckoo
- 3) Northern White-faced Owl
- 4) Western Dwarf Hornbill
- 5) Red-thighed Sparrowhawk

Species Account

*Below is a list of species seen and heard as this group wished to count “heard-only” birds. Heard only will be marked in **SALMON**. We had just one bird that was seen by only the local guide. That bird will be marked in **SAGE**.

Species Account Summary

Birds Seen: 380

Birds Heard-Only: 11

Birds Seen/Heard by TB Guide-Only: 0 (wahoo!)

Birds Seen/Heard by Local Guide-Only: 1

Other Animals Seen: 22

(April - May)		
<u>Bird Species</u>	Main Tour	Atewa Hills Extension
Grebes: Podicipidae		
Little Grebe	Bokru Marsh	
Cormorants: Phalacrocoracidae		
Long-tailed Cormorant	Seen in various locations	Legon Botanical Gardens
Hérons, Egrets, and Bitterns: Ardeidae		
Gray Heron	Seen throughout the tour	
Black-headed Heron	Seen en route to Mole	
Purple Heron	Seen throughout the tour	
Great Egret	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Yellow-billed Heron	First seen at “the bridge over a river with a mangrove area”	
Little Egret	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Western Reef Heron	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Black Heron		Legon Botanical Gardens
Cattle Egret	Seen throughout the tour	Legon Botanical Gardens

(April - May)		
Squacco Heron	Tono Dam	Legon Botanical Gardens
Striated Heron	Seen throughout the tour	Legon Botanical Gardens
Black-crowned Night-Heron		Legon Botanical Gardens
Hamerkops: Scopidae		
Hamerkop	Seen in a few places throughout the tour. Usually a solo flying bird	
Storks: Ciconiidae		
African Woolly-necked Stork	Seen from Mole Motel	
Ibis and Spoonbills: Threkirothidae		
Hadada Ibis	Mole NP	
Ducks, Geese and Swans: Anatidae		
White-faced Whistling Duck	First seen in Bokru Marsh then seen regularly after and including Mole	
Spur-winged Goose	Mole NP	
African Pygmy-Goose	Bokru Marsh	
Hawks, Eagles and Kites: Accipitridae		
Black Kite	One bird seen on the way to Atewa Hills	
Black-winged Kite	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
African Harrier-Hawk	Seen throughout the tour	
African Cuckoo-Hawk	Seen throughout the tour	
Bat Hawk	One bird seen flying north of Kakum NP	
Palm-nut Vulture	First seen in Kakum NP and then seen well in Mole NP	
White-headed Vulture	Mole NP	
Hooded Vulture	Seen best in Mole NP	
White-backed Vulture	Mole NP	
Bateleur	First seen in Shai Hills and then again in Mole NP	

(April - May)		
Congo Serpent-Eagle	Seen briefly in flight in Ankasa and then heard well north of Kakum	
Ayres's Hawk-Eagle		Bird seen in-flight in Atewa Hills
Cassin's Hawk-Eagle	A few birds seen well in Kakum NP	
Lizard Buzzard	First seen on the drive to Kakum and then regularly encounter towards and including Mole NP	
Dark Chanting Goshawk	Seen en route to Mole NP	
Shikra	Seen occasionally throughout the tour	
African Goshawk	Seen in the farming area north of Kakum NP	
Long-tailed Hawk	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	Atewa Hills
Red-thighed Sparrowhawk	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
Guineafowl: Numididae		
Helmeted Guineafowl	Mole NP	
New World Quail: Odontophoridae		
Stone Partridge	Mole NP	
Pheasant, Grouse and Allies: Phasianidae		
Double-spurred Spurfowl	Many seen in Shai Hills and a few seen in Mole NP	
White-throated Francolin	Mole NP	
Rails, Crakes, Gallinules and Coots: Rallidae		
Black Crake	Seen from Mole Motel	
Nkulengu Rail	A foursome seen on a night excursion in Ankasa Reserve	
Allen's Gallinule	Bokru Marsh	
Eurasian Moorhen		Legon Botanical Gardens
Jacanas: Jacanidae		
African Jacana	First seen headed towards farmland north of Kakum NP and then seen regularly after Ankasa	

