

Trip Report

Sierra Leone

November-December, 2018

Overview

Having spent 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ months in Ghana prior to flying into Freetown, I was wanting to focus on trying to find a number of range-restricted species in Sierra Leone and a few others that I missed during my time in Ghana. I contacted Kenneth Gbengba (email: factsfinding@yahoo.com) to plan a trip into the Loma Mountains which I began just after my arrival in Sierra Leone. Kenneth and his team were wonderful and we mounted a successful expedition into this remote area, even by Sierra Leonean standards. Kenneth dropped me off in Makeni afterwards, and from there I was on my own as I travelled a more-or-less circular route taking me to Gola National Park, Tiwai Island and then back to the Freetown area. I really enjoyed my time in Sierra Leone and the people were exceedingly friendly. It's a very interesting country, and for those who love off-the-beaten path independent travel, it has lots of rewards. My intention is that the information in this report will be of help for anyone planning a birding trip, and especially for those contemplating doing so independently instead of with a tour. I hope that the logistical information will be helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything else of which I can be of assistance.

Mike Moore

moore_travel@hotmail.com

Transportation

Other than my trip with Kenneth into the Loma Mountains with his 4 x4, I used various forms of public transportation to get around the country. The transportation infrastructure in Sierra Leone is very limited. Along the main roads and between the larger towns, poda podas (minibuses) and share-taxis operate on a fill-up-and-go basis. Unlike in Ghana, attempts are made in Sierra Leone to squeeze as many bodies into these forms of transportation as can fit. For example, share-taxis will take two in front with a driver and four in the back. However, much of my solo travel was done by oçadas (motorbikes) which are plentiful and go everywhere. Simply strap your backpack on the back of the motorbike and sit behind the driver. It's surprisingly comfortable, at least for a few hours, as my longest trip was only something like 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours which wasn't bad. It was kind of liberating to know that I could always find someone with a motorbike to take me where I wanted to go, so I never really had to worry too much about getting around. Transportation was very inexpensive, but bargaining was required for motorbikes.

Accommodation and Food

Compared to Ghana, accommodation in Sierra Leone is more expensive and of a lesser quality on average. I only stayed in four hotels while I was travelling independently, and simple single rooms ranged from 200000-350000 leones which is roughly between USD 25-40. At the time of my visit, the exchange rate was 1 USD to 8500 leones. Although simple, the rooms were clean and comfortable with private bathrooms. Electricity was a problem as blackouts were common, especially in Bo where it seemed the only electricity available was by private generators, a potential problem for those seeking a bit of air conditioning to survive the humid climate as generators only run overnight.

Although options are not typically diverse, food is always available in the form of rice with various sauces and a bit of chicken or fish. Street stalls are present in even the smallest villages, and sit-down restaurants are found in the larger centres. Masiri, the cook with Kenneth's team, provided fabulous meals on our Loma Mountains trip, and I found the quality of the food quite good throughout the rest of Sierra Leone as well.

Itinerary

- Nov. 21 Kenya Airways flight 502 from Accra to Freetown (Lungi). Picked up by Kenneth and taken to hotel near airport.
- Nov. 22 Birded in an agricultural area around Lungi and then began driving east. Brake problems delayed us several times. Got as far as Magburaka and stayed in a room at Riverside Guesthouse.
- Nov. 23 Left at 5:00 a.m. to drive east to junction and then took more than five hours to drive on a bad road to the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains. Sorted out porters and hiked five hours up to Camp 1.
- Nov. 24 Left camp at 5:00 a.m. to hike two hours in the dark up to the grassy plateau. Birded for four hours and returned to camp for lunch. Retraced our route back to Mansonia. Stayed in forestry building in village.
- Nov. 25 Birded on the road outside Mansonia for a few hours. Drove back along bad road to main highway. Had wheel bearing problems which caused major delay. Eventually pulled into Makeni at about 8 p.m. Stayed at MJ Hotel in Makeni. Kenneth and crew continued to Freetown.
- Nov. 26 Makeni
- Nov. 27. Share taxi to Matotaka. Motorbike from Matotaka to Baomahun. Stayed at forestry office outside the village. Afternoon walk along trails in Kangari Hills.
- Nov. 28 Morning walk in Pujehun sector. Motorbike to Bo. Stayed at Sahara Hotel.
- Nov. 29 Poda poda to Kenema. Tried to confirm my visit to Gola National Park at their office in town. Visited Chinese Farms in afternoon. Stayed at the former Hotel Capitol.

- Nov. 30. Much confusion in morning at Gola forest office in Kenema. Motorbike to Lalehun in Gola North. Stayed in room at forest guesthouse. Afternoon visit to picathartes site.
- Dec. 1. Hiked to Malimbe Camp.
- Dec. 2. Searched for Gola Malimbe in morning. Hiked back down to Lalehun. Stayed at forest guesthouse.
- Dec. 3. Motorbike to Sileti in Gola South. Walked along main road and short trail. Stayed at forest guesthouse.
- Dec. 4. Birding on main trail at Sileti in the direction of a bridge. Stayed at forest guesthouse.
- Dec. 5. Began hike to Tiwai Island. Camped in forest.
- Dec. 6. Continued hike to Tiwai Island. Camped in small village of Segbwema.
- Dec. 7. Crossed Moa River in small dugout to Tiwai Island and hiked about one hour to ecotourism camp. Camped on Tiwai Island.
- Dec. 8. Tiwai Island. Morning boat trip downriver. Walked trails from camp afterwards. Afternoon boat trip upriver.
- Dec. 9. Tiwai Island. Morning hike with guide on trails beyond research station. Afternoon boat trip downriver.
- Dec. 10. Tiwai Island. Morning hike with guide on trails beyond research station. Afternoon boat trip downriver. Success with Rufous Fishing Owl.
- Dec. 11. Morning hike with guide on trails beyond research station. Offered a ride by Italian film-makers - we crossed the river and took a 4 x 4. I was dropped at Bo. Stayed at Sahara Hotel. Picked up my stored gear.
- Dec. 12. Took government bus to Freetown, getting off at Jui Junction. Poda poda to Lumley roundabout. Motorbike to River No. 2. Stayed at community guesthouse.
- Dec. 13. Morning walk to Tokeh beach. Massive party started in afternoon at River No. 2 with much noise and commotion. Afternoon hike on Guma Valley trail. Noisy party finally ended around 10 pm.
- Dec. 14. Motorbike to beginning of tar road back towards Freetown. Poda poda to Lumley roundabout. Keke (tuktuk) to Kissy Ferry Terminal. Public speedboat to Tagrin. Private boat to Tasso town on Tasso Island. Motorbike to Tasso Island Guesthouse.
- Dec. 15. Tasso Island.
- Dec. 16. Morning visit by boat to Bunce Island. Toured slave trading fort. Returned to Tasso Island. After lunch, took boat to Tagrin. Motorbike to airport. KLM flight 511 to Amsterdam.
- Dec. 17. KLM flight 671 from Amsterdam to Montreal.

Sites Visited

Loma Mountains trip with Kenneth Gbengba including farmbush around Lungi

Many months before arriving in Sierra Leone, I had contacted Kenneth about arranging a trip into the Loma Mountains to search for five key birds: Sierra Leone Prinia, Crimson Seedcracker, Turati's Boubou, Emerald Starling and Black-headed Rufous Warbler. We agreed on a four-day trip that turned out to be a full-on expedition. I was joined by Kenneth, Omar our driver, Masiri our cook and Komba a helper, and we filled up the 4 x 4 with equipment and food with not any space to spare. I paid USD 200 per day for the four-day trip which included everything, quite a reasonable price I must say. Kenneth had picked me up upon arrival at the airport in Lungi and dropped me at a nearby hotel. Options were very limited and this place (whose name I don't remember) was very expensive and extremely basic, but Freetown (and Lungi) is a very expensive place for accommodation. Staying in Lungi was convenient instead of Freetown proper because Kenneth knows an out-of-the-way area of farmbush near the international airport that is good for Turati's Boubou, and it was here we headed right after Kenneth picked me up the next morning at dawn to begin our tour. We birded the area for a couple of hours, seeing several Turati's Boubous, and other more widespread species, before taking the peninsular road heading east towards Makeni and beyond.

We immediately ran into car trouble with the brakes not functioning fully. Repairs at a couple of simple roadside garages provided only short-term fixes and we resigned ourselves to trying to make it to Port Loko and a more reputable garage. Fortunately, the road was perfectly flat and there was no traffic whatsoever, but before we could arrive, we came to a police roadblock, and not being quite able to stop in time, we sort of toppled over the little barricade they had put over the road. This of course resulted in much commotion and feigned anger by the police which led to threats of not allowing us to continue onwards. Fortunately, Kenneth sorted out the problem and we resumed our drive to Port Loko where the garage did make the proper repairs, although the delay was very long. We continued on to Makeni, and Kenneth wanted to have another garage give the brakes a good check. We were delayed there again as a part had to be replaced, and since it was now almost dark, we decided to continue on to the town of Magbaruka where we stayed at the Riverside Guesthouse. In retrospect, I should have simply camped on the grounds in my tent as the room was not great.

Despite all of the car problems, we were only two hours behind schedule, so we decided to leave the next morning at 5:00 a.m. and we continued driving east for two hours until we came to a junction with a dirt road heading north. This is the road to the Loma Mountains, and we stopped to have a roadside breakfast here around 7 a.m. From here we started to drive north on what was a very bad road that would surely be impassable in the rainy season. We stopped from time to time to look for birds, and at one stop at a marshy area, I quickly found a Crimson Seedcracker that was trying to remain hidden, but gave a brief but good look. After bumping along this bad road for about

5 ½ hours, and getting stuck once, we pulled in to the little village of Mansonia. There is a national park post here, and Kenneth had arranged for porters. We took some time to get organized and then set off on what turned out to be a five-hour hike up to Camp 1. Not much in terms of birds along the way, and it was almost dark when we arrived at camp. After a very long day and a nice dinner by the campfire, we all went to bed.

