

Tropical Birding Tours

Ghana: Picathartes and Egyptian Plover with Extension to Atewa Hills



Tour Guide: Ben Knoot

***PSA:** Everyone always puts the White-necked Rockfowl (Picathartes) on the cover. In an effort to be a bit different I chose a different bird but rest assured we did see the Picathartes and saw it well. Continue reading to see the photo of this incredible bird. The photos in this report were captured by the guide Ben Knoot. This report also includes the extension to the Atewa Hills.

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

Tour Introduction

Ghana...whew! Ghana is full of wonderful people, stunningly dense forests and expansive African Savana. This tour aims to cover both of these bio-zones thoroughly and that's exactly what we did during our trek across Ghana. Over the course two and a half weeks we covered an incredible distance and percentage of this country. Long hot days, tough (but satisfying) birding and a more rustic version of Africa than you might be used to in the south or east make this one of the tougher tours I have done personally. Overall, due mostly to exceptional knowledge of our team in Ghana, this tour I thought was a resounding success and I know I can speak for all of the guests when I say we had a great time, saw some incredible birds and went home very happy.

This tour begins close to Ghana's capital city of Accra in the Shai Hills. A relatively open habitat more reminiscent of an oak type forest to my eyes but the birds here plentiful and stunning, species like Guinea Turaco were just the tip of the iceberg. We had plenty of rain here as well, nearly getting rained-out our very first day on tour but luckily it turned out to be a quick shower and afterwards we had some great birding before moving to Kakum.

Kakum National Park is gorgeous. It's a stunningly thick, green and lush forest full of bird and animal life, if you can find it...the birding here was our first taste of what would continue to be tough but rewarding birding. Lots of neck breaking but satisfying looks at small forest specialties like the Violet-backed Hyliota. The Canopy Walk was a real highlight for me personally and will remain in my eyes one of the coolest locations on this tour.

After Kakum we visited another densely vegetated national park, this one even more humid and hot, Ankasa. Here the forest skulkers like Rufous-winged Illadopsis reign supreme but some small forest ponds also held unique treasure we targeted. It also needs to be said that the Ankasa Lodge was by far the most luxurious area we experienced. What a beautiful lodge, delicious food and some of the most friendly people. Awesome place!

Next up was the famed 'Picathartes Hike'. This excursion did not disappoint as we had an active and incubating White-necked Rockfowl all to ourselves for a good half an hour before descending down trail. Here is where I learned about 'Asraban' a fruit local field/forest workers were find, extract the seeds and then suck on them for the sweet sugar to keep them going on their work day. A little bit of fun culture!

The dry and open savanna of Mole NP gave our necks a little bit of a break and gave those who had some cameras a little more photographic opportunities, especially of a very cooperative White-throated Francolin who was vigorously defending his territory. From here, a quick trip up to the river border of Burkina Faso for the monotypic Egyptian Plover and dry country birds of Tono Dam was a fantastic way to end the main tour.

For those who were not participating on the extension, we said our goodbyes and the rest of us headed for the Atewa Hills. Located just northwest of Accra, we said hello again to thick, lush forests, excessive heat and humidity, a beast of a hill and neck breaking binocular views. All worth it though as great birds were out in spades, even the strikingly beautiful Blue-moustached Bee-eater. A fantastic trip overall, enjoy the read!



Itinerary

April 15th.....	Guest Early Arrival (No birding this day)
April 16th.....	Afternoon of Birding in Shai Hills
April 17th.....	Morning in Shai Hills/Winnebaa Lagoon/Kakum NP
April 18th.....	Kakum NP
April 19th.....	Edge of Kakum NP forest/Pare River/Kakum NP Road
April 20th.....	Kakum to Ankasa via Bokru Marsh
April 21st.....	Ankasa NP
April 22nd.....	Ankasa NP to Kakum via Dry Country Scrubland
April 23rd.....	Kakum NP Road to Kumasi via Picathartes Hike
April 24th.....	Kumasi to Mole
April 25th.....	Mole NP
April 26th.....	Mole NP
April 27th.....	Mole NP to Bolgatanga via Tongo Hills
April 28th.....	Egyptian Plover and Dry Country Birds of Tono Dam
April 29th.....	Bolgatanga to Tamale for Flight to Accra/End Main Tour
April 30th.....	Start of Extension/Accra to Atewa Hills
May 1st.....	Full Day of Birding Atewa Hill
May 2nd.....	Morning Drive to Accra/Guests Depart this Evening

Tour Summary

April 16th (Day 1): Afternoon meeting to Shai Hills

We began this tour with lunch at hour hotel. For those who have not traveled to Ghana before, this is a your fair warning. They like their food HOT! Well, at least by my standards so best to ask for the food without pepper/spice until you're sure you can manage. That was an important lesson learned early for us all! Anyway, after a good lunch, a quick meet and greet, we hit the road with our local guide Paul and a trainee (who was also incredible already), Johnston.

We had a great start for our afternoon in the [Shai Hills](#). This relatively open area gave way to mostly common birds we'd see throughout the tour but as they were new to us, they were still very cool. Birds like; [Double-spurred Spurfowl](#), [Stone Partridge](#), [Shikra](#), [Black Kite](#), [Vinaceous and Red-eyed Dove](#), [Blue-spotted Wood-Dove](#), [Swallow-tailed Bee-eater](#), [Yellow-fronted and Yellow-rumped Tinkerbirds](#), [Violet Turaco](#), [Senegal Parrot](#), [African Paradise Flycatcher](#), [Glossy-backed Drongo](#), [Senegal Eramomela](#), [Bearded and Double-toothed Barbet](#), and lots of [Olive Baboon](#). Just to name a few.



Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

For me, the highlight came as dusk started to fall. We found a few **Flappet Lark** as we drove deep into **Shai Hills** for some night birding. The roads were crawling with **Long-tailed Nightjar** with a few **Plain Nightjar** mixed in. The highlight nightjar was surely a beautiful **Freckled Nightjar** we had on the road and saw well while flying. Very cool to see this elusive bird in its element. On the way out, we stumbled on a pair of **Grayish Eagle Owl**. A pretty great first day if you ask me!



Grayish Eagle Owl: Photo by guide - Ben Kroot



Plain Nightjar: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Long-tailed Nightjar: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

April 17th (Day 2): Morning in Shai Hills to Kakum via Winneba Lagoon

We had a big drive today (there are A LOT of big drives on this tour) but luckily, Paul is great at getting us to some birding locations en route so typically we never go more than 3-4hrs without getting out and doing some birding. Before we got going with our big drive, we revisited [Shai Hills](#) for a few hours in the morning. That time was cut a bit short by a big rain shower but luckily, after it lightened up, we were able to do some good birding. We added; [Guinea Turaco](#), [Vieillot's Barbet](#), [Blue-breasted Kingfisher](#), [Mocking Cliff-Chat \(white crowned race\)](#), [Moustached Grass-Warbler](#), [Lizard Buzzard](#), [African Gray Hornbill](#), [Eurasian Kestrel](#), [Lanner Falcon](#), [Western Plantain Eater](#), [Blue Malkoha](#), [Brown-crowned Tchagra](#), [Croaking Cisticola](#), [Gray Tit-Flycatcher](#), and a brilliant pair of little [European Pied-Flycatcher](#). We also had plenty more [Olive Baboons](#) and added some adorably wet [Vervet Monkey](#).



Vervet Monkey: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Blue-breasted Kingfisher: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Violet Turaco: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

Continuing on towards Kakum, we visited [Winneba Lagoon](#) for some water birds. The tide was a bit high but we saw; [Western Reef Heron](#), [Common Tern](#), [Great Egret](#), [Gray Heron](#), [Common Greenshank](#), [Pied Kingfisher](#), [Long-tailed Cormorant](#), [Black-winged Stilt](#), [Curlew Sandpiper](#), [Common Ringed Plover](#), [Common Sandpiper](#), [Sanderling](#), [Senegal Coucal](#), [African Palm Swift](#) and a huge colony of [Village Weaver](#). By the time we got to Kakum it was nearly dark so we checked in, and called it a day. The first of many checklists and dinners now complete, we went to bed, eager for our Kakum Canopy walk the next day.