(April - May)		
Egyptian Plover: Pluvianidae		
Egyptian Plover	Seen on the White Valto River near Burkina Faso	
Stilts and Avocets: Recurviorstridae		
Black-winged Stilt	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Thick-knees: Burhinidae		
Senegal Thick-knee	Most common after Ankasa Reserve	Legon Botanical Gardens
Spotted Thick-knee	A few birds seen at night in Shai Hills by a few guests	
Pratincoles and Coursers: Glareolidae		
Rock Pratincole	Pare River	
Plovers and Lapwings: Charadriidae		
Spur-winged Lapwing	Winnebaa Lagoon Bokru Marsh Seen en route to Mole from Kumasi	
White-headed Lapwing	Seen on the White Valto River near Burkina Faso	
Wattled Lapwing	Several small groups seen in Mole NP	
Black-bellied Plover	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Forbes's Plover	A single bird seen in Mole NP	
White-fronted Plover	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Sandpipers: Scolopacidae		
Ruddy Turnstone	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Whimbrel	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Common Sandpiper	Winnebaa Lagoon Pare River White Valto River near Burkina Faso	
Common Greenshank	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Common Redshank	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Marsh Sandpiper	Winnebaa Lagoon	

(April - May)		
Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers: Laridae		
Common Tern	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Little Tern	Winnebaa Lagoon	
West African Crested Tern	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Pigeons and Doves: Columbidae		
African Green-Pigeon	Seen throughout the tour	
Bruce's Green-Pigeon	Seen well at Mole Motel	
Rock Pigeon	Seen around towns	Seen around towns
Speckled Pigeon	Seen well at Mole Motel Motel NP	
Mourning Collared-Dove	Seen on the White Valto River near Burkina Faso	
Red-eyed Dove	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
Laughing Dove	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
Tambourine Dove	Seen well in Ankasa	Atewa Hills
Vinaceous Dove	One bird seen well in Shai Hills Seen regularly in Mole NP	
Black-billed Wood-Dove	Many seen in Mole NP	
Blue-headed Wood-Dove	Ankasa NP	
Blue-spotted Wood-Dove	Seen throughout the tour up to Ankasa	Atewa Hills
Falcons: Falconidae		
Fox Kestrel	A single bird in Tongo Hills	
Eurasian Kestrel	Seen throughout the tour up to Ankasa	
Gray Kestrel	Seen often while transferring to new locations	Seen mostly en route towards Atewa Hills
Red-necked Falcon	Seen en route to White Valto River	
African Hobby	Farmland area en route to Kakum from Ankasa	
Turacos: Turacidae		

(April - May)		
Great Blue Turaco	A quick flyby seen by a few guests in Ankasa and many heard throughout Ankasa	
Guinea Turaco	Heard many times	Seen very well in Legon Botanical Gardens
Yellow-billed Turaco	Sightings in Ankasa and Kakum and heard many times	
Violet Turaco	Few sightings in Shai Hills	
Western Plantain-eater	Seen throughout the tour	Legon Botanical Gardens
Cuckoos: Cuculidae		
Senegal Coucal	Seen throughout the tour	
Black-throated Coucal		Atewa Hills
Blue-headed Coucal	First seen well at K' Archy Lodge and then seen well north of Kakum	
Blue Malkoha	Shai Hills Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
Great Spotted Cuckoo	Seen first from Mole Motel then seen again at White Valto River	
Red-chested Cuckoo	Mole NP	
Levaillant's Cuckoo	Mole NP	
Black Cuckoo	Heard many times in Kakum NP and then finally seen	
African Cuckoo	Shai Hills Mole NP	
Dideric Cuckoo	Seen throughout the tour	
Klaas's Cuckoo	Heard throughout the tour and seen well in the farmland/forest north of Kakum NP	First seen at the base of Atewa Hills Walk
African Emerald Cuckoo	A nice male on the Kakum NP Canopy Walk	Atewa Hills
Yellow-throated Cuckoo		Atewa Hills Entry Gate
Owls: Strigidae		
African Scops-Owl	Mole NP Airstrip	
Northern White-faced Owl	Mole NP	