We left camp at 5:00 a.m. to continue climbing up the trail for just under two hours and at dawn, we came to the flat, grassy plateau that is the site for Sierra Leone Prinia. The grass was extremely high due to the heavy rains during the rainy season, and this made the footing challenging as we bushwhacked through the grasses looking for the prinia. Four hours of searching and no prinia. Extremely dejected, I pulled the plug and we began to descend. About 30 minutes above our camp was a little stream, and this is the site for the Black-headed Rufous Warbler, a very difficult bird to see as it is a notorious skulker. We did hear one and tried to track it for a good 20 minutes, but to no avail and it then went silent. Now thoroughly frustrated in missing the two key species for this trek, I returned to camp, ate a quick lunch, pulled down my tent and then began the descent back to Mansonia, taking somewhere between four and five hours. After a long, frustrating day, Masiri prepared a great dinner and I was given a room in the small national park building where I had a good night's sleep.

On the morning of our last day, Kenneth and I walked out on the dirt road we had come along upon our arrival to Mansonia. There is very nice woodland habitat here, and it was not long before we had a big surprise in finding a Sierra Leone Prinia right by the side of the road. Kenneth said he had never seen the prinia down here near the village before. It certainly was a big relief after missing it up on the plateau. A little later we saw several Emerald Starlings as well, giving me four out of the five birds I was searching for on this part of my trip. We also found a Brown-backed Woodpecker, a bird I had missed in Ghana, and after a very enjoyable two hours of birding, we returned to the village, packed up the 4 x 4 and began our return along the very bad road. It wasn't long before the car developed wheel bearing problems which created periodic, and very alarming grinding sounds. Kenneth knew of an old mechanic in one of the tiny villages on this bad road and we made it there intact. A few hours of repairs and we were magically back on the road, albeit way behind schedule. It was with much relief that we made it to the tarred road where we turned west and reached Makeni around 8:00 p.m. Kenneth had called ahead and booked a room for me at the MJ Hotel in Makeni and the crew dropped me there where I had a very nice room for 200000 leones. It had certainly been an eventful four days. Kenneth and his entire crew were wonderful and I thoroughly enjoyed their company. It was great to experience this little-visited corner of Sierra Leone and it was with some sadness I said goodbye to my new friends as they continued on to Freetown, still three hours away. Kenneth and his team can offer guiding services anywhere in Sierra Leone and I can say that I would highly recommend his services.

Kangari Hills

I had a few days before I was to start my pre-arranged visit to Gola National Park, so I decided to have a rest day in Makeni before, on Kenneth's recommendation, stopping off at the Kangari Hills near the gold mining village of Baomahun on my way to Bo. I found Baomahun on a map I had on an app on my tablet, and Kenneth told me to ask for Joseph Bangali, the manager of the forest office, upon my arrival. In Makeni, I was told where I could get a share-taxi to the town of Matotaka a little to the east. The main highway bypasses the town, but at the junction road into Matotaka, I negotiated a motorbike ride to Baomahun for 70000 leones. The motorbike driver didn't really know where we were going since he'd never been there, and I was no help of course as my map showed little detail. But we asked directions on a few occasions and it was a pleasant ride along a surprisingly good road through the countryside, spotted with the occasional small village.

It took 2 ½ hours to reach Baomahun, and although Joseph Bangali was away in Bo, some very friendly villagers found some forest guards who took me to the forestry office about 1 km outside of town, gave me a room to stay in at the office, and I arranged for a cook to make some food for dinner. In the afternoon, Mohammed, one of the forest guards, and I went for a walk along the trail that continues beyond the forest office. The trail passed mainly through grassland and degraded forest, and apparently eventually leads to tall, primary forest, but it must be quite distant as we never made it there. Birding was pretty slow. The next morning, Mohammed and I went by motorbike to the nearby Pujehun sector and spent a couple of hours walking a trail there. Birding was fine, and although no major targets were seen, there were nice views of several Brown-cheeked Hornbills and a skulking Brown Illadopsis. After the hike, I got a motorbike ride to Bo from Mathia, another forest guard, taking about two hours. Mathia asked for 60000 leones which I thought was fair. I got a room at the Sahara Hotel with air conditioning for 200000 leones. Persistent electricity blackouts in Bo meant that power was only available from 7 p.m to 7 a.m. from the hotel's generator.

Kenema - Chinese Farms

From Bo, I took a poda poda to Kenema, paying 40000 leones for two seats for a bit more comfort for the one-hour trip. Kenema is a sprawling, dusty city and I found a room at what was, until recently, a hotel called the Hotel Capitol for 300000 leones. It had recently been sold and re-named under new management, but I never learned the new name.

Kenneth had told me about a birding site called the Chinese Farms, a patch of ricefields in Kenema. They were easy to access. Upon arrival to Kenema from Bo, the main road into Kenema branches off to the left. If you instead continue straight along the Bo-Kenema highway, you will soon come to an obvious stretch of rice fields on your right. Continuing past the farms, you will reach a roundabout where Dama Road branches off to the Gola National Park office. I took a motorbike from my hotel, and I think if you just ask for the Chinese Farms, everybody in town knows what you mean. It's possible to walk

along the paths between the fields which were dry during my visit. Kenneth said that this was a good site for Great Snipe. I didn't find the snipe, but I did find eight Forbes's Plovers, a surprising find and a pleasing one since I had missed it in Ghana.

Gola North - Lalehun

Gola Rainforest National Park is a large tract of well-protected rainforest now contiguous with a new park on the Liberian side of the border. It protects a large number of Upper Guinea endemic birds, and unlike in the forests in Ghana, primates are plentiful and, although wary, good sightings are assured. The two southern sections, known as Gola East and Gola West, have seemingly been combined into a single unit, not surprisingly called Gola South, and this combined with Gola North constitute the portion of the protected forest in Sierra Leone.

I had made prior arrangements with a fellow named Benjamin Barca (email: benjaminbarca@rspb.org.uk) for a visit to both Gola North (at Lalehun) and Gola South (at Sileti) many months prior to arriving in Sierra Leone. Upon arrival in Kenema, I made a visit to the Gola NP forest office at 164 Dama Road. Benjamin had informed me that he would be away and that I could meet a co-ordinator by the name of Lumme, but he wasn't there either and nobody else really seemed aware of my program. It was suggested that I return the next day at 9 a.m. which I did. I met Lumme outside the forest office expecting to go inside and confirm my itinerary and pay the fees but he seemed in a great hurry and insisted that I get going immediately. He had arranged a motorbike driver in advance, but not the price so I ended up being asked to pay 100000 leones for the two-hour trip to Lalehun which was rather expensive. Feeling a bit cornered, I relented. Lumme was to follow behind after picking up my food apparently. It was a nice ride on a good road as far as Joru where we turned left to Lalehun, but from then on the road was rather bad.

I was met upon arrival by Ibrahim, the caretaker at the Lalehun guesthouse. The guesthouse complex is set in a nice, leafy area and consisted of several distinct buildings and rooms for at least a dozen people I think, maybe even twenty. Rooms were very simple but comfortable, and electricity was available due to recently installed solar panels. I hung around the guesthouse area, looking around a bit for birds but mostly waiting for Lumme who I assumed was coming right behind. Noon came and went and after a few more hours passed with no sign of Lumme, I asked Ibrahim if he could take me to the picathartes nesting site which was in my original plan for this afternoon. The site is about a 45-minute walk up the trail that goes past the guesthouse. The site was very active with about six birds being present. I had visited a nesting site in Ghana near the village of Bonkro, but it was wonderful to get a chance to see these amazing birds one more time. One even came to a mud nest that was attached to the side of a large boulder. Ibrahim said that there were a total of three eggs in the cluster of nests at this site. We stayed for about 30 minutes or so, getting amazing views, and the birds seemed totally unconcerned by our presence.

Upon my return to the guesthouse, Lumme was there waiting with a box full of

food. He had arranged for a cook and I was glad to know I was going to have some dinner as I was now quite hungry. I tried to engage LummeH in a discussion about my previously-arranged plan, but he seemed both unaware of what it was and how much I was supposed to pay. A bit dumbfounded, I wrote out a day-by-day itinerary for my entire stay in Gola, and told him how much it was to have cost and I paid him. LummeH had other tasks to attend to and he left just after our conversation. At dusk I heard and then saw two Black-shouldered Nighthawks right around the guesthouse, a nice sighting as I had missed it in Ghana.

The next morning, I was to hike up to Malimbe Camp, the site for the Gola Malimbe. In meeting Ibrahim in the morning and mentioning this plan to him, it was apparent that nobody had been informed that I was going up to Malimbe Camp. This necessitated a delay as Ibrahim had to go back to Lalehun village and find someone who would agree to be a porter, and we didn't get started until 9 a.m. The hike up is not terribly strenuous, but it does take time. You will start off by walking to Lalehun village and then through a disturbed area, taking about two hours to reach the boundary of the national park. It was another three hours to what is called Tourist Camp and another hour to Malimbe Camp, a nice camping area by a small stream so drinking water (after being purified) was available. The birding was good on the way up, with Black Cuckoo, Blue-moustached Bee-eater, Brown-eared Woodpecker, Little Green Woodpecker and White-tailed Alethe being notable. After setting up camp, we had time for a short look for Gola Malimbe which is found in flocks in this higher area of the forest. The forest was pretty quiet and although one flock was found, there were no Gola Malimbés.

Early in the morning, we crossed the stream and birded for 30 minutes in this area with no luck. Returning to camp, we had a quick bite to eat and packed up the campsite. Mustapha the porter headed back to Lalehun, and Ibrahim and I continued trying to find Gola Malimbe, with a plan to head back down the trail by 11 a.m. A couple of hours of searching proved fruitless, and then at 10:30, we found a flock and I spotted first one male Gola Malimbe and we found another shortly afterward. Great views too. A surge of relief passed over me! For some reason, the hike back down took almost as long as the hike up, and it was late in the afternoon when we arrived back to Lalehun. My best sighting on the way down was a Spotted Honeyguide.