African Palm Swift: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

April 18th (Day 3): Kakum National Park (NP) - Canopy Walk

Well this was pretty cool. [Kakum National Park Canopy Walk](#) is a global attraction. A series of suspension bridges held together with rope, wood planks and steel cable ranging from what looked like 10m all the way up to about 50m or so high off of the forest floor gave us a pretty great chance to see some small (and large) forest birds that would normally be neck breaking. We spent an entire morning and afternoon (with a nice lunch and rest in between) on these bridges, birding mostly from the 'in-between' platforms. Here are some highlights; [Black-casqued and Brown-cheeked Hornbill](#), [African Emerald Cuckoo](#), [Plain and Anson's Greenbul](#), all three of the nigrita finches (gray-headed, chestnut-breasted and white-breasted), [Wood Warbler](#), [Red-rumped and Yellow-throated Tinkerbird](#), [Blue Cuckoo-shrike](#), [Rufous-crowned Eremomela](#), [Fire-bellied Woodpecker](#), [Blue-throated Roller](#), [Chestnut-capped Flycatcher](#), [Chestnut-winged Starling](#), [Red-fronted Parrot](#), [West African Batis](#), [Johanna's and Superb Sunbird](#), and by far the two biggest highlights, a stunning [Long-tailed hawk](#) and a tiny [Violet-backed Hyliota](#). The few mammals included were; [Lesser Spot-nosed Monkey](#), [Lowe's Mona Monkey](#), [Slender-tailed Squirrel](#) and [Gambian Sun Squirrel](#).



Long-tailed Hawk: Photo by guide - Ben Knot



Plain Greenbul: Photo by guide - Ben Knot



Blue-throated Roller: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

April 19th (Day 4): Forest Edge Birding of Kakum NP/Pare River/Kakum NP Access Road

We began the day by birding a [track that skirted the Kakum NP](#). So as we were walking, the forest was on our right and farm/shrubland was on our left. This made for an interested mix of birds. It was also a fun mix of birding conditions. Along this track we managed some new birds like; [Rosy Bee-eater](#), [Black-bellied Seedcracker](#) (cover), [African Pygmy Kingfisher](#), [Black Bee-eater](#), [Gray-throated Tit-Flycatcher](#), [African Pied Hornbill](#), [Woodland Kingfisher](#), [Bronze and Black-and-white Manikin](#), [Preuss's Swallow](#), [Chestnut-and-black Weaver](#), [Black-headed Paradise Flycatcher](#), [Red-necked Buzzard](#), [Gray Kestrel](#), [Bristle-nosed and Naked-faced Barbet](#), [Hairy-breasted Barbet](#), [Palm-nut Vulture](#), [African Harrier Hawk](#), [African Cuckoo-Hawk](#), [African Green Pigeon](#), [Cassin's Honeyguide](#), [Ethiopian Swallow](#), [Blue-headed Coucal](#), [Olive Weaver](#) and one of the bigger (figuratively) highlights was the skulking little [White-spotted Flufftail](#).



Black Bee-eater: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Chestnut-and-black Weaver: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

Once we had done the side track properly, we continued away from Kakum and visited the [Pare River](#). Here we had just a few targets and thankfully with only some minor searching we found both, the stunning [White-throated Blue Swallow](#) and the odd little [Rock Pratincole](#). We scanned the river for anything else of interest but other than those few birds, mostly just things we had seen before. So we called it a day and ventured back towards the hotel for lunch and an afternoon rest.



Rock Pratincole: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

The afternoon was again spent in [Kakum NP](#) but this time, instead of the canopy walk, we visited what looked to me like an access road for rangers, and potentially some logging operations happening adjacent to the park. Either way, it held some good birds for us. Along with many of the birds we had seen already we added; [African Goshawk](#), [Yellow-billed Turaco](#), [Sabines Spinetail](#), [Chocolate-backed Kingfisher](#), [Western Nicator](#), [Fanti Drongo](#), [Golden and Simple Greenbul](#), [Yellow-browed Camaroptera](#), [Ussher's and Pale Flycatcher](#), [Copper-tailed Starling](#), [Olive Sunbird](#), [Western Black-headed and Black-winged Orioles](#), and the smallest bird in Africa, the [Tit Hylia](#). It got dark really fast but that's what we wanted. We worked back slowly trying for various owls. Unfortunately, no luck so we hopped back in the vehicle but then on the way out, Johnston spots a [Fraser's Eagle Owl](#) sitting next to the road. Unfortunately, only Johnston, myself and Paul managed to see this bird because of where it was sitting and the vehicle's position before it took flight. We tried calling it back but didn't have any luck. Too bad as this would remain a 'guide-only' for the rest of the tour.

April 20th (Day 5): Kakum NP to Ankasa NP via Bokru Marsh

Another big travel day but we made another visit to the same road we did the previous afternoon. We managed a few new birds like; **Sabines Puffback, Black Cuckoo, Cassin's Spinetail, West African Wattle-eye, Square-tailed Sawwing, Green Hylia, Slender-billed Greenbul, Green Crombec, Fraser's, Little Green, Tiny and Blue-throated Brown Sunbird, Splendid Starling** and a pretty shy **Finch's Flycatcher-Thrush**.



Black Cuckoo: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

Our next stop on the way to Ankasa was the small but extremely productive **Bokru Marsh**. New birds were here for us in spades including; **White-throated Bee-eater, Orange Weaver, Orange-cheeked Waxbill, African Jacana, Malachite and Pied Kingfisher, Little Grebe, Allen's Gallinule, Eurasian Moorhen, White-faced Whistling Duck, Black Crake, Spur-winged Lapwing**, and my personal highlight from this location, the special little **African Pygmy Goose**. I had missed this bird in Tanzania on a previous trip and I was really looking forward to seeing it this year and I got my wish as there were about 3-pairs in this smallish pond! Very sweet for me personally!



African Pygmy Goose: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

We continued towards Ankasa and made one final stop at a [roadside wetland and mangrove area](#). First up, the wetland. As we pulled along side, we noticed to [Hartlaub's Duck](#) and just after everyone got their bins on, these skittish ducks took flight around a corner and out of sight. There were also loads of Little Swift flying around and while I was photographing them, the group continued on walking towards the mangrove area. While taking a brief rest, I look over and noticed an [African Openbill](#) that had just landed in the top of the tree. I looked over for the group and unfortunately they had already left the road and gone down towards the mangrove area a good 100m away. I took a couple of shots and just as I did, it took off across the wetland. This would also remain a 'guide-only' but it goes in a special category of "Guide-Only without Clients Present". I then joined the group down in the mangroves to look for skulking small brown bird, conveniently called a [Mouse-brown Sunbird](#). After a while of standing around and scanning, near the nest, I found a distant individual seriously hiding away in the mangroves. It popped out one time for me to identify it and then scurried back inside never to be seen again. This was another 'guide-only' for the tour unfortunately. We didn't make anymore planned stops but there was an opportunistic stop for a perched [African Hobby](#) before we arrived in Ankasa.



African Openbill: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

For the afternoon we spent a few hours wandering around the main road of [Ankasa NP](#). To get there, we used the lodges superb old Land Rover. When I say superb, I don't mean high quality...poor thing was rusted, incredibly old, and sort of falling apart what was superb about it was the fact that it could carry 9-people, go anywhere (which we needed it too) and was actually incredibly comfortable! We all piled out of the car, including our local ranger who'd be accompanying us during our time here and started to walk the main road. Anskasa NP is very similar to Kakum NP. Thick, lush forests, lots of birds singing but difficult to see. Paul of course knew absolutely every call so even though we didn't see a whole lot of new birds, we were able to add some great ones like; [Yellow-mantled Weaver](#), [Crested](#), [Red-headed](#) and [Blue-billed Malimbe](#), and unfortunately, a heard-only (which this group didn't count) [Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo](#). The excitement came while eating a delicious dinner, Paul rushed up the driveway of [Ankasa Lodge](#) to tell us he had already found our night target, a fantastically perched [Akun Eagle Owl](#). So, we rushed down the driveway, illuminated this stunning bird, took a few photos and then walked back up to the driveway for desert. A pretty sweet addition to the day! After this wonderful end to the day, we returned to our luxurious rooms for the evening. This is by far the nicest place on this tour. The rooms are excellent, clean, comfortable, spacious and very well made, the staff are lovely and the food is also the best on the tour. Very lovely place!



Akun Eagle Owl: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

April 21st (Day 6): Full Day in Ankasa NP

As we had all noted the afternoon before, [Ankasa NP](#) is HOT and HUMID. This of course entails as early a start as possible. So after an early breakfast, we climbed in our old Land Cruiser, picked up our park ranger and hit the road. Our aim again was to get to the ponds to find a few special birds. Right at our parking place we had terrific views of our largest turaco species, the [Great Blue Turaco](#). Several individuals were bouncing around the tree-tops, almost playing with each other for a good 5-minutes or so. That was a lovely start to our morning.



Great Blue Turaco: Photo by guide - Ben Kroot

Once we had our fill of the turacos, we moved further down the trail, slow and quiet hoping to not disturb the pond and our main target. We approached and nothing. A few minutes of waiting and still nothing. But then, ‘zeeeeeeep!’ It calls, faintly but distinctly and then, it appeared...a glowing little orange ball at the top of a stick, the **White-bellied Kingfisher**. This tricky little forest kingfisher is so small, fast and shy that we were all exceptionally relieved to have gotten such great looks and had such a great experience with this bird. Also present at the pond was a **Striated Heron**, and another **Blue-breasted Kingfisher**.