(April - May)		
Grayish Eagle-Owl	Mole NP	
Fraser's Eagle-Owl		Atewa Hills Entry Gate
Akun Eagle-Owl	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
Pearl-spotted Owllet	Seen well in Mole NP	
African Wood Owl	Ankasa Reserve Lodge	
Nightjars: Caprimulgidae		
Long-tailed Nightjar	Seen on our first evening at Shai Hills	
Brown Nightjar	Kakum NP	
Plain Nightjar	Seen on our first evening at Shai Hills	
Swifts: Apodidae		
Mottled Spinetail	Flying over Kakum NP Flying over Ankasa	
Sabine's Spinetail	Flying over Ankasa	
Cassin's Spinetail	Flying over Kakum NP Flying over Ankasa	
African Palm Swift	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
Little Swift	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
Common Swift	Seen flying over Kakum NP	
Flufftails: Sarothruridae		
White-spotted Flufftail	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	
Kingfishers: Alcedinidae		
African Pygmy-Kingfisher	Seen throughout the tour	Seen at the base of Atewa Hills
Shining-blue Kingfisher	Ankasa NP (bridge over the river by the entrance)	
Malachite Kingfisher	Mole NP White Valto River near Burkina Faso	
White-bellied Kingfisher	Ankasa NP (ponds)	
Chocolate-backed Kingfisher		Seen well at Atewa Hills
Gray-headed Kingfisher		Tono Dam Area

(April - May)		
Woodland Kingfisher	Seen throughout the tour	Legon Botanical Gardens
Blue-breasted Kingfisher	Ankasa NP (ponds)	
African Dwarf Kingfisher	Heard many times in Ankasa but never seen	
Striped Kingfisher	Mole NP	
Pied Kingfisher	Winnebaa Lagoon Bokru Marsh	
Giant Kingfisher	Ankasa NP (bridge over the river by the entrance) While Valto River near Burkina Faso	
Bee-eaters: Meropidae		
Black Bee-eater	Kakum NP Ankasa Reserve	Atewa Hills
Red-throated Bee-eater	Common in Mole NP	
Little Bee-eater		Farmland before Atewa Hills
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater	One bird seen in Mole NP	
Northern Carmine Bee-eater	Seen en route to Mole NP	
Rollers: Coraciidae		
Abyssinian Roller	Tongo Hills	
Rufous-crowned Roller	Mole NP	
Blue-bellied Roller	Seen several times throughout the tour	
Broad-billed Roller	Seen en route to Mole NP	Legon Botanical Gardens
Blue-throated Roller	Forest edge birding outside and in Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Woodhoopoes and Scimitarbills		
Green Woodhoope	Mole NP	Legon Botanical Gardens
Ground-Hornbills: Bucorvidae		
Abyssinian Ground-Hornbill	One male seen well just meters inside Mole NP entrance gate	
Hornbills: Bucerotidae		
Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill	Ankasa NP	

(April - May)		
Western Dwarf Hornbill	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
African Pied Hornbill	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
African Gray Hornbill	Few sightings in Shai Hills Mole NP	Legon Botanical Gardens
Northern Red-billed Hornbill	Few sightings in Mole NP and many around Bolgatanga	Legon Botanical Gardens
Western Long-tailed Hornbill	Seen well on Kakum Canopy Walk	
Black-casqued Hornbill	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Brown-cheeked Hornbill	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Piping Hornbill	Forest road north of Kakum NP Ankasa	
African Barbets: Lybiidae		
Red-rumped Tinkerbird	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird	Shai Hills Mole NP	Legon Botanical Gardens
Yellow-throated Tinkerbird	Forest road north of Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird	Shai Hills K'Archy Lodge	Atewa Hills
Speckled Tinkerbird	Seen throughout the tour up to Ankasa	Atewa Hills
Yellow-billed Barbet	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Bristle-nosed Barbet	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Naked-faced Barbet	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Yellow-spotted Barbet	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
Hairy-breasted Barbet		Atewa Hills
Vieillot's Barbet	Shai Hills	
Double-toothed Barbet	Shai Hills	Atewa Hills farm brush section
Bearded Barbet	Mole NP	
Honeyguides: Indicatoridae		
Cassin's Honeyguide	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	

