# Trip Report

# Ghana (and Togo)
# September-November, 2018

## Overview

Having spent a few weeks in Cameroon back in 2011, I wanted to further my exploration of West Africa, focusing this time on the Upper Guinea forest biome and the savanna region of northern Ghana. Upon entry at the airport in Accra, immigration officials only gave me 60 days in the country which necessitated a side trip into Togo for a few days before I re-entered Ghana to get another 60 days as, all told, I spent about 2 ½ months in Ghana. As my interests extend beyond just birds, I travelled slowly and thus spent much more time than would be the case for the typical birdwatcher.

As far as resources are concerned, I used the Birds of Western Africa by Borrow and Demey, and uploaded bird vocalizations from www.xeno-canto.org to assist in identification. Playback was used very sparingly. Overall, I was rather successful in finding not only the key Upper Guinea endemics, but a wide variety of excellent forest and savanna birds. However, there were some significant misses such as Spot-breasted Ibis, a couple of owls and the perhaps mythical White-breasted Guineafowl.

There is a great deal of pressure on the wild habitats in Ghana which are largely in a rather depressing state of conservation. Not surprisingly, there is a lack of resources for conservation, and mining, tree-felling and hunting pressures are taking their toll. Hunting is so significant that it is very rare to see any mammal in the southern forests other than the odd squirrel. My favourite birding site was the Atewa Range, and on half of my visits up the ridge trail, I encountered hunters, and the trail was littered with spent cartridges and batteries. I was initially perplexed as to why I was seeing batteries along the trail, but was later informed that hunters use the batteries for powerful lights to enable hunting at night. Dead batteries are simply discarded on the trail. To add insult to injury, the national government is planning to open up the Atewa Range to major mining interests, and thus the best birding spot (in my opinion) in the southern forests is under great threat. Best to go soon.

## Transportation

Other than enlisting the services of a guide with a private vehicle for my visit to the Nsuta Forest, I exclusively relied on public transportation during my travels. Typical vehicles included share-taxis and the ubiquitous trotros, a collective term used to describe any vehicle larger than a car but smaller than a big bus. Share-taxis and trotros exclusively operate on a fill-up-and-go basis with no fixed departure times. Normally, it didn't require too much of a wait to have a trotro fill up, but on a couple of occasions, I did have to wait 2-3 hours, and in these instances, a lack of patience got the better of me and I ended up buying the last couple of seats myself to get the thing going and on the

road. It was generally in the more remote areas in the north that I experienced the longest waits.

Unlike in many countries in Africa, trotros in Ghana do not fill up and then add as many more extra people as can squeeze in. It essentially is one seat for one person. Vehicles range in comfort and roadworthiness and are quite inexpensive. As long as there is space, you can flag down a trotro anywhere along its route. Ghanaians operating the trotros are virtually universally honest as attempts to overcharge me occurred maybe only two or three times during my entire stay. On routes between larger cities, more expensive and comfortable air conditioned vans are available, usually leaving from private lots. When taking share-taxis, only one person sits in front with the driver and three passengers in the back, so they are comfortable as well.

## Accommodation and Food

I only booked advance accommodation for my arrival in Accra at the Sleepy Hippo Hotel, at a lodge called Escape 3 Points along the western coast and at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park. Otherwise, I essentially found accommodation on arrival which never proved to be a challenge. Generally, accommodation was fairly inexpensive and comfortable. Most places had rooms with attached bathrooms and I typically spent the equivalent of about USD 10-25 for a simple room. I will outline specifics about each place I stayed at when I discuss the birding sites I visited.

Ghanaian staples like fufu, banku and kenkey, prepared from either cassava or maize, are definitely an acquired taste, something I didn't manage to achieve. In fact, after making an initial effort, I tried to avoid them at all costs. Fortunately, rice was readily available, but it made for a diet lacking in variety. It wasn't all gruesome as I really enjoyed local dishes like red red and omo tuo and ate them frequently when they were available.

Freshly cooked food was always available on the street, with even the smallest village having a stall selling something for a hot meal. Street food was generally very good and quite inexpensive. Those reluctant to eat street food and wishing to rely on a physical restaurant will have trouble finding a more sit-down place to eat in even some larger towns as, outside of big cities, most Ghanaians who eat out eat on the street or else pick up take-away from a stall and take it home. Those wishing to self-cater will have great difficulty finding anything except bread, fruit, various inedible biscuits and cookies and canned fish, either sardines or mackerel, in the shops anywhere other than in Accra. Even in Accra, there are apparently only a few of what travellers would call supermarkets. Outside of Accra, forget it. Anyone craving western-style snack food is advised to, as strange as it sounds, head to one of the more up-scale gas stations which usually have attached shops selling expensive imported snacks. I did find some amazing Ghanaian dark chocolate at one of these stations rather late in my stay. I forget the brand name, but the package had "Made in Ghana" on it. I definitely recommend the dark chocolate - the

milk chocolate wasn't so great.

Independent birders are a rare sight in Ghana. However, for the independent birder, I believe the country offers the most birder-friendly experience in West Africa in terms of infrastructure, expense, ease and comfort of public transportation and the accessibility of birding sites. Other than having to endure the frequent calls of "obruni", meaning "white man", which was never meant in a negative way, Ghanaians are very friendly and it was easy to have interactions with local people, one of the attractions of course of travelling in a more independent manner as opposed to group travel. I hope the information in this report will prove useful to anyone thinking of an independent birding trip in Ghana. Please feel free to contact me if there is anything with which I can be of assistance.

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## Itinerary

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| Sept. 4 | Leave Montreal on Air France 347. |
| Sept. 5 | Arrive in Paris. Fly Air France 914 to Accra. Stayed at Sleepy Hippo Hotel. |
| Sept. 6 | Accra - walked around Jamestown. |
| Sept. 7 | Day trip to Sakumono Lagoon. |
| Sept. 8 | Trotro from Neoplan station to Kibi. Room at Adwoa Asantewaa. Guesthouse. Went to Sagyamase to find ridge trail at Atewa Range. |
| Sept. 9 | Birding ridge trail. |
| Sept. 10 | Birding ridge trail. |
| Sept. 11 | Birding ridge trail. |
| Sept. 12 | Birding ridge trail. |
| Sept. 13 | Birding ridge trail. |
| Sept. 14 | Share-taxi to Bunso Junction, then trotro to Koforidua and another to Doryumu Junction for Shai Hills. Stayed at park guesthouse. Afternoon walk with William in grassland. Night visit by motorbike along roads in park for nightjars. |
| Sept. 15 | Picked up by William to go to Sayu Camp and then on foot to Sayu Cave area. Took trotro to Ashaiman and another trotro to Ada Foah. Stayed at Ezine Guesthouse. Tried to arrange turtle visit - no luck. |
| Sept. 16 | Around Ada Foah - tried to arrange turtle visit - no luck. |
| Sept. 17 | Share-taxi to Ada Kasseh, share-taxi to Sogakope and share-taxi along coastal road where I disembarked at Woe. Stayed at Max's Guesthouse. Looked around almost birdless Keta Lagoon. |
| Sept. 18 | Took trotro to Aflao and border. Crossed border into Togo. Took motorbike to station in Lomé to catch a taxi-brousse to Kpalimé. Room at Hotel Chez Fanny. |

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| Sept. 19 | Visited town of Kpalimé. |
| Sept. 20 | Morning hike on Mt. Kloto. |
| Sept. 21 | Morning walk to Kpimé waterfall and large nearby bat colony. |
| Sept. 22 | Took motorbike to border. Crossed lonely border post into Ghana. Same motorbike dropped me at first village in Ghana. Took share-taxi towards Ho but once reaching the main highway, disembarked and took motorbike to Mountain Paradise Lodge just north of Biakpa. |
| Sept. 23 | Mountain Paradise Lodge. |
| Sept. 24 | Mountain Paradise Lodge. |
| Sept. 25 | Morning trip to Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary. |
| Sept. 26 | Trotro to Ho, share-taxi to Abutia Kloe and motorbike to Kalakpa. Afternoon visit to forest trail that was underwater. Camped at HQ. |
| Sept. 27 | Morning visit to grassland and forest. Returned to Ho. Stayed at Kekeli Hotel. |
| Sept. 28 | AC van to Accra. Taxi to Kaneshie Station. Trotro to Winneba. Room at Lagoon Lodge. |
| Sept. 29 | Morning visit to Winneba Plains. Evening walk to find Olive Ridley Turtles. |
| Sept. 30 | Share-taxi to main road, trotro to Cape Coast and trotro from junction to Kakum NP. Birded around HQ. Stayed at park guesthouse. |
| Oct. 1 | Morning visit to canopy walkway until about 9:15. Rested during afternoon as last night's food at park restaurant made me sick. |
| Oct. 2 | Walked to and birded the Abrafo Forest. |
| Oct. 3 | Morning visit to canopy walkway until about 9:45. Trotro to main highway at Cape Coast. Took another trotro to Ayensudo Junction. Stayed at Kofi and Adjoa's Esteem Guesthouse. |
| Oct. 4 | Went to Cape Coast to visit Cape Coast Castle, the former slaving outpost. |
| Oct. 5 | Took trotro to Cape Coast and at same junction road to Kakum, took trotro to Twifo Praso and visited bridge over Pra River. Returned to Ayensudo Junction and birded along Brenu Beach Road in afternoon. |
| Oct. 6 | Birded along Brenu Beach Road. |
| Oct. 7 | Early morning walk along Brenu Beach Road, then went to Elmina to visit St. George's Castle, the old slave-trading site. Afternoon along Brenu Beach Road. |
| Oct. 8 | Trotro to Takoradi. Room at Ahenfie Hotel. |
| Oct. 9 | Briefly visited Monkey Hill. Joined by Philip, a guide from Ashanti African Tours. Took trotro to Sowadadzem and motorbike to Frenchman's Farm where I stayed. Birded a bit around Ankasa HQ and along main road in park. |
| Oct. 10 | Walked to Nkwanta Camp and beyond to three pools. Walked back quickly in pouring rain for two hours. |

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| Oct. 11 | Morning birding down main road at Ankasa. Afternoon on trail starting to the right just after the bridge at the entrance. This connected back to the main road and we walked back. |
| Oct. 12 | Birded main road and took trail to right going to observation hide but trail too wet. Continued birding main road. |
| Oct. 13 | Birded main road. |
| Oct. 14 | Motorbike back to Sowadadzem. Share-taxi to Half Assini junction. Share-taxi to Essiama. Room at Maggie's Guest House. |
| Oct. 15 | Share-taxi to Ebi River - birded the river area. Trotro to Half Assini Junction and another to Half Assini. Waited around the Hotel Gracia for Carmelite Sunbird. Returned to Essiama. |
| Oct. 16 | Share-taxi to Agona and trotro to Old Akwidaa since road to New Akwidaa is bad. Motorbike to Escape 3 Points Lodge. |
| Oct. 17 | Relaxed around beach at Escape 3 Points. |
| Oct. 18 | Escape 3 Points. |
| Oct. 19 | Escape 3 Points. |
| Oct. 20 | Shared a taxi with two other travellers to Agona Junction. Trotro to Takoradi. Trotro to Shama Junction and share-taxi to Shama. Room at Hotel Applause. Visited slave trading fort of Fort St. Sebastian. |
| Oct. 21 | Birding day trip to Nsuta Forest with Kwame Brown. |
| Oct. 22 | Birding day trip to Nsuta Forest with Kwame Brown. Dropped in Cape Coast. Room at Mighty Victory Hotel. |
| Oct. 23 | AC van (after waiting three hours) to New Edubiase. Taxi to Breku. Met Samson and set up camp at old school under a shelter. Afternoon visit to Picathartes site beyond village of Bonkro. |
| Oct. 24 | Morning birding along Bonkro forest trails. Motorbike to New Edubiase. Stayed at Hotel Boa Temaa. |
| Oct. 25 | Trotro to Bekwai, trotro to Kuntanase, share-taxi to Kwaso, trotro to Accra Road, trotro to Kubease and taxi to Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary. Stayed at park guesthouse. Birded along main road in sanctuary. |
| Oct. 26 | Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary. |
| Oct. 27 | Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary. |
| Oct. 28 | Taxi to Ejisu, share-taxi to main highway, trotro to Mampong, share-taxi to Ejura, share-taxi to Nkoranza and share-taxi to Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary. Afternoon hike with guide in sanctuary. Stayed at sanctuary guesthouse. |
| Oct. 29 | Morning visit on my own to sanctuary. Share-taxi to Nkoranza and share-taxi to Techiman. Room at Agyeiwaa Memorial Hotel. |
| Oct. 30 | Share-taxi to Banda Nkwanta. Visited mosque. Trotro to Bole. Visited Bole Mosque. Stayed at Mom and Dad's Hotel. |

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| Oct. 31 | Trotro to Sawla. Long 3-hr wait for trotro to Larabanga. Taxi to Mole Motel. Explored grounds including viewpoint. Stayed at Mole Motel. |
| Nov. 1 | Mole NP. Morning walk below escarpment. Afternoon visit to grassland area for Forbes's Plover and Sun Lark. |
| Nov. 2 | Mole NP. Morning at airstrip and first part of Samole Loop. Afternoon back to Samole Loop. |
| Nov. 3 | Mole NP. Morning at Mognori River area. Afternoon on the Samole Loop and airstrip. |
| Nov. 4 | Morning around airstrip and adjacent Mognori Road. Afternoon on the Yagbon Loop. |
| Nov. 5 | Birded on grounds and at viewpoint at Mole Motel for a couple of hours in morning. Daniel (my guide) took me by motorbike to Damongo. Trotro to Tamale. AC van to Bolgatanga. Stayed in great room at Mama's Place, a wonderful base. |
| Nov. 6 | Share-taxi to Navrongo. Afternoon visit to Lake Tono Dam. Stayed at Hotel Mayaca. |
| Nov. 7 | Morning visit to Lake Tono Dam. Visited Cathedral of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows in Navrongo. Share taxi back to Bolga. Room at Mama's Place. |
| Nov. 8 | Day trip to Sirigu. |
| Nov. 9 | Trotro to Walewale. Three hour wait for trotro to Nalerigu, then a trotro to Nakpanduri. Walked along Gambaga escarpment on the Bawku Road. Room at Sillim Guesthouse. |
| Nov. 10 | Birding Gambaga escarpment. |
| Nov. 11 | Motorbike to Garu. Trotro to Bawku. Room at Sunrise Guesthouse. |
| Nov. 12 | Morning visit with car and driver to Sapeliga Road and White Volta site. Trotro from Bawku to Bolga. Room at Mama's Place. |
| Nov. 13 | Share-taxi to Paga. Visited the Chief's Pool to see crocodiles. Visited Paga Pia's Palace. Share-taxi back to Bolga. |
| Nov. 14 | Share-taxi to Tongo. Motorbike up to birding site in Tongo Hills. Returned to Bolga and took afternoon VVIP bus heading south. |
| Nov. 15 | Early morning drop-off at Bunso Junction. Waited for Linda Dor Restaurant to open to get breakfast. Share-taxi to Kibi. Room at Adwoa Asantewaa Guesthouse. |
| Nov. 16 | Birding ridge trail at Atewa. |
| Nov. 17 | Birding "goldfields" road near Bunso Junction and ridge trail. |
| Nov. 18 | Birding ridge trail. |
| Nov. 19 | Share-taxi to Bunso Junction and trotro to Accra. Room at Sleepy Hippo Hotel. |
| Nov. 20 | Accra. |
| Nov. 21 | Taxi to airport. Kenya Airways 502 to Freetown, Sierra Leone. |

## Sites Visited

### *Sakumono (Sakumo) Lagoon*

This lagoon, on the outskirts of the city of Tema, lies about one hour from Accra. I was told that trotros left from Nkrumah Circle (known simply as "Circle"), and since The Sleepy Hippo Hotel where I was staying was close to Circle, I decided to catch one there instead of at Tema Station. Circle is quite chaotic, but I did manage to find a small "station" with onwards transport to Tema on the western edge of Circle.

We took the coastal road into Tema, and just before reaching the city, I could see a large open area of grassland and a little bit of water to my left on the other side of a railway track. I really had no first-hand description about how to effectively bird this site, so I hopped off the trotro and crossed over to the railway track and walked along it in the direction of the city centre of Tema. There was very little open water, and I did find some paths into the grassland that I could follow. The most productive path was found not far from the far edge of the lagoon which I reached again by simply following the railway tracks.

As I feared, my visit was too early in the season for much in the way of migratory species, and there was surprisingly very little open water, despite the fact there had been more rain than normal during the rainy season which was still in progress. It made me wonder if there was some other area of the lagoon that had more open water of which I was unaware. I found mostly common species, but Winding Cisticola was vocal and displaying, Yellow-billed Shrike was nice, and I had my only sighting of Little Bittern for the trip. The weather was rather miserable - windy with a spitting rain - so after I crossed the breadth of the lagoon by following the railway tracks with the occasional foray into the grassland, I flagged down a trotro back to Accra.

### *Atewa Range*

My favourite birding site due to great birds, ease of access and no restrictions on visiting. I decided to catch a trotro to the village of Kibi from the Neoplan Station in Accra, just a short distance west of Nkrumah Circle. It took about two hours to get to Kibi and a ticket cost 18 cedi, the local currency, where, at the time of my visit, 1 USD got about 4.8 cedi. Most road maps seem to be inaccurate in situating Kibi, even the map in the Bradt Guidebook. Kibi is not on the main road to Bunso Junction and onward to Kumasi from Accra. We turned left off the main road before reaching Bunso Junction on to another road that looped around through several towns and on to Kibi, and eventually to Asikam, Adukrom, Sagyamase and Asiakwa before re-joining the main road to Kumasi just south of Bunso Junction. Accommodations are available at Kibi and Asiakwa for access to the Atewa Range. I chose the Adwoa Asantewaa Guesthouse in Kibi. It was a nice place - single rooms, depending on amenities were 60-80 cedi and came with hot water and attached bathroom. The guesthouse is about a 15 minute walk from the centre of town. Grab a taxi on arrival for 5 cedi instead of walking with bags. The location of the

guesthouse is on google maps. There are a couple of other hotels in Kibi, but they are even further away from the centre. Kibi was a good choice because grabbing a taxi to access the birding site early in the morning is no problem from the little taxi station along the main highway in the centre of town. A share-taxi route runs on a fill-up-and-go basis from Kibi to Bunso Junction for 5 cedi per person, but a taking private taxi to drop you off at the access point for the birding site is 20 cedi, essentially the entire fare for the normal four passengers to go all the way to Bunso Junction. I simply took a private taxi (ask for "dropping" to indicate a private and not share-taxi) instead of waiting for the share taxi to fill up. Extremely budget conscious birders could wait and catch a passing trotro for 3 cedi instead! I typically got a dropping taxi at 5:45 a.m. and was on site by 6:00.