We continued on towards the other pond which was exceptionally quiet. We did note a few more forest birds like **Yellow-spotted Barbet**, **Gray Longbill**, **Dusky-blue Flycatcher**, **Orange-breasted Forest-Robin** and to round out our Malimbe’s the **Red-vented Malimbe**! Then, traveling with a mixed flock, I spotted a woodpecker and having almost finished the word “...woodpecker” to get the rest of the group on it, a male **Brown-eared Woodpecker** took flight and all attempts to call him back were met with empty results. Another guide only for the trip as we would try this bird that afternoon and the next morning without any luck...grr...



White-bellied Kingfisher: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

After a very successful morning we returned to the lodge, mainly for one bird and we got it within minutes, a sweet little **Reichenbach's Sunbird**. There were a few other good birds around the lodge before lunch and then after our rest and before we left. Besides having fantastic food and wonderful service, the lodge grounds also had **African Pygmy Kingfisher, Olive-bellied Sunbird, African Forest-Flycatcher, Black-headed Paradise-Flycatcher** and a much better look a **Swamp Greenbul** than we had previously. I'll tell you what, that greenbul is heavily underrated...the spotting on that birds body is simply stunning.



African Pygmy Kingfisher: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Reichenbach's Sunbird: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Olive-bellied Sunbird: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

The afternoon had us back out on the road through the forest and one last visit to the forest ponds. This time however, we packed the flashlights because we had a special bird to find once the afternoon light faded. But before that, we had a pretty stellar afternoon. On the way to the ponds sitting right in the middle of the road was a gorgeous **Blue-headed Wood-Dove**. Then, near the ponds we had **Dwarf Bittern**, **Red-fronted Antpecker**, **Black Goshawk**, **Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill**, **Cassin's Hawk-Eagle**, **Shining Drongo**, **Yellow-bearded Icterine** and **Little Greenbul**. As night fell, I stumbled upon a **Lesser Flying Squirrel** thanks to some very obvious eye-shine. Then, while driving our guide heard and then sprinted after to find us the peculiar **Nkulengu Rail**. His speed was impressive and he found it incredibly quickly. Very odd bird but a great evening!



Red-fronted Antpecker: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

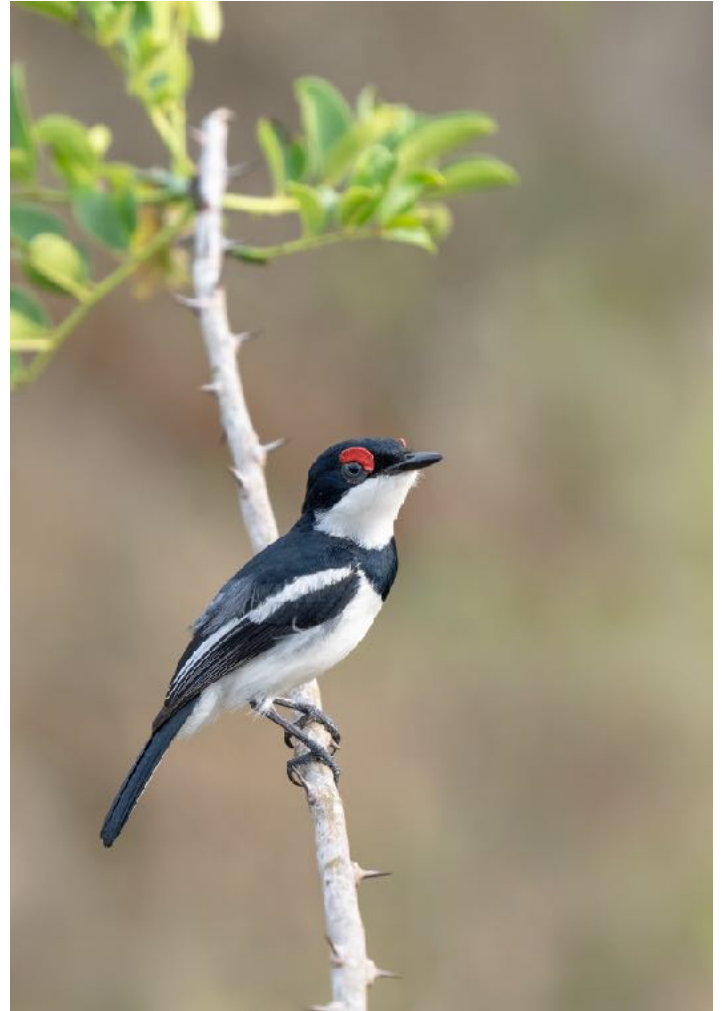
April 22nd (Day 7): Ankasa to Kakum via Dry Country Birding

We did some quick birding along a [Ankasa NP](#) forest trail for yet more brown skulkers like; [Pale-breasted Illadopsis](#), [Rufous-winged Illadopsis](#), [Rufous-sided Broadbill](#), [Orange-breasted Forest Robin](#), and [Golden Greenbul](#).

All of these birds were incredibly shy and in a very dark habitat so they are quite difficult to photograph. Another bird that was exceptionally difficult to photograph was the tiny [Cassin's Flycatcher](#) that we saw by the bridge at the base of the lodge. After an earlier lunch, we finished packing our bags, and met by the vehicle. I was about 15-minutes earlier than most so I had a bit of a walk around [Ankasa Lodge](#) and found myself face to face with a sharp-dressed [Pin-tailed Whydah](#). I have seen this bird plenty of times but I have never seen it with its tail spread out like it is in the photo below. Very odd but a pretty awesome bird. I managed to get a few guests who came out a bit earlier on it but we'd see this bird later on in the trip for those who missed it. We finished packing the vehicle and hit the road towards Kakum.



Pin-tailed Whydah: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Brown-throated Wattle-eye: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

As usual, Paul did a great job giving us a break from this long drive. We didn't really stop in a specific park but rather just a road Paul suggested. This was a dry country habitat that was incredibly disturbed. Sometimes these places are really good, sometimes they aren't. This was one of the better ones I think. This was the first dry country we had done and that typically means it's more open and more easily birded. This time was no exception. Though it was quiet, the views we had of the birds were high quality. We saw a few species and added; **Pied Crow**, **Copper Sunbird**, a couple of circling **Hooded Vulture**, loads of **Laughing Dove**, our first **Northern Fiscal**, **Piping Hornbill**, **Northern Gray-headed Sparrow**, **House Sparrow** and a few 'guide only' sightings like **Northern Crombec** and **Brown-throated Wattle-eye**. We'd see both of these birds later on in the trip. We also saw one of the biggest swallows, the **Mosque Swallow** and a few of the funny named, **Piapiac**. We made it back to the same hotel we had stayed in before whilst in Kakum, had a nice dinner then went to bed, eager for our day tomorrow and its special target!

April 23rd (Day 8): Forest Edge Birding to Kumasi via Picathartes

The morning was spent on a road doing some secondary forest/farmland mixed habitat near Kakum NP. Before we left, we grabbed a **Bar-breasted Firefinch** and **Mottled Spinetail** from the parking lot and then we hit the road.

On this 'Open-country Forest/Farmland Road Near Kakum NP' we found; **Senegal Cuckoo**, **Melancholy Woodpecker**, **Dideric Cuckoo**, **Brown-throated Wattle-eye**, **Lesser Striped Swallow**, **Simple Greenbul**, **Buff-throated Sunbird** and some incredibly mottled looking **Yellow-mantled Widowbirds**. There were a few 'guide only' sightings which were **Lowland Sooty Boubou** and **Tambourine Dove**.

We then took a fairly long drive towards a small village where we'd climb for picathartes. The climb overall is about 2km, mostly about a 4% grade through a hot, humid and dense jungle. The last maybe 300-400m however is about a 8-10% grade where some more care was required but as soon as we got up to the spot, our target was waiting for us, the **White-necked Rockfowl**. We watched this individual for about 30-minutes as it hopped around the rocks and incubated its eggs. A very special bird! We made our way back to the vehicle and continued on towards a hotel in between here and Mole.



White-necked Rockfowl: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

April 24th (Day 9): Kumasi to Mole NP

Today we spent the day traveling towards Mole. We made several stops along the way, the first being a side track off of the main road for a few forest birds. Overall this area didn't have very many new birds for us but we did manage; **Blue-bellied Roller**, **Whistling Cisticola**, **Black-winged Kite**, **Green Hylia**, **Green-backed Camaroptera**, **Collared Sunbird**, and a 'guide only' view of **Puvel's Illadopsis**.