(April - May)		
Willcock's Honeyguide	Kakaun NP Canopy Walk	
Lesser Honeyguide	One seen briefly on Kakum NP canopy walkway then again at Nasia Wetland	
Greater Honeyguide	Heard only Mole NP	
Old World Parrots: Psittaculidae		
Rose-ringed Parakeet	Seen many times flying over Seen perched well at White Valto River near Burkina Faso	Seen flying over Legion Botanical Garden
Black-collared Lovebird	Seen by local guide only around Accra	
New World & African Parrots: Psittacidae		
Senegal Parrot	Common in the Shai Hills and Mole NP and onwards	
Red-fronted Parrot	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
African Gray Parrot	Seen flying over hotel in Accra Seen flying over Ankasa	
Woodpeckers: Picidae		
African Piculet	Heard only in Kakum NP	
Buff-spotted Woodpecker		Atewa Hills
Melancholy Woodpecker	Farmland north of Kakum NP	
Cardinal Woodpecker	Farmland north of Kakum NP	
Fire-bellied Woodpecker	Seen best on farmland north of Kakum but heard often around Kakum NP	
Brown-backed Woodpecker	Mole NP	
African Gray Woodpecker	Open country en route to Kakum from Ankasa	
Fine-spotted Woodpecker	Mole NP	
Broadbills: Calyptomenidae		
Rufous-sided Broadbill	Seen well on a forest road north of Kakum NP	
Batises and Wattle-Eyes: Platysteridae		
West African Batis		Atewa Hills
Senegal Batis	Mole NP	

(April - May)		
West African Wattle-eye	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	Atewa Hills
Brown-throated Wattle-eye	Shai Hills	
Red-cheeked Wattle-eye	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
Vangas, Helmetshrikes & Allies: Vangidae		
White Helmetshrike	Shai Hills	
Red-billed Helmetshrike	Forest road north of Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Black-and-white Shrike Flycatcher	Forest road north of Kakum NP	Farmland before Atewa Hills
Bushshrikes and Allies: Malaconotidae		
Northern Puffback	Shai hills Motel NP and Mole Motel	
Sabine's Puffback	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
Black-crowned Tchagra	Mole NP	
Brown-crowned Tchagra	Shai hills Open country en route to Kakum from Ankasa	
Yellow-crowned Gonolek	First sighting in Alexis Hotel Open country en route to Kakum from Ankasa Best views from Mole Motel	
Lowland Sooty Boubou	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike	Mole NP	
Cuckoo-shrikes: Caprophagidae		
Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike	Mole NP	
White-breasted Cuckooshrike	Mole NP	
Blue Cuckooshrike	Heard only in Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Shrikes: Laniidae		
Yellow-billed Shrike	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout the extension
Northern Fiscal	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout the extension
Orioles: Oriolidae		
African Golden Oriole	Mole NP	
Western Black-headed Oriole	Few sightings in Kakum NP and Ankasa	

(April - May)		
Black-winged Oriole	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	Atewa Hills
Drones: Drongidae		
Sharpe's Drongo	Mole NP	
Fork-tailed Drongo	Mole NP	Legon Botanical Gardens
Velvet-mantled Drongo	Kakum NP	
Shining Drongo		Atewa Hills
Monarch Flycatchers: Monarchidae		
Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher	Ankasa NP	
African Paradise-Flycatcher	Mole NP	
Black-headed Paradise-Flycatcher	Seen throughout the tour	Atewa Hills
Crows: Corvidae		
Piapiac	Seen throughout the tour	
Pied Crow	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
Nicators: Nicatoridae		
Western Nicator		Atewa Hills
Larks: Alaudidae		
Sun Lark	Mole NP	
Martins and Swallows: Hirundidae		
Rock Martin	Shai Hills	
Ethiopian Swallow	Pare River	Atewa Hills farm brush section
Rufous-chested Swallow	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
Wire-tailed Swallow	Mole NP	
Pied-winged Swallow	Mole NP	
White-throated Blue Swallow	Pare River	
Red-chested Swallow	Seen in most locations of Northern Ghana	
Red-rumped Swallow	Farm land before White Valto River near Burkina Faso	
Lesser Striped Swallow	Kakum NP and Ankasa NP	