Before our hike, I had asked Ibrahim if he could find a motorbike driver who could take me to Sileti. He came back saying he knew someone who would take me for 200000 leones. Knowing that it was only around two hours to Sileti, this was ridiculous so I said I would pay 90000. I asked Ibrahim about it again after we returned to Lalehun from Malimbe Camp and he said there was someone who would take me for 90000. Well, in the morning I was told the fellow backed out, but Ibrahim found another fellow and I negotiated a trip for 100000 leones with him. I felt bad for Ibrahim since little had been organized in advance and he had to keep running around doing little jobs for me. I gave him what I hope was a decent tip at the end.

Gola South - Sileti

The motorbike ride from Lalehun to Sileti took about 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours. The road was very bad in spots, with big water-filled holes. At one of these, the motorbike stalled right in the middle of a huge hole. I crawled off into the water and as I turned around, the bike toppled over on its side with the driver still in place. I rushed over and helped the driver get himself and the bike up. The bike magically started, but my bags were soaked and coated with mud.

Upon arrival at Sileti, nobody was around. After awhile, some forest guards arrived, and it turns out that nobody was made aware of my arrival in advance. The forest guards offered to cook me some rice for lunch as Lumme had yet to arrive with the food for my stay. He eventually arrived later with provisions and we tried to iron out the details for the rest of my stay. I slept at the guest accommodations, a small building set a short distance away from the main park office. The room was comfortable and simple with separate bathroom and shower facilities.

I walked along the main dirt road in the afternoon, and later met up with Mohammed who was to be my guide the next day and on my trek to Tiwai Island. I asked Mohammed about trying to find White-breasted Guinea fowl, and he thought that it would be best to walk along the main road in the early morning and then along a trail that leads deeper into the forest. We did this, but had no luck with the guinea fowl. The birding along the main road is good for canopy species, and hornbills were common. I also caught a brief look at a Timneh Parrot as it flew over. The trail was through secondary forest and it was very quiet - almost nothing at all was seen. In comparing the two sites, Lalehun certainly seems to have the better forest, but it was worth the attempt at Sileti for the guinea fowl, even if I failed to find it.

My next stop was to be Tiwai Island, and one possible way to get there is to hike on foot from Sileti. This looked interesting and I arranged in advance to go via this route. Although I had been told I would have porters and a cook for the trip, on the day before departure when I tried to make sure everything was in order, it appeared that only a single porter had been organized. After expressing my displeasure that this was not the original plan, I did manage to get a second porter. On day 1, it took about 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours to reach camp. The first two hours were along a very flat, well-demarcated trail. Afterwards, we took a turn and followed the national park boundary for a period of time along a less well-defined trail that had plenty of ups and downs, and areas where the footing was tricky with lots of things to trip over, many of which I found. It was with relief that we made camp which was a nice spot by a small river.

Mohammed told me it was only three hours to Segbwema, the small village where we were to set up camp the next day. It turned out to be 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours instead with a large swampy area to navigate and much farmbush to bushwhack through to get to the village. Very tired, I arrived in Segbwema and was shown to a small camping area that had been set aside for visitors. It was nice and peaceful and a woman in the village cooked me a wonderful groundnut soup with fresh fish for dinner. Not much in the way of birds over

the two days of trekking and the only owl I heard was an African Wood-Owl in the distance at camp on the first night.

In terms of cost for my time in Gola National Park and my trek to Tiwai, I paid a total of USD 295 which included a community development fee, national park fee, food for seven days, three nights accommodation in park guesthouses at Lalehun and Sileti, three nights of camping, and services of guides and porters. Arrangements can be made by contacting the Gola Forest Program (email: info@golaforest.org) or directly through their website at www.golarainforest.org. Although there were logistical hiccups during my trip, this is a remote corner of Sierra Leone and it is perhaps to be expected that not everything will run smoothly. As long as one goes into it with that mindset, and recognizing that any problems that pop up can be solved, it can be a very enjoyable experience to visit independently. Transportation by motorbike was paid for separately, and I was given the option of renting a 4x4 to get around which, while more expensive, may be preferable for larger groups.

Tiwai Island

From Segbwema, I paid a fellow 140000 leones to take me across the nearby Moa River in a small dugout to Tiwai Island and guide me for about an hour through the forest to the tourist camp. Despite having made arrangements in advance, nobody at Tiwai Island seemed to know I was scheduled to arrive today, and after little fussing around, I set up my own tent underneath a shelter and started to formulate a plan, with the camp manager named Alusine, to seek out the wildlife I was hoping to observe during my stay.

From the camp, there is a short trail that leads to the research station. Beyond, there is supposedly a grid of trails, and although this may be the case as is suggested by the map of Tiwai Island in the Bradt guidebook, it would be impossible to find your way around these trails without getting hopelessly lost. From camp, another trail called the Nature trail heads in the opposite direction to a boat launching site at the river. It is quite possible to enjoy a few hours poking around these trails which do not require any guiding, but guides are available to go into the grid area, and I used their services a few times in trying to find White-breasted Guinea fowl to no avail. As well, boat trips upriver or downriver are great for searching out Rufous Fishing Owl and African Finfoot, and I was told downriver was best. It was indeed on a downriver trip, my fourth and last trip on the river searching for the owl, that we did finally find a spectacular Rufous Fishing Owl. Pleasingly, monkey troops are common on Tiwai and primate lovers will have a great time here just as I did with sightings of Diana Monkey, King Colobus, Upper Guinea Red Colobus, Campbell's Monkey, Sooty Mangabey and Spot-nosed Monkey.

Costs on Tiwai were as follows: 225000 leones per night for camping plus breakfast; 75000 leones for upriver boat trips; 150000 leones for downriver boat trips (boat trips last about two hours); 50000 leones for forest walks lasting about two hours; and meals were 30000 leones apiece. The food was simple but tasty. There is a refrigerator for those who can bring their own beverages, but water is available for purchase as well.

In leaving Tiwai in the morning, Alusine told me the best way to get back to Bo was to cross the river to the village of Potoru and take a motorbike to Bandajuma where it would be possible to find a share-taxi to Bo. Poda podas (minibuses) from Zimmi do pass by the closer town of Pujehun on their way to Bo, but not until much later in the day so that option would likely result in a long wait. In the end, I was offered a lift back to Bo by a team of Italian film-makers who were shooting footage for a promotional film about the Tiwai project.

Information about Tiwai Island can be found at www.tiwaiisland.org, and contact can be made at info@tiwaiisland.org.

River No. 2

After being on the road for almost 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ months (Ghana and Togo before Sierra Leone), I was looking for a relaxing end to my trip. I stayed two nights at the community guesthouse on the beach at River No. 2 where I had a nice cabin for 350000 leones. My first afternoon and evening was idyllic. It was mid-week, nobody was around and it was perfectly peaceful with meals served out on the beach with the clear sky above and the sounds of waves gently lapping against the shore. The next morning, I went for a pleasant walk to Tokeh beach after taking a little boat across the estuary at River No. 2 and saw some nice birds, including my first Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters. Red-chested Swallows were also a nice surprise.

Unfortunately, upon my return for a nice lunch, the workers were preparing for a big party that started in the afternoon, and my perfect quiet hideaway (he says selfishly) was soon taken over by hundreds of teenagers and twenty-somethings. I escaped for an afternoon walk to what I think was the Guma Valley trail. If you go out to the main road and take it in the direction of Tokeh, you will come to a bridge over the River No. 2. After just a few hundred metres beyond the bridge, there is a path to the left that eventually leads into the forest. There was no sign to confirm this was the trail, but I strongly suspect it was. There was a great deal of road works going on as the plan is to finally pave the last stretch of the peninsula highway, a distance of 7.5 km between River No. 2 and Tokeh. There is still no public transportation along the part of the road, although getting through on a hired motorbike would be easy to arrange. There certainly was a lot of truck traffic however as large trucks seemed to pass by every few minutes taking illegally mined sand from the beaches to the south back into Freetown. The illegal activity is all out in the open and nothing is done about it.

Tasso Island

I had read about the Tasso Ecotourism Project in the Bradt guide and thought it would be a great end to my trip. Information is available at tassoisland.org and I got into contact with Peter Nelson (email: peter@tassoisland.org), the co-ordinator of the project. The idea is to improve the livelihoods of the islanders by offering alternative forms of income. Projects involving agriculture and health have been initiated, and preparations were being made for the opening of the new health clinic while I was on the island. Peter,

who normally lives back in the UK, was present for the opening of the clinic, and I had the pleasure of talking with him and his wife about the island, the plans for the project and the positives that ecotourism can bring to improving the lives of the people living in the places we foreigners visit by encouraging sustainable development.

Cabins and chalets are available. I definitely recommend the chalets (USD 20) which are large, comfortable and have a nice view of the estuary. The food is prepared by a well-trained staff and was delicious. Everybody was very friendly, and I was pleased to have been invited to the wedding reception of one of the workers on the day of my arrival! Visitors to the island are free to wander the roads and paths, and visits to local craftspeople can be arranged. Simply relaxing and enjoying the slow pace of life had its own appeal for me. I did however look around for birds, and walking to the right along the beach took me to a large river that emptied into the estuary a short distance away. Scanning the mudflats in front of the chalets for waders was also interesting. Peter and I talked about the possibilities of having kayaks for people to use, and this may be the case in the future.

Another reason for visiting Tasso Island is its proximity to Bunce Island, the former slave-trading post. I arranged a visit to Bunce Island from Tasso Island using the Tasso Island project's boat, the *Gladi-Gladi*, for 80000 leones. The site offers a stark contrast to the well-preserved slave-trading forts in Ghana, and although much of the former structures lie in ruin, much-needed restoration work is in progress. Walking amongst the dilapidated buildings on a warm, sunny day, and enjoying the shade of the trees and the occasional bird call, one can't help but shake one's head at the horrors that were committed here over such a long period of time and lament that those scars have not fully healed even now, hundreds of years later.

A visit to Tasso Island was a wonderful finale to my trip. For anyone visiting Sierra Leone, I would recommend considering a visit here upon arrival or before departure, as it would be a nice alternative to the chaos of Freetown and access to the airport at Lungi is easy to arrange. Information can be found at www.tassoisland.org, and email contact can be made at peter@tassoisland.org.