For some reason, descriptions I had read of this site implied that it could be difficult to locate the trailhead for the ridge trail, but, in fact, it is quite easy. The village you want to ask the taxi driver to take you to is Sagyamase, or if you simply ask for the "forest", most drivers will know exactly what you mean and drop you right at the correct spot. Upon leaving Kibi, you will pass through the tiny community of Asikam and then the equally tiny community of Adukrom (there are signs for each). The next, somewhat larger village, is Sagyamase. However, you do not want to go to Sagyamase. Just before you reach the village, and before you can even see the first buildings, there is a road on your left which, since it angles away from you, is easy to miss. Tell the driver to drop you here. At this junction you will see a big sign advocating for the protection of endangered primates. Follow this road and you will pass a marshy area on your left. If it is early in the morning, you will no doubt see many local people coming to a water source on the right. Continue on through farmbush and plantations, and after about 500 metres from the main highway, the road emerges into a large open area. Immediately on the right is the beginning of the ridge trail. Ignoring the ridge trail for now, you can explore the open area for edge species, and if you stay as far to the left as you can as you continue forward, you will reach a little path that takes you down to an area of open pits, remnants of the former mining operations in this area. The mining area is also worthy of exploration.

However, it is the ridge trail for which this site is so famous. The first bit of the trail passes through a bit of farmbush and more disturbed areas and takes you to a bluish metal gate. It is this stretch, up to the blue gate, that is a good spot for Puvel's Illadopsis. From the blue gate, the trail essentially goes up to a big clearing where the trail noticeably flattens out. This clearing isn't exactly the top, as the trail does continue to climb at a very slight grade beyond the clearing. I had read of a "trail to the right" after the clearing as being the place for Nimba Flycatcher. This description was not very useful as there is no separate trail to the right at all. After getting to the far end of the clearing, the main trail does veer a little bit to the right, and if you look carefully, there is what seemed to be another small, more overgrown trail coming up from below on the left which merged with the main trail at this point. After exploring the area, my suspicion is that this is what was meant by others. I could not find a separate trail heading off to the right. Nevertheless, the main trail does continue on, climbing ever so slightly and then

seeming to level off and begin a slight descent. I walked for at least a good hour beyond the big clearing and the trail kept going and I really don't know how long it runs. Several attempts here did not turn up the Nimba Flycatcher, but I believe this area beyond the clearing is also the best place for Red-fronted Antpecker, and I finally did find a female in a mixed-species flock here.

The hike up to the big clearing is not terribly difficult. I am not a super fast hiker, and with that in mind, it took me about 1 ½ hours from the blue gate to reach the big clearing near the top, hiking at a constant pace and essentially without stopping at all. Walking at a birding pace will take much longer. I think on my first visit I took more than five hours.

Another key bird for this site is Blue-moustached Bee-eater. On my first visit to Atewa, I spent five days on the ridge trail and struck out completely. I left feeling very frustrated in missing what is supposed to be a virtual guarantee. I did return again to Atewa at the end of my trip, and although I had seen the bee-eater in Ankasa, it was a poor view and I was hoping to get a better look. This time, they were reliable just before and just after the big clearing near the top, and I do believe that this is the best area for this species based on other accounts. All told, I spent a lot of time at this birding site, much more than most people will. But the birding was great, despite the hunting pressure I mentioned previously, and I really liked the spot.

There is one nearby area that warrants description. If you continue by road from Sagyamase towards Bunso Junction, the road will join up with the main Accra to Kumasi highway prior to reaching Bunso Junction. Just as the road swings around to the right to join the Accra-Kumasi highway, you will see a dirt road to the left which goes to a gold mining operation. I was told of a marshy area a short distance along this road that was a site for Marsh Tchagra and Lowland Sooty Boubou. I spent a couple of hours here one morning on my second visit to Atewa, but unfortunately did not see either of these targets. I did find a nice male Red-headed Quelea however, my only one for the trip.

I should note that Bunso Junction has the excellent Linda Dor Restaurant. After an intense morning and early afternoon of birding around Atewa, I would flag down a passing share-taxi to Bunso Junction and have a big meal at Linda Dor before taking the share-taxi back to Kibi. Food options in Kibi amounted to one little restaurant, but everybody eats at the food stalls on the street centred around the taxi station. Lastly, when I returned to Atewa on an overnight bus from up north in Bolgatanga, I got off the bus at Bunso Junction very early in the morning and decided to inquire about rooms at the Linda Dor Hotel that I had seen on my first visit back in September. The hotel is across the massive parking lot from the aforementioned restaurant and is quite new I believe. Well, at the front desk of the hotel, I was greeted by the rudest individual I met during my entire stay in Ghana. I had a look at a single room which had a price of 150 cedi and was, at most, marginally nicer than my previous guesthouse in Kibi. To top it off, she wanted to charge me a large early check-in fee, despite the fact the room was empty and there didn't appear to be many, if any, other guests. So, I simply left and caught a share–taxi to

Kibi and checked in to the Adwoa Asantewaa Guesthouse again. I definitely would not recommend staying at the Linda Dor Hotel.

***Shai Hills Resource Reserve***

From Kibi, I took a share-taxi to Bunso Junction and at the trotro station, caught a trotro to Koforidua. At the trotro station in Koforidua, I asked around about onward transportation to Doryumu Junction, a crossroads at the entrance to the Shai Hills Reserve. I was told a trotro going to Tema would pass Doryumu Junction, and after taking some lonely back roads, sure enough I did reach my destination and jumped off the trotro right at the entrance to Shai Hills.

I made enquiries at the visitor's centre, and after some initial confusion and waiting around, I met with William, the park ranger, and arranged a plan with him for the afternoon and the next morning. I was planning to camp, but a new option is to stay in a very simple park guesthouse just a short walk from the visitor's centre for 50 cedi for a room, and I arranged with the staff for a meal of rice and chicken for dinner.

William and I headed out on foot into the grassland at 2:30 and stayed out until dusk. There was much activity in the grassland with nice sightings of Senegal Parrot, Violet Turaco, Croaking Cisticola, Short-winged Cisticola, Senegal Eremomela and Double-spurred Francolin amongst others. As dusk approached, we walked over to an area with rocky inselbergs and found a female Mocking Cliff Chat, a small covey of Stone Partridge and my only Black-capped Babblers of the trip. After dinner, William, who lives with his family at Sayu Camp, returned to pick me up and we spent about two hours travelling the dirt roads in the reserve by motorbike looking for nocturnal creatures. From a birding perspective, both Plain and Long-tailed Nightjars were seen, the latter being particularly common.

William came back to pick me up first thing the next morning and we went by motorbike about 8 km along the main highway to a second entrance to the reserve that is used to access Sayu Camp just a short distance off the road. We parked the motorbike at his home and spent a few hours walking the roads to Sayu Cave and back. New species in the grassland included Purple Glossy-Starling, Vinaceous Dove, Blue-bellied Roller, Yellow-crowned Gonolek and Piapiac. The forest grove around Sayu Cave is a site for Oriole Warbler and we did find a pair. Green Turaco and Splendid Sunbird were also found around the cave.

***Ada Foah***

Leaving Shai Hills, I flagged down a passing trotro going to Ashaiman where I found another to Ada Foah. This is not a birding site, but rather a location where it is possible to co-ordinate nighttime visits with the Ghana Wildlife Division to the beach to observe nesting sea turtles at this time of year. I arrived in the afternoon and found a room at the Ezime Guesthouse, centrally located in this little village. I asked the manager at the guesthouse to try to make arrangements with the wildlife division for a visit that

evening. I spent some time walking around this sleepy little town and came back to find out that it wouldn't be possible to visit the turtle beach this evening. The manager said that he hoped it would be possible for the next night. I decided to stay another day, and did my best to keep myself interested by walking around the town and nearby areas, managing to see a pair of Oriole Warblers about 200 m west of my hotel, and a pair of Mottled Spinetails later in the day, my only sighting of this species for my trip. I met with the manager later in the day and he informed me that it wouldn't be possible to visit the turtles this evening either. Feeling a bit annoyed at the difficulty in arranging this, I asked him why and he said that in order to visit the nesting beach, you have to go by 4x4 and the man who had the key to the vehicle couldn't be found!

***Keta Lagoon***

As I was making my way to Togo, I decided to stop off at the Keta Lagoon for a day to see what I could find. The lagoon is a magnet for migratory waterbirds, and although mid-September was a bit too early, I felt it was worthwhile having a look. From Ada Foah, I first took a share-taxi to Ada Kasseh, another to Sogakope and a third that followed the coastal road along a narrow strip of land separating the lagoon from the ocean, and I stopped off at the town of Woe (pronounced "way") and found a nice room at Max's Hotel for 70 cedi. I thought Woe would be a good choice because a foreign NGO built a birdwatching hide at the lagoon nearby. However, upon making enquiries, I found out that once the NGO left, nobody maintained the hide and it fell to the ground a little while ago! I went out to the site but there were no birds around anyway. At least the manager at Max's Hotel prepared a wonderful barbecued tilapia for dinner.

***Kpalimé Area (Togo)***

Upon my initial arrival in Accra, the immigration officer only stamped my passport for 60 days, which I guess is the norm, and since I was going to be in Ghana for a couple of weeks beyond 60 days, I had to go to Togo, whereby upon my return, I would be given another 60 days. I flagged down a trotro from Woe going to the border town of Aflao. At the Togo border, it is possible to purchase a 7-day visa. Border formalities were slow, but straightforward and I passed through a tiny door in the tiny immigration office to find myself suddenly in the chaotic city of Lomé which extends right to the border. I was heading to the city of Kpalimé, about two hours away. I had no idea where to catch a taxi-brousse (bush-taxi) going my way, but some locals gave me a hand finding a motorbike driver to take me to a small plot of land in the depths of the city where there magically was a taxi-brousse heading to Kpalimé waiting for passengers.

Upon arrival in Kpalimé, I found a room at the Hotel Chez Fanny for 18000 CFA (about USD 32) where I spent a few days relaxing, walking around the city, and exploring a few minor sites nearby, including a morning hike at Mt. Kloto where I found my only African Shrike-Flycatcher and Red-tailed Leafloves of the trip.

***Mountain Paradise Lodge***

A motorbike from Kpalimé took me through the backroads to the very sleepy border with Ghana and through to the first village in Ghana where I found a share-taxi heading to Ho. However, once we hit the Ho-Hohoe highway, I got out and found a motorbike to take me to the Mountain Paradise Lodge just a few km north of the village of Biakpa.

The Volta region is little-visited and is certainly not on the normal birding circuit in Ghana. Nevertheless, the hills offer a bit of a respite from the oppressive heat and humidity of the rest of the country. Although I did contemplate doing some more significant hiking, I still found the heat a bit much even here, and my birding exploits didn't take me far from the lodge itself. The lodge is very laid-back and quite comfortable, and I enjoyed my three-day stay. A word of advice - put your order in for food and a preferred time to eat well in advance to increase your chances at least of not having to wait too long to eat!

There is a waterfall trail beginning on the lodge grounds which is easily located by walking from the lodge back in the direction of the highway, and an obvious trail will set off to your right and drop somewhat steeply down to a river and beyond. Take an immediate left after crossing the water and the trail loops around to the main road and you can simply follow the main road back up to the lodge property taking only a couple of hours round-trip. It was along the first stretch of this trail that I actually had some really good success, with my only sightings of Kemp's Longbill, Brown Illadopsis, Red-cheeked Wattle-eye and the *chloronata* subspecies of Olive-green Camaroptera for my trip.

Otherwise, I birded along the main road from the lodge in both directions. From the lodge, if you walk back out to the main road and turn right and follow the road around a couple of curves, you will see a big silk cotton tree on your left, and there is a trail into some farmbush starting right here that is worth exploring.

***Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary***

The Mountain Paradise Lodge is a good base to visit this little sanctuary. I caught a trotro passing by the lodge and got off after travelling only a few km at the village of Logba Alekpeti where the road to the sanctuary is met. Transportation here to the sanctuary was possible, but I chose to walk the 5 km instead, seeing a nice flock of Pied-winged Swallows along the way. The sanctuary has been set up to protect the Mona Monkey, and sightings are guaranteed as habituated troops are quite common. There is a visitor's centre in the village of Tafi Atome where I paid my entrance and guide fee. My visit to the actual sanctuary seemed to be rather short, only lasting 40 minutes at the most, but long enough to have close encounters with numerous Mona Monkeys. The sanctuary is not worth visiting for birds however - I don't think I even saw a bulbul or Pied Crow at all! I returned to the Mountain Paradise Lodge by motorbike, and along the way, I saw a flock of swifts circling low over an opening in the forest near the road. They

were of a smallish size, all dark black with no white on the rump and seemed to be the scarce Bates's Swift.

***Kalakpa Resource Reserve***

Leaving the Mountain Paradise Lodge, I first caught a passing trotro to Ho and then, from an adjacent station across the street from the main trotro station, a share-taxi to the village of Abutia Kloe where the taxi run terminates. The wildlife office is on the left, just a short distance further along the road. Not sure if I really needed to check in here as I paid no fee and signed no papers, but the officers found a motorbike for me and we set off along the 3-4 km access road to the reserve headquarters. I met the main forest ranger and made arrangements for an afternoon hike and one for the next morning as well. There is no accommodation or food available, but I brought enough food to keep me alive and I camped in the ample space in the compound at HQ.

This was still the rainy season, and this year's rains had been unusually heavy, so much so that the trails in the reserve were mostly underwater. In speaking with the ranger about wanting to find Baumann's Greenbul and Capuchin Babbler, my two key targets, he assured me that he knew where to find them. Our afternoon hike for a couple of hours took in a portion of the reserve that was completely underwater. I borrowed some rubber boots that didn't quite ride up my leg high enough to keep out all of the water, but they were better than nothing. During our hike, I saw a grand total of nothing, not a single bird in the forest. Obviously, the flooded forest floor must have resulted in birds abandoning the area. Dejected, I returned to camp and it started to rain and rain and rain. No chance to go looking for Black-shouldered Nightjar which is supposedly found along the entrance road.

Early in the morning, around 4 am, I heard an African Wood Owl calling nearby and a short search produced two birds right in the HQ compound. Before dawn, I tried for Black-shouldered Nightjar along the access road, flushing one unidentifiable nightjar. No calls were heard. As we started our morning hike, I was preparing myself for the worst, but we headed to slightly higher ground that was not underwater and, in some open grassland with some sparse trees, found a wonderful pair of Baumann's Greenbuls, and shortly afterwards in a more forested area, a wary flock of Capuchin Babblers. Feeling happy and relieved, we returned to HQ. I broke camp, paid my fee which, with guiding and camping, came to something like 60 cedi - I gave a good tip too. The ranger drove me back to Abutia Kloe by motorbike and I re-traced my steps to Ho and decided to spend the night at the Kekeli Hotel which had nice simple rooms and free wifi.

***Winneba***

Leaving Ho, I took an air-conditioned van to Accra, a taxi to the sprawling Kaneshie Station and a trotro to Winneba and found a single room at the Lagoon Lodge for 60 cedi.

The Muni-Pomadze Ramsar site is just a bit west of town, but I had no information about any specific area that was good for birds. After making some inquiries, I walked to

the beach and took the road west past the Windy Beach Lodge Resort. In order to continue following the beach, the path turns to sand and passes through a small fishing village and beyond with the lagoon on the right and the ocean on the left. All told, I walked a few km from the town, but saw little other than a few shorebirds. It was perhaps too early for large numbers of migratory birds, but there very well may have been better spots.

Good grassland habitat, which I will call the Winneba Plains, is accessible from town. I arranged at my hotel for a taxi early one morning, and negotiated a price of 20 cedi for the driver to take me back out to the junction of the main Accra to Cape Coast road. At the junction, we turned left and drove for maybe about 2 km to a Shell filling station with an attached fast food place on the right hand side of the highway. Immediately on the left side of the highway was a dirt track. We turned down this track and proceeded straight for less than 1 km before water-filled ruts in the road prevented any further advance. I got out here and spent the morning exploring the surrounding grassland on foot. The area isn't large, and I continued walking away from the main road where there was some nice, birdy scrub, and soon came to a marshy area that was quite wet. To the left was an old bridge and after climbing up and over this bridge, reaching some large buildings on the other side, the habitat became much more open, but other than a few cisticolas, not much was seen here. I walked back and explored the scrub a bit more, including along a side road to the west, but it soon got very hot by mid-morning and the activity dropped dramatically. A site certainly worthy of a morning's birding. It was the only place I saw Black-faced Quailfinch and Moustached Grass Warbler on my trip. Other notable species were Yellow-throated Longclaw, Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Slender-billed Weaver and three species of cisticola. To return to the town of Winneba, I flagged down a trotro back to the junction which is called Swedru Junction, and here I took a share-taxi back to town.