(April - May)		
Preuss's Swallow		Many sightings around and before Atewa Hills
Mosque Swallow	Farmland north of Kakum NP	
Square-tailed Sawwing	Ankasa NP	Atewa Hills
Fairy Flycatchers: Stenostiridae		
African Blue-Flycatcher	Mognori River - Mole NP	
Penduline-Tits: Remizidae		
Forest Penduline-Tit	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
Tits, Chickadees and Titmice: Paridae		
White-shouldered Black-Tit	Seen around Mole Motel and in Mole NP	
Bulbuls: Pycnonotidae		
Common Bulbul	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
Gray-headed Bristlebill	Heard only on a forest road north of Kakum NP	
Golden Greenbul	Seen best in Ankasa	
Simple Greenbul	Seen well in Shai Hills and Ankasa	
Slender-billed Greenbul	Seen throughout the tour	
Honeyguide Greenbul		Atewa Hills
Spotted Greenbul	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
Swamp Greenbul	Few sightings in Ankasa NP and also on a forest road north of Kakum NP	
Red-tailed Greenbul		Atewa Hills
Western Bearded-Greenbul	A few heard birds only in Ankasa NP	Atewa Hills
Yellow-bearded Greenbul	Best views at Ankasa	
Yellow-throated Greenbul		Legon Botanical Gardens
Little Greenbul	Seen throughout the tour	
Plain Greenbul	Ankasa NP	Atewa Hills
Yellow-whiskered Greenbul	Seen well in Kakum NP Canopy Walk	

(April - May)		
Gray Greenbul	Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Icterine Greenbul	Few sightings in Ankasa NP	
African Warblers: Macrosphenidae		
Green Crombec		Atewa Hills
Northern Crombec	Shai Hills Mole NP	
Lemon-bellied Crombec	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
Moustached Grass-Warbler	Mole NP	
Green Hylia	Seen throughout the rainforest section of this tour	Atewa Hills
Tit-Hylia	Seen throughout the rainforest section of this tour	Atewa Hills
Gray Longbill		Atewa Hills
Kemp's Longbill		Heard only around the Atewa Hills area
Cisticolas and Allies: Cisticolidae		
Red-faced Cisticola		Open farmland country below Atewa Hills
Singing Cisticola	Open country en route to Kakum from Ankasa	
Whistling Cisticola	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
Dorst's Cisticola	Mole NP	
Rock-loving Cisticola	Tongo Hills	
Croaking Cisticola	Few sightings in Shai Hills	
Rufous Cisticola	Mole NP	
Siffling Cisticola	Shai Hills	
Zitting Cisticola	Heard first at Winneba Lagoon and then seen well at White Valto River near Burkina Faso	
Oriole Warbler		Seen well in Legon Botanical Garden
Red-winged Prinia	Common in Mole NP	
Tawny-flanked Prinia	Common in Mole NP	

(April - May)		
Senegal Eremomela	Common in the drier areas of this tour	
Rufous-crowned Eremomela	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Green-backed Camaroptera	Seen and heard throughout tour	Atewa Hills
Olive-green Camaroptera		Heard only around the Atewa Hills area
Yellow-browed Camaroptera	Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Yellow-breasted Apalis	Mole NP	
Sharpe's Apalis	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Black-capped Apalis		Atewa Hills
Bush Warblers and Allies: Scotocercidae		
Chestnut-capped Flycatcher	Kakum NP and Forest road north of Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
White-eyes: Zosteropidae		
Northern Yellow White-eye	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
Ground Babblers and Allies: Pellorneidae		
Pale-breasted Illadopsis	Ankasa NP	
Rufous-winged Illadopsis	Ankasa NP	
Blackcap Illadopsis	Ankasa NP	
Puvel's Illadopsis		Atewa Hills
Brown Illadopsis		Heard only in Atewa Hills
Laughingthrushes: Leiothrichidae		
Black-capped Babbler	Mole NP	
Brown Babbler	Shai Hills Mole NP	
Rockfowl: Picathartidae		
White-necked Rockfowl	Seen in the forests near Kasumi	
Hyliotas: Hyliotidae		
Violet-backed Hyliota	A pair seen well in Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Old World Flycatcher: Muscicapidae		