Blue-bellied Roller: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

Our next stop was a largish cattle pond (or at least that's what I thought it was) that had some decent activity but all of birds we had seen before with the notable exception of; **Lesser Blue-eared Starling**, **Black-rumped Waxbill**, **Red-billed Quelea**, **Northern Red Bishop** (all young/females/non-breeding males) and a few **Grasshopper Buzzards**. When we finally reached the gate, I noticed a pretty sweet **Lizard Buzzard** perched well on a tree so I hopped out quickly during the paperwork process and grabbed a few photos. Once we were at **Mole Motel**, the guests opted for an early dinner with no walk around. I took advantage of a 45min break just before hand and did some birding on my own. Everything I found on my own we saw again with the exception of; **Senegal Batis**, **Violet-backed Starling**, **Western Yellow Wagtail** and **Melodius Warbler**. These birds would remain 'guide only' birds for the rest of the trip. A nice dinner and off to bed.



Lizard Buzzard: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

April 25th-26th (Day 10-11): Two Full Days in Mole NP

Our time in [Mole National Park](#) is split between a few main locations; [A serious of tracks, the 'airstrip'](#) and the [Mole Motel Grounds](#). Over the course of the next two full days we kept a consistent schedule. First, an early breakfast, return to the lodge around 11:00am for lunch around 12:30pm, a nice afternoon rest for 3hrs, then around 3:30pm go out birding for the afternoon and stay out until dark for night-time birding. It was a great schedule as Mole NP is quite hot so those afternoons were extremely quiet (I did a little birding around the lodge in the afternoon and typically found very little) and the rest was much appreciated to break up these long hot days.

So what I am going to do is share what I call a 'species dump'. I do this for two reasons. 1) It shows just how many species some specific areas hold and 2) we typically go from point to point to find all of these so this in my mind is a better summary of the time in that region. Over these two days we added a great portfolio of new dry Savana species. Check this list out; **Black-winged Kite, Lizard Buzzard, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Red-winged Prinia, Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike, African Blue Flycatcher, Oriole Warbler, Hamerkop, Wood Warbler, Red-throated Bee-eater, Senegal Thick-knee, Bateleur, Malachite Kingfisher, African Firefinch, Red-billed Firefinch, Lavender Waxbill, Helmeted Guineafowl, Double-spurred Spurfowl, White-throated Francolin, Levialliant's Cuckoo, Northern White-faced Owl, Northern Black Flycatcher, Little Weaver, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver, Standard-winged Nightjar (females only), African, Klaas's and Red-chested Cuckoo, Rufous, and Dorst's Cisticolas, African Spotted Creeper, Black-crowned Tchagra, White-shouldered Black-Tit, Brown-rumped Bunting, Black-capped Apalis, Brown Babbler, Wattled Lapwing, White-backed Vulture, Spotted Thick-knee, Brubru, Yellow-billed Shrike, Northern Yellow White-eye, Brown-backed and Fine-spotted Woodpecker, Sahel Bush Sparrow, White-fronted Black Chat, Familiar Chat, Long-tailed Glossy Starling, Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike, a very cool displaying (in flight) Black-bellied Bustard, Rufous-crowned, Broad-billed and Abyssinian Rollers, Forbes's Plover, Sun Lark, Black-billed Wood-Dove Bruce's Green-Pigeon, Gray-headed and Striped Kingfisher, Gambaga Flycatcher, Abyssinian Ground-Hornbill, Pearl-spotted Owlet, and a few 'guide only' views of Western Square-tailed Drongo, Red-necked Falcon, White-headed Vulture, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Green-headed Sunbird and Singing Cisticola. Whew...ya, pretty awesome place. Check out some of these photos!**



Standard-winged Nightjar (female): Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Red-winged Prinia: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Tawny-flanked Prinia: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Fine-spotted Woodpecker: Photo by guide - Ben Knot



Levillant's Cuckoo: Photo by guide - Ben Knot



Double-spurred Spurfwowl: Photo by guide - Ben Knot



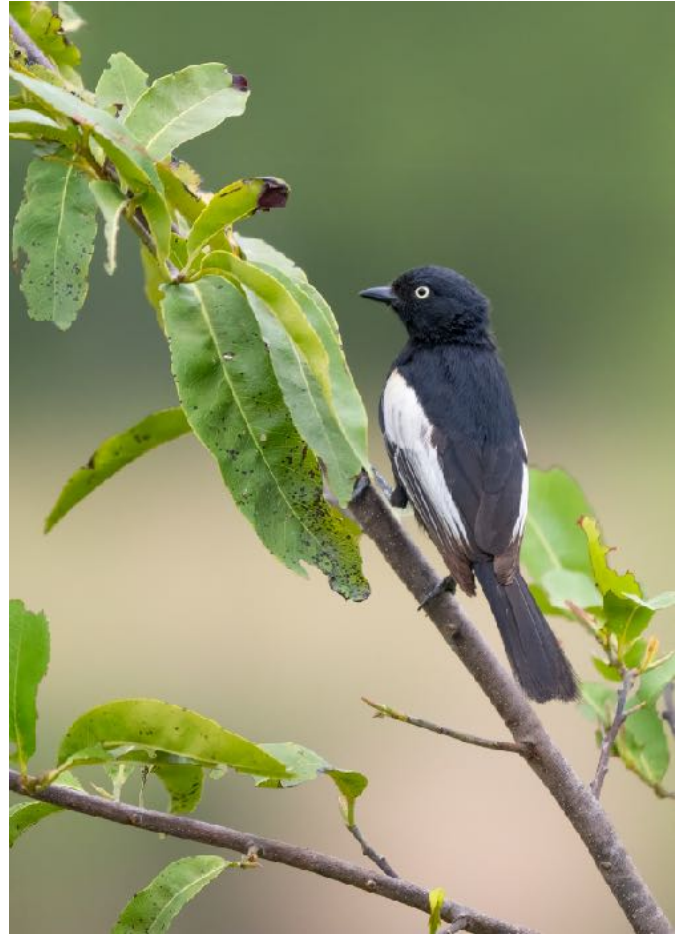
Lavender Waxbill: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Long-tailed Glossy Starling: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



African Spotted Creeper: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



White-shouldered Black-Tit: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Brown-rumped Bunting: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Northern White-faced Owl: Photo by guide - Ben Knot



White-throated Francolin: Photo by guide - Ben Knot



Northern Black Flycatcher: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



African Cuckoo: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Abyssinian Roller: Photo by guide - Ben Knot



Black-crowned Tchagra: Photo by guide - Ben Knot



Yellow-crowned Gonolek: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Klaas's Cuckoo: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

April 27th (Day 12): Mole NP to Bolgatanga

Today we moved from Mole towards Bolgatanga. Bolgatanga is up towards the northern most reaches of Ghana where we'd be based for a few nights. It was a long, long drive so we of course made several stops along the way to break up the journey. The few random stops we made we're fairly productive and we added a few new birds like; **Hadada Ibis**, **Northern Crombec**, **Singing and Red-faced Cisticola**, **Yellow-billed Oxpecker**, and a few **Chestnut-crowned Sparrow Weaver**.



Northern Crombec: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

After this productive start and long travel day, we finally made it to our scheduled stop for the day just before getting into the Bolgatanga area, a spot called ; the **Tonga Hills**. The habitat here is very odd but I quite enjoyed it. Huge boulders and rock formations mixed in with some broadleaf trees granted us a chance to bird in a very unique habitat for a few specialty birds.

Upon our arrival, the sky looked a bit daunting. Threats of spinkles, some thunder and even some distant lightning put a little pep in our step as we searched for our query. It didn't take long to find our first **Fox Kestrel** sitting on one of the giant rocks. We then had the opportunity to watch a pair of them use the winds and thermals to go for their late evening hunt. Very cool! Also present in the area were a few **Goslings Bunting**, **White-rumped Swift** a flock of noisy **Piapiac**, and a lone **Dark Chanting Goshawk**. We arrived at our hotel fairly late so we called it an evening and prepped for our date with another special bird the following day.



Goslings Bunting: Photo by guide - Ben Knot



Piapiac: Photo by guide - Ben Knot

April 28th (Day 13): Bolgatanga and Tono Dam

Today was our day with a very special bird, a monotypic bird family that stretches across the middle of Africa but is arguably the most accessible and easy to access here in the far north of Ghana, right on the [river border with Burkina Faso](#). The day started with a bit of stress and a minor amount of annoyance. Later determined as a faulty charging cable and some weird internal issue with my camera, I would end up going 'camera-less' for the day which was a real bummer when the group got on a pair of exceptionally cooperative and close **Egyptian Plover**, our big target for the morning and indeed the trip. Not sure why technology chooses moments of absolute need to quit on you but such is life. The minor heartache paled in comparison to these epic little birds however. We spent nearly an hour birding the farmlands and occasionally looking at the plovers again and again. We also added; **Lesser Honeyguide, Squacco Heron, White-billed Buffalo-Weaver, Intermediate Egret, Common Sandpiper, Mourning Collared Dove and Spectacled Pigeon** as our trip started to come to a close.