Winneba is also a great place to find nesting sea turtles at the right time of year. I was there near the beginning of the season for Olive Ridley Turtles, but a bit early for Leatherbacks. Upon arrival, I asked the manager of the Lagoon Lodge to call the Wildlife Office to see if I could arrange for a night tour, and luckily a tour was going out in two nights. A tour first involves being picked up from your hotel by officers from the Wildlife Division, and I joined a group of about eight people in the back of a pickup truck for a drive out to the Ramsar site, a bit further than I had walked the day before, and we then proceeded to start walking the beach. The nesting area runs a total of about 4 km along the beach. Sometimes visits take in the whole route, necessitating a number of hours of walking, but we found two Olive Ridley Turtles without having to walk too far. A full description of the experience is accounted in the Reptile List near the end of this report. This was my first experience with nesting sea turtles, and for anyone interested in natural history, I would definitely recommend making an effort to arrange a tour.

***Kakum National Park***

Easily accessed by catching a trotro at the junction of the Accra-Cape Coast Highway and the road to Twifo Praso which passes the entrance to Kakum. This was one of the few trips on which I was overcharged - correct fare was 5.5 cedi and it took about an hour or so if I remember correctly on a poor road.

I stayed in a very simple room at the Rainforest Lodge inside the park near the visitor's centre. Although Isaac, the caretaker, is very nice and accommodating, I didn't enjoy the place. The room wasn't great and the only food available comes from the small restaurant attached to the visitor's centre. The restaurant closes at 4:00-4:30 in the afternoon, but beware of the food as it is really bad. The only time I was poisoned during my stay in Ghana was here.

From a birding standpoint, the main focus is the canopy walkway. I had read mixed reviews about it - some suggested it was great and others indicating that it didn't live up to expectations. My first morning visit was really good, so I did decide to go one more time, and although my second visit wasn't as active birdwise as the first, it was still worthwhile. It is easy to arrange for an early visit before the daytrippers from Cape Coast arrive. However, my guide failed to show up at 6:00 a.m. on my first visit, but Isaac took me in to the walkway, about a 30 minute walk away, and I got a different guide by the name of Stephen for my second visit. Birds of note on the canopy walkway that I saw infrequently elsewhere, or not at all, included Cassin's Hawk-Eagle, Black Dwarf Hornbill, Brown-cheeked Hornbill, Yellow-casqued Hornbill, Yellow-billed Barbet, Cassin's Honeybird, Golden Greenbul, Sharpe's Apalis, Violet-backed Hyliota, Chestnut-winged Starling, Yellow-mantled Weaver and Preuss's Weaver.

I didn't explore the trails within the park, other than the section connecting the entrance to the canopy walkway. It is possible to explore a small area without a guide as there is a trail, originating just to the right of the visitor's centre, that leads to a camping site. Just don't make it obvious that you're walking there alone. There had been reports of both Akun and Fraser's Eagle Owl around the park guesthouse, but they no longer roost there, perhaps due the disturbance caused by the building of a new children's park adjacent to the guesthouse. In fact, no nightbirds were seen or heard at all, just the ever-present shrieks of tree hyrax.

***Abrafo Forest***

Easily accessible by foot from Kakum with the advantage of no restrictions on access and no guide required. To find the forest, from the entrance to Kakum, walk back along the road in the direction of Cape Coast for about 1 km or so to the village of Abrafo. Continue walking through to the end of the village until you see a large school on the right and a sign saying Natilla School Complex, presumably the name of the school. At this point, there will be a dirt road to the right. Follow this dirt road for maybe 4-5 km, passing through farmbush and forest pockets. The farmbush was quite active birdwise, but I didn't see anything not observed elsewhere aside from a distant Fanti Saw-wing.

The road terminates at an oil palm plantation. The trail into the forest supposedly begins here on the left hand side, but all I could find were pathways into the plantation. Perhaps I didn't explore carefully enough, but I then walked back the way I came and found another access into forest that proved quite good. To find this trail, my instructions are written from the viewpoint of one walking from Kakum. As you walk towards the end of the road, you will come to the first spot where the forest canopy actually extends over the road. This was only a few hundred metres before the end of the road. At this point, there was a large puddle of water in the road which I suspect was more or less permanent since on the left hand side of the road someone had placed five wooden boards for people to walk on and around the water. Just a short distance ahead, I found a trail to the left. At this point, to the right of the road, the forest opened up and a lone, tall tree could be seen not far off the road in an open area. I took this trail to the left and immediately saw my only Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill of my trip. Following the trail, you initially have the forest edge on the left with plantations on the right, but the trail soon enters the forest proper. The trail splits several times and it is a bit of a maze, and although there was a fair amount of wood-cutting activity going on, the birding was good and in a particularly wet area, I found a great White-spotted Flufftail. It had taken me about 2 ½ hours to walk from Kakum to the trail at a birding pace, and I spent no more than 1-2 hours in the forest by which time it had gotten so hot that activity had dropped dramatically. The walk back was brutal as there was no shade at all.

***Twifo Praso***

Easily accessed by taking a trotro from Cape Coast past the entrance to Kakum on a bumpy road, and taking a total of around two hours or so. The reason to come here is to reach a site that is reliable for Rock Pratincole, White-throated Blue Swallow, both of which I found, and White-headed Lapwing which I missed. The road north to Twifo Praso ends at a T-junction. Taking the road to the left, after a short walk you come to a large bridge over the Pra River. It is here that I found a couple of swallows in flight from the bridge. The water was very high, owing to the heavy rains, and exposed rocks were limited to a couple of small ones quite a distance away, so far that even in the scope, the pratincoles looked like blobs. I could only find views of the river from the bridge itself. I tried walking a bit below the bridge along the bank closest to the town, but I couldn't find any proper access. During times of low-water, the situation perhaps may be different. There is no real reason to stay in Twifo Praso, and catching a trotro back south from the centrally located trotro station was easy.

***Brenu Beach Road***

For anyone wishing to go birding along this road, I would highly recommend staying at the Kofi and Adjoa's Esteem Guesthouse. The guesthouse is found in the tiny village of Ayensudo Junction, about 15 km west of Elmina, and is located about 50 m south of the junction along the Brenu Beach Road. Rooms go for about 60-110 cedi and are quite good.

The attached restaurant does very nice food, although it's best to plan ahead and give your order early as everything is prepared from scratch. I used this place as a convenient base for both birding along the Brenu Beach Road and also for visiting the slave-trading forts at both Cape Coast and Elmina as I never had to wait more than about 30 seconds to catch a trotro along the highway and it was at most maybe 30 minutes to Cape Coast. For me at least, it was much nicer to stay here than in the noisy and busy villages of either Cape Coast or Elmina. Despite the guesthouse being so close to the main road, there is very little traffic noise, and of course the birding site starts just outside your door.

The 4-5 km road to Brenu Beach offers nice relaxing birding in the coastal scrub with very little traffic along the road other than the occasional share-taxi running from the junction to the beach and back, and friendly local people on foot. There are occasional paths branching off the Brenu Beach Road that are worth some exploration; the best one I found was not too far from the guesthouse and branched to the right just after the Hope Academy School, and almost opposite what looked like a large private residence. This spot is readily visible on google maps. Most of my birding took place simply along the road. As you get closer to Brenu Beach, there is a big marshy area. I regret not spending more time here as this perhaps may have been a good spot for Marsh Tchagra which is reported along this road and which I did not see anywhere in Ghana. I never did follow the road all the way to the beach, and I simply walked back to the guesthouse, although flagging down a cheap share-taxi would have been possible.

Since I was using the guesthouse as a base for exploring the area and not just birding, I spent five nights here and walked along the Brenu Beach Road on parts of three days. Notable birds seen along the road were Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, Black-rumped Waxbill, Pied-winged Swallow, Oriole Warbler, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Black-bellied Seedeater, Western Bluebill and African Hobby.

***Monkey Hill***

On my way west towards Ankasa, I spent one night in Takoradi at the Ahenfie Hotel where a single room was 70 cedi. Early the next morning, I decided to try my luck at Monkey Hill, mentioned in the Bradt Guide to Ghana as a location for Spot-nosed Monkey and Olive Colobus. Just a short distance away from the Ahenfie Hotel, the entrance to Monkey Hill is just off the northeastern side of Paa Grant Circle. A paved entry road climbs the forested hill and you soon come to the top. As I was walking up, I started to get the feeling that this was not necessarily a wise thing to do first thing in the morning in a big city with nobody else around. Sure enough, at the top of the hill was what seemed to be an old, abandoned building which housed at least a couple of youngish males who did take a not too subtle interest in my binoculars, mistaking them for a camera. I talked and joked around with them for a bit, but feeling the need to make an exit, I said I needed to leave to meet some friends and left. On the walk down, a man walking up cautioned me about this being a place where there have been armed robberies. Although I did see a nice troop of Spot-nosed Monkeys, I don't recommend this location, especially if you are by

yourself, and only include it here as a warning to be careful.

***Ankasa Protected Area***

I had been in contact with Mark Williams of Ashanti African Tours about requesting information regarding their new accommodations at both Ankasa and Bonkro. Neither was up and running at the time of my arrival, but Mark and I exchanged a few emails while I was in country, and he very generously offered to have one of his guides join me for my trip to Ankasa at no charge - I was just to pay his travel expenses. I accepted his gracious offer and met up with the guide Philip Senyo at the Ahenfie Hotel in Takoradi in the morning and we proceeded to take a trotro west towards Ankasa. We alighted at the entrance road to Ankasa, just a few hundred metres beyond the tiny village of Sowadadzem, at least I think that was the name of it as there was no sign for the village, although there was a big sign for Ankasa at the junction road. There was a small motorbike garage right at this junction, but nobody was willing to take us to the Frenchman's Farm so Philip went back to the village and found two fellows who agreed to take us there for 5 cedi, a pretty reasonable charge.

At the time of my visit, Ankasa was a difficult place to visit independently. Access was no problem, but the only accommodation nearby is the Frenchman's Farm where I did stay, but I didn't like it there. The cabin was fine, but the food was mediocre and the place just seemed disorganized. Also, it's a 30-minute walk to the entrance gate for the park, and coming back after a long day required a miserable climb up a big hill before reaching the farm which I dreaded each time. My original plan when organizing my trip was to camp at the visitor's centre, but seeing as I was not travelling with my own cooking equipment, and that non-perishable food to keep myself alive was virtually non-existent, it would have been a challenge. Also, since Ankasa sees few visitors, the park officials make themselves pretty scarce (I only ever saw one official at the park gate once) and convincing them to guide me in the park for anything other than short visits would likely have been challenging. However, Ashanti African Tours is well on their way to completing some impressive accommodations right at the entrance to Ankasa which would be far preferable to the Frenchman's Farm. Nevertheless, the Frenchman's Farm is found by taking the access road from the main highway and just before reaching the entrance gate to Ankasa, there is a road branching off to the right just at the village of Old Ankasa. Take this road and after climbing the big hill, it's just a short distance to the Frenchman's Farm which is found on the left just before the road ends. There is no sign but you can't miss seeing the cabins.

On our first day in the park, Philip and I started early in the morning with a packed lunch and walked along the main road straight through the park to what's called Nkwanta Camp, an old establishment where there used to be a campsite, but it's no longer possible to stay there. The buildings at Nkwanta Camp are not actually visible directly from the road, but a dirt road branches off the main road to the right which leads to the camp and is easy to follow. Instead, we kept going straight which took us to three small pools. From

Nkwanta Camp, it took us about 25 minutes to walk to the first pool which is on the left. This is the largest of the pools and it was here we found both White-bellied and Shining-blue Kingfishers. The second pool is just a short distance further along the road, also on the left, but is small and easy to miss if you don't know it's there. The 3rd pool is about another 15 minute walk away, not far after passing under the electrical wires for the second time. The wires are taking electricity to Cote D'Ivoire. It was at the third pool that we succeeded in finding a Hartlaub's Duck, getting a great look at it. The forest cut along the electrical pylon towers is supposed to be a good site for Blue-moustached Bee-eater, hornbills, and at dusk, Spot-breasted Ibis. Without transport, and not relishing a very long walk back in the dark, we didn't try for the ibis, and I later missed it at Nsuta Forest as well. I only spent a short period of time here around the pylons, but did find Great Blue Turaco, a scarce bird in Ghana.

Going back to Nkwanta Camp, we checked out the bamboo cathedral which is accessed by taking a trail starting from the back of the camp. The large stands of bamboo are just a short distance along this trail, and this is supposed to be an excellent birding spot, but the clouds were rolling in and it was looking like some serious rain was imminent so we started back. It soon began to pour and we walked back through a heavy downpour all the way to the entrance gate. I had read that it was 8 km to Nkwanta Camp, but it took exactly two hours of fast-paced walking to reach the entrance gate from Nkwanta Camp, so I suspect that the true distance is greater. We stopped for nothing except for a few moments as we were surprised to find a Blue-moustached Bee-eater perched right along the road.

There are other birding spots at Ankasa as well. For example, at the visitor's centre, if you go up and over to the left, you'll come to some other park buildings and a camping area. In behind this spot is a trail entering the forest which soon comes to a bridge over a small stream. Right along here we had White-bellied Kingfisher at the stream and Forest Robin in the forest. We didn't go much further along the trail. There are two spots to check for White-crested Tiger Heron which I didn't see. After passing the entrance gate, there is an open area on the left. Go down into this area and you'll see the water. It's worth checking here for the heron. The other spot is just a short distance further on along the main road where you'll see a trail dropping down to the right. Take this and an immediate left and, as you walk through some thin woodland, you'll reach a swampy area after maybe 50 m which is also reputedly a good place for the heron. That trail to the right off the main road actually continues into the forest and is worthwhile, although we only explored it a little bit, but we did flush a Fraser's Eagle-Owl there. Another trail, which apparently used to take you to an observation hide that is no longer there, branches off the main road to the right maybe an hour or so from the entrance gate. The trail is fairly obvious, and there is an old sign showing the way, but it doesn't stand out too well. We couldn't complete the trail because we came to a flooded area that was impassable, so we had to return to the main road. In reality, most of the birding we did at Ankasa was just along the main road. Without transport, we never returned all the

way to Nkwanta Camp after our first successful and wet attempt. Transport of any kind may have been useless anyway since the big gate blocking traffic from entering the park was always locked. For my four days of birding at Ankasa, the park warden charged me 80 cedi for entrance and another 80 cedi for birding without a park guide. I was not given a receipt for the 160 cedi and the money was suspiciously put into his pocket.

Philip was a great guy, very friendly, personable and an amazing guide. Some of the best eyes and ears I've ever seen. He certainly put my skills to shame. We did well at Ankasa, and amongst our best sightings were, aside from the birds I've already mentioned, Long-tailed Hawk, Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, Green-tailed and Red-tailed Bristlebills, Yellow-bearded Greenbul, Pale-breasted, Blackcap and Rufous-winged Illadopsises, Western Bronze-naped Pigeon, Brown-eared Woodpecker, Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, White-tailed Alethe, Copper-tailed Glossy Starling and Rufous-sided Broadbill. No luck with White-breasted Guineafowl. There was a small chance along the main road closer to Nkwanta Camp, but we missed it - in fact, Philip has never seen it so the bird must be pretty scarce. For further information about the new accommodations and facilities at Ankasa, it would be advisable to check out the website for Ashanti African Tours (www.ashantiafricantours.com) or email Mark Williams directly at info@ashantiafricantours.com

***Ebi River***

Upon leaving Ankasa, Philip and I returned to the village of Sowadadzem, and caught a share-taxi going to Half Assini Junction where we took another share-taxi going to Takoradi, although I said good-bye to Philip and got off at the town of Essiama which I thought would be a good base for exploring the nearby Ebi River and Half Assini. I had no information about hotels, but I had seen that there were several options when I had previously passed through the town on my way to Ankasa. Essiama is a bit of a beach town with several overpriced hotels. I settled on a single room for 60 cedi at Maggie's Guest House, a nice, friendly small establishment on the north side of the road at the far east end of Essiama. It did not have a restaurant, but a few options were within walking distance.

I decided to take a bit of a rest after arriving in Essiama, and the next morning, I walked the short distance to the centre of town. On my way into the centre of town, I found three Orange Weavers in a few small trees directly in front of the Sunny Corner Lodge. I then easily found a share-taxi that was going west and was dropped off at the big bridge over the Ebi River just before the village of Kambungli, less than 10 km from Essiama. The fare was 2 cedi. The river is a well-known site for Mangrove (Brown/Mouse-brown) Sunbird, Reichenbach's Sunbird and White-browed Forest Flycatcher. I saw both sunbirds, but the flycatcher has apparently become rare here and I missed it. There was no sign of Hartlaub's Duck which is also reported here. If you are dropped off just before the bridge, walk along the left (southern) side of the road towards the guardrails where I easily found two Reichenbach's Sunbirds. Once reaching the guardrail on the left, you will

soon see an obvious path on the left. Take this path and it quickly winds down to the river's edge and ends there. By simply waiting at the river's edge, it didn't take too long for a few Mangrove Sunbirds to come in for a good look. I explored the wetland area a bit by walking along the main highway for a short period of time, but I found nothing of note and decided to continue on to Half Assini.

***Half Assini***

A well-known site for Carmelite Sunbird. After finishing up at the Ebi River, I caught a trotro (6 cedi) to the Half Assini junction where the road to Half Assini meets the highway to Takoradi. There was a small share-taxi stand right at the junction, but strangely, no taxis to Half Assini, so I simply waited about 20 minutes by the side of the road and one came by (8 cedi). As you enter Half Assini, look out for the Hotel Gracia on the left hand side. Get off here and ask at the hotel for permission to look for the sunbird. The owners are very friendly and are used to birders dropping by. The sunbird is known to come to the bushes directly in front of the hotel building, or to the trees in the open field directly adjacent to and to the west of the hotel. It took about 90 minutes before a nice male Carmelite Sunbird came by and perched in a large tree in the adjacent field. The hotel has a restaurant and, as a token of my thanks, I had lunch there before catching a share-taxi back to the main highway and a trotro back to Essiama.