(April - May)		
Little Flycatcher	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Swamp Flycatcher	Mole NP	
Cassin's Flycatcher	Ankasa NP (bridge over the river by the entrance)	
Ussher's Flycatcher	Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Dusky-blue Flycatcher	Forest road north of Kakum NP	Atewa Hill
Pale Flycatcher	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
African Forest-Flycatcher		Atewa Hills
Gray-throated Tit-Flycatcher		Heard only in Atewa Hills
Northern Black-Flycatcher	Mole NP	
White-tailed Alethe		Atewa Hill
Blue-shouldered Robin-Chat	Heard only on a forest road north of Kakum NP	
Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat	Best seen in Mole NP	
White-crowned Robin-Chat	Shai Hills	
Orange-breasted Forest Robin	Ankasa NP	
White-fronted Black-Chat	Mole NP	
Mocking Cliff-Chat	The "white-crowned version seen well in Shai Hills	
Thrushes: Turdidae		
African Thrush	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
White-tailed Ant-Thrush	Ankasa NP	
Finsch's Flycatcher-Thrush	Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Starlings: Sturnidae		
Chestnut-winged Starling	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
Copper-tailed Starling	Few sightings in Kakum NP	
Violet-backed Starling	Shai Hills	
Long-tailed Glossy Starling	Shai Hills Common in Mole NP	
Splendid Starling	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension

(April - May)		
Chestnut-bellied Starling	Farm land before White Valto River near Burkina Faso	
Purple Starling	Farm land before White Valto River near Burkina Faso	Legon Botanical Gardens
Bronze-tailed Starling	Farm land before White Valto River near Burkina Faso	
Lesser Blue-eared Starling	Mole NP	
Greater Blue-eared Starling	Farm land before White Valto River near Burkina Faso	
Oxpeckers: Buphagidae		
Yellow-billed Oxpecker	Seen en route to Mole NP Farm land before White Valto River near Burkina Faso	
Sunbirds and Spiderhunters: Nectarinidae		
Fraser's Sunbird	Few sightings in Kakum NP and then a few times on the forest edge of Ankasa	Atewa Hills
Western Violet-backed Sunbird	Mole NP	
Variable Sunbird	Mole NP	
Mouse-brown Sunbird	River Crossing with Mangroves	
Little Green Sunbird	Kakum NP Ankasa Reserve	
Collared Sunbird	Seen throughout the tour	Atewa Hills
Olive Sunbird	Few sightings in Kakum NP and in Ankasa	
Green-headed Sunbird	Seen well across from Rainforest Lodge in Kakum	
Reichenbach's Sunbird	Ankasa Lodge	
Blue-throated Brown Sunbird	Seen throughout the tour	
Buff-throated Sunbird	Seen throughout the tour up to Ankasa	
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	Very common around Mole NP	
Olive-bellied Sunbird	Best sightings were around the Ankasa Lodge	Atewa Hills farm brush section
Tiny Sunbird	Few sightings in Ankasa NP	Atewa Hill
Splendid Sunbird	Seen throughout the tour up to Ankasa	Atewa Hill

(April - May)		
Johanna's Sunbird	Kakum NP Ankasa Reserve	
Superb Sunbird		Atewa Hills farm brush section
Beautiful Sunbird	Many sightings in Mole NP	
Copper Sunbird	Seen throughout the tour before Mole NP	
Wagtails and Pipits: Motacillidae		
African Pied Wagtail	Seen throughout the tour	
Old World Buntings: Emberizidae		
Brown-rumped Bunting	A few sightings in Mole NP	
Gosling's Bunting	Common in Tongo Hills	
Seed eaters: Fringillidae		
Yellow-fronted Canary	First seen at Rainforest Lodge and then seen commonly around Mole NP	
Old World Sparrows: Passeridae		
House Sparrow	Spotted in several towns	
Northern Gray-headed Sparrow	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout the extension
Sahel Bush Sparrow	Many in Mole NP	
Weavers: Ploidae		
White-billed Buffalo-Weaver	Farm land before White Valto River near Burkina Faso	
Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver	Mole Motel	
Red-vented Malimbe	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
Blue-billed Malimbe	Kakum NP Forest road north of Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Crested Malimbe		Atewa Hills
Red-headed Malimbe	Kakum NP and Ankasa NP	Atewa Hills
Olive-naped Weaver	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
Black-headed Weaver	Nasia Wetlands	
Little Weaver	Mole NP	
Orange Weaver	Bokru Marsh	