After a spectacular morning, we visited the [Tono Dam](#) area for some dry country birds. Here the semi-burned deciduous habitat gave way to; **Wattled Lapwing, Bruce's Green Pigeon, Four-banded Sandgrouse, African Silverbill, Red-cheeked Cordonbleu, Namaqua Dove, Red-rumped Swallow, Chestnut-bellied, Purple, Bronze-tailed, Lesser Blue-eared and Greater Blue-eared Starlings, Pygmy Sunbird, Red-billed Quelea, Wilson's Indigobird**. And a guide only **Little Green Bee-eater and Namaqua Dove**.



Ring-necked Dove: Photo by guide - Ben Knot



Wattled Lapwing: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Bruce's Green Pigeon: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



Four-banded Sandgrouse: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

April 29th (Day 14): Return to Accra and Guest Departures/Start of Extension

Today our only plan was to drive to Tamale and catch our flight back to Accra. We made a few stops and added a few new birds; **Black-headed Heron, Black-headed Weaver, African Woolly-necked Stork** and only (but solid) flight views of **Quailfinch**.

Once we finished with our travel back to Accra, we hitched a ride with our hotel shuttle and for those going on the extension, we got checked in and set our stuff down to relax for a few hours. Those who were departing on this day took off with the hotel shuttle as our driver was still making his way back (driving) from Tamale (a solid 12hr or so drive!), so we said goodbye to them, had a nice dinner at the hotel to discuss some of the logistics for the next stage of the journey, the Atewa Hills extension. We went to bed eager for a good start in the morning for two more days of good Ghanaian birding.

April 30th (Day 15/Day 1 of Atewa Hills Extension): Drive to Atewa Hills

Today we started in the [Accra Botanic Gardens](#). Here there are some gardens, groves of trees, some patches of 'wild' forest and a nice lake with a heron and cormorant rookery. We managed few new things like [Green Woodhoopoe](#), [Black-crowned Night Heron](#), and improved looks at a stunning [Piping Hornbill](#). There was also a guide only, [White-crowned Robin-Chat](#).

We continued on towards our hotel and after a quick rest, went out to the [lower reaches of the Atewa Hills](#) which is sort of disturbed forest mixed with open country from farming. We also went up to the gate of the official road up through the hills. We saw some great new birds including the following; [Yellow-throated Cuckoo](#), [Pin-tailed Whydah](#), [Tambourine Dove](#), [Double-toothed and, Vieillot's Barbet](#), [Superb Sunbird](#), [White-throated Bee Eater](#), [Dideric Cuckoo](#), [Red-faced Cisticola](#), [Blue-headed Coucal](#), [Grosbeak Weaver](#), [Olive-naped Weaver](#) and a guide only [Western Bluebill](#). After a terrific afternoon, we called it a day and went back to the hotel to prep for our big hike up the hill tomorrow.



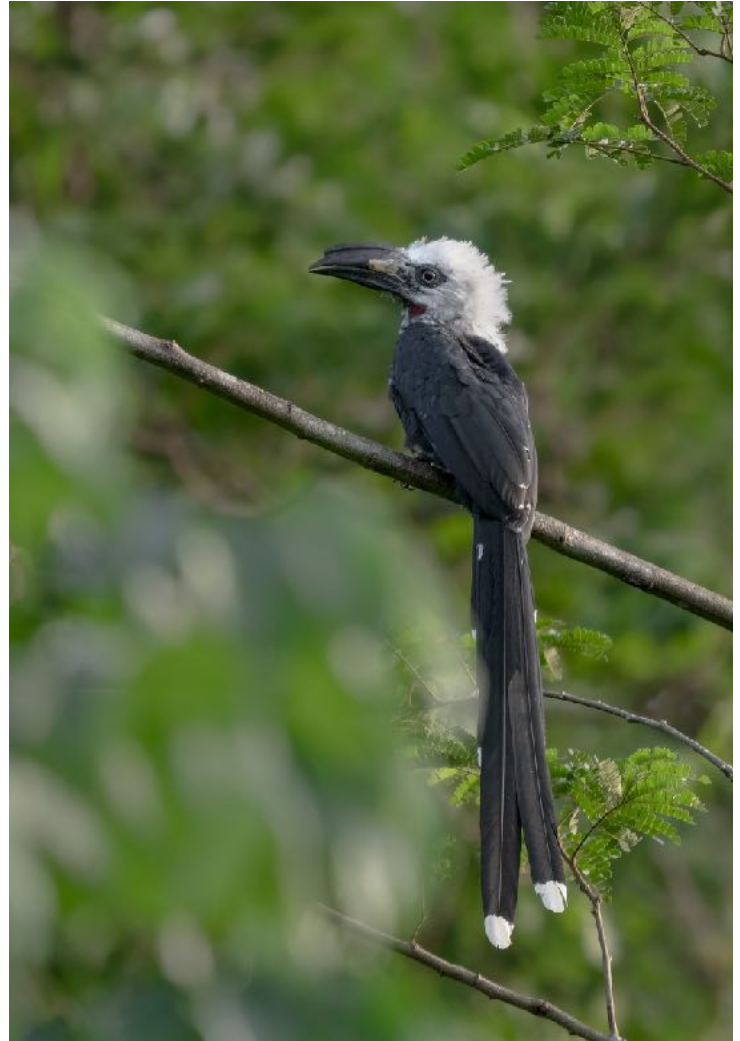
Vieillot's Barbet: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

May 1st (Day 16/Day 2 of Atewa Hills Extension): Hike up Atewa Hills

Today it is imperative we get an early start. Only one of the two participants chose to participate in the hike today. It was a long slog up the hill. A fairly consistent 4% grade for about 4-miles in this kind of heat and humidity is not easy but we were rewarded with some very cool birds, including the biggest target. We added; **Cassins Hawk Eagle, White-crested Hornbill, Yellow-billed Barbet, Red-billed Helmet-shrike, Red-tailed Greenbul, Yellow-browed Camaroptera, Black-capped Apalis, Chestnut-capped Flycatcher, Maxwell's Black Weaver,** and the big target, the **Blue-moustached Bee-eater.** There was also a guide only a **Little Flycatcher.**



Double-toothed Barbet: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot



White-crested Hornbill: Photo by guide - Ben Knoot

There is supposed to be a little bit of afternoon birding but after such a hike, the guest that went on the morning hike decided to take a rest for the afternoon. Can't blame him for that! After meeting for dinner, the decision was also made to spend the next morning packing and resting for the long travel day home so there was NO BIRDING on May 2nd before traveling back to Accra.



May 2nd (Day 17/Day 3 of Atewa Hills Extension): Atewa Hills to Accra

No birding in the morning meant a leisurely breakfast and a relaxed morning for departure back to Accra. We packed the vehicle and took the 2hr or so trip back to Accra. The guests departed several hours before me so after a nice early dinner we said our goodbyes and concluded this overall extremely productive and wonderful tour of Ghana!

Guests Favorites

- 1) Egyptian Plover
- 2) White-necked Rockfowl
- 3) Abyssinian Ground Hornbill
- 4) Rosy Bee-eater
- 5) *Three-way Tie*
 - 1) Black Bee-eater
 - 2) Long-tailed Nightjar
 - 3) Violet-backed Hyliota

Trip List and Summary

- 361 Bird species seen overall
- 29 Bird species seen by guide only (seen by TB guide)
- 23 Mammal species seen overall
- 2 Mammal species seen by guide only (seen by TB guide)

(April - May)		
<u>Bird Species</u>	Main Tour	Atewa Hills Extension
Cormorants: Phalacrocoracidae		
Long-tailed Cormorant	Seen throughout the tour	Accra Botanical Gardens
Hérons, Egrets, and Bitterns: Ardeidae		
Dwarf Bittern	Brief flyby views in Ankasa NP	
Gray Heron	Seen throughout the tour	
Black-headed Heron	One individual seen in a flooded field around the Burkina Faso Border	
Great Egret	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Intermediate Egret	One birds seen in a flooded field around the Burkina Faso Border	
Western Reef Heron	Winnebaa Lagoon	

(April - May)		
Cattle Egret	Seen throughout the tour	Accra Botanical Gardens
Squacco Heron	Seen throughout the tour	
Striated Heron	Ankasa NP	
Black-crowned Night-Heron		Accra Botanical Gardens
Hamerkops: Scopidae		
Hamerkop	Seen in a few places throughout the tour. Usually a solo flying bird	
Grebes: Podicipidae		
Little Grebe	Bokru Marsh	
Storks: Ciconiidae		
African Woolly-necked Stork	Seen en route to Tamale from Bolgatanga	
African Openbill	Seen by guide only (while walking alone)	
Ibis and Spoonbills: Threkirothidae		
Hadada Ibis	Mole NP	
Ducks, Geese and Swans: Anatidae		
White-faced Whistling Duck	Seen throughout the tour	
Hartlaub's Duck	Seen en route to Ankasa in roadside marsh	
Spur-winged Goose		
African Pygmy-Goose	Severa pairs present in Bokru Marsh	
Hawks, Eagles and Kites: Accipitridae		
Black Kite	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
Black-winged Kite	Seen en route to Mole from Kumasi	
African Harrier-Hawk	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	
African Cuckoo-Hawk	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	Atewa Hills (guide only)
Palm-nut Vulture	A nice adult seen in Ankasa NP	