***Nsuta Forest***

I had read about this place being a good birding site, but I could find no useful logistical information about how to independently visit it. Thus, I contacted a guide by the name of Kwame Brown prior to leaving home, and we agreed on a two-day visit for a guiding fee of USD 50 per day and a vehicle with driver for USD 60 per day. We had exchanged various emails before I came to Ghana, and I confirmed everything with him while I was travelling in country as well. Despite this, the driver picked me up with virtually an empty tank of gas and Kwame informed me that I had to pay to fill up the fuel tank. At no time did he ever mention that this was an additional cost, and although I argued that fact, he claimed that he either did mention it or had forgotten to. I was pretty steamed, but I eventually relented and later in the day, we filled up the tank for USD 70, a figure I had not budgeted for as an independent and budget-conscious birder. This left a significant sour taste in my mouth, and after we finished our trip, I expressed my displeasure once more and suggested that, in the future, he has to be much more clear in terms of costs when dealing with clients. Not sure if he will change, but he knew the birding location well and had good eyes and ears. His email contact information is kwameb718@gmail.com.

As far as our trip is concerned, I arrived in the coastal town of Shama the day before our trip was to begin, and got a room at the Hotel Applause for 70 cedi. As we had planned, Kwame and the driver (who had left Cape Coast very early in the morning) met me before dawn at the Hotel Applause and we began our trip. Returning to the main Cape Coast-Takoradi highway, we turned right and headed east until we reached the a road that

went north to the town of Daboase (and on to Twifo Praso) just before crossing a bridge over the Pra River. We turned left on to this road, and we arrived in Daboase just after the sun had come up. We stopped in the middle of town where there were many, many roosting swallows on electrical wires, and found plenty of Preuss's Cliff Swallows, along with some more common species as well. Continuing north, we passed through a few smaller villages and then the road bisected a more forested region. This was the Nsuta Forest. I'm not sure it has any protected status, and there was certainly plenty of evidence of tree-felling. Kwame knew of a couple of trails into the forest accessed directly from the main road, and over two days, we walked those trails and, later each day when the temperature dropped, we walked along the main road hoping for flyovers of key species and this is where we tried to find owls and Spot-breasted Ibis at dusk and beyond, failing entirely to see them. The trails we walked were readily visible from the road, but I don't have any really good landmarks to provide directions, although gps co-ordinates are available on ebird.com for this birding site. For anyone desperately wanting to bird this site without a guide and private transportation, it probably could be done. The challenge would be getting to Daboase early in the morning (didn't appear to be any place to stay the night here, but maybe there is) since, as a relatively large town, there assuredly would be onward transportation along the highway to the forest.

I spent two full days at this site and the birding was very good. Notable birds seen in the forest included Rosy Bee-eater, African Piculet, Chestnut-capped Flycatcher, Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher, Maxwell's Black Weaver, Little Green Woodpecker, Rufous-sided Broadbill, Copper-tailed Glossy Starling and Bristle-nosed Barbet. Birds seen while walking along the main highway included Congo Serpent-Eagle, Sharpe's Apalis, Bat Hawk, Preuss's Weaver, Grey Parrot and Red-fronted Parrot.

***Bonkro Forest***

All birders coming to Ghana want to see the Yellow-headed Picathartes and this is certainly the best place to do just that. Coming from Cape Coast, I decided to upgrade to an air conditioned van heading to Kumasi, and disembarked at the town of New Edubiase. This small town has a junction road to the right which leads about 15 km to the little villages of Breku and Bonkro which are separated by about 500 m. Back at the junction in New Edubiase, there is a small taxi stand and it was easy to negotiate a taxi for 50 cedi after I filled up with some nice groundnut soup for lunch at a roadside stall.

Most people who visit the picathartes site arrive in the afternoon, make a visit to the site and then leave. As I was interested in taking some time to also explore the forest at Bonkro, I had contacted Mark Williams about the new guesthouse Ashanti African Tours is constructing at Bonkro, but it was not quite ready. This guesthouse is part of a fantastic ecotourism project Ashanti has co-ordinated with Breku and Bonkro, with the aforementioned guesthouse at Bonkro and a new school having just been completed at Breku a few days before my arrival. Mark suggested I find a fellow by the name of Samson at Breku who would take care of organizing my stay. Upon arrival, everybody in

Breku and Bonkro knows why you've come, and finding Samson was easy. We agreed that I should camp underneath the remnants of the old school at Breku, and Samson found someone who could cook some rice and fish for my dinner.

I was joined by guides from both Breku and Bonkro and we left maybe around 3:00 or so (I can't quite remember) to walk to the nesting site which took less than one hour. I was quite fortunate in that several picathartes were already around the nesting site just as I arrived, and I spent a fantastic 30 minutes or so enjoying an estimated seven different birds being very active. Although they showed no evidence of being disturbed by our presence, I felt like I had stayed long enough and wanted to err on the side of caution. It was a fantastic experience as they are such interesting birds to watch.

I had a nice dinner and camping under the roof of the remnants of one of the old school buildings was a wise choice as there was another very heavy rain at night. After the rain stopped, I unfortunately had to deal with some rather noisy goats that had decided the old school offered good shelter, and one young goat in particular bleated and bleated and bleated incessantly. Getting up several times to chase them off was only mildly successful.

I had wanted to go birding in the forest at Bonkro the next morning as I'd read reports of people claiming the forest was good, but it seemed few people had spent much time exploring it. There was at least one report (and probably only one) of someone seeing Western Wattled Cuckooshrike, and although I knew it was highly unlikely, I felt that since I was already there, it was worth a morning to try. Needless to say, I was unsuccessful. Samson, another guide and I went out after breakfast, and while I was kind of expecting to be taken to a different area of the forest, they ended up guiding me to one of the other picathartes nesting sites. We birded the trails for a few hours and then the farmbush on the way back to Bonkro, but the only birds of note were both heard-only: Long-tailed Hawk and Latham's Francolin. Nevertheless, it was a nice morning, but I'm unsure how extensive the trail system is here as I had difficulty gleaning information out of the guides.

All in all, the experience was wonderful. Staying in a tiny village (two of them in a sense), enjoying rural life and meeting some fine people who are very proud of the new school, and justifiably so as it is quite impressive, was a real highlight. And of course the picathartes! It was a great example of how the economic activity of birding has simultaneously led to the conservation of the forest and an improvement in the opportunities for the local people. Ashanti African Tours should be commended for all of their efforts here.

My next birding destination was the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary. But as it was already into the afternoon by the time I took down my tent, combined with the fact that I'd been on the road for quite awhile and the goats had disturbed my sleep, I decided just to return to New Edubiase to relax and take the afternoon off. I had heard horror stories of traffic chaos in Kumasi, and wanting to avoid the city by taking some of the backroads around Kumasi to get to Bobiri, and not knowing for sure about the frequency

of transportation, I felt an early start in the morning was a better choice. A ride on a motorbike for 20 cedi got me back to New Edubiase where I tried for a room at Tina's Holiday Inn, but the proprietor very strangely said they had no rooms despite the fact nobody was there. So I found a room at the Hotel Boa Temaa for 50 cedi instead. It was fine. Food was limited to street stalls in town, and I ended up having a nice conversation with a store owner as I ate my chicken and rice for dinner.

***Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary***

Leaving New Edubiase, and wanting to avoid Kumasi, I first took a trotro in the direction of Kumasi, but got off at the town of Bekwai. From the junction in Bekwai, I found another trotro going only as far as Kuntananse. Share-taxis are available in Kuntananse, but only going as far as Kwaso. From Kwaso, I found a trotro that continued along to intersect with the Kumasi-Accra road, but as this trotro was continuing to Kumasi, I got off at the junction and flagged down another trotro to Kubease and got off at the toll booth. As I was hungry, I found some breakfast at a roadside stall, and as a taxi was waiting right at the junction for the road to Bobiri, I asked for a lift for the going rate of 20 cedi. Despite the numerous transfers, the trip was fluid and efficient and I avoided the chaos of downtown Kumasi. I met the manager at the sanctuary and got a nice room for only 50 cedi. The guesthouse was quite comfortable with a quiet, open lounge area and a small library with a selection of books. I arranged for my meals with advance notice and the food was quite good. Beer and soft drinks were also available. All in all, it was a really nice place and worthy of the three nights I stayed there.

There isn't much in the way of trails at Bobiri aside from the main dirt road that bisects the forest in this small sanctuary. As you are arriving, you will pass through maybe about 1 km of forest before reaching the guesthouse, and beyond that, the same road continues. My explorations involved that first km or so of the road and maybe only a couple of km past the guesthouse where I reached a section of the road that was completely flooded and more or less impassable on foot without proper footwear or perhaps the willingness to swim (maybe a slight exaggeration). Speaking of swimming, at one of the enormous water-filled depressions in the terrible road, I had to essentially scramble over a small ridge to get around it. One time the branch I was holding on to broke, and for a brief moment, which no doubt seemed longer than it was, I sort of hovered in mid-air before gravity kicked in and down I went into the muddy water-filled hole.

This was my last forest-based birding site in the southern forests, and I was hoping to track down a few species I had yet to see. Of these, I did flush and get a glimpse of a single Ahanta Francolin, and I also tracked a calling Afep Pigeon, only to see it briefly as it flew out of the canopy of the tree it was in. I alsofound four Forest Woodhoopoes in a large mixed-species flock. Bobiri was a really good place for Congo Serpent-Eagle as I had a couple of close encounters with perched birds in the relatively open forest. Other particularly good sightings included Black Dwarf Hornbill, African

Piculet, Preuss's Weaver, Grey Parrot, Tropical Boubou, Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike and Bristle-nosed Barbet. Night birding proved frustrating. The only owl heard was Red-chested Owlet which was reliably vocal around the guesthouse an hour or more before dawn on each of my three mornings, but I could never manage to get a sighting. One morning at around 4:30, I did hear the call of Nkulengu Rail from the guesthouse, but it was not very close and in an area that was impassable. There was no sign of Brown Nightjar which is reputed to be found at Bobiri.

***Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary***

My desire to again avoid Kumasi necessitated another complex process to get to this sanctuary from Bobiri. I called the taxi driver who took me to Bobiri in order to arrange for a pickup and drop off in the village of Ejisu which is before Kumasi. I was expecting to be able to find direct transportation to at least Mampong, but none existed, so upon explaining where I wanted to go at the taxi stand in Ejisu, I was advised to take a share-taxi a short distance to what I think was the village of Nkwanta where I subsequently took a trotro to Mampong. Upon asking around in the somewhat larger village of Mampong, the best alternative resulted in me taking a share-taxi to Ejura, a share-taxi to Nkoranza and yet one last share-taxi to Fiema. The guesthouse at the sanctuary is about 1 km before the village of Fiema and I was dropped there. The route sounds convoluted and time-consuming, but there was essentially no waiting time involved at any of the different stages, and was likely still faster and less chaotic than going through Kumasi.

When I arrived at the guesthouse, there wasn't a soul around. I waited a bit, then it started to rain and I took shelter under a gazebo. Eventually a few fellows showed up who were researchers working on a scientific project in the reserve, and one of them said he would phone the caretaker who was away due to some family reason or illness, I don't quite remember. Anyway, someone showed up and I arranged for a room for 30 cedi and food for the evening and the next morning. There was an entrance fee of 30 cedi and I arranged for a guide to lead me into the adjacent forest in the afternoon. Our short walk lasted only about one hour. Lowe's Monkey was numerous and distant views were had of White-thighed Colobus. Not much in the way of birds however.

The next morning, I wanted to explore a bit on my own. In reality, a guide is not really necessary to find your way around the sanctuary. One entrance to the sanctuary is along a dirt path that starts essentially right across the road from the guesthouse. However, on our visit, we simply walked the main road in the direction of the village of Fiema, and after maybe 200-300 m, there was an obvious dirt path to the right which enters the forest. In the forest, there are several paths with some signs indicating the direction, but if you have your wits about you, it would be hard to get lost since there are quite a few local people using the pathways as well and the sanctuary is not really that large. On my solo visit I had great views of both primate species. Later in the morning, I left the sanctuary by flagging down a share-taxi to Nkoranza and then I took another

share-taxi to Techiman where I found a room at the Agyeiwaa Memorial Hotel for 110 cedi.

***Mole National Park***

Upon leaving Techiman, I spent a day visiting some of the old mosques at Banda Nkwanta and Bole, and found a room a few km north of Bole at Mom and Dad's Hotel for 70 cedi. It was a friendly place on this lonely back-door route to Mole National Park. Early the next morning, I easily flagged down a trotro heading north to Wa, but I descended at the junction town of Sawla. The road from Sawla across to Larabanga (for access to Mole) and beyond to join with the main highway to Tamale was paved a few years ago. Unfortunately, trotro traffic along the stretch of road from Sawla to Larabanga is infrequent, and I had my longest wait of three hours here for a trotro, a well-worn rust bucket, to fill up in Sawla. I actually paid for two additional fares just to get the thing on the road. Dropping at Larabanga, I was immediately met by a local taxi driver. There seems to be a set rate of 30 cedi for transfer by taxi to the Mole Motel in the national park. I had made a reservation by email (info@molemotelgh.com) for a single room with AC which was 150 cedi.

After checking in, I began to sort out the logistics of how to visit the park. The park office is maybe 100 m from the Mole Motel and after discussing my goals, I was assigned a guide by the name of Daniel Koroma. Daniel was a great guy and really eager to help me track down the birds and mammals I was interested in. Not all of the guides know much about birds so it was good to have someone who was knowledgeable. Before arriving, I was concerned that the expense of hiring a park vehicle for me as a solo traveller was going to be excessive, but Daniel came up with a great solution of using a motorbike instead. The use of a motorbike amounted to 50 cedi for a half-day, and 100 cedi for a full day. A three-hour guided birding trip was 60 cedi. With that settled, Daniel and I planned a full four days in and around Mole starting the next day. That afternoon, I spent time on the grounds of the Mole Motel, mainly at the viewpoint over the waterhole in the valley below. During my entire visit, the viewpoint area proved to be very good for birds like Pygmy Sunbird, Grey-headed Bushshrike, Bearded Barbet, Red-throated Bee-eater, Bruce's Green Pigeon and Senegal Batis amongst others, and when bird activity was low, Elephants were almost always at the water to add to the interest.

The next morning we did the usual tourist hike following a path from the Mole Motel down the escarpment to the valley below on foot and searched for birds. It was a good birding hike with nice views of Violet Turaco, Abyssinian Roller, White-shouldered Black Tit, Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Long-tailed Glossy Starling, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver, Little Weaver and many others. In the afternoon we tried a special site for Forbes's Plover and Sun Lark. This location was a good distance by motorbike into the park. Unfortunately, the grass was still high and had not yet been burned which typically happens in December or January. This meant that the available habitat for these species was reduced, and although we did find two pairs of Sun

Larks, we failed to locate the Forbes's Plover. However, we were successful in finding a very large number of voraciously-biting tsetse flies (or rather they found us) and we beat a more hasty retreat from the area sooner than we would have otherwise. Daniel said the plover would be more reliable after the grass was burned and the tsetse flies would be much reduced as well. We didn't return to give it another try which was just as well as I found Forbes's Plover in Sierra Leone after leaving Ghana.

On the morning of day 2, we went to the airstrip which is back along the access road on the way to Larabanga. After passing through the security gate, in less than maybe 500 m there is a narrow path to the left that leads to the airstrip. The dirt road to Mognori actually is also to the left just after the path to the airstrip and acts as a good reference point to know if you've missed the path. The airstrip is reputed to be a great place for a number of good birds like Rufous Cisticola, Dorst's Cisticola, White-throated Francolin and African Golden Oriole. Other than this morning, I also spent some time at the airstrip and along the adjacent Mognori Road on each of the next two days and found it incredibly quiet, only getting a brief look at one African Golden Oriole from the target list. I did find Red-winged Pytilia, Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark and Black-faced Firefinch there, as well as Standard-winged Nightjar on my one visit at dusk, but it was a rather frustrating place from a birding perspective. In fact, the entire park was very slow birdwise during my stay, a feeling shared by Daniel as well, and we had to work quite hard to find things. Later in the morning, and for our afternoon visit, we drove out along the Samole Loop and birded on foot in some of the wetter areas that Daniel thought would be productive. Birding was slow, but new sightings were Northern Red-billed Hornbill and Swamp Flycatcher. We stayed out until dark and easily found several Greyish Eagle-Owls right on the dirt roads.

On the morning of day 3, we took the motorbike out past the security gate and turned left on the Mognori Road and proceeded all the way to the village of Mognori and parked at the bridge over the Mognori River. A main reason for coming here was to search for Yellow-throated Leaflove which is found in the riverine forest. Unfortunately, we found no evidence of it. However, we did locate a pair of White-crowned Robin-Chats skulking in the forest, but they were difficult to see well. We also spent some time in the grassland accessed to the left of the road just after passing over the bridge. Here we found a Dorst's Cisticola, a relief after failing at the airstrip, and a wonderful displaying male Togo Paradise-Whydah. Daniel said this area was good for this species. The afternoon was spent mainly walking in the woodland along the Samole Loop where the very quiet birding was fortunately interrupted by displaying Exclamatory Paradise-Whydahs.

My last full day at Mole had us back at the dead-quiet airstrip for another fruitless effort first thing in the morning before we again birded along the Samole Loop where little of any significant interest was seen. A mid-day break produced my only Beautiful Sunbird at the bank of flowering bushes just at the entrance to the Mole Motel. For the afternoon, we tried the Yagbon Loop, but it was quiet as well, although we did find two female Abyssinian Ground-Hornbills, my only sighting of the trip. Night birding on

foot again around the Mole Motel produced nothing, as had been the case on previous nights.

The main mammal draw at Mole would have to be the Elephants at the waterhole, visible from the viewpoint, which can be approached on foot as well from the Mole Motel. The grounds around the motel were pretty good for primates, principally Olive Baboon, but I also had single sightings of a Green Monkey and seven Patas Monkeys. At night, Central Bushbuck and Buffon's Kob roam around, and Common Warthog can be seen at any time. I had wanted to see Roan in the park, but unfortunately this time of year is not good for sightings and we saw nothing.