Bird List

Normally I have followed the taxonomy from The Clements Checklist of the Birds of the World. However, since Clements adopts a number of English names for West African birds that are seemingly out of step with what are used both locally and in other widely referenced sources, I decided not to follow any one reference, but instead used my best judgement for better or worse. I've attempted to comment on taxonomic differences of opinion in the individual listings where appropriate.

ANATIDAE (Ducks, Geese and Waterfowl)

Hartlaub's Duck

Pteronetta hartlaubii

A great sighting of three birds in a small roadside pond along the bad road up to Mansonia and the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23.

NUMIDIDAE (Guineafowl)

Crested Guineafowl

Guttera pucherani

A very brief look at two birds as they flushed along a trail at Tiwai Island on Dec. 10.

PHASIANIDAE (Pheasants, Grouse and Allies)

Ahanta Francolin

Francolinus achantensis

Endemic to West Africa. While searching for Sierra Leone Prinia in the grassland on the plateau above Camp 1 in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 24, one bird flew in towards my position in a small grove of trees and quickly veered off upon seeing me.

Double-spurred Francolin

Francolinus bicalcaratus

While walking the road outside of Mansonia on Nov. 25, we came across several birds including one perched in a tree. Two were spotted in the fields at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29. One bird came down to the beach at Tasso Island on Dec. 15.

COLUMBIDAE (Pigeons and Doves)

Rock Pigeon

Columba livia

Introduced. A few were in urban areas on Nov. 22.

Afep Pigeon

Columba unicincta

Heard only. One was heard along the road outside Mansonia on Nov. 25.

Bronze-naped Pigeon

Columba iriditorques

Common by voice at Gola North including along the trail up from the guesthouse at Lalehun and on the trek to Malimbe Camp. I did have a brief sighting of one bird in flight on the little trail just up from the guesthouse at Lalehun on Dec. 3. Heard at Sileti and on my trek from Sileti to Tiwai.

Red-eyed Dove***Streptopelia semitorquata***

Two were found in a scrubby agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22, and two more along the road outside the village of Mansonia on Nov. 25. About eight birds were at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29. One flew over the river at Tiwai Island on Dec. 8. One bird was on Tasso Island on Dec. 15.

Laughing Dove***Streptopelia senegalensis***

Just one sighting of a bird on a wire as I was approaching Freetown from Bo on Dec. 12.

Blue-spotted Wood-Dove***Turtur afer***

Two were found in a scrubby agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22. We found one along the bad road up to Mansonia and the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23, and one in farmbush on the trail not far from Mansonia on the 24th. Common in the Kangari hills at Baomahun with two birds on the trail near the forestry office on Nov. 27, and two in the Pujehun sector the next day on the 28th. One bird was on Tasso Island on Dec. 15.

Tambourine Dove***Turtur tympanistria***

We found one along the bad road up to Mansonia and the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23. Commonly seen at Gola North around Lalehun and on the trek to Malimbe Camp.

African Green Pigeon***Treron calvus***

Two were found in a scrubby agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22. While walking along the road outside of Mansonia on Nov. 25, we saw about six birds perched in a leafless tree. Just one sighting of three birds along the river at Tiwai Island on Dec. 8. Five birds were on Tasso Island on Dec. 15.

MUSOPHAGIDAE (Turacos)**Great Blue Turaco*****Corythaeola cristata***

Common around the village of Mansonia on Nov. 25 where six birds were seen very well. One was found around the forestry office at Baomahun in the Kangari Hills on Nov. 28. Heard at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30, and one was around the guesthouse on Dec. 1. Another was seen on the hike back to Lalehun from Malimbe Camp on Dec. 2. One was found along the main road at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 4. A final sighting was of one along the Guma Valley trail on Dec. 13.

Yellow-billed Turaco***Tauraco macrorhynchus***

Heard on the hike from Mansonia up to Camp 1 on Nov. 23. Commonly heard at Gola North and South. One was finally seen on the trail towards a bridge at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 4. Heard on Tiwai Island.

Green Turaco***Tauraco persa***

Heard from the grassland above Camp 1 in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 24.

Western Plantain-eater***Crinifer piscator***

Four birds were found in a scrubby agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22. Two more were spotted on the morning of Nov. 25 near the village of Mansonia.

CUCULIDAE (Cuckoos)

Black Cuckoo

Cuculus clamosus

One was observed moving through the canopy and then in flight in secondary growth along the early part of the trek to Malimbe Camp in Gola North on Dec. 1.

Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo

Cercococcyx olivinus

Heard only. One was heard on the hike from Malimbe Camp back to Lalehun in Gola North on Dec. 2.

Klaas's Cuckoo

Chrysococcyx klaas

A juvenile was being fed by an unidentified small host bird on the trek to Malimbe Camp in Gola North on Dec. 1.

African Emerald Cuckoo

Chrysococcyx cupreus

Heard only. Heard on the hike from Mansonia up to Camp 1 on Nov. 23 and around Mansonia on the morning of Nov. 25. Heard on the hike from Malimbe Camp back to Lalehun in Gola North on Dec. 2.

Dideric Cuckoo

Chrysococcyx caprius

A female was found in secondary growth on the hike to Malimbe Camp in Gola North on Dec. 1.

Blue Malkoha (Yellowbill)

Ceuthmochares aureus

One was in a mixed-flock on the trail up from the guesthouse at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30. Daily sightings on the trails on Tiwai Island with a total of four on Dec. 10.

Black-throated Coucal

Centropus leucogaster

Heard only. Heard along the trail between Lalehun and Malimbe Camp in Gola North on both Dec. 1 and 2. Heard before dawn around the guesthouse at Lalehun on Dec. 2. Heard also on Tiwai Island.

Senegal Coucal

Centropus senegalensis

One was at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29.

CAPRIMULGIDAE (Nightjars and Allies)

Brown Nightjar

Caprimulgus binotatus

Heard only. One was heard after dusk from camp on Tiwai Island on Dec. 10.

Black-shouldered Nightjar

Caprimulgus nigriscapularis

Two were swooping around the guesthouse at Lalehun in Gola North at dusk on Nov. 29.

APODIDAE (Swifts)

African Palm Swift

Cypsiurus parvus

Three were seen around a garage in Makeni while we were in for repairs on Nov. 22. Three were also found at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29. A flock was swirling around the village of Segbwema on Dec. 6 after we arrived on our trek from Sileti. About six were at Tokeh Beach on Dec. 13.

Common Swift***Apus apus***

Two were seen in secondary growth along the trek from Lalehun to Malimbe Camp in Gola North on Dec 1. Flocks of what probably was this species (although strongly appearing to be African Black Swift) were found at Sileti in Gola South on both Dec. 3 and 4. Two were at Tokeh Beach on Dec. 13.

Little Swift***Apus affinis***

Two were spotted in the Kangari Hills on both Nov. 27 and 28.

RALLIDAE (Rails, Gallinules and Coots)**Nkulengu Rail*****Himantornis haematopus***

Heard only. Heard calling before dawn from the accommodations at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 4. Heard calling from right behind my tent at the camp on Tiwai Island at 6 a.m. on Dec. 9. By the time I got up and out of the tent, they stopped calling, and although I made a thorough search, I couldn't find them. Very frustrating!

Black Crake***Amaurornis flavirostra***

While stopped at a marshy area on the road up to Mansonia on Nov. 23, one ran across the road.

HELIORNITHIDAE (Finfoots)**African Finfoot*****Podica senegalensis***

Brief looks on two occasions at single birds as they fled from our boat in calm, isolated channels in the Moea River at Tiwai Island.

CHARADRIIDAE (Plovers and Lapwings)**White-headed Lapwing*****Vanellus albiceps***

I accessed Tiwai Island by taking a dugout over from the village of Segbwema on Dec. 7, and as I made the crossing, there were two lapwings on a nearby rock. Strangely, there were no sightings on any of my river trips from camp.

Black-bellied (Grey) Plover***Pluvialis squatarola***

One was seen daily on the mudflats in front of the chalets at Tasso Island.

Common Ringed Plover***Charadrius hiaticula***

Common on the mudflats in front of the chalets on Tasso Island.

Forbes's Plover***Charadrius forbesi***

A fantastic sighting of eight birds at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29.

SCOLOPACIDAE (Sandpipers and Allies)**Bar-tailed Godwit*****Limosa lapponica***

One was at the river estuary at River No. 2 on Dec. 13.

Whimbrel***Numenius phaeopus***

About 10 were at the river estuary at River No. 2 on Dec. 13. Several were seen daily on the mudflats at Tasso Island.

Common Sandpiper***Actitis hypoleucos***

Commonly seen on the river at Tiwai Island. One was at the beach at River No. 2 on Dec. 13. Common on the mudflats in front of the chalets on Tasso Island.

Common Greenshank***Tringa nebularia***

One was on the mudflats on Tasso Island in front of the chalets on Dec. 14, and then a flock of about 50 at the river mouth a bit up the beach the next day on the 15th.

Common Redshank***Tringa totanus***

One was on the mudflats in front of the chalets at Tasso Island on Dec. 14.

Ruddy Turnstone***Arenaria interpres***

On Dec. 13, two were first seen at Tokeh Beach, and then two more back at the River No. 2 estuary.

Sanderling***Calidris alba***

Twelve birds were on the beach at River No. 2 on Dec. 13.

Ruff***Philomachus pugnax***

Up to two were seen daily on the mudflats in front of the chalets on Tasso Island.

GLAREOLIDAE (Pratincoles and Coursers)**Rock Pratincole*****Glareola nuchalis***

Easy to see on rocks in the river on all my boat trips at Tiwai Island. Great views.

LARIDAE (Gulls, Terns and Skimmers)**Royal Tern*****Sterna maximus***

A large roosting colony at River No. 2. Common in the estuary while travelling by boat from Freetown to Tasso Island.

Sandwich Tern***Thalasseus sandvicensis***

Common at River No. 2. Common in the estuary while travelling by boat from Freetown to Tasso Island.

CICONIIDAE (Storks)**Wooly-necked Stork*****Ciconia episcopus***

As I crossed the river on my departure from Tiwai Island, one was seen in flight.

PHALACROCORACIDAE (Cormorants and Shags)**Long-tailed Cormorant*****Phalacrocorax africanus***

Just one was seen from the Kissy Ferry Terminal in Freetown on Dec. 14.