(April - May)		
Hooded Vulture	Two birds seen circling in shrub habitat en route to Kumasi and then a small group seen cleaning up a carcass in Mole NP	
White-headed Vulture	Seen by guide only in Moly NP	
White-backed Vulture	One mixed in with Hooded Vultures	
Bateleur	A few sightings in Mole NP	
Cassin's Hawk-Eagle	Seen well flying by in Ankasa NP	Atewa Hills
Lizard Buzzard	Shai Hills Seen en route to Mole from Kasumi	
Grasshopper Buzzard	Seen en route to Mole from Kumasi	
Red-necked Buzzard	Seen throughout the tour	
Dark Chanting Goshawk	Tongo Hills	
Shikra	Shai Hills and Mole NP	
Black Goshawk	Chasing Cassin's Hawk Eagle in Ankasa NP	
African Goshawk	Kakum NP	
Long-tailed Hawk	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Guineafowl: Numididae		
Helmeted Guineafowl	Seen throughout the tour	
New World Quail: Odontophoridae		
Stone Partridge	Group in Shai Hills and in 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	Two sightings in Mole NP	
Rails, Crakes, Gallinules and Coots: Rallidae		
Black Crake	Several birds seen well in Bokru Marsh	
Nkulengu Rail	Heard many times in Kakum NP then a pair seen in Ankasa NP	

(April - May)		
Allen's Gallinule	Bokru Marsh	
Eurasian Moorhen	Bokru Marsh	Accra Botanical Gardens
Jacanas: Jacanidae		
African Jacana	Bokru Marsh Many seen in a flooded field around the Burkina Faso Border	
Bustards: Otidae		
Black-bellied Bustard	One seen performing display flight in Mole NP	
Egyptian Plover: Pluvianidae		
Egyptian Plover	Three birds on the river border of Burkina Faso	
Stilts and Avocets: Recurviorstridae		
Black-winged Stilt	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Thick-knees: Burhinidae		
Senegal Thick-knee	Several seen near waterways in Mole NP	Accra Botanical Gardens
Spotted Thick-knee	A shy pair encountered in the drier areas of Mole NP	
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	
Wattled Lapwing	Several small groups seen in Mole NP	
Forbes's Plover	A pair seen in Mole NP	
Common Ringed Plover	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Sandpipers: Scolopacidae		
Sanderling	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Curlew Sandpiper	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Common Sandpiper	Winnebaa Lagoon	

(April - May)		
Common Greenshank	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers: Laridae		
Common Tern	Winnebaa Lagoon	
Sandgrouse: Pteroclididae		
Four-banded Sandgrouse	A flock of about 12 seen in the dry country near Bolgatanga	
Pigeons and Doves: Columbidae		
African Green-Pigeon	Forest edge birding outside and in Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Bruce's Green-Pigeon	Mole NP Common around Bolgatanga	
Rock Pigeon	Seen around towns	Seen around towns
Speckled Pigeon	A pair seen near Mole NP	
Mourning Collared-Dove	Few seen in the dry country near Bolgatanga	
Red-eyed Dove	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
Laughing Dove	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
Tambourine Dove	Heard many times throughout the tour. One seen briefly by guide on side track near Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Vinaceous Dove	Seen throughout the tour	
Namaqua Dove	Seen by guide only (while walking alone)	
Black-billed Wood-Dove	Many seen in Mole NP	
Blue-headed Wood-Dove	One seen well on the road in Ankasa NP	
Blue-spotted Wood-Dove	Guide Only - seen flying by	
Falcons: Falconidae		
Fox Kestrel	A pair in Tongo Hills	
Eurasian Kestrel	Seen flying over hotel in Accra	
Gray Kestrel	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	Atewa Hills (guide only)
Red-necked Falcon	Seen by guide only in Mole NP	
African Hobby	Seen en route to Ankasa	

(April - May)		
Lanner Falcon	Seen flying over hotel in Accra	
Turacos: Turacidae		
Great Blue Turaco	Few sightings in Ankasa NP	
Guinea Turaco	Few sightings in Shai Hills	Accra Botanical Gardens
Yellow-billed Turaco	Few sightings in Kakum NP and in Ankasa NP	
Violet Turaco	Few sightings in Shai Hills	
Western Plantain-eater	A pair in Shai Hills Several sightings in Mole NP	Accra Botanical Gardens
Cuckoos: Cuculidae		
Senegal Coucal	One in Winnebaa Lagoon and the "Black-morph" seen well on a side track near Kakum NP	
Blue-headed Coucal	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	Atewa Hills farm brush section
Blue Malkoha	Shai Hills Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Red-chested Cuckoo	Mole NP	
Levaillant's Cuckoo	Mole NP	
Black Cuckoo	Heard many times in Kakum NP and then finally seen	
African Cuckoo	Mole NP	
Dideric Cuckoo	Side track near Kakum NP	Atewa Hills farm brush section
Klaas's Cuckoo	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP Mole Motel	
African Emerald Cuckoo	A nice male on the Kakum NP Canopy Walk and a nice female in Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Yellow-throated Cuckoo		Atewa Hills
Owls: Strigidae		
African Scops-Owl	Seen on our first evening at Shai Hills	
Northern White-faced Owl	One bird seen well in Mole NP	
Grayish Eagle-Owl	Seen on our first evening at Shai Hills	

(April - May)		
Fraser's Eagle-Owl	Seen by guide only	
Akun Eagle-Owl	Beautiful individual seen by the Ankasa Lodge	
Pearl-spotted Owlet	Seen well in Mole NP	
Nightjars: Caprimulgidae		
Standard-winged Nightjar	Just females seen in Mole NP	
Long-tailed Nightjar	Seen on our first evening at Shai Hills Mole NP	
Brown Nightjar	Heard many times in Kakum NP	
Plain Nightjar	Seen on our first evening at Shai Hills	
Freckled Nightjar	Seen on our first evening at Shai Hills	
Swifts: Apodidae		
Mottled Spinetail	Flying over Rainforest Lodge in Kakum	
Sabine's Spinetail	Flying over Kakum NP	
Cassin's Spinetail	Flying over Ankasa NP	
African Palm Swift	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
Little Swift	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
White-rumped Swift	A small flock seen in Tongo Hills	
Common Swift	A few individuals flying over Ankasa NP	
Flufftails: Sarothruridae		
White-spotted Flufftail	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	
Kingfishers: Alcedinidae		
African Pygmy-Kingfisher	Brief glimpses in Shai Hills then excellent perched views in the forest edge birding outside of Kakum NP Also around the lodge in Ankasa	
Shining-blue Kingfisher	Ankasa NP (bridge over the river by the entrance)	
Malachite Kingfisher	Bokru Marsh	

(April - May)		
White-bellied Kingfisher	Ankasa NP (ponds)	
Chocolate-backed Kingfisher	Heard many times in Kakum NP then finally seen	
Gray-headed Kingfisher	Several sightings in Mole NP	
Woodland Kingfisher	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	Accra Botanical Gardens
Blue-breasted Kingfisher	A stunning individual seen well in Shai Hills and another seen in Ankasa NP (ponds)	
Striped Kingfisher	Mole NP	
Pied Kingfisher	Winnebaa Lagoon Bokru Marsh	
Bee-eaters: Meropidae		
Black Bee-eater	Seen throughout the tour	
Blue-moustached Bee-eater		Atewa Hills
Red-throated Bee-eater	Common in Mole NP	
Little Bee-eater	On the edges of Kakum NP	
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater	One bird seen in Shai Hills	
White-throated Bee-eater	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	
Little Green Bee-eater	Seen by guide only	
Rosy Bee-eater	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	
Rollers: Coraciidae		
Abyssinian Roller	Several sightings in Mole NP	
Rufous-crowned Roller	One individual seen in Mole NP	
Blue-bellied Roller	Seen en route to Mole from Kumasi and in Mole NP	
Broad-billed Roller	Few sightings in Mole NP	
Blue-throated Roller	Forest edge birding outside and in Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Woodhoopoes and Scimitarbills		
Green Woodhoopoe		Accra Botanical Gardens
Ground-Hornbills: Bucorvidae		