Food at the restaurant at the Mole Motel was good, and they have a decent bar. The dining area is open-air which is quite nice except at night when the lights tend to attract numerous insects that potentially could end up supplementing your protein intake if you are not careful in picking them off your plate. When it came time to leave Mole, Daniel offered to take me to the town of Damongo by motorbike where I found a trotro to Tamale (12 cedi). In Tamale, I took an air-conditioned van to Bolgatanga for 30 cedi. In Bolga, I stayed at Mama's Place where a very nice self-contained air conditioned room was 75 cedi. I highly recommend this place as a base for exploring the north as the people were wonderful, the food fantastic and the rooms very comfortable. It's about 3 km outside of Bolga on the road to Navrongo. Autorickshaws or tuktuks (a la India or SE Asia) are catching on in popularity, especially in the north, and these run on a share basis along this road. However, the drivers never seemed to have heard of Mama's Place, and initially I only had a rough idea of where it was myself. So if you want to go there, tell the driver to drop you at the Goil filling station in Yikene, a sort of "suburb" of Bolga. The Goil station will be on the left and Mama's Place is right across the road on the right.

***Lake Tono Dam***

After a relaxing morning, I took a tuk tuk back to the main station in Bolga and found a share-taxi to Navrongo. Although the road to Navrongo passes in front of Mama's Place, the passing taxis likely would all be filled and would not stop. I took a room at the Hotel Mayaca in Navrongo for 60 cedi. Despite the heat of Ghana, I generally took rooms with fans as opposed to AC since I prefer fans. This turned out to be an unwise choice in Navrongo because at night it was so hot that the fan just blew hot air over me and I slept poorly.

Upon checking in, I asked the manager about finding transportation to Lake Tono and he assured me he would find someone. Later in the afternoon, a tuk tuk driver pulled up and I described where I wanted to go. He wanted 60 cedi for an afternoon visit which I thought was fair so we left around 3:00, taking maybe 40 minutes to arrive by a route through winding roads that would be hard to describe. If visiting, I would advise getting the driver to drive along the little road on top of the dam and go to the far end and park. From this elevated spot, you will see a dry concrete spillway. Walk down to this spillway, take the path across it and simply explore the scrubland on the other side. What you are

walking on is actually a road and there will be a good deal of traffic along it, as well as pedestrians, goats, cattle and who knows what else. This site is not a quiet, pristine setting. However, there are some footpaths into the scrub taking you away from some of the commotion. My afternoon visit produced a wonderful Yellow Penduline-Tit, a special bird from this particular site and not often seen I gather. Grasshopper Buzzard and Speckle-fronted Weaver were also present. I stayed until about dusk and then returned to Navrongo.

As I had missed a couple of the targets for this site, I arranged to go back again the next morning. My driver was a good 30 minutes late picking me up in the morning, but we quickly set off and returned to the dam. In walking down from the top of the dam, I decided to explore an open field to the left before crossing the concrete spillway. This was a good choice as I flushed about 10 Four-banded Sandgrouse and one Singing Bushlark, the other two big targets I was hoping to see. There was certainly more activity in the morning than I saw yesterday afternoon, although I couldn't relocate the Yellow Penduline-Tit. However, I did find a mating pair of Little Green Bee-eaters, Lesser Honeyguide, Melodious Warbler, Chestnut-bellied Starling, a first-winter Lesser Black-backed Gull, and a number of widespread savanna species. I saw little in the way of waterbirds as the habitat along the lakeshore was not great, and I was unaware of any other more productive spots.

I stayed for around three hours at the dam, and upon returning to Navrongo, I visited the interesting Cathedral of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, the interior being decorated with beautiful frescoes painted with pigments in the traditional style most noted around the nearby village of Sirigu which I made a day-trip to the following day. After my visit to the cathedral, I returned to the Hotel Mayaca, picked up my bag and walked to the main station and took a share-taxi back to Mama's Place outside Bolga.

***Gambaga Escarpment***

Intrigued by the idea of exploring a little-known area, and charged with the information from the Bradt guide that there was some nice forest at the Gambaga Escarpment near the village of Nakpanduri, I decided to go and see what I could find. Early in the morning from the main station in Bolga, the quickest way to get on the road was to take the last seat on a crowded trotro heading to Tamale. Paying the full fare, I was dropped at Walewale at the junction with the road to Nakpanduri. There was a waiting trotro heading to Nalerigu just east of the junction, but I was only the third passenger and it took almost three hours to fill. While waiting, I kept a look out for any other form of transportation heading east along the road, but there was nothing. I ended up buying a couple of extra seats to finally get the thing on the road. From Nalerigu there was a small trotro going to Nakpanduri requiring no wait at all.

Arriving in Nakpanduri, I was dropped at the junction in the middle of the village. I knew the Sillim Guesthouse was along the road to Bawku, so I walked in that direction but ended up beyond the town before realizing I must have missed it. I asked a fellow and he

pointed back in the direction of the village, so I began walking back but still couldn't find it. Finally, another man directed me to the guesthouse, an unassuming place that is not noticeably a guesthouse and of course there was no sign whatsoever. If walking from the centre of Nakpanduri, you will see a communications tower on the right hand side of the road. The guesthouse is almost immediately after this tower also on the right. A room there was 60 cedi.

I spent a bit of time in the afternoon and the next day birding along the road to Bawku. Walking out past the guesthouse continuing north, the road will soon start descending the escarpment with nice views over the valley below. It was essentially just roadside birding here, and I walked as far as the bridge over a small river on the valley floor not far from the bottom of the escarpment. Birding was slow (and hot!), and no Gambaga Flycatcher, but I had some nice sightings along the excarpment including a pair of Fox Kestrels, West African Swallow, Lavender Waxbill and a big flock of Red-billed Quelea. Gosling's Bunting was very common. The riverine forest at the bridge was worthwhile with my only Vitelline Masked Weavers of the trip, and Bearded Barbet, Senegal Parrot and Yellow-crowned Gonolek amongst others. A curious flock of about 30 African Grey Hornbills was also spotted near the bridge.

Upon leaving Nakpanduri, my next destination was Bawku, but there is no public transportation along this stretch of road. I asked the manager at the Sillim Guesthouse to find me a motorbike and I paid 80 cedi for a driver to take me on an enjoyable ride to the town of Garu where I easily found a trotro to Bawku.

***Sapeliga Road and the White Volta***

Upon arrival in the very dusty town of Bawku, I got a room at the Sunrise Guesthouse for 60 cedi. The manager found a driver with a car for me and we negotiated a rather steep price of 300 cedi for a morning visit to the Sapeliga Road and White Volta the next day. In retrospect, there is no reason why I couldn't have gone to these sites by motorbike instead of car which would have been much cheaper.

Leaving Bawku in the direction of Bolga, we came to a large bridge over the Volta River. I wanted to stop here for a look which was a good decision as I found about eight Egyptian Plovers on the sandbars below the bridge. They were very active and close enough for some excellent views. My big target for the day already spotted without even getting to its traditional site! There were other more common waterbirds around as well, but my only new trip bird was Mourning Collared-Dove.

Continuing a short distance along the main road towards Bolga, you very soon come to a turn to the right which is the Sapeliga Road. This road goes through some nice light woodland and scrub to the village of Sapeliga. From a birding perspective, the activity along the road was quieter than I had expected. Despite this, I did find a Rufous Cisticola, which I had missed at Mole, as well as a number of typical birds of open savanna. Upon reaching Sapeliga, an obvious but narrow road to the right takes you to the White Volta where there is space to park at an open area with a view of the river. This is the

traditional site for Egyptian Plover, (gps co-ordinates are on ebird.com) and although I did see two here, during my stay they restricted themselves to a river bank very far away even for scope views. I should note that I met an arriving Ashanti African Tours group as I was leaving the White Volta site. We discussed our findings, locating a nearby Whinchat in the process, and I later found upon bumping in to them again in the south at Atewa, that they had luck with a number of Egyptian Plovers coming much closer than I had seen them. They also had one very distant Northern Carmine Bee-eater which I did not see. Otherwise, for me the White Volta site had a number of Mourning Collared-Doves and a nice flock of Piapiac, but not the hoped-for White-crowned Lapwing which has been seen here in the past.

***Tongo Hills***

A key site for Fox Kestrel and Rock-loving Cisticola. Since I had already found the kestrel, my goal on my morning visit was the cisticola. From the main station in Bolga, I took a share-taxi to the village of Tongo early in the morning. At Tongo, there is a road that heads up into the hills for about 5 km before reaching the tiny village of Tengzug where there is a small visitor's centre where one can organize a visit to a few Ashanti cultural sites nearby. As I was only planning on birding, I found a fellow with a motorbike in Tongo to take me up the road to where it came close to and intersected some large rocks as it was here that I had been told was the best birding site. It was very easy to find. However, it would seem that even if one is only birding along the road, one is expected to pay the entrance fee to the ecotourism site as a worker came by on motorbike and informed me of the policy. Somewhat skeptical, I nevertheless had to go with him by motorbike up to Tengzug to pay the 30 cedi fee. There was a registry and I did see that a recent birding group had paid for each person in the group which proved I guess that the fee is legit. This means that someone like me without his/her own transport has to go all the way (I guess it really isn't very far) to Tengzug, pay the fee and then go back down the road to the boulder field and the birding site. After all of this, and returning to the site, I couldn't find the cisticola or, for that matter, the kestrel. My only new bird for the trip was a pair of Red-necked Falcons. A pair of both Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Larks and Mocking Cliff-Chats were good sightings too. After a few hours, it started to get hot and bird activity, never high to begin with, dropped off even more so. Despite missing the cisticola, I headed back to Mama's Place in Bolga, packed up my stuff, had some lunch and, in the afternoon, took an overnight bus south towards Accra, but stopping off at Bunso Junction at about 4:30 in the morning, for my return visit to the Atewa Range.

## 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 that seemingly are 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)

**White-faced Whistling-Duck** ***Dendrocygna viduata***

From the viewing area above the waterhole at the Mole Motel, a flock was frequently seen at a distant marshy area. A single bird was spotted at the river below the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri. At the bridge along the Bawku-Bolgatanga road just before the turnoff to Sapeliga, I found a flock of eight birds.

**Spur-winged Goose** ***Plectropterus gambensis***

A flock of about six birds was seen from the viewpoint at the Mole Motel. Two birds were found at the Lake Tono Dam.

**Hartlaub's Duck** ***Pteronetta hartlaubii***

A female was seen very nicely at the third pool at Ankasa.

### NUMIDIDAE (Guineafowl)

**Helmeted Guineafowl** ***Numida meleagris***

Common in Mole National Park but very shy.

**Crested Guineafowl** ***Guttera pucherani***

A small covey was flushed at Ankasa near Nkwanta camp and I managed to get a good look at one bird before it disappeared.

### PHASIANIDAE (Pheasants, Grouse and Allies)

**Latham's (Forest) Francolin** ***Francolinus lathami***

Heard only. My only encounter was in the Bonkro Forest where I had calling birds quite close, but they refused to show.

**Ahanta Francolin** ***Francolinus ahantensis***

Endemic to West Africa. One bird was flushed from the side of the main track through the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary.

**Double-spurred Francolin** ***Francolinus bicalcaratus***

Easily found along the roads at Shai Hills. Two birds were seen on the Mt. Kloto hike in Togo. After hearing them for a few days, I finally found two individuals around the Mountain Paradise Lodge. Six birds were found on one of my walks along the Brenu Beach Road. Common and easy to see along the roads in Mole National Park.

**Stone Partridge** ***Philophachus petrosus***

Four birds were settling into a roosting area at the base of a rocky outcrop at Shai Hills. Common and easy to see along the roads in Mole National Park.

**COLUMBIDAE (Pigeons and Doves)**

**Rock Pigeon** ***Columba livia***

Occasional sightings in towns and cities.

**Speckled Pigeon** ***Columba guinea***

About eight birds were seen at the Lake Tono Dam on my first visit, but oddly none were found there the next morning. Commonly encountered on along the Sapeliga Road to the White Volta site.

**Afep Pigeon** ***Columba unicincta***

I tracked one by voice to a tall tree at the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary. It was buried deep in the canopy and despite trying every angle possible, all I managed was a quick view as it rapidly burst out of the tree, flying off never to be seen or heard again.

**Western Bronze-naped Pigeon** ***Columba iriditorques***

Heard daily at Ankasa and one was finally seen singing at the top of a dead tree along the main track. Heard once at the Nsuta Forest.

**Mourning Collared-Dove** ***Streptopelia decipiens***

One or two were spotted from the bridge over the main Bawku-Bolgatanga road near the turnoff to Sapeliga, and several more were found at the White Volta site a bit later in the day.

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

Widespread and common.

**Vinaceous Dove** ***Streptopelia vinacea***

Very common at Shai Hills on my walk to Sayu Cave. One was spotted on the Mt. Kloto hike in Togo. Common at Mole National Park. Common at the Lake Tono Dam. Small numbers were seen around the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri. Common along the Sapeliga Road.

**Laughing Dove** ***Streptopelia senegalensis***

A common bird of open habitats.

**Black-billed Wood-Dove** ***Turtur abyssinicus***

Sightings at both Shai Hills and the Winneba Plains. One was found at Mognori in Mole National Park. Small numbers on both visits to the Lake Tono Dam. One was found around the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri, and one was along the Sapeliga Road.

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

First seen in the farmbush at Atewa. Single birds on both days at Shai Hills. A few in Togo at Mt. Kloto. Common around the Mountain Paradise Lodge and Tafi Atome. Small numbers were seen on each of my walks along the Brenu Beach Road. One was around the Frenchman's Farm at Ankasa. A final sighting was of one bird in the farmbush at Atewa in November.

**Tambourine Dove** ***Turtur tympanistria***

This forest dove was spotted a few times along the ridge trail at Atewa. Two were seen well at the Ebi River. Singles were found on both visits to the Nsuta Forest. One was seen in the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary.

**Blue-headed Wood-Dove** ***Turtur brehmeri***

One rapidly flew across the trail as I walked back to the HQ from the canopy walkway at Kakum. A great sighting of a bird on the ground at the edge of the main track through Ankasa, and another flew across the main trail at Ankasa the next day.

**Bruce's Green Pigeon** ***Treron waalia***

Big flocks were sometimes seen from the viewpoint at the Mole Motel.

**African Green Pigeon** ***Treron calvus***

Widespread and common.

**PTEROCLIDAE (Sandgrouse)**

**Four-banded Sandgrouse** ***Pterocles quadricinctus***

Three groups of about 10 birds in total were flushed from an open field at the Lake Tono Dam.

**MUSOPHAGIDAE (Turacos)**

**Great Blue Turaco** ***Corythaeola cristata***

Heard occasionally at Ankasa but my only sighting was of one bird along the electricity pylons.

**Guinea Turaco** ***Tauraco persa***

One was around Sayu Cave at Shai Hills. Commonly heard around the Mountain Paradise Lodge with a total of four birds seen. Two were on the Winneba Plains. One at the guesthouse at the Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary.

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

Heard daily along the Atewa Ridge trail in Sept. but never seen. Also heard daily at Kakum. Finally, up to three birds were seen pretty much daily at Ankasa. One was seen in flight at the Nsuta Forest. After only hearing it along the Atewa Ridge trail on the first two days of my return visit, I finally caught sight of two birds on the trail beyond the big clearing at the top.

**Violet Turaco** ***Musophaga violacea***

At Shai Hills, three birds were found during an afternoon hike from the visitor's centre and one was around Sayu Cave the next day. At Mole National Park, birds were quite commonly seen, including some nice views in the Mognori sector. Of particular note were two large blackish birds along the Mognori road near the airstrip which were initially confusing, but finally determined to be juveniles of this species.

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

Widespread and quite common with sightings at Shai Hills, Ada Foah, Winneba, Brenu Beach Road, Mole NP and around the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri.

**CUCULIDAE (Cuckoos)**

**Levaillant's Cuckoo** ***Clamator levaillantii***

My only sighting was of one bird in Mole National Park during my morning hike just below the escarpment at the Mole Motel.

**Red-chested Cuckoo** ***Cuculus solitarius***

One bird was heard and then seen just below the clearing at the top of the Atewa Ridge trail.

**Black Cuckoo** ***Cuculus clamosus***

One bird was seen in flight over the main road through Ankasa.

**Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo** ***Cercococcyx mechowi***

Heard only. Although less common than the next species, it was heard more or less daily at Ankasa. On one occasion, a calling bird was tracked to a tall tree, but it frustratingly remained hidden in the canopy.

**Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo** ***Cercococcyx olivinus***

One was calling from directly below the canopy platform at Kakum, but a subsequent search along the trail proved fruitless. One was tracked down with decent views along the main road at Ankasa, and birds were heard calling daily afterwards. One was flushed and seen flying over the trail beyond the big clearing at the top of the Atewa Ridge trail in November.

**Klaas's Cuckoo** ***Chrysococcyx klaas***

Single birds were sighted in the farmbush at Atewa, from the canopy platform at Kakum, near the Frenchman's Farm at Ankasa, at the Nsuta Forest and one at Atewa on my return in November.

**African Emerald Cuckoo** ***Chrysococcyx cupreus***

Commonly heard on the Atewa Ridge trail with one bird finally seen. Birds were subsequently heard at all southern forest sites, and I did see two more birds in the Nsuta Forest.

**Dideric Cuckoo** ***Chrysococcyx caprius***

A male was seen in the town of Kibi, and others in the farmbush at Atewa. One was found in the farmbush on my walk to the Abrafo forest.

**Blue Malkoha (Yellowbill)** ***Ceuthmochares aureus***

Common at Atewa. One was found around the Mountain Paradise Lodge and another from the canopy platform at Kakum. Just one bird was found at Ankasa. Two were seen in the Nsuta Forest. One was spotted at Bobiri.

**Black-throated Coucal** ***Centropus leucogaster***

One bird, presumably of this species, was seen skulking away in thick undergrowth along the Atewa Ridge trail. While I was walking back to the Frenchman's Farm, one individual burst out of the undergrowth to land in the open on the ground in front of me providing a great look. A brief look of a bird that appeared to be this species at Bobiri. A few sightings at Atewa on my return in November.