ARDEIDAE (Herons, Egrets and Bitterns)**Grey Heron*****Ardea cinerea***

Two were seen near the forestry office at Baomahun in the Kangari Hills on Nov. 28. One was at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29. Daily sightings of birds on the mudflats in front of the chalets at Tasso Island.

Little Egret*Egretta garzeta*

One was on the mudflats in front of the chalets on Tasso Island on Dec. 15.

Western Reef-Heron*Egretta gularis*

Eight were seen on the beach at River No. 2 on Dec. 13. Daily sightings of birds on the mudflats in front of the chalets at Tasso Island.

Intermediate Egret*Mesophoyx intermedia*

Two were seen at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29.

Cattle Egret*Bubulcus ibis*

Many sightings while driving the roads on Nov. 22. Two flew over the city of Bo on Nov. 28. Common at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29. Six birds were on the river at Tiwai Island on Dec. 8.

Striated Heron*Butorides striata*

One was found in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22. One was on the mudflats in front of the chalets on Tasso Island on Dec. 15.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE (Ibises and Spoonbills)**Hadada Ibis***Bostrychia hagedash*

Daily sightings of a maximum of three birds at Tiwai Island, always in flight at the river.

African Spoonbill*Platalea alba*

Two were soaring over the city of Bo on Nov. 28.

PANDIONIDAE (Osprey)**Osprey***Pandion haliaeetus*

One was seen flying over the river at Tiwai Island during a boat trip on the river on Dec. 8. One was also observed at the beach at River No. 2 on Dec. 13.

ACCIPITRIDAE (Hawks, Eagles and Kites)**Black (Yellow-billed) Kite***Milvus migrans*

Three birds were seen in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22. One was observed around Mansonia on Nov. 25 and in the Kangari Hills on Nov. 28. Four were seen in Kenema at the Chinese Farms on Nov. 29. A few were seen in the city of Bo on Dec. 11. Common at River No. 2. All birds were presumably of the subspecies *aegyptius*, split by some authors as Yellow-billed Kite.

Palm-nut Vulture*Gypohierax angolensis*

One was seen along the main road at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 4, and two again the next day on the 5th. One was observed in flight at Tiwai Island on Dec. 7 and two on the 9th. One was found in a palm tree on Tasso Island on Dec. 15.

Hooded Vulture*Necorsyrtes monachus*

Two were seen in the city of Bo on Dec. 11.

African Harrier-Hawk*Polyboroides typus*

Numerous sightings of this common and widespread species.

Red-necked Buzzard***Buteo auguralis***

One was found in farmbrush as we approached Mansonia after hiking back down from Camp 1 on Nov. 24. One was observed soaring in the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on both Nov. 27 and 28.

Long-crested Eagle***Lophaetus occipitalis***

A good view of one during a morning walk outside the village of Mansonia on Nov. 25.

Crowned Hawk-Eagle***Stephanoaetus coronatus***

One was flushed along a little trail at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 4.

STRIGIDAE (Owls)**Rufous Fishing-Owl*****Scotopelia ussheri***

Endemic to West Africa from Sierra Leone to Ghana. On my fourth river visit, I finally was able to find and get fantastic looks at one bird in a calm, quiet channel in the Moa River at Tiwai Island, a little bit downstream.

African Wood-Owl***Strix woodfordii***

Heard only. Heard at the guesthouse at Lalehun at Gola North on Nov. 30. Also heard around camp in the evening of day 1 of my trek from Sileti to Tiwai Island, and twice around camp on Tiwai Island as well.

BUCEROTIDAE (Hornbills)**Black Dwarf Hornbill*****Tockus hartlaubi***

A good view of one bird on the short stretch of trail to the research station on Tiwai Island on Dec. 7.

African Pied Hornbill***Tockus fasciatus***

Two birds were seen both on my drive on the bad road up to Mansonia on Nov. 23 and on the way back on the 25th. Small numbers were seen or heard daily at Gola North. Sightings were almost daily on Tiwai Island.

Piping Hornbill***Ceratogymna fistulator***

One flew over the road at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 3, and another on the 5th. Two were in flight over the river at Tiwai Island and a few along the trails, including a pair feeding at a fruiting tree.

Brown-cheeked Hornbill***Ceratogymna cylindrica***

Endemic to the Upper Guinea forests from Sierra Leone to Ghana. Several great views of birds in the Pujehun sector in the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 28. A pair was found along the trail up from the guesthouse at Lalehun at Gola North on Dec. 2. Another pair was perched in the forest at Sileti on Dec. 3, with another pair on the 4th.

Black-casqued Hornbill***Ceratogymna atrata***

After a couple of brief views I could only put down as possible sightings in Gola North, a female flew over the main road at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 3, and a fantastic male was perched in plain view in the same area on the 4th.

Yellow-casqued Hornbill***Ceratogymna elata***

Endemic to West Africa. Common in Sierra Leone. A pair was seen well in the Pujehun sector in the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 28. Common in the forest at Gola North with one perched in a tall tree at the guesthouse at Lalehun. Very common and easy to see at Sileti with a fantastic perched pair along the road being particularly notable. A few sightings on my trek from Sileti to Tiwai, with a pair seen well at my campsite in the village of Segbwema. Two were also found on Tiwai Island on Dec. 10. About four were observed on the Guma Valley trail on Dec. 13.

ALCEDINIDAE (Kingfishers)**Shining-blue Kingfisher*****Alcedo quadribrechys***

A quick sighting of one bird in flight along the river at Tiwai Island on Dec. 9.

Malachite Kingfisher***Corythornis cristata***

One was along a little channel at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29.

African Pygmy-Kingfisher***Ispidina picta***

A brief look at one bird at the forestry office at Baomahun in the Kangari Hills on Nov. 27.

Chocolate-backed Kingfisher***Halcyon badia***

Heard only. Commonly heard at Gola North, Gola South and at Tiwai Island.

Grey-headed Kingfisher***Halcyon leucocephala***

One was seen on a morning walk outside the village of Mansonia on Nov. 25.

Woodland Kingfisher***Halcyon senegalensis***

Common with four seen in a scrubby, agricultural area around Lungi on Nov. 22. One was found on day 2 of my trek from Sileti to Tiwai Island. One was spotted on the Guma Valley trail on Dec. 13.

Blue-breasted Kingfisher***Halcyon malimbica***

A quick sighting of one bird in flight along the river at Tiwai Island on Dec. 10.

Striped Kingfisher***Halcyon chelicuti***

One was seen on a morning walk outside the village of Mansonia on Nov. 25.

Giant Kingfisher***Megaceryle maximus***

One was seen on a river trip at Tiwai Island on Dec. 9. One was at the little river estuary on Tasso Island on Dec. 15.

MEROPIIDAE (Bee-eaters)**Blue-moustached Bee-eater*****Merops mentalis***

Endemic to West Africa. A good look at one bird along the trail to the Malimbe Camp in Gola North on Dec. 1.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater***Merops persicus***

Great looks at four birds on the beach at River No. 2 just on the other side of the little estuary in the direction of Tokeh on Dec. 13. Six birds were also found on Tasso Island on Dec. 15.

Little Bee-eater***Merops pusillus***

While travelling from Bo to Freetown, one bird flew in and perched on a roadside wire just on the outskirts of the capital on Dec. 12.

White-throated Bee-eater***Merops albicollis***

Common in flocks throughout Sierra Leone.

LYIBIIDAE (African Barbets)**Naked-faced Barbet*****Gymnobucco calvus***

Just one was found on the trek from Mansonia up to Camp 1 in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23, followed by one more on the way back down the next day.

Speckled Tinkerbird***Pogoniulus scolopaceus***

Two were seen on the trek from Mansonia up to Camp 1 in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23. Two more were found in the Pujehun sector of the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 28, and three on the hike up to Malimbe Camp from Lalehun at Gola North on Dec. 1.

Red-rumped Tinkerbird***Pogoniulus atroflavus***

One was seen in the grassland above Camp 1 in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 24.

Yellow-throated Tinkerbird***Pogoniulus subsulphureus***

One was seen in the grassland above Camp 1 in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 24. One more was found in the Pujehun sector of the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 28. Three were spotted on the Guma Valley trail on Dec. 13.

Yellow-spotted Barbet***Buccanodon duchaillui***

A sighting of one bird while hiking back down to Lalehun from Malimbe Camp at Gola North on Dec. 2. Another was seen on a trail at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 4.

Vieillot's Barbet***Lybius vieilloti***

Two were seen in farmbrush at the bottom of the trail on the way back to Mansonia from Camp 1 in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 24.

Double-toothed Barbet***Lybius bidentatus***

One was seen poorly on the short trail to the research centre on Tiwai Island on Dec. 10.

INDICATORIDAE (Honeyguides)**Spotted Honeyguide*****Indicator maculatus***

One bird flew across the trail from Malimbe Camp back to Lalehun and landed. Fortunately I was able to track it and I ended up with a good look through the open undergrowth.

PICIDAE (Woodpeckers)**Little Green Woodpecker*****Campethera maculosa***

Endemic to West Africa. A so-so look at one bird at a distance on the hike up to Malimbe Camp from Lalehun at Gola North on Dec. 1.

Buff-spotted Woodpecker*Campethera nivosa*

One was in a mixed-species flock on the trail up by the guesthouse at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30.

Brown-eared Woodpecker*Campethera caroli*

Pleasingly common in Sierra Leone forests. A male was seen on the hike back down from Camp 1 to the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 25. Birds were spotted on both my hike up to Malimbe Camp and back down to Lalehun, with a high of four on the second day. Two were seen very well on Tiwai Island on Dec. 10.

Fire-bellied Woodpecker*Chloropicus pyrrhogaster*

One was seen well on my hike up to Malimbe Camp from Lalehun at Gola North on Dec. 1.

Brown-backed Woodpecker*Chloropicus obsoletus*

A great sighting of one right by the side of the road outside the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on the morning of Nov. 25.

FALCONIDAE (Falcons and Caracaras)**Eurasian (Common) Kestrel***Falco tinnunculus*

One was spotted at the beach at River No. 2 on Dec. 13.