(April - May)		
Chestnut-and-Black Weaver	Seen throughout the tour	Atewa Hills farm brush section
Yellow-mantled Weaver	Kakum NP	Atewa Hill
Maxwell's Black Weaver	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	Atewa Hill
Village Weaver	Seen throughout the tour	Atewa Hills
Red-billed Quelea	Mole NP	
Grosbeak Weaver		Atewa Hill
Preuss's Weaver	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Northern Red Bishop	Common during the second half of the tour, especially around Mole NP	Seen en route to Atewa Hills
Black-winged Bishop	Mostly seen along roadsides en route to new locations	Atewa Hills
Yellow-crowned Bishop	First seen en route to Mole NP Then again in Mole NP	
Yellow-mantled Widowbird	Seen very well in open farmland en route to Kakum from Ankasa	
Waxbills and Allies: Estrildidae		
Gray-headed Nigrita	Kakum NP and Ankasa NP	Atewa Hills
White-breasted Nigrita	Kakum NP and Ankasa NP	Atewa Hills
Chestnut-breasted Nigrita	Kakum NP and Ankasa NP	Atewa Hills
Red-billed Firefinch	Mole NP	
Black-faced Firefinch	Mole NP	
Bar-breasted Firefinch	Best views were in open farmland en route to Kakum from Ankasa	
African Firefinch	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
Quailfinch	Few sightings by guide only at a small marsh en route to Tamale from Bolgatanga	
Black-rumped Waxbill	Seen en route to Mole	
Orange-cheeked Waxbill	Bokru Marsh Mole NP Forest road north of Kakum Shai Hills	
Lavender Waxbill	Mole NP	

(April - May)		
Black-bellied Seedcracker	Bokru Marsh	
Western Bluebill	Forest roads north of Kakum NP	Atewa Hills (guide only)
Red-cheeked Cordonbleu	Common around Mole NP	
Red-fronted Antpecker	Heard only in Ankasa Reserve	
Bronze Mannikin	Seen throughout the tour	
Magpie Mannikin	Several pairs seen well at Rainforest Lodge in Kakum	
Black-and-white Mannikin	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
African Silverbill	Tono Dam	
Whydahs and Indigobirds: Viduidae		
Pin-tailed Whydah	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
Wilson's Indigobird	Seen en route to Ankasa from Kakum NP	
Village Indigobird	Mole NP	
<u>Mammal Species</u>		
Olive Baboon	Shai Hills	
Patas Monkey	Mole NP	
Lowe's Mona Monkey	Kakaun NP Canopy Walk	
Lesser Spot-nosed Monkey	Ankasa Reserve	
Vervet Monkey	Shai Hills	
Straw-colored Fruit Bat	Seen in Ankasa Lodge A large colony seen en route to Tamale	
Hammer Bat	Ankasa Lodge	
House Bat	Ankasa Lodge	
Yellow-winged Bat	One seen in Mole NP	
Gambian Sun Squirrel	Kakum NP	
Red-legged Sun Squirrel	Ankasa Reserve	
Green Bush Squirrel	Ankasa Lodge	



(April - May)		
Striped Ground Squirrel	Mole NP Shai Hills	
Slender-tailed Squirrel	Forest road north of Kakum NP	
Slender Mongoose	Shai Hills Mole NP Ankasa Reserve	
Zebra Mouse	Mole NP	
African Elephant	Mole NP	
Common Warthog	Mole NP	
Bushbuck	Mole NP	
Kob	Mole NP	
Waterbuck	Mole NP	
Nile Crocodile	Mole NP	
Five-lined Skink	Mole NP	