**Senegal Coucal** ***Centropus senegalensis***

Widespread and common in more open environments.

**CAPRIMULGIDAE (Nightjars and Allies)**

**Plain Nightjar** ***Caprimulgus inornatus***

Small numbers were seen along the dirt roads through Shai Hills at night.

**Long-tailed Nightjar** ***Caprimulgus climacurus***

Very common along the dirt roads through Shai Hills at night.

**Standard-winged Nightjar** ***Macrodipteryx longipennis***

Two birds were observed in flight at dusk at the airstrip in Mole National Park.

**APODIDAE (Swifts)**

**Mottled Spinetail** ***Telacanthura ussheri***

Two birds were seen well in the town of Ada Foah.

**Black Spinetail** ***Telecanthura melanopygia***

A single bird was seen very well on two occasions in the town of Kibi. The bird flew rapidly close to ground level and vocalized on each occasion.

**Sabine's Spinetail** ***Rhaphidura sabini***

Three sightings of small flocks at Ankasa, mainly around the entrance gate.

**Cassin's Spinetail** ***Neofrapus cassini***

Two birds were seen in amongst a flock of Sabine's Spinetail at the entrance gate to the Ankasa Protected Reserve.

**African Palm Swift** ***Cypsiurus parvus***

Widespread and common in non-forested environments.

**Common Swift** ***Apus apus***

One or two birds were in amongst a flock of Sabine's Spintail within the Ankasa Protected Reserve, and larger numbers were in a mixed-species flock at the entrance gate. One was seen around the abandoned mine at Atewa.

**Little Swift** ***Apus affinis***

Widespread and common in non-forested environments.

**Bates's Swift** ***Apus batesi***

A large flock was seen circling rather low over a forest clearing along the road on the way back from the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary to the Mountain Paradise Lodge. The birds were a deep black in colour and lacking any white on the rump and thus were, somewhat tentatively, assigned to this seemingly little-known species in Ghana.

**SAROTHRURIDAE (Flufftails)**

**White-spotted Flufftail** ***Sarothura pulchra***

After hearing it call, a magnificent male was taped in almost to my feet in a particularly wet area in the Abrafo Forest near Kakum NP.

**RALLIDAE (Rails, Gallinules and Coots)**

**Nkulengu Rail** ***Himantornis haematopus***

Heard only. Heard calling around 4:30 a.m. from just outside the guesthouse at the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary. The call was not close and was coming from a relatively inaccessible area.

**Black Crake** ***Amaurornis magnirostris***

My only sighting was of one bird at a pool in Mole National Park.

**BURHINIDAE (Thick-knees)**

**Senegal Thick-knee** ***Burhinus senegalensis***

A pair was found at the Sakumono Lagoon. Two pairs were found in Mole National Park. A single bird was on a sandbar in the Volta River at the main bridge along the Bawku-Bolgatanga road near the turnoff to Sapeliga.

**PLUVIANIDAE (Egyptian Plover)**

**Egyptian Plover** ***Pluvianus aegyptius***

A fantastic sighting of eight very active birds on the sandbars below the main bridge along the Bawku-Bolgatanga road near the turnoff to Sapeliga. I also later found two birds at the traditional hotspot along the Volta River a little beyond Sapeliga, but they were very distant.

**RECURVIROSTRIDAE (Stilts and Avocets)**

**Black-winged Stilt** ***Himantopus himantopus***

Several were seen on the margins of the Keta Lagoon as I travelled by trotro from Woe to the Togo border at Aflao. A few were on the Winneba lagoon as seen from the Lagoon Lodge.

**CHARADRIIDAE (Plovers and Lapwings)**

**Spur-winged Plover** ***Vanellus spinosus***

Common with about eight birds seen at the Sakumono Lagoon. A pair was around the town of Ada Foah. Two were found as I walked to the Ramsar site at Winneba, and I also saw two on the lagoon. Two birds were seen from the bridge along the main Bawku-Bolgatanga highway near the turnoff to Sapeliga, and one later in the day at the White Volta site beyond Sapeliga.

**Wattled Lapwing** ***Vanellus senegallus***

Three juveniles were spotted at the Sakumono Lagoon. Up to three birds were seen along the Brenu Beach Road. Common at Mole National Park where small numbers were seen daily. One was found at the Lake Tono Dam. Several were at the main bridge along the Bawku-Bolgatanga highway near the turnoff to Sapeliga and also at the White Volta site beyond Sapeliga.

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

Two were found as I walked to the Ramsar site at Winneba.

**Common Ringed Plover** ***Charadrius hiaticula***

Just one bird was seen at the Sakumono Lagoon.

**JACANIDAE (Jacanas)**

**African Jacana** ***Actophilornis africana***

Quite common at the Sakumono Lagoon. Presumably it was a male that was minding three young while foraging amongst the lily pads on a small pond at Shai Hills. One was found on the Ebi River near Kamgbunli.

**SCOLOPACIDAE (Sandpipers and Allies)**

**Whimbrel** ***Numenius phaeopus***

Just one bird was seen at the Sakumono Lagoon. Two were found as I walked to the Ramsar site at Winneba.

**Common Sandpiper** ***Actitis hypoleucos***

Common at the Sakumono Lagoon. At least five birds were seen on my walk to the Ramsar site at Winneba. One was at the Lake Tono Dam. A few were seen at both the bridge along the main Bawku-Bolgatanga road near the turnoff to Sapeliga and at the White Volta site beyond Sapeliga. One was spotted in a wet area in the farmbush at Atewa in November.

**Common Greenshank** ***Tringa nebularia***

My first sighting was of one bird at the Lake Tono Dam. Another single bird was found at the bridge along the main Bawku-Bolgatanga road near the turnoff to Sapeliga.

**Wood Sandpiper** ***Tringa glareola***

Just one bird was seen at the Sakumono Lagoon.

**Sanderling** ***Calidris alba***

Three were found on the beach as I walked the spit of land between the ocean and lagoon on my way to the Ramsar site at Winneba.

**GLAREOLIDAE (Pratincoles and Coursers)**

**Rock Pratincole** ***Glareola nuchalis***

The bridge over the Pra River just to the west of the village of Twifo Praso is a well known site for this bird. Due to late and very heavy rains, the water was running very high and there was little in terms of exposed rock. Two birds were initially spotted very far away, even appearing as not much more than brown blobs in the scope. A little later, two more flew in, approaching a bit closer to my position on the bridge and affording mildly improved views.

**LARIDAE (Gulls, Terns and Skimmers)**

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** ***Larus fuscus***

What appeared to be a first winter bird was on the ground in the dry spillway at the Lake Tono Dam. A Yellow-billed Kite was only a few metres away from the gull and was of a similar size.

**Royal Tern** ***Sterna maximus***

One bird was seen on my walk to the Ramsar site at Winneba.

**Sandwich Tern** ***Thalasseus sandvicensis***

Three birds were seen in flight at the Sakumono Lagoon.

**CICONIIDAE (Storks)**

**Wooly-necked Stork** ***Ciconia episcopus***

Three sightings in total of soaring birds at Mole National Park.

**PHALACROCORACIDAE (Cormorants and Shags)**

**Long-tailed Cormorant** ***Phalacrocorax africanus***

First seen in the Jamestown area of Accra. they were also quite common at the Sakumono Lagoon. A few were observed in the Keta Lagoon around Woe and while I travelled by trotro to the border with Togo, and a few were also on the lagoon at Winneba.

**SCOPIDAE (Hamerkop)**

**Hamerkop** ***Scopus umbretta***

Common at Mole National Park where small numbers were seen daily. Two were found at the Lake Tono Dam. Two were observed at a roadside pond after leaving the town of Bawku, and two more were at the bridge along the main Bawku-Bolgatanga road just before the turnoff to the Sapeliga road. A final bird was found in the marshy area along the goldfields road near Bunso Junction.

**ARDEIDAE (Herons, Egrets and Bitterns)**

**Grey Heron** ***Ardea cinerea***

Birds were common in the grassland area as seen from the viewpoint at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park. One was found at the Lake Tono Dam.

**Purple Heron** ***Ardea purpurea***

One bird was found at the Sakumono Lagoon. One was spotted down in the grassland area as seen from the viewpoint at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park, and another as we travelled by motorbike in the park.

**Black Heron** ***Egretta ardesiaca***

I was quite surprised to see a Black Heron fly across the road from a marshy area as I travelled by trotro between Mampong and Ejura. Although my view was somewhat brief, its dark black plumage and bright orange feet made me feel confident about the identification despite this location being out of range.

**Little Egret** ***Egretta garzeta***

About six birds were on the lagoon at Winneba as seen from the Lagoon Lodge.

**Western Reef Heron** ***Egretta gularis***

Quite commonly seen on the Keta Lagoon as I travelled by trotro from Woe to Aflao at the border with Togo.

**Intermediate Egret** ***Mesophoyx intermedia***

Common at the Sakumono Lagoon with about ten birds in total.

**Squacco Heron** ***Ardeola ralloides***

Three birds were at the Sakumono Lagoon. One was found in Mole National Park..

**Cattle Egret** ***Bubulcus ibis***

Widespread and common.

**Striated Heron** ***Butorides striata***

One was flushed from a small pool along a trail off the Brenu Beach Road. Two sightings in Mole National Park. One was seen at the bridge below the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri. Single birds were seen at the bridge along the main Bawku-Bolgatanga road near the turnoff to Sapeliga, and also later in the day at the White Volta site beyond Sapeliga.

**Little Bittern** ***Ixobrychus exilis***

My only sighting was of one bird in flight at the Sakumono Lagoon.

**THRESKIORNITHIDAE (Ibises and Spoonbills)**

**Spot-breasted Ibis** ***Bostrychia rara***

Heard only. Flocks have been known to fly over certain areas along the main road through the Nsuta Forest at dusk, and although we heard calls on both visits, the birds refused to show. Very disappointing.

**Hadada Ibis** ***Bostrychia hagedash***

Common in Mole National Park.

**ACCIPITRIDAE (Hawks, Eagles and Kites)**

**African Cuckoo-Hawk** ***Aviceda cuculoides***

A distant, soaring bird was spotted at Frenchman's Farm. Another soaring bird was seen in the forest at Ankasa. I also scoped a perched bird along the main road through the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary.

**Bat Hawk** ***Macheiramphus alcinus***

While unsuccessfully waiting for Spot-breasted Ibis to emerge from the forest at Nsuta, a single Bat Hawk flew over at dusk.

**Black-winged Kite** ***Elanus caeruleus***

Two were seen hovering in fields around the Keta Lagoon at Max's Hotel near the town of Woe. One was found along the Brenu Beach Road.

**Black (Yellow-billed) Kite** ***Milvus migrans***

First seen around the town of Ada Foah, and birds were commonly seen in towns and cities as well as in other open environments. All birds were presumably of the subspecies *aegpytius*, split by many authors as Yellow-billed Kite.

**African Fish-Eagle** ***Haliaeetus vocifer***

An immature was spotted perched near the big waterhole as seen from the viewpoint at the Mole Motel on a few occasions.

**Palm-nut Vulture** ***Gypohierax angolensis***

One was seen in flight on both visits to the canopy walkway at Kakum. Three birds were found at the Nsuta Forest. In Mole National Park, I found three juveniles and an adult.

**Hooded Vulture** ***Necorsyrtes monachus***

First seen in the city of Kpalimé in Togo. Two birds were observed circling above the city of Ho, and two more along the highway west of Takoradi. Seen on four out of five days at Mole National Park, mostly on the plains below the viewpoint at the Mole Motel.

**White-backed Vulture** ***Gyps africanus***

One was seen soaring along the Mognori Road on my return to the HQ from the Mognori River in Mole National Park. At dusk along the Yagbon Loop in Mole, five birds were preparing to roost in a small tree.

**White-headed Vulture** ***Trigonoceps occipitalis***

Seen on four out of five days at Mole National Park, mostly on the plains below the viewpoint at the Mole Motel, but an interesting pair was also found on a nest along the Yagbon Loop road.

**Bateleur** ***Terathopius caudatus***

Single birds were seen on two occasions from the Mole Motel in Mole National Park, and a total of five (3 adults and 2 juveniles) were found in the park on another occasion.

**Congo Serpent-Eagle** ***Dryotriorchis spectabilis***

Heard along the Atewa Ridge trail on two occasions in September. Heard from the canopy walkway at Kakum National Park on both visits. A bird was heard calling in the Nsuta Forest on my first visit, and then finally the next day, two birds were seen in flight over the highway at Nsuta. Great, prolonged looks at perched birds in the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary on two occasions.

**Eurasian Marsh-Harrier** ***Circus aeruginosus***

A female was seen in flight over the grassland below the viewpoint at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park. Another female was seen from the bridge over the Bawku-Bolgatanga road near the turnoff to Sapeliga.

**African Harrier-Hawk** ***Polyboroides typus***

My first sighting involved one bird along the little trail beyond the HQ at Kakum to the campsite. Subsequent observations were at the Abrafo Forest, the Brenu Beach Road, Ankasa, the Nsuta Forest, the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary and at the abandoned mine at Atewa.

**Lizard Buzzard** ***Kaupifalco monogrammicus***

A perched bird was very confiding almost adjacent to the Mountain Paradise Lodge and seen on two occasions. Singles were seen on the Mognori Road and Yagbon Loop at Mole NP. One was perched along the road as I moved by motorbike from Mole to Damongo. One was also spotted along the Sapeliga Road

**Dark Changing-Goshawk** ***Melierax metabates***

Two sightings in Mole National Park. A juvenile was perched in a low tree along the road between Larabanga and Damongo.

**Gabar Goshawk** ***Micronisus gabar***

One was soaring along the road between Larabanga and Damongo, and a perched bird gave a good look in the Tongo Hills.

**Red-chested Goshawk** ***Accipiter toussenelii***

Split from African Goshawk. Fairly common with sightings at Kalakpa, the Abrafo Forest, on the canopy walkway at Kakum NP, on the drive from Shama to the Nsuta Forest, at Bobiri and at the Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary.

**Shikra** ***Accipiter badius***

A good look at a perched bird at Monkey Hill.

**Red-thighed Sparrowhawk** ***Accipiter erthropus***

One was spotted above the canopy along the ridge trail at Atewa.

**Long-tailed Hawk** ***Urotriorchis macrourus***

A large bird with a very long tail flew into the canopy of a tall tree along the ridge trail at Atewa. As the bird perched, only its tail was visible for a few moments before it flew off. It was likely this species. A better look at one bird flying over the main trail through Ankasa. Birds were heard calling in the same general area over the next few days, and one again flew over the main trail. Also heard on two separate days the Bonkro Forest.

**Grasshopper Buzzard** ***Butastur rufipennis***

My only sighting was of one bird in the scrubland around the Lake Tono Dam.

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

This migratory species only re-appeared at the end of my trip, and I only saw one bird soaring above the abandoned mine at Atewa in November.

**Martial Eagle** ***Polemaetus bellicosus***

One was soaring along the road between Larabanga and Damongo.

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

A perched bird was seen well along the main road through the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary, and a soaring bird, possibly the same one, was also found the next day.

**Cassin's Hawk-Eagle** ***Aquila africanus***

Two birds were seen soaring at great height on my first visit to the canopy walkway at Kakum.

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

A soaring bird was found over the main track through Ankasa.

**STRIGIDAE (Owls)**

**African Scops-Owl** ***Otus senegalensis***

Heard only. One was heard at dusk in Mole National Park.

**Greyish Eagle-Owl** ***Bubo cinerascens***

One was flushed from its daytime roost at the little campsite opposite the park office at Mole National Park. On the two occasions I travelled the roads in Mole after dark, it was easy to encounter and get good looks at birds right on the road.

**Fraser's Eagle-Owl** ***Bubo poensis***

A decent view of a flushed bird from the forest around the headquarters at Ankasa.

**Akun Eagle-Owl** ***Bubo leucostictus***

Heard only. Heard along the main road through the Nsuta Forest.

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

I first heard and then saw two birds before dawn outside my tent at the headquarters of the Kalakpa Resource Reserve. Heard at dusk along the main road through the Nsuta Forest on both visits.

**Pearl-spotted Owlet** ***Glaucidium perlatum***

A party of birds was mobbing one Pearl-spotted Owlet in a tree right at the viewpoint over the waterhole at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park.

**Red-chested Owlet** ***Glaucidium tephronotum***

Heard only. Branching off the main road through Ankasa is a trail to an observation hide, and along here I heard one calling during the day. A very frustrating experience at Bobiri with birds reliably calling before dawn each day from the forest around the headquarters, but they refused to show.

**TROGONIDAE (Trogons)**

**Narina Trogon** ***Apaloderma narina***

One male was found at Kalakpa.

**PHOENICULIDAE (Woodhoopoes and Scimitarbills)**

**Green Woodhoopoe** ***Phoeniculus purpureus***

Two birds were found at Shai Hills. Three were seen at Kalakpa, and three more on the Winneba Plains. In Mole National Park, I first had a single bird and then a large flock of eight birds, with one more as I was leaving the park on my way to Damongo.

**Forest Woodhoopoe** ***Phoeniculus castaneiceps***

Four individuals were found in amongst a large mixed-species flock along the main road through the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary.

**Black Scimitarbill** ***Rhinopomastus aterrimus***

My only sighting was of one bird at Shai Hills.

**BUCORVIDAE (Ground-Hornbills)**

**Abyssinian Ground-Hornbill** ***Bucorvus abyssinicus***

Two females were seen along the Yagbon Loop at Mole National Park.

**BUCEROTIDAE (Hornbills)**

**White-crested Hornbill** ***Tockus albocristatus***

Two sightings of single birds along the ridge trail at Atewa. One passed by in flight and then dived into cover as seen from the canopy walkway at Kakum. One was perched and seen very well near the HQ at Ankasa. Single birds were seen on both days at the Nsuta Forest with an absolutely stunning view of a perched bird.