(April - May)		
Abyssinian Ground-Hornbill	Two males seen very well in Mole NP	
Hornbills: Bucerotidae		
Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill	A pair in Ankasa NP	
African Pied Hornbill	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
African Gray Hornbill	Few sightings in Shai Hills	Accra Botanical Gardens
Northern Red-billed Hornbill	Few sightings in Mole NP and many around Bolgatanga	
White-crested Hornbill	Heard only in Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Black-casqued Hornbill	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Brown-cheeked Hornbill	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Piping Hornbill	Seen en route Kakum from Ankasa	Accra Botanical Gardens
African Barbets: Lybiidae		
Red-rumped Tinkerbird	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird	Shai Hills	
Yellow-throated Tinkerbird	Forest edge birding outside and in Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird	Shai Hills	Atewa Hills
Speckled Tinkerbird	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	Atewa Hills
Yellow-billed Barbet		Atewa Hills (guide only)
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	Ankassa NP	Atewa Hills
Hairy-breasted Barbet	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Vieillot's Barbet	Shai Hills and dry country near Bolgatanga	Atewa Hills farm brush section
Double-toothed Barbet	Shai Hills	Atewa Hills farm brush section
Bearded Barbet	Shai Hills Mole NP Tongo Hills	

(April - May)		
Honeyguides: Indicatoridae		
Cassin's Honeyguide	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	
Lesser Honeyguide	Seen around the farm country by the river border with Burkina Faso	
Old World Parrots: Psittaculidae		
Rose-ringed Parakeet	Guide Only - seen flying by in Mole NP	Accra Botanical Gardens (guide only)
New World & African Parrots: Psittacidae		
Senegal Parrot	Common in the Shai Hills	
Red-fronted Parrot	Kakum NP Parking Lot	
Melancholy Woodpecker	Side track near Kakum NP	
Fire-bellied Woodpecker	A trip at the Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Brown-eared Woodpecker	One seen briefly by guide only in Ankasa NP	
Brown-backed Woodpecker	Mole NP	
African Gray Woodpecker	Several sightings in Mole NP	
Fine-spotted Woodpecker	Mole NP	
Broadbills: Calyptomenidae		
Rufous-sided Broadbill	First seen in Kakum NP then improved views in Ankasa NP	
Batises and Wattle-Eyes: Platysteridae		
West African Batis	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Senegal Batis	Seen by guide only (while walking alone) in Mole Motel area	
West African Wattle-eye	Seen well in Kakum NP and Ankasa NP	Atewa Hills (guide only)
Brown-throated Wattle-eye	Side track near Kakum NP	
Red-cheeked Wattle-eye		
Vangas, Helmetshrikes & Allies: Vangidae		
Red-billed Helmetshrike		Atewa Hills

(April - May)		
Bushshrikes and Allies: Malaconotidae		
Brubru	Mole NP	
Northern Puffback	One individual in Shai hills	
Sabine's Puffback	Seen well in Kakum NP	
Black-crowned Tchagra	Mole NP	
Brown-crowned Tchagra	One individual in Shai hills	
Yellow-crowned Gonolek	Few sightings in Shai Hills	
Lowland Sooty Boubou	Side track near Kakum NP	
Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike	A pair seen mobbing a Pearl-spotted Owlet in Mole Np	
Fiery-bellied Bushshrike	Heard only en route to Mole from Kasima	
Cuckoo-shrikes: Caprophagidae		
Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike	Two birds seen in Shai Hills then few sightings in Mole NP	
Blue Cuckooshrike	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Shrikes: Laniidae		
Yellow-billed Shrike	Mole NP	Accra Botanical Gardens (guide only)
Northern Fiscal	Seen en route from Ankasa to Kakum	Atewa Hills farm brush section
Orioles: Oriolidae		
African Golden Oriole	Mole NP	
Western Black-headed Oriole	Few sightings in Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Black-winged Oriole	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Drones: Drongidae		
Western Square-tailed Drongo	Seen by guide only in Mole NP	
Glossy-backed Drongo	Few sightings in Shai hills	
Fanti Drongo	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	Atewa Hills
Shining Drongo	A few sightings in Ankasa NP	
Monarch Flycatchers: Monarchidae		

(April - May)		
African Paradise-Flycatcher	Few sightings in Shai hills and then many in Mole NP	
Black-headed Paradise-Flycatcher	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP Few sightings in Ankasa NP	Atewa Hills
Crows: Corvidae		
Piapiac	Several birds seen briefly at Winnebaa Lagoon and one seen very well en route to Kakum from Ankasa	
Pied Crow	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
Nicators: Nicatoridae		
Western Nicator	Brief but definite views in Kakum NP	Atewa Hills (guide only)
Larks: Alaudidae		
Sun Lark	Mole NP	
Flappet Lark	Seen with driving with good views	
Martins and Swallows: Hirundidae		
Ethiopian Swallow	Pare River	Atewa Hills farm brush section
Barn Swallow	Many circling around Shai Hills as well as Pare River	
Wire-tailed Swallow	Seen throughout the tour	
White-throated Blue Swallow	Pare River	
Red-chested Swallow	Seen in most locations of Northern Ghana	
Red-rumped Swallow	A pair seen in the dry country around Bolgatanga	
Lesser Striped Swallow	Seen throughout the tour	
Preuss's Swallow	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	
Mosque Swallow	Seen en route from Ankasa to Kakum	
Square-tailed Sawwing	One sighting in Kakum NP and then a small flock seen briefly in Ankasa NP	Atewa Hills (guide only)
Fairy Flycatchers: Stenostiridae		

(April - May)		
African Blue-Flycatcher	Mole NP	
Tits, Chickadees and Titmice: Paridae		
White-shouldered Black-Tit	Seen around Mole Motel by guide and one guest	
Bulbuls: Pycnonotidae		
Common Bulbul	Seen throughout the tour	Seen throughout extension
Gray-headed Bristlebill	Heard only in Ankasa NP	
Golden Greenbul	Forest edge birding outside and in Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Simple Greenbul	Few sightings in Shai Hills, Kakum	
Slender-billed Greenbul	Few sightings in Kakum NP and in Ankasa NP	
Honeyguide Greenbul	Heard in Kakum NP	
Swamp Greenbul	Few sightings in Ankasa NP	
Red-tailed Greenbul		Atewa Hills
Western Bearded-Greenbul	A few heard birds only in Ankasa NP	
Yellow-bearded Greenbul	Few sightings in Ankasa NP	
Yellow-throated Greenbul		Accra Botanical Gardens
Little Greenbul	Ankasa NP	
Plain Greenbul	One bird seen well in Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Ansorge's Greenbul	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	
Yellow-whiskered Greenbul	Heard only in Ankasa NP	
Gray Greenbul		Atewa Hills
Icterine Greenbul	Few sightings in Ankasa NP	
African Warblers: Macrosphenidae		
Green Crombec	Seen many times in Kakum NP	
Northern Crombec	Seen by guide only en route from Ankasa to Kakum then by group in Mole NP	
Moustached Grass-Warbler	One individual in Shai hills	

(April - May)		
Green Hylia	Few sightings in Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Tit-Hylia	Seen once in Kakum NP and then a few times on the forest edge of Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Gray Longbill	First bird seen on the forest edge of Kakum and then seen by a few in Ankasa NP	
Leaf-Warblers: Phylloscopidae		
Wood Warbler	Kakum NP Canopy Walk	Atewa Hills
Reed-Warblers and Allies: Acrocephalidae		
Melodious Warbler	Seen by guide only (while walking alone) in Mole Motel area	
Cisticolas and Allies: Cisticolidae		
Red-faced Cisticola	Heard only on side track near Kakum NP then seen well in Mole Motel	Atewa Hills farm brush section
Singing Cisticola	Seen in Mole NP by guide only	
Whistling Cisticola	One individual seen on side track near Kakum NP	
Dorst's Cisticola	Mole NP	
Rock-loving Cisticola	Mole NP	
Croaking Cisticola	Few sightings in Shai Hills	
Rufous Cisticola	Mole NP	
Oriole Warbler	Heard only in Shai Hills and then seen very well in Mole NP	
Red-winged Prinia	Common in Mole NP	
Tawny-flanked Prinia	One bird seen at the Pare river	
Senegal Eremomela	Few sightings in Shai hills	
Rufous-crowned Eremomela	Few sightings in Shai Hills	
Green-backed Camaroptera	Seen in Kakum NP and Ankasa NP	
Yellow-browed Camaroptera	Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Yellow-breasted Apalis	Mole NP	