PSITTACIDAE (New World and African Parrots)**Timneh Parrot***Psittacus timneh*

Endemic to the Upper Guinea forests from Sierra Leone to Ivory Coast. A very brief look at one bird as it quickly flew over the main road at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 4. Clements does not support the split of this bird from Grey Parrot, *Psittacus erithacus*.

CALYPTOMENIDAE (African and Green Broadbills)**Rufous-sided Broadbill***Smithornis rufolateralis*

Heard only. One was heard on a guided forest walk on Tiwai Island on Dec. 10.

PLATYSTEIRIDAE (Wattle-eyes and Batises)**Brown-throated (Common) Wattle-eye***Platysteira cyanea*

One was found in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22. Another was spotted on the rough road up to the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23. A final bird was seen on Tasso Island on Dec. 15.

West African Wattle-eye*Platysteira hormophora*

Endemic to West Africa. One was seen on the trail up from the guesthouse at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30. A pair was along the road at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 3. Fairly common, mostly in pairs, on the forest trails on Tiwai Island.

MALACONOTIDAE (Bushshrikes and Allies)

Northern Puffback

Dryoscopus gambensis

One was seen along the rough road up to the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23.

Marsh Tchagra

Tchagra minutus

Heard only. One was heard on a morning walk outside the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 25.

Black-crowned Tchagra

Tchagra senegalus

One was perched upon a bush and singing at the top of its lungs in the Pujehun sector in the Kangari Hills near Baomahun on Nov. 28.

Turati's Boubou

Laniarius turatii

Endemic to West Africa from Guinea-Bissau to Sierra Leone. Common with five birds seen in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22. Heard on a morning walk outside the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 25.

Tropical Boubou

Laniarius major

One was found along the rough road up to the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23. Two were spotted at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29.

LANIIDAE (Shrikes)

Northern Fiscal

Lanius humeralis

Two were seen on a morning walk outside the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 24.

ORIOLIDAE (Old World Orioles)

Western Black-headed Oriole

Oriolus brachyrhynchus

Small numbers were seen on both days along the Lalehun-Malimbe Camp trail in Gola North. Two were found on a trail in the forest at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 4.

DICRURIDAE (Drongos)

Shining Drongo

Dicrurus atripennis

Two birds were at the picathartes nesting site at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30. Spotted on both days along the Lalehun-Malimbe Camp trail in Gola North.

Velvet-mantled Drongo

Dicrurus modestus

One was in a mixed-species flock at one of our stops along the road up to the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23. Occasional sightings in the forest at Tiwai Island.

ERYTHROCERCIDAE (Yellow Flycatchers)

Chestnut-capped Flycatcher

Erythrocercus mccallii

Five birds were spotted on the hike up from Lalehun to Malimbe Camp in Gola North on Dec. 1.

MONARCHIDAE (Monarch Flycatchers)

Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher

Trochocercus nitens

Heard in the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 27 and on both days along the trail between Lalehun and Malimbe Camp. After hearing them for several days, I finally tracked down and saw two birds on the trails on Tiwai Island on Dec. 10.

African Paradise Flycatcher

Tersiphone rufiventer

My first sighting was of one bird along the short trail from camp to the research centre on Tiwai Island on Dec. 8, followed by one on Tasso Island on Dec. 15.

Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher

Tersiphone rufiventer

Two were first sighted along the trail up from the guesthouse at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30. Three were seen on the hike from Lalehun to Malimbe Camp on Dec. 1. One was found on a trail at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 4. Two more were on the trails on Tiwai Island on Dec. 10. Clements gives the name of Black-headed Paradise -Flycatcher to this taxon.

CORVIDAE (Crows, Jays and Magpies)

Pied Crow

Corvus albus

Common in non-forested environments.

PICATHARTIDAE (Rockfowl)

Yellow-headed Picathartes (White-necked Rockfowl) *Picathartes gymnocephalus*

Endemic to the Upper Guinea forests from Guinea to Ghana. About a 45 minute walk up the trail by the guesthouse at Lalehun will take you to a nesting site and it was here I had a fantastic encounter with about six birds in total on Nov. 30. The birds were very active and came quite close, one actually landing on one of the nests attached to the side a huge boulder. The birds did not seem to be bothered by our presence, but after about 30 minutes, I decided to err on the side of caution and we took our leave.

NICATORIDAE (Nicators)

Yellow-spotted (Western) Nicator

Nicator chloris

My only sighting was of one bird on the trails at Tiwai Island on Dec. 10.

HIRUNDINIDAE (Swallows)

Square-tailed Saw-wing

Psalidoprocne nitens

About 15 were in flight over a secondary area not far along the hike from Lalehun up to Malimbe Camp at Gola North on Dec. 1.

Fanti Saw-wing

Psalidoprocne obscura

Endemic to West Africa. A great sighting of three birds along the dirt road beyond River No. 2 in the direction of Tokeh on Dec. 13. About three more were on Tasso Island on Dec. 15.

Barn Swallow*Hirundo rustica*

A few were seen at a village as we headed back along the terrible road from Mansonia in the Loma Mountains to the main highway on Nov. 25. A few were flying around the forestry office at Baomahun in the Kangari Hills on Nov. 28. Several were in flight over a secondary area not far along the hike from Lalehun up to Malimbe Camp at Gola North on Dec. 1.

Red-chested Swallow*Hirundo lucida*

Endemic to West Africa. Between five and ten birds were easy to see at the beach at River No. 2 on both Dec. 13 and 14.

White-throated Blue Swallow*Hirundo nigrita*

Fairly easy to see on river trips at Tiwai Island. Birds often perched on snags in the river giving great up-close views as we floated by.

Lesser Striped Swallow*Cecropis abyssinica*

One was found in flight over the farmbrush near Mansonia as we descended on the hike back down from Camp 1 in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 24. Seven birds were quietly perched in a small tree along the dirt road beyond River No. 2 in the direction of Tokeh on Dec. 13.

Preuss's Cliff Swallow*Petrochelidon preussi*

A large flock was at a village as we headed back along the terrible road from Mansonia in the Loma Mountains to the main highway on Nov. 25. A flock of about 25 was seen at the forestry office at Baomahun in the Kangari Hills on Nov. 28. Another large flock came to drink at a pool at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29. About four were found in flight along the dirt road beyond River No. 2 in the direction of Tokeh on Dec. 12.

PYCNONOTIDAE (Bulbuls)**Common Bulbul***Pycnonotus barbatus*

Common in non-forested environments.

Little Greenbul*Eurillas virens*

One was found along the bad road up to Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23. One was spotted in scrubby growth along a trail past the forestry office at Baomahun in the Kangari Hills on Nov. 27, and two in the Pujehun sector the next day on the 28th. A pair was occasionally seen foraging unusually high up in a tree right in front of the guesthouse at Lalehun in Gola North. Two on the trails at Tiwai Island on Dec. 9.

Little Grey Greenbul*Eurillas gracilis*

One was in a mixed-species flock a little bit up the trail adjacent to the guesthouse at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30. Clements refers to this taxon simply as Grey Greenbul.

Ansorge's Greenbul*Eurillas ansorgei*

One was seen very well in a mixed-species flock at one of our stops along the bad road up to Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23.

Plain Greenbul (Cameroon Sombre Greenbul)***Eurillas curvirostris***

One was seen very well in a mixed-species flock at one of our stops along the bad road up to Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23. Another two were observed in a mixed-species flock a little way up the trail from the guesthouse at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30.

Yellow-whiskered Greenbul***Eurillas latirostris***

Two were observed on the trail from Lalehun up to Malimbe Camp in Gola North on Dec. 1. One was found on a trail at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 4. A very good look at one bird on the Guma Valley trail near River No. 2 on Dec. 13.

Slender-billed Greenbul***Stelgidillas gracilirostris***

One was found along the bad road up to Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23. One more was up the trail from the guesthouse at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30. One was spotted on the trails on Tiwai Island on Dec. 8.

Spotted Greenbul***Ixonotus guttatus***

Sightings of one bird in stunted forest on a trail past the forestry office at Baomahun in the Kangari Hills on Nov. 27, and one the next day in the Pujehun sector.

Yellow-throated Greenbul (Yellow-throated Leaflove) *Atimastillas flavicollis*

A brief look at one bird in the undergrowth along the Nature trail on Tiwai Island on Dec. 8.

Simple Greenbul (Simple Leaflove)***Chlorocichla simplex***

My first sighting was of three in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22. One was found in scrubby growth along a trail past the forestry office at Baomahun in the Kangari Hills on Nov. 27. One more was up the trail from the guesthouse at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30.

Swamp Palm Bulbul***Thescelocichla leucopleura***

Heard on the way up to Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23. Two were found along the dirt road at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 3. One was at my campsite at the little village of Segbwema on the morning of Dec. 7 just before breaking camp to cross the river to Tiwai Island. One was spotted on Tiwai Island itself on Dec. 9. Clements gives the name of Swamp Greenbul to this taxon.

White-throated Greenbul***Phyllastrephus albigularis***

One was found down low in the undergrowth along a trail just up from the guesthouse at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30.

Icterine Greenbul***Phyllastrephus icterinus***

Two were in a mixed-species flock at the picathartes site at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30. Common in flocks on the hike back down from Malimbe Camp to Lalehun on Dec. 2. Two were in a flock at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 3, and one the next day on the 4th.

Red-tailed Bristlebill***Bleda syndactylus***

Heard only. Heard on the hike from Lalehun up to Malimbe Camp in Gola North on Dec. 1. Clements gives the name of Common Bristlebill to this taxon.

Grey-headed Bristlebill***Bleda canicapillus***

Endemic to West Africa. A decent look at one up the trail by the guesthouse at Lalehun in Gola North on Dec. 3. One was also seen on the trails at Tiwai Island on Dec. 10.

Red-tailed Greenbul***Criniger calurus***

One was seen very well in a mixed-species flock at one of our stops along the bad road up to Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23. One was found on the hike from Lalehun up to Malimbe Camp in Gola North on Dec. 1. The subspecies seen, in this the western part of its range, was *verreauxi* which has an olive-green tail as opposed to red.