**Black Dwarf Hornbill** ***Tockus hartlaubi***

A perched bird was seen well from the canopy walkway at Kakum, and an unfortunately backlit bird was observed just a short distance down the main road from the guesthouse through the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary.

**Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill** ***Tockus camurus***

One was flushed and seen very well just at the start of the trail into the Abrafo Forest near the end of the road.

**Northern Red-billed Hornbill** ***Tockus erythrorhynchus***

Fairly common in Mole National Park. While travelling by trotro between Tamale and Bolgatanga, I had a sighting of one bird. Just two birds seen at the Lake Tono Dam on both visits. Two were along the Sapeliga Road.

**African Pied Hornbill** ***Tockus fasciatus***

Common and widespread at all southern sites.

**African Grey Hornbill** ***Tockus nasutus***

Easily seen at Shai Hills. Common at Mole National Park. A very interesting sighting of a large flock of about 30 birds below the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri. Another flock of about 15 birds was seen at the bridge along the Bawku-Bolgatanga road near the turnoff to Sapeliga. A final sighting of one bird in the Tongo Hills.

**Piping Hornbill** ***Ceratogymna fistulator***

Two sightings of three birds in total along the Brenu Beach Road. One was at Monkey Hill, two along the main road through Ankasa and two at the Ebi River. Common at the Nsuta Forest.

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

Endemic to the Upper Guinea forests from Sierra Leone to Ghana. A male was seen very well from the canopy platform at Kakum. It was active and calling in a nearby tree.

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

Heard only. Heard from the clearing along the electricity pylons at Ankasa..

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

Endemic to West Africa. Two flew by the canopy walkway at Kakum NP.

**ALCEDINIDAE (Kingfishers)**

**Shining-blue Kingfisher** ***Alcedo quadribruchys***

One was seen well at the bridge at the entrance to Ankasa, and one was found on the first pool beyond Nkwanta Camp.

**Malachite Kingfisher** ***Corythornis cristata***

Two were found around the edges of the big waterhole on my morning walk below the escarpment at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park. One was at the little bridge along the goldfields road near Bunso Junction.

**White-bellied Kingfisher** ***Corythornis leucogaster***

One was found at the first pool beyond Nkwanta at Ankasa. A trail enters the forest beyond the campsite at Ankasa and soon reaches a small stream and it was here that there seemed to be a resident bird which was first glimpsed by Philip, and then I saw it two days later.

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

Rather common. First seen at the very beginning of the ridge trail at Atewa, and then again in the farmbush. Found once at Ankasa along the main road. Two encounters in Mole National Park. Two were found in the scrub at the Lake Tono Dam. One was at the river below the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri, and a final sighting was of one at the abandoned mine at Atewa.

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

Fairly commonly heard in the forests of Atewa, Ankasa and Nsuta. Individual birds were heard and then taped in first at Ankasa and then on my return visit to Atewa along the ridge trail in November.

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

Two were found around the edges of the big waterhole on my morning walk below the escarpment at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park.

**Woodland Kingfisher** ***Halcyon senegalensis***

Two were spotted around the town of Ada Foah. One was at the Hotel Chez Fanny in Kpalimé, Togo. I walked the last 5 km to the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary and found two along the way. One was calling and then seen at Ayensudo Junction. A perched bird was seen along the highway on the drive to Ankasa. Two were perched along power lines along the highway at the Nsuta Forest. Just one encounter in Mole National Park.

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

A bird flew in and perched right above my head as I walked along the ridge trail at Atewa. One was found at the first pool beyond Nkwanta camp at Ankasa. Two were seen along the Samole Loop at Mole NP, and one at the Mognori River.

**Striped Kingfisher** ***Halcyon chelicuti***

A perched bird was spotted in the grassland at Shai Hills, and one was found on my hike at Mt. Kloto near Kpalimé, Togo.

**Giant Kingfisher** ***Megaceryle maximus***

First seen in flight at the abandoned mine at Atewa. One was observed from the viewpoint over the waterhole at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park.

**Pied Kingfisher** ***Ceryle rudis***

Two were hovering at the Keta Lagoon as seen from Max's Hotel at Woe. Common along my walk to the Ramsar site at Winneba with about eight birds seen. Three were on the reservoir at the Lake Tono Dam.

**MEROPIDAE (Bee-eaters)**

**Black Bee-eater** ***Merops gularis***

Four birds were found in a dead tree in a small clearing along the Atewa Ridge trail. One was seen in the Nsuta Forest.

**Blue-moustached Bee-eater** ***Merops mentalis***

Endemic to West Africa. The prime spot for this species is the ridge trail at Atewa, especially the area just before and beyond the big clearing at the "top", but although this species is apparently common at Atewa, I completely missed it on my first five-day visit. I did see one bird in terrible lighting immediately adjacent to the main road through Ankasa. Much greater success on my return visit to Atewa with a single bird found immediately below the big clearing at the top on Nov. 16, and on the 18th, one in the same place before the top and two a little further on just beyond the clearing.

**Red-throated Bee-eater** ***Merops bulocki***

Very common at Mole National Park.

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

Two were seen just down the road from the Mountain Paradise Lodge. Three were found at the river below the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri.

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

A flock of about six birds was first seen at Bobiri. A big flock was found in Mole National Park on the way to the Forbes's Plover site. A big flock was also found in the Tongo Hills. Another big flock of more than 30 birds was seen in the farmbush at Atewa, but just two birds in the same area the next day.

**Green Bee-eater** ***Merops orientalis***

A mating pair was found in the scrub around the Lake Tono Dam.

**Rosy Bee-eater** ***Merops malimbicus***

My only sighting was of a flock of about seven birds flying overhead at the Nsuta Forest. An all-too-brief encounter.

**CORACIIDAE (Rollers)**

**Abyssinian Roller** ***Coracias abyssinicus***

Fairly common at Mole National Park with single birds seen on three out of four full days. One was perched on a wire as I travelled from Mole to the town of Damongo. Common at the Lake Tono Dam, and around the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri Common along the Sapeliga Road with three birds seen. Lastly, two were found in the Tongo Hills .

**Rufous-crowned Roller** ***Coracias naevius***

Three birds in total were seen at Shai Hills. Two were along the Mognori Road near the airstrip at Mole National Park. One was found at the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri, and then two at the river below the escarpment the next day. Common along the Sapeliga Road with four birds seen.

**Blue-bellied Roller** ***Coracias cyanogaster***

Unfortunately, only brief encounters with this species, first with two in flight at Shai Hills, and then a backlit bird along the Mognori Road near the airstrip in Mole National Park.

**Blue-throated Roller** ***Eurystomus gularis***

A perched bird was at the top of a dead tree at the Nsuta Forest. About five birds were seen hawking insects at dusk at Bobiri.

**LYIBIIDAE (African Barbets)**

**Yellow-billed Barbet** ***Trachyphonus purpuratus***

One was observed at close range along the canopy walkway at Kakum National Park. One was sticking its head out of a nesting hole in a dead tree at Nsuta.

**Bristle-nosed Barbet** ***Gymnobucco peli***

After failing to find this rather scarce species at Atewa, Kakum and Ankasa, I found two birds in the Nsuta Forest on my first visit, followed by more than five the next day. A nesting tree along the main road at the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary was very active with at least 10 birds present on two separate occasions.

**Naked-faced Barbet** ***Gymnobucco calvus***

Relatively common along the ridge trail on my first visit to Atewa where seen on four days out of five in September. Common at the canopy walkway at Kakum. Less common on my return to Atewa in November where my only sighting was of one bird in the big clearing at the top of the ridge trail.

**Speckled Tinkerbird** ***Pogoniulus scolopaceus***

Quite common with sightings along the Atewa Ridge trail, on my hike on Mt. Kloto near Kpalimé, Togo, at the Mountain Paradise Lodge, at Kakum National Park, and at both Ankasa and Nsuta.

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

Two sightings along the Atewa Ridge trail.

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

Very common by voice in southern forests and secondary growth, with good views at Atewa and Bobiri.

**Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird** ***Pogoniulus bilineatus***

Single birds were found near the Mountain Paradise Lodge on two occasions. One was seen in the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary, and one in the big clearing at the top of the ridge trail at Atewa.

**Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird** ***Pogoniulus chrysoconus***

Single birds were found in the grassland at Shai Hills and at Ada Foah. One was also seen on my hike below the escarpment at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park.

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

Single birds were found along the Atewa Ridge trail, at Monkey Hill, in some scrub around the Frenchman's Farm outside Ankasa, in the Nsuta Forest on both visits, in farmbush around Bonkro and again along the ridge trail at Atewa .

**Hairy-breasted Barbet** ***Tricholaema hirsuta***

One was seen well from the canopy walkway at Kakum National Park, and two were found in the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary.

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

Fairly common with sightings in more disturbed habitats throughout Ghana.

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

One was found in farmbush along the access road to the ridge trail at Atewa, another in the grassland at Shai Hills and one more around Ada Foah. A final bird was seen in the farmbush along the access road to the ridge trail at Atewa in November.

**Bearded Barbet** ***Lybius dubius***

The viewpoint at the top of the escarpment looking over the waterhole at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park was the place for this species with sightings of first one and then a pair. At the bridge over the river below the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri, I found one bird, and one was also seen while I travelled by motorbike from Nakpanduri to Garu.

**INDICATORIDAE (Honeyguides)**

**Cassin's Honeybird** ***Prodotiscus insignis***

My only sighting was of one bird from the canopy walkway at Kakum National Park.

**Lesser Honeyguide** ***Indicator minor***

One was found in the scrub at the Lake Tono Dam.

**Greater Honeyguide** ***Indicator indicator***

Females were seen perched on a branch in the grassland at Shai Hills and also in Mole National Park .

**PICIDAE (Woodpeckers)**

**African Piculet** ***Verreauxia africana***

A good look at a nice male in the Nsuta Forest. Another good view of one bird along the main road through Bobiri.

**Little Green Woodpecker** ***Campethera maculosa***

Endemic to West Africa. Seemingly a very scarce bird. A poor look at one bird in the Nsuta Forest was my only sighting.

**Buff-spotted Woodpecker** ***Campethera nivosa***

One was seen in the grassland at Shai Hills, one in the Nsuta Forest and two in the farmbush at Atewa.

**Brown-eared Woodpecker** ***Campethera caroli***

A poor look at one bird along the main trail through Ankasa. A slightly better view of one more in the same general area the next day.

**Cardinal Woodpecker** ***Chloropicus fuscescens***

A pair was at Shai Hills with the male quite active at a nest hole.

**Melancholy Woodpecker** ***Chloropicus lugubris***

Endemic to West Africa. Two pairs were found along the Atewa Ridge trail in September. One was seen along the main trail through Ankasa. One was observed in the farmbush at Atewa on my return in November.

**Fire-bellied Woodpecker** ***Chloropicus pyrrhogaster***

A pair was along the ridge trail at Atewa. A good look at one bird from the canopy walkway at Kakum National Park. Two birds were found in the Nsuta Forest. One was in the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary.

**African Grey Woodpecker** ***Chloropicus goertae***

One was seen along the Samole Loop in Mole National Park, and one more was in a mobbing party disturbed by a Pearl-spotted Owlet at the viewpoint over the waterhole at the Mole Motel. One more was found in the scrub as I took a motorbike from Nakpanduri to Garu.

**FALCONIDAE (Falcons and Caracaras)**

**Eurasian (Common) Kestrel** ***Falco tinnunculus***

Sightings of two around the town of Ada Foah, and two more along the Brenu Beach Road.

**Fox Kestrel** ***Falco alopex***

A great look at a pair amongst the rocks of the Gambaga Escarpment along the road from Nakpanduri that descends to the valley below.

**Grey Kestrel** ***Falco ardosiaceus***

Two birds were seen from the viewpoint at the Mole Motel as they hunted early in the morning. One was seen at the Gambaga Escarpment near the town of Nakpanduri, and one was found in the farmbush at Atewa.

**Red-necked Falcon** ***Falco chicquera***

A pair was found amongst the rocks in the Tongo Hills.

**African Hobby** ***Falco cuvierii***

At dusk near the top of the Brenu Beach Road, one bird rapidly approached and flew by, disappearing very quickly.

**PSITTACIDAE (New World and African Parrots)**

**Rose-ringed Parrakeet** ***Psittacula himalayana***

A quick flyover of one bird at great height at Shai Hills. Common in Mole National Park with good numbers seen daily. One bird was at the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri, and two along the Sapeliga Road.

**Grey Parrot** ***Psittacus erithacus***

A flock of six birds flew over the highway at the Nsuta Forest. Ten birds were perched in a tall, dead tree near dusk along the main road through the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary not far from the headquarters.

**Brown-necked Parrot** ***Poicephalus robustus***

Small flocks were seen in flight at Bobiri and in the Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary.

**Red-fronted Parrot** ***Poicephalus gulielmi***

Two perched birds were in a tall tree along the highway late in the afternoon at the Nsuta Forest. A perched bird and five more were seen in flight on my way to the picathartes site in the Bonkro Forest, and another single bird was in the Bonkro Forest.

**Senegal Parrot** ***Poicephalus senegalus***

Very common at Shai Hills especially in the grassland near the visitor's centre. Common at Mole National Park and at the Gambaga Escarpment near Nakpanduri. One bird was found along the Sapeliga Road.

**CALYPTOMENIDAE (African and Green Broadbills)**

**Rufous-sided Broadbill** ***Smithornis rufolateralis***

Displays were fairly commonly heard at Ankasa. My first sighting was of one bird along a side trail to an observation hide at Ankasa, and then the next day, a displaying male was watched at close range along the main road through the forest. Marvelous! One more was found in the Nsuta Forest.

**PLATYSTEIRIDAE (Wattle-eyes and Batises)**

**Brown-throated (Common) Wattle-eye** ***Platysteira cyanea***

A female was seen at Shai Hills. Fairly common along the Brenu Beach Road. A total of three birds were seen at Mole NP. One was spotted in the riverine forest at the bridge just below the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri.

**West African Wattle-eye** ***Platysteira hormophora***

Endemic to West Africa. A pair was seen very well from the canopy walkway in Kakum National Park on both visits. Along the main road through Ankasa, I found pairs on two occasions. A pair was seen in the Nsuta Forest. Common at the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary and upon my return to Atewa in November.

**Red-cheeked Wattle-eye** ***Platysteira blissetti***

Endemic to West Africa. A very scarce species. My only sighting was a brief encounter of one bird as it popped right out into the open just a little ways down the waterfall trail at the Mountain Paradise Lodge.

**Senegal Batis** ***Batis senegalensis***

Endemic to West Africa. Two birds were seen very well on the grounds of the Mole Motel at the viewpoint over the waterhole. Three were found on my walk below the escarpment at the Mole Motel the next day.

**Fernando Po (Bioko) Batis** ***Batis poensis***

Endemic to West Africa. A scarce and difficult species. Persistence paid off as I finally encountered a pair just at the very beginning of the big clearing at the top of the ridge trail at Atewa in November. Unfortunately they flew off very quickly. I briefly saw a male in the same area two days later on my final birding day.

**VANGIDAE (Vangas, Helmetshrikes and Allies)**

**African Shrike-Flycatcher** ***Megabyas flammulatus***

A perched female was found on the trail at Mt. Kloto near Kpalimé, Togo. She frequently moved her tail back and forth in a sideways fashion, a typical behavioural trait of this species.

**Black and White Shrike-Flycatcher** ***Bias musicus***

My only sighting was of a male in the farmbush at Atewa.

**White Helmetshrike** ***Prionops plumatus***

A flock of about seven birds was found in the grassland at Shai Hills around Sayu Cave. Across the highway from the Mountain Paradise Lodge is a little church on a hill, and a party of six birds was seen in the woodland up near the church. A flock was also spotted in Mole National Park.

**Red-billed Helmetshrike** ***Prionops alberti***

Endemic to West Africa. Good looks at two different small flocks along the ridge trail at Atewa. Two birds were seen from the canopy walkway at Kakum National Park. A nice flock of about six birds was found along the main road through the forest at Bobiri. Clements calls this species by the name Chestnut-bellied Helmetshrike.

**MALACONOTIDAE (Bushshrikes and Allies)**

**Brubru** ***Nilaus afer***

One was a participant in a mob of a Pearl-spotted Owlet right at the viewpoint over the waterhole at the Mole Motel.

**Northern Puffback** ***Dryoscopus gambensis***

Two were first seen along the Brenu Beach Road. Birds were pretty common on the grounds of the Mole Motel, and one was in the riverine forest at Mognori. Upon my return to Atewa, birds were twice seen in the farmbush.

**Sabine's Puffback** ***Dryoscopus sabini***

A pair was seen in the farmbush at Atewa between the main road and the trailhead. Interestingly, the male was performing a display for the female, giving evidence to the origin of the name "puffback". Clements calls this species by the name Large-billed Puffback.

**Black-crowned Tchagra** ***Tchagra senegalus***

Quite common. Single birds were sighted at Shai Hills, around the Mountain Paradise Lodge, on the Winneba Plains and in the farmbush on my walk to the Abrafo Forest. Very common along the Brenu Beach Road. One was in the scrub near Frenchman's Farm at Ankasa. Two were in the scrub at the Lake Tono Dam. On my return to Atewa, one was seen in the farmbush.

**Brown-crowned Tchagra** ***Tchagra australis***

One was found on my hike at Mt. Kloto near Kpalimé, Togo. Another was spotted on the Winneba Plains, and on my return to Atewa, one was seen in the farmbush.

**Tropical Boubou** ***Laniarius major***

One was seen well along the main road through the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary.

**Yellow-crowned Gonolek** ***Laniarius barbarus***

Endemic to West Africa. Obscured views of two birds skulking in the undergrowth around Sayu Camp at Shai Hills. A good look at one in the scrub on the Winneba Plains. Several sightings along the Brenu Beach Road. Three were seen during my walk below the escarpment at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park, and one was also found along the Samole Loop. A final bird was seen in the forest at the bridge below the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri. Clements calls this species by the name Common Gonolek.