(April - May)		
Black-capped Apalis		Atewa Hills
Bush Warblers and Allies: Scotocercidae		
Chestnut-capped Flycatcher	A pair seen from the Kakum NP Canopy Walk	Atewa Hills (guide only)
White-eyes: Zosteropidae		
Northern Yellow White-eye	Mole NP	
Ground Babblers and Allies: Pellorneidae		
Pale-breasted Illadopsis	Few sightings in Ankasa NP	
Rufous-winged Illadopsis	One bird seen well in Ankasa NP	
Puvel's Illadopsis	Heard by all and seen briefly by guide only	
Laughingthrushes: Leiothrichidae		
Brown Babbler	Mole NP	
Treecreepers: Certhiidae		
African Spotted Creeper	Mole NP	
Rockfowl: Picathartidae		
White-necked Rockfowl	Seen in the forests near Kasumi	
Hyliotas: Hylotiidae		
Violet-backed Hyliota	One bird seen well in Kakum NP Canopy Wall	
Old World Flycatcher: Muscicapidae		
Little Flycatcher		Atewa Hills (guide only)
Spotted Flycatcher	One individual seen in Shai hills	
Swamp Flycatcher	Mole NP	
Cassin's Flycatcher	Ankasa NP (bridge over the river by the entrance)	
Ussher's Flycatcher	Seen in Kakum NP and Ankasa NP	
Dusky-blue Flycatcher	Few sightings in Ankasa NP	Atewa Hills farm brush section
Pale Flycatcher	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	
African Forest-Flycatcher	A pair seen well at Ankasa Lodge	Atewa Hills

(April - May)		
Gray-throated Tit-Flycatcher	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Gray Tit-Flycatcher	Few sightings in Shai Hills	
Northern Black-Flycatcher	Mole NP	
Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat	Seen by guide briefly flying across the road	
White-crowned Robin-Chat		Atewa Hills (guide only)
Orange-breasted Forest Robin	A few brief sightings in Ankasa NP	
European Pied Flycatcher	A pair seen well in Shai Hills	
White-fronted Black-Chat		
Mocking Cliff-Chat	The “white-crowned: versions seen well in Shai Hills and Tongo Hills by guide only	
Familiar Chat	One individual seen in Mole NP	
Thrushes: Turdidae		
African Thrush	Common in Shai Hills	Atewa Hills farm brush section
Finsch’s Flycatcher-Thrush	A pair seen in Kakum NP	Atewa Hills (guide only)
Starlings: Sturnidae		
Chestnut-winged Starling	Few sightings in Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Copper-tailed Starling	Few sightings in Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Violet-backed Starling	Seen by guide only (while walking alone) in Mole Motel area	
Long-tailed Glossy Starling	Common in Mole NP	
Splendid Starling	One individual seen at Bokru Marsh	
Chestnut-bellied Starling	Dry country en route to river border with Burkina Faso	
Purple Starling	Dry country en route to river border with Burkina Faso	
Bronze-tailed Starling	Dry country en route to river border with Burkina Faso	
Lesser Blue-eared Starling	Seen en route to Mole from Kumasi and then a few in Mole NP	

(April - May)		
Greater Blue-eared Starling	A pair seen in the dry country around Bolgatanga	
Oxpeckers: Buphagidae		
Yellow-billed Oxpecker	Seen en route a few places on cattle and donkey	
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	Seen by guide only (while walking alone) in Mole Motel area	
Mouse-brown Sunbird	Seen by guide only	
Little Green Sunbird	Several seen in Kakum NP	Atewa Hills
Pygmy Sunbird	Few sightings in Mole NP	
Collared Sunbird	Seen throughout the tour	Atewa Hills
Olive Sunbird	Few sightings in Kakum NP and in Ankasa	
Green-headed Sunbird	Seen by guide only in Mole NP	
Reichenbach's Sunbird	A pair seen around Ankasa Lodge	
Blue-throated Brown Sunbird	Seen throughout the tour	
Buff-throated Sunbird	One pair seen in Kakum NP A few seen well en route to Mole from Kasima	
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	
Splendid Sunbird	A pair seen well in Kakum NP	
Johanna's Sunbird	Several seen in Kakum NP	
Superb Sunbird	Seen in Kakum NP	Atewa Hills farm brush section
Beautiful Sunbird	Many sightings in Mole NP	
Copper Sunbird	Seen en route Kakum from Ankasa Mole NP	

(April - May)		
Wagtails and Pipits: Motacillidae		
Western Yellow Wagtail	One bird seen by guide only (while walking alone) on the Mole Motel grounds	
African Pied Wagtail	Seen throughout the tour	
Old World Buntings: Emberizidae		
Brown-rumped Bunting	A few sightings in Mole NP	
Gosling's Bunting	Several sightings in Tongo Hills	
Seedeaters: Fringillidae		
Yellow-fronted Canary	One bird seen by Rainforest Lodge in Kakum	
Old World Sparrows: Passeridae		
Northern Gray-headed Sparrow	Seen throughout the tour	
Sahel Bush Sparrow	Many in Mole NP	
Weavers: Ploidae		
White-billed Buffalo-Weaver	A small colony was observed near the river border with Burkina Faso	
Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver	Seen by guide only (while walking alone) in Mole Motel area	
Red-vented Malimbe	Ankasa NP	
Blue-billed Malimbe	Forest edge birding outside Kakum Np and in Kakum NP	
Crested Malimbe	Kakum NP and Ankasa NP	Atewa Hills
Red-headed Malimbe	Kakum NP and Ankasa NP	Atewa Hills
Olive-naped Weaver	Forest edge birding outside Kakum NP	Atewa Hills farm brush section
Black-headed Weaver	A flock of females/juveniles were seen en route to Tamale from Bolgatanga	
Little Weaver	Mole NP	
Orange Weaver	Many birds in Bokru Marsh	
Chestnut-and-Black Weaver	Seen throughout the tour	A small group seen in Atewa Hills farm brush section

(April - May)		
Yellow-mantled Weaver	A single bird seen in Kakum NP and a small flock seen in Ankasa NP	
Maxwell's Black Weaver		Several group sightings in Atewa Hills
Village Weaver	Several sightings, once around Winnebaa and then around Bokru Marsh	Atewa Hills
Red-billed Quelea	Seen en route to Mole from Kumasi	
Grosbeak Weaver		Atewa Hills (guide only)
Northern Red Bishop	Only females and non-breeding males seen around Mole NP	
Black-winged Bishop		Atewa Hills
Yellow-mantled Widowbird	Two molting males seen on side track near Kakum NP	
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	
Bar-breasted Firefinch	A few individuals seen at Rainforest Lodge in Kakum	Atewa Hills (guide only)
African Firefinch	Mole NP	Atewa Hills
Quailfinch	Few sightings by guide only at a small marsh en route to Tamale from Bolgatanga	
Black-rumped Waxbill	Seen en route to Mole from Kumasi	
Orange-cheeked Waxbill	A small flock seen at Bokru Marsh	Atewa Hills
Lavender Waxbill	Few sightings in Mole NP (and motel area)	
Black-bellied Seedcracker	A nesting pair seen on forest edge birding track outside of Kakum NP	
Western Bluebill		Atewa Hills (guide only)

(April - May)		
Red-cheeked Cordonbleu	Seen en route to Mole from Kumasi	
Red-fronted Antpecker	A nesting pair seen in Ankasa NP	
Bronze Mannikin	Flocks in forest edge road outside of Kakum NP Seen en route to Mole from Kumasi	
Black-and-white Mannikin	Flocks in forest edge road outside of Kakum NP and a few other locations	Atewa Hills
African Silverbill	One bird seen in the drier country around Bolgatanga	
Whydahs and Indigobirds: Viduidae		
Pin-tailed Whydah	A stunning individual seen well in at the Ankasa Lodge	A solo male seen in Atewa Hills farm brush section
Wilson's Indigobird	One bird seen in the drier country around Bolgatanga	
<u>Mammal Species</u>		
Olive Baboon	Seen throughout the tour	
Patas Monkey	Several troops seen in Mole NP	
Lowe's Mona Monkey	One sighting in Kakum NP (canopy)	
Lesser Spot-nosed Monkey	Few sightings in Kakum NP (canopy)	
Vervet Monkey	Shai Hills	
Straw-colored Fruit Bat	Seen in Ankasa Lodge	
Yellow-winged Bat	One seen in Mole NP	
Gambian Sun Squirrel	A pair seen in Kakum NP (canopy)	
Red-legged Sun Squirrel	One seen by guide in Ankasa NP	
African Giant Squirrel	One seen by guide in Ankasa Lodge	
Green Bush Squirrel		One seen in Atewa Hills
Slender-tailed Squirrel	Kakum NP	One seen in Atewa Hills

(April - May)		
Slender Mongoose	Seen by guide only in the dry country around Bolgatanga	
Gambian Mongoose	Mole NP	
White-tailed Mongoose	Mole NP	
African Elephant	Few sightings in Mole NP	
Common Warthog	Mole NP	
Bushbuck	Many in Mole NP	
Kob	Seen throughout the tour	
African Buffalo		
Waterbuck	A small group in Mole NP	
West African Monitor	Kakum NP	
Red-headed Agama	Seen throughout the tour	
Lesser Flying Squirrel	Ankasa NP	
African Pygmy Hedgehog	Mole Np	
Nile Monitor	Near Bolgatanga	