Western Bearded-Greenbul***Criniger barbatus***

Endemic to West Africa. Two were in a mixed-species flock at the picathartes site at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30. At least four were seen on the hike down from Malimbe Camp to Lalehun on Dec. 2.

Yellow-bearded Greenbul***Criniger olivaceus***

Endemic to the Upper Guinea forests from Sierra Leone to Ghana. Two were in a mixed-species flock at the picathartes site at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30. At least one was found on the hike down from Malimbe Camp to Lalehun on Dec. 2.

MACROSPHENIDAE (African Warblers)**Black-headed Rufous Warbler*****Bathmocercus cerviniventris***

Endemic to the Upper Guinea forests from Sierra Leone to Ghana. Heard only on Nov. 24. About 30 minutes above Camp 1 in the Loma Mountains, there is a small stream which is the site for this bird. As it was still dark on the way up to the grassland, we didn't stop, but on the way back, we heard one calling, but after a patient and ultimately frustrating search, it failed to show. Clements give the name of Black-capped Rufous Warbler to this taxon.

Moustached Grass Warbler***Melocichla mentalis***

One was found on our morning walk along the road outside the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 25. Some authors call this taxon by the name of African Moustached Warbler.

INCERTAE CEDIS**Green Hylia*****Hylia prasina***

Heard on the terrible road up to Mansonia in the Loma Mountains and in the Kangari Hills at Baomahun, but it wasn't until the hike from Lalehun up to Malimbe Camp in Gola North that I was able to see one individual on Dec. 1. Another was seen at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 3. Just a single encounter on the trails on Tiwai Island on Dec. 10.

Tit-hylia***Pholidornis rushiae***

One bird was seen well in a mixed-species flock at one of our stops along the bad road up to Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov 23.

PHYLLOSCOPIDAE (Leaf Warblers)

Willow Warbler

Phylloscopus trochilus

About three birds in total were seen in the grassland above Camp 1 in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 24. One was spotted along the trail past the forestry office in the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 27. A final bird was found on Tasso Island on Dec. 15.

Wood Warbler

Phylloscopus sibilatrix

One was spotted along the trail past the forestry office in the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 27. Another was seen in farmbush along the early part of the trail from Lalehun up to Malimbe Camp at Gola North on Dec. 1.

CISTICOLIDAE (Cisticolas and Allies)

Red-faced Cisticola

Cisticola erythrops

We found one bird in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22. About three birds were seen on our morning walk outside the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 25.

Whistling Cisticola

Cisticola lateralis

Two were spotted in the Pujehun sector in the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 28. Two more were seen in overgrown farmbush as we approached the village of Segbwema on Dec. 6, day 2 of my trek to Tiwai Island.

Winding Cisticola

Cisticola galactotes

Two were seen at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29.

Short-winged Cisticola

Cisticola brachypterus

One was spotted in the Pujehun sector in the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 28. Clements gives the name of Siffling Cisticola to this taxon.

Sierra Leone Prinia

Schistolais leontica

Endemic to West Africa with a patchy distribution from Guinea to Cote D'Ivoire. The site for this species is a grassland area that is a two-hour hike up from Camp 1 in the Loma Mountains, which itself is reached on a five-hour hike from the village of Mansonia. Reaching the grassland at around 7 a.m. on Nov. 25, we bushwhacked for four hours through the tall, thick grass, thanks to the heavy rains, without even the sound of the prinia. Thoroughly dejected, we descended back to Mansonia to spend the night. Kenneth and I walked along the road outside of Mansonia the next morning and almost immediately found a Sierra Leone Prinia, much to our surprise as Kenneth said he had never seen it around this area before.

Sharpe's Apalis

Apalis sharpii

Endemic to West Africa. A male was found in a mixed-species flock at one of our stops along the bad road to Mansonia and the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23. Another male was seen on the trail up from the guesthouse at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30. A final bird was spotted on the trail from camp to the research station on Tiwai Island on Dec. 7.

Oriole Warbler***Hypergerus atriceps***

First a pair and then a single bird were seen very well in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22.

Grey-backed Camaroptera***Camaroptera brevicaudata***

This taxonomically confusing species is split by some authors into two species: Grey-backed Camaroptera, *C. brevicaudata* and Green-backed Camaroptera, *C. brachyura*. Authors who lump the two don't seem to agree on which English name to assign. The subspecies in West Africa is *brevicaudata*, thus leading me to the decision to assign the name I did. We found one bird in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22.

SYLVIIDAE (Sylviid Warblers)**Garden Warbler*****Sylvia borin***

One was found on Tasso Island on the morning of Dec. 15.

PELLORNEIDAE (Ground Babblers and Allies)**Brown Illadopsis*****Illadopsis fulvescens***

A calling bird was eventually observed after a bit of effort along a scrubby part of the trail in the Pujehun sector of the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 28. I encountered noisy flocks and managed good looks on Tiwai Island on two occasions.

MUSCICAPIDAE (Old World Flycatchers)**White-tailed Alethe*****Alethe diademata***

Endemic to West Africa. Common by voice at Gola North and relatively easy to see as well with good observations along the trail up by the guesthouse at Lalehun and on the trail up to Malimbe Camp. Of particular note was a good look at a spotted juvenile. A good look as well at single birds at Sileti in Gola South on two occasions. Another good sighting of a bird on Tiwai Island. Clements does not support the split of this species from Fire-crested Alethe.

Fraser's Forest Flycatcher***Fraseria ocreata***

One was found around Malimbe Camp in Gola North early in the morning on Dec. 2. Clements gives the name of African Forest Flycatcher to this taxon.

White-browed Forest-Flycatcher***Fraseria cinarescens***

Three sightings of birds while travelling on the river at Tiwai Island. Not seen along trails on the island itself.

Spotted Flycatcher***Muscicapa striata***

A very pale looking flycatcher, presumably of the subspecies *balearica*, was spotted in some scrubby woodland along the trail past the forestry office in the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 27.

Dusky-blue Flycatcher***Muscicapa comitata***

One was along the dirt road at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 5.

Grey Tit-Flycatcher (Lead-coloured Flycatcher) *Myioparus plumbeus*
One was found along the trail past the forestry office in the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 27.

European Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*
Two were seen in the grassland above Camp 1 in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 24, and one as well on a walk outside the village of Mansonia the next morning. One was spotted in the Pujehun sector of the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 28.

Forest Robin *Stiphronis erythrothorax*
Heard only. Heard at least once on the trek from Lalehun up to Malimbe Camp at Gola North on Dec. 1.

Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat *Cossypha niveicapilla*
A single bird was found in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*
Two were in the grassland at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29.

African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*
A nice male perched atop a tall bush in the grassland above Camp 1 in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 24.

TURDIDAE (Thrushes)

Finsch's Flycatcher Thrush *Neocossyphus finschi*
Endemic to West Africa. One was found on the hike back down from Malimbe Camp to Lalehun in Gola North on Dec. 2. A single sighting on the trails on Tiwai Island on Dec. 9. One more was spotted on the Guma Valley trail near River No. 2 on Dec. 13.

White-tailed Ant Thrush *Neocossyphus poensis*
One was found on the hike back down from Malimbe Camp to Lalehun in Gola North on Dec. 2. Another was found on Tiwai Island on Dec. 8.

African Thrush *Turdus pelios*
One was seen near the guesthouse at Lalehun in Gola North on Dec. 3. Another was on the trails on Tiwai Island on Dec. 8.

STURNIDAE (Starlings)

Splendid Glossy-Starling *Lamprotornis splendidus*
One was seen on Dec. 6, day 2 of my hike from Sileti to Tiwai Island.

Emerald Starling *Lamprotornis iris*
Endemic to West Africa from Guinea to Côte D'Ivoire. A morning walk along the road outside the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 25 produced about ten of these amazing birds. They were very partial to the tops of dead trees and were very active.

Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*
About six birds were found along the road outside the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 25. A flock was also seen on Tasso Island on Dec. 15.

NECTARINIIDAE (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)

Fraser's Sunbird

Deleornis fraseri

Three birds were found on Dec. 2 around Malimbe Camp at Gola North and on the hike back down to Lalehun. One was seen along the trail from camp to the research centre on Tiwai Island on Dec. 8. Clements gives the name of Scarlet-tufted Sunbird to this taxon.

Mangrove Sunbird

Anthreptes gabonicus

Several sightings on river trips at Tiwai Island. While walking east of the village of River No. 2 along the dirt road towards Tokeh, I came to a bridge over River No. 2 and found one individual there. Common on Tasso Island. Alternate names for this taxon include Brown Sunbird and Mouse-brown Sunbird.

Collared Sunbird

Hedydipna collaris

One was first seen in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22. A pair was found in the Pujehun sector of the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 28. Rather common in the forest at Gola North. One was spotted on a trail at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 4.

Green-headed Sunbird

Cyanomitra verticalis

One was seen in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22.

Blue-throated Brown Sunbird

Cyanomitra cyanoaema

A male was seen well along the main dirt road at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 4.

Olive Sunbird

Cyanomitra olivacea

One was active right by my campsite on Tiwai Island and I saw it there from time to time. I also had one sighting of a bird along the forest trails at Tiwai.

Buff-throated Sunbird

Chalcomitra adelberti

Endemic to West Africa. A nice view of one male at the camping area on Tiwai Island on Dec. 10.

Olive-bellied Sunbird

Cinnyris chloropygius

One was first seen in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22. Another was found in the Pujehun sector of the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 28. A final sighting of one bird on Tasso Island on Dec. 15.

Splendid Sunbird

Cinnyris coccinigastrus

Three were found in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22.

Variable Sunbird

Cinnyris venustus

Common in the grassland above Camp 1 in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 24.

Copper Sunbird

Cinnyris cupreus

One was first seen in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22. Another was found on a walk along the road outside the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 25, and one more at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29.

MOTACILLIDAE (Wagtails and Pipits)

Western Yellow Wagtail

Motacilla flava

Several sightings of birds along the bad road up to the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains and on the return a couple of days later.

African Pied Wagtail

Motacilla aguimp

Three sightings of birds during river trips at Tiwai Island.

EMBERIZIDAE (Old World Buntings)

Gosling's Bunting

Emberiza goslingi

Split from Cinnamon-breasted Bunting. One was spotted on the road on the drive from Mansonia in the Loma Mountains back to the main highway on Nov. 25. Three were found in the Pujehun sector in the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 28.

PASSERIDAE (Old World Sparrows)

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow

Passer griseus

Common with more than ten birds at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29.

PLOCEIDAE (Weavers and Allies)

Gola Malimbe

Malimbus ballmanni

Endemic to the Upper Guinea forests at fragmented sites from Sierra Leone to Côte D'Ivoire. Arriving at Malimbe Camp late in the afternoon on Dec. 1 gave us little time to look for this species that day. The next morning, we started our search around Malimbe Camp just after first light, but there was little activity, no flocks, and we saw nothing. About 30 minutes before we had decided we'd have to head back down to Lalehun, we found a flock and eventually had two Gola Malimbés up in the canopy. What a relief! Clements gives the name of Ballman's Malimbe to this taxon.

Red-vented Malimbe

Malimbus scutatus

A pair was seen nest building in the Pujehun sector of the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 28. A pair was spotted at the guesthouse and Lalehun on Dec. 1, and another pair was building a nest on our hike back to Lalehun from Malimbe Camp the next day.

Blue-billed Malimbe

Malimbus nitens

One was in a mixed-species flock at a stop along the bad road up to the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23. Singles were seen on both days along the Lalehun-Malimbe Camp trail in Gola North. One bird was along the main road at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 5. Two sightings of pairs on the trails at Tiwai Island during my stay. Clements gives the name of Grey's Malimbe to this taxon.

Crested Malimbe

Malimbus malimbicus

Two were spotted on the bad road up to the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23. One or two pairs were seen on both days along the Lalehun-Malimbe Camp trail in Gola North. Only a single bird was sighted on Tiwai Island.

- Red-headed Malimbe** *Malimbus rubricollis*
 Three birds were found on a morning walk along the road outside the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 25.
- Black-necked Weaver** *Ploceus nigricollis*
 Two were spotted on the bad road up to the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23. One was around the village of Lalehun in Gola North on Dec. 1.
- Vieillot's Black Weaver** *Ploceus nigerrimus*
 Three were found on a walk along the road outside the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 25. One was seen just outside the village of River No. 2 along the dirt road towards Tokeh on Dec. 13.
- Village Weaver** *Ploceus cucullatus*
 Common in non-forested environments, often in large colonies.
- Yellow-mantled Weaver** *Ploceus tricolor*
 Two were seen on a morning walk along the road outside the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 25. Many were attending a large mixed-species canopy flock on the short trail to the research station on Tiwai Island on Dec. 10, and two were also seen earlier in the day.
- Maxwell's Black Weaver** *Ploceus albinucha*
 Fairly common in the forest in Gola North. Just one sighting on Tiwai island of one bird on the short trail to the research station on Dec. 7.
- Red-headed Quelea** *Quelea erythrops*
 Three flocks with breeding males were spotted in the grassland along the road outside the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on the morning of Nov. 25.
- Red-billed Quelea** *Quelea quelea*
 Just one bird, a breeding male, was found in the grassland along the road outside the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on the morning of Nov. 25.
- Black-winged Red Bishop** *Euplectes hordeaceus*
 One was first seen along the main highway near Makeni on Nov. 22. Fairly common in grassland around Mansonia in the Loma Mountains. A male was attending several females just outside the village of River No. 2 along the dirt road towards Tokeh on Dec. 13. Some authors use the name of Black-winged Bishop for this taxon.
- Yellow-mantled (Yellow-shouldered) Widowbird** *Euplectes macroura*
 Quite common with about five males spotted in grassland while driving on the main highway near Makeni on Nov. 22. Also common in the open grassy areas at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29.
- Red-collared Widowbird** *Euplectes ardens*
 Common in the grassland outside the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 25. Also common in the Kangari Hills around Baomahun on Nov. 27 and 28.

ESTRILDIDAE (Waxbills and Allies)

Chestnut-breasted Nigrita

Nigrita bicolor

One was found on the short trail from camp to the research station on Tiwai Island on Dec. 7.

Orange-cheeked Waxbill

Estrilda melpoda

A flock of about seven birds was found at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29. Three were in a patch of grassland near the guesthouse at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 4.

Common Waxbill

Estrilda astrild

Two were seen in the grassland above Camp 1 in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 24. Two more were in the grassland around the village of Mansonia the next morning.

Western Bluebill

Spermophaga haematina

One was found in a marsh along the bad road up to the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23.

Crimson Seedcracker

Pyrenestes sanguineus

Endemic to West Africa from Senegal to Côte D'Ivoire. On Nov. 23, immediately upon exiting the car at a marsh on the bad road up to the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains, a seedcracker flew across my field of view and skulked in the reeds, giving a good look before disappearing.

Red-billed Firefinch

Lagonotsticta senegala

A male was found in the Pujehun sector of the Kangari Hills near Baomahun on Nov. 28.

Black-bellied Firefinch

Lagonotsticta rara

Two males were seen on a morning walk along the road outside the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 25.

Bronze Mannikin

Spermestes cucullatus

First spotted in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22. A few were found near the forestry office in the Kangari Hills at Baomahun on Nov. 27. A flock was seen at the Chinese Farms in Kenema on Nov. 29. Two birds were in some grassland near the guesthouse at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 4.

Black and White Mannikin

Spermestes bicolor

First spotted in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22. Small numbers were seen on both days in the Kangari Hills around Baomahun.

VIDUIDAE (Indigobirds)

Pin-tailed Whydah

Vidua macroura

A male was spotted on the drive on the bad road up to the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23.

Togo Paradise-Whydah

Vidua togoensis

A male was displaying in the farm bush near the bottom of the trail back down from Camp 1 to the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 24.

Mammal List

LORISIDAE (Angwantibos, Pottos and Lorises)

West African Potto

Perodicticus potto

While unsuccessfully searching for a calling Nkulengu Rail behind my tent on Tiwai Island before dawn on Dec. 9, I found a potto up in the canopy.

CERCOPITHECIDAE (Old World Monkeys)

Sooty Mangabey

Cercocebus atys

A troop was heard near the picathartes site in Gola North on Nov. 30. One was seen along a trail at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 4. Not easy to see on Tiwai Island, and I only had a good but brief sighting of two crossing a trail on Dec. 11.

Green Monkey

Chlorocebus sabaceus

Two individuals, amongst a bigger troop, were found on a short walk on Tasso Island on Dec. 15.

Diana Monkey

Cercopithecus diana

A big troop was at the picathartes site at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30, but they were very wary and I only got a glimpse of one individual. A big troop was also encountered the next day on the hike up to Malimbe Camp and I got a good look at one individual. An amazingly beautiful monkey. Common on Tiwai Island where fabulous troops were encountered on most days.

Campbell's Monkey

Cercopithecus campbelli

One was spotted along the main dirt road at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 4. Fairly common on Tiwai Island with one or two seen on three days.

Spot-nosed Monkey

Cercopithecus petaurista

A troop was seen near the forest guesthouse at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 5. Infrequent sightings on Tiwai Island with one troop on Dec. 9 and three individuals on the morning of Dec. 11 before my departure.

King Colobus

Colobus polykomos

A big troop was seen very well along the main dirt road at Sileti in Gola South on Dec. 5. Common on Tiwai Island with troops seen on most days, with one troop frequently observed near the campsite.

Upper Guinea Red Colobus

Piliocolobus badius

A good look at a big troop on the hike down from Malimbe Camp to Lalehun in Gola North on Dec. 2. Wonderful sightings of troops on two separate days on Tiwai Island.

HOMINIDAE (Great Apes)

Chimpanzee

Pan troglodytes

Heard only. A distant vocalization was heard as we hiked down from Malimbe Camp to Lalehun in Gola North on Dec. 2. On Tiwai Island, my guide twice located a large nut-bearing tree where we saw the remnants of many nut casings and some rocks that chimpanzees had brought to the base of the tree to be used to crack the nuts. In each case, immediately adjacent to the rocks was an obviously worn spot on a large root that was the base upon which the chimpanzees had placed the nuts. A fascinating observation. One knuckle print was also seen in the mud in a nearby area in the forest.

SCIURIDAE (Tree, Flying and Ground Squirrels, Chipmunks, Marmots and Prairie Dogs)

Striped Ground Squirrel

Euxerus erythropus

A few were found along the bad road up to Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23, and on the way back on the 25th. Another was seen as I travelled by motorbike to Baomahun in the Kangari Hills on Nov. 27. Two were spotted as I travelled by motorbike from Kenema to Lalehun at Gola North on Nov. 30. An alternate name for this species is Geoffroy's Ground Squirrel.

Red-legged Sun Squirrel

Heliosciurus rufobrachium

One was found up the trail by the guesthouse at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30.

Forest Giant Squirrel

Protoxerus stangeri

On Dec. 5, one individual, which may have been this species, was seen around my camp in the afternoon of day 1 of my trek from Sileti to Tiwai Island

Fire-footed Rope Squirrel

Funisciurus pyrropus

One was found in a scrubby, agricultural area near Lungi on Nov. 22. Another was seen on Tiwai Island on Dec. 7.

Green Bush Squirrel

Paraxerus poensis

Two sightings on Tiwai Island.

PROCAVIDAE (Hyraxes)

Western Tree Hyrax

Dendrohyrax dorsalis

Heard only. Heard at night at the guesthouse at Lalehun in Gola North on Nov. 30 and at Malimbe Camp on Dec. 1. Heard again around the guesthouse at Lalehun on Dec. 2.

HIPPOPOTAMIDAE (Hippopotamuses)

Pygmy Hippopotamus

Choeropsis liberiensis

Fresh prints in a riverbank were seen on a boat trip on the Moa River at Tiwai Island on Dec. 9.

Reptile List

Red-headed Agama

Agama agama

Several were seen in the Kangari Hills around Baomahun on Nov. 27.

African Rock Python

Python sebae

One was met on the trail up to Camp 1 from the village of Mansonia in the Loma Mountains on Nov. 23. I had to stop one of the porters from taking a machete to it, thinking it was dangerous.