**Orange-breasted (Sulphur-breasted) Bushshrike** ***Telophorus sulfureopectus***

My only sighting was of one bird during my walk below the escarpment at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park.

**Grey-headed Bushshrike** ***Malaconotus blanchoti***

My two sightings of this bird both occurred at the viewpoint over the waterhole at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park.

**CAMPEPHAGIDAE (Cuckooshrikes)**

**Blue Cuckooshrike** ***Cyanograucalus azureus***

A brief look at one bird in the canopy not far from the top of the ridge trail at Atewa. One was spotted from the canopy walkway at Kakum, and two were found in the Nsuta Forest.

**Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike** ***Campephaga phoenicea***

Two females were in a mixed-species flock at the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary. A female was spotted at the viewpoint above the waterhole at the Mole Motel, and a male and several females were subsequently seen along the roads in Mole National Park.

**Purple-throated Cuckooshrike** ***Campephaga quiscalina***

A female at the big clearing at the top of the ridge trail at Atewa proved to be my only sighting.

**LANIIDAE (Shrikes)**

**Northern Fiscal** ***Lanius humeralis***

Commonly seen in the farmbush at Atewa and along the Brenu Beach Road.

**Yellow-billed Shrike** ***Corvinella corvina***

Three individuals of the subspecies *togoensis* were found at the Sakumono Lagoon. One bird of the subspecies *corvina* was found near the airstrip in Mole National Park, and one more as I travelled by motorbike from Mole to Damongo. A flock of four was also found along the Sapeliga Road.

**ORIOLIDAE (Old World Orioles)**

**African Golden Oriole** ***Oriolus auratus***

An unfortunately brief view of one bird in flight along the Mognori Road at the airstrip in Mole National Park.

**Western Black-headed Oriole** ***Oriolus brachyrhynchus***

Rather common in southern forests.

**Black-winged Oriole** ***Oriolus nigripennis***

Two were seen at Mt. Kloto near Kpalimé, Togo on Sept. 20. One was spotted from the canopy walkway at Kakum on Oct. 3.

**DICRURIDAE (Drongos)**

**Shining Drongo** ***Dicrurus atripennis***

Fairly common along the Atewa Ridge trail. Single birds were observed on three days out of four at Ankasa. One was found in the Nsuta Forest.

**Fork-tailed Drongo** ***Dicrurus adsimilis***

Common at Shai Hills in the grassland accessed from the vistor's complex, but only one seen in the park the next day on my hike to the Sayu Cave area from Sayu Camp. Fairly common in Mole National Park with several birds seen on two out of four days.

**Velvet-mantled Drongo** ***Dicrurus modestus***

Two birds were first seen along the little trail from the HQ at Kakum to the campsite. Commonly observed from the canopy walkway at Kakum on both visits. Common in the Nsuta Forest. Very common in the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary. Two sightings along the ridge trail at Atewa in November.

**ERYTHROCERCIDAE (Yellow Flycatchers)**

**Chestnut-capped Flycatcher** ***Erythrocercus mccallii***

Strangely absent from Atewa (on my first visit), Kakum and Ankasa, I finally had success at the Nsuta Forest with five birds seen well on my first visit. Common in the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary. On my return visit to Atewa, two small parties were found along the ridge trail on Nov. 16, and two individual birds were spotted just below the clearing at the top on the 18th.

**MONARCHIDAE (Monarch Flycatchers)**

**Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher** ***Trochocercus nitens***

Heard daily at Ankasa, but extremely elusive and I was unable to get a look at a single individual. I did manage to track one down for a decent view in the Nsuta Forest. One was seen very well in the Bonkro Forest. Heard daily at Bobiri. Now more familiar with its call, birds were commonly heard along the ridge trail upon my return to Atewa, and I had an obscured look at one individual.

**African Paradise Flycatcher** ***Tersiphone viridis***

One was seen along the Samole Loop in Mole National Park.

**Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher** ***Tersiphone rufiventer***

Common in the southern forests. Clements calls this taxon by the name of Black-headed Paradise-Flycatcher.

**CORVIDAE (Crows, Jays and Magpies)**

**Piapiac** ***Ptilostomus afer***

A flock of about 15 birds was seen perched at a great distance in the grassland at Shai Hills. Four birds were seen well around a little church on the outskirts of the town of Ada Foah. Flocks were found in the city of Bolgatanga and in the town of Walewale, south of Bolgatanga. Another flock of eight birds was spotted at the White Volta site near Sapeliga.

**Pied Crow** ***Corvus albus***

Widespread and very common.

**PICATHARTIDAE (Rockfowl)**

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

Endemic to the Upper Guinea forests from Guinea to Ghana. About seven birds were seen at a nesting site in the Bonkro Forest. Absolutely amazing!

**NICATORIDAE (Nicators)**

**Yellow-spotted (Western) Nicator** ***Nicator chloris***

One was seen in the farmbush at Atewa and another along the ridge trail. Two were found in the forest at Mt. Kloto near Kpalimé, Togo. Three birds were sighted at the Mountain Paradise Lodge.

**ALAUDIDAE (Larks)**

**Singing Bushlark** ***Mirafra cantillans***

One was flushed from a grassy field at the Lake Tono Dam, its white outer tail feathers evident in flight.

**Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark** ***Eremopterix leucotis***

A pair was found in some grassland in Mole National Park while we were searching for Forbes's Plover and Sun Lark, and about seven birds were on the tarmac at the airstrip in Mole. A pair was also in the Tongo Hills.

**Sun Lark** ***Galerida modesta***

Daniel and I headed by motorbike to a place he knew in Mole National Park that was good habitat for Sun Lark and Forbes's Plover. We didn't find any plovers, but there were two larks and a large number of aggressive tsetse flies!

**HIRUNDINIDAE (Swallows)**

**Square-tailed Saw-wing** ***Psalidoprocne nitens***

One was seen circling over the abandoned mine at Atewa. Quite common at Ankasa with sightings on three days. Single birds were seen over the Nsuta Forest on both visits. Three were spotted in the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary, and six birds were found at the big clearing at the top of the ridge trail at Atewa upon my return in November.

**Fanti Saw-wing** ***Psalidoprocne obscura***

Endemic to West Africa. This migratory species was frustratingly scarce. Only one bird, seen at a distance, was observed as I walked to the Abrafo Forest. I may have missed the wave of its southerly migration as a birding group I later met in the far north in late November had found it common in and around Kakum just a few days prior.

**Barn Swallow** ***Hirundo rustica***

Quite common with sightings in Accra, at the Sakumono Lagoon, the Abrafo Forest, at the bridge over the Pra River at Twifo Praso, at the Nsuta Forest, at the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary, along the Sapeliga Road and around the farmbush and the abandoned mine at Atewa.

**Red-chested Swallow** ***Hirundo lucida***

Endemic to West Africa. Not easy to distinguish from Barn Swallow, but a few were spotted in the town of Larabanga.

**Wire-tailed Swallow** ***Hirundo smithii***

Birds were seen at the waterhole below the escarpment at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park and around the grounds as well. Two were at the Lake Tono Dam and three were seen at the bridge over the river at the bottom of the Gambaga Escarpment near Nakpanduri.

**White-throated Blue Swallow** ***Hirundo nigrita***

I was rewarded for being patient at the bridge over the Pra River just west of Twifo Praso when a few birds flew by giving close in-flight views.

**Ethiopian Swallow** ***Hirundo aethiopica***

Common in open areas and in towns in the south of Ghana.

**Pied-winged Swallow** ***Hirundo leucosoma***

Four birds were foraging low over a field as I walked to the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary. A small flock was seen on several occasions perched on a wire just as I started to walk down the Brenu Beach Road from my guesthouse. One was also found in Mole National Park.

**Rock Martin** ***Ptyonoprogne fuligula***

At Shai Hills, two were spotted at an inselberg accessed on foot from the visitor's centre, and a few were seen around Sayu Cave the next day. Common at the Gambaga Escarpment near Nakpanduri.

**Common House-Martin** ***Delichon urbicum***

One sighting of a huge flock circling over the waterhole below the escarpment at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park.

**Lesser Striped Swallow** ***Cecropis abyssinica***

Two were seen in flight over the abandoned mine at Atewa. One was observed in a mixed-species flock perched on a wire along the highway through the Nsuta Forest.

**Rufous-chested Swallow** ***Cecropis semirufa***

A few were spotted at the abandoned mine and in the farmbush at Atewa on two separate days in November.

**Mosque Swallow** ***Cecropis senegalensis***

Two sightings of three birds in total in the farmbush at Atewa. One sighting of three birds around the Mountain Paradise Lodge. Five were perched on a wire at the beginning of the Brenu Beach Road.

**West African Swallow** ***Cecropis domicella***

One or two pairs were seemingly resident at the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri. A pair was also seen along the Sapeliga Road. Some authors, such as Clements, do not accept this taxon as a split from Red-rumped Swallow, *Cecropis daurica*.

**Preuss's Cliff Swallow** ***Petrochelidon preussi***

Large numbers were roosting on wires in the town of Daboase as we passed through on the way to the Nsuta Forest on both visits. About three birds were found at the abandoned mine at Atewa in November.

**STENOSTRIIDAE (Fairy Flycatchers)**

**Dusky Crested Flycatcher** ***Elminia nigromitrata***

One bird was quietly perched in thick undergrowth along the ridge trail at Atewa.

**PARIDAE (Tits, Chickadees and Titmice)**

**White-shouldered Black-Tit** ***Melaniparus leucomelas***

I found one bird on my walk below the escarpment at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park. The airstrip proved to be a reliable place with two sightings. One also joined a mobbing party that was disturbed by a Pearl-spotted Owlet right at the viewpoint over the waterhole at the Mole Motel.

**REMIZIDAE (Penduline-Tits)**

**Yellow Penduline-Tit** ***Anthoscopus parvulus***

A fantastic prolonged look at a perched and preening bird in the scrub at the Lake Tono Dam.

**Forest Penduline-Tit** ***Anthoscopus flavifrons***

A bird vocalized as it flew into the top of a dead tree along the main road through Ankasa.

**PYCNONOTIDAE (Bulbuls)**

**Common Bulbul** ***Pycnonotus barbatus***

Common and widespread in non-forested environments.

**Little Grey Greenbul** ***Eurillas gracilis***

One was seen along the ridge trail at Atewa. An excellent look at one bird in a plantation on the walk back from the primary forest at Bonkro. Clements refers to this taxon as simply Grey Greenbul.

**Ansorge's Greenbul** ***Eurillas ansorgei***

One obligingly came to within about one metre of where I was standing along the canopy walkway at Kakum, giving a perfect look at its chestnut/ginger vent which can be difficult to see from the ground on this canopy species. One more was found at Bobiri.

**Little Greenbul** ***Eurillas virens***

It was good to learn the call of this species so as not to be continually distracted as it sings all day from hidden spots in the undergrowth and was very common. It was not difficult to see, and a little bit of patience could produce good views. Birds were common in the farmbush at Atewa and were often heard all along the ridge trail as well. One sighting at the Mountain Paradise Lodge. One was found in the farmbush on my walk to the Abrafo Forest. Common by voice along the Brenu Beach Road with two seen. Three were observed around the Nsuta Forest and one was found at Bobiri .

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

Two birds were seen nicely along the ridge trail at Atewa and one in the farmbush. One or two were seen daily at the Mountain Paradise Lodge. One was in the Abrafo Forest and one at Bobiri. On my return to Atewa, I had two sightings along the ridge trail.

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

Two sightings in the canopy along the main road through Ankasa. One was also seen in the Nsuta Forest.

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

A good look at one bird along the waterfall trail at the Mountain Paradise Lodge. Two were found along the main road through Ankasa. Single birds were seen on two occasions in the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary.

**Golden Greenbul** ***Calyptocichla serinus***

One was seen well from the canopy walkway at Kakum, and two birds were found in the Nsuta Forest.

**Honeyguide Greenbul** ***Baeopogon indicator***

One was seen in the farmbush near the end of the road to the Abrafo Forest, and another from the canopy walkway at Kakum. One or two birds were seen in the Nsuta Forest on both visits. One was found at Bobiri.

**Spotted Greenbul** ***Ixonotus guttatus***

Small flocks were observed on two days at Ankasa, with a maximum of five birds on one day. One was also seen in flight in the Nsuta Forest.

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

Common in the farmbush and at the bottom of the ridge trail at Atewa. Common elsewhere with sightings at Mt. Kloto near Kpalimé, Togo, at the Mountain Paradise Lodge, on the Winneba Plains, around the HQ at Kakum, along the Brenu Beach Road and near the Frenchman's Farm at Ankasa.

**Swamp Palm Bulbul** ***Thescelocichla leucopleura***

Three birds were seen in the farmbush along the pathway to the abandoned mine at Atewa. One was near the start of the trail in the Abrafo Forest. A couple of observations at the entrance to Ankasa. Common at the Nsuta Forest with up to five birds seen daily on my two visits. On my return visit to Atewa, birds were fairly common in the farmbush. Clements calls this taxon by the name of Swamp Greenbul.

**Red-tailed Leaflove** ***Phyllastrephus scandens***

My only sighting was of a large, noisy party in the forest at Mt. Kloto near Kpalimé, Togo. Seemingly a difficult species to find in Ghana. This taxon is known simply as Leaflove by both Clements and the authors of the Birds of Western Africa.

**Baumann's Greenbul** ***Phyllastrephus baumanni***

Endemic to West Africa. A pair was found in the grassland at Kalakpa. Great views. Also known as Baumann's Olive Greenbul.

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

Two sightings in the undergrowth along the ridge trail at Atewa.

**Icterine Greenbul** ***Phyllastrephus icterinus***

Relatively common in flocks. Just two were spotted along the ridge trail at Atewa in September. Common and easy to see in mixed-species flocks at Ankasa. One was seen in the Nsuta Forest. Three were found along the ridge trail at Atewa in November.

**Green-tailed Bristlebill** ***Bleda eximius***

Endemic to the Upper Guinea forests from Sierra Leone to Ghana. One was taped-in and seen very well at Ankasa. A short look at one bird along the ridge trail at Atewa in November was part of a three bristlebill day.

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

A difficult bird to spot. My first observation was little more than a brief glimpse of a red tail of one bird down at the far end of the main road through Ankasa. Three days later, we managed to tempt one out of the forest, but it simply quickly flew across the main road at Ankasa and disappeared. My best sighting was a short look at one bird along the ridge trail at Atewa in November, part of a three bristlebill day. Clements notes this taxon by the unimaginative name of Common Bristlebill.

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

Endemic to West Africa. A good look at one rather high up on the ridge trail at Atewa. One was found as I walked from the canopy walkway back to the HQ at Kakum. One flew across the main road through the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary. One was seen along the ridge trail at Atewa in November, part of a three bristlebill day.

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

At Atewa, one bird was in a mixed-species flock in the farmbush, and another along the ridge trail. A good look at one along the main road through Ankasa. Two were found in the Nsuta Forest. Two were spotted along the main road at Bobiri, and a final two along the ridge trail at Atewa in November. 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. Quite common in southern forests with multiple sightings at Atewa, Kakum, Ankasa and Nsuta, mainly in flocks.

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

Endemic to the Upper Guinea forests from Sierra Leone to Ghana. One was found in a mixed-species flock along the main road through Ankasa, followed by two more two days later.

**MACROSPHENIDAE (African Warblers)**

**Moustached Grass Warbler** ***Melocichla mentalis***

A good look at two birds in the grassland at the Winneba Plains. Some authors call this taxon by the name of African Moustached Warbler.

**Green Crombec** ***Sylvietta virens***

Quite common with sightings at Atewa, Mountain Paradise Lodge, Kakum, Ankasa, and both the Nsuta and Bonkro forests.

**Lemon-bellied Crombec** ***Sylvietta denti***

Persistence paid off as I finally found a pair of this species along the ridge trail at Atewa in November. Fortunately, this tiny canopy-dwelling species decided to come down rather low to give me a good look.

**Northern Crombec** ***Sylvietta brachyura***

Two were first found along the Brenu Beach Road. Three were seen in Mole National Park. One was in the scrub at the Lake Tono Dam on both visits. A final two birds were seen along the Sapeliga Road.

**Kemp's Longbill** ***Macrosphenus flavicans***

Endemic to West Africa. While descending the waterfall trail just a little bit below the Mountain Paradise Lodge, I heard a strange call coming from the thick undergrowth. Not knowing what it was, I persisted in my attempt to track it and was quite surprised to see a Kemp's Longbill pop into the open and give me a great look, singing the whole time. Also heard once in the Nsuta Forest.

**Grey Longbill** ***Macrosphenus concolor***

A pair of what appeared to be juveniles was found along the ridge trail at Atewa. An adult was in the Nsuta Forest, and two birds were seen along the ridge trail at Atewa when I returned in November.

**INCERTAE CEDIS**

**Green Hylia** ***Hylia prasina***

Very common by voice in all southern forests with sightings along the ridge trail at Atewa, at the Mountain Paradise Lodge, from the canopy walkway at Kakum, the Nsuta Forest, the Bonkro Forest and the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary. Birds were certainly commonly heard at Ankasa, but I never did see one there.

**Tit-hylia** ***Pholidornis rushiae***

A great look at a flock of four birds along the ridge trail at Atewa. My walk to the Abrafo Forest produced two birds in the farmbush. Two were found in the Nsuta Forest. My final sighting was of one bird along the ridge trail at Atewa in November.

**PHYLLOSCOPIDAE (Leaf Warblers)**

**Willow Warbler** ***Phylloscopus trochilus***

Two were seen on the grounds of the Mole Motel in Mole National Park. Two more were in the scrub at the Lake Tono Dam.

**Wood Warbler** ***Phylloscopus sibilatrix***

Three birds were in the canopy just below the big clearing at the top of the ridge trail at Atewa in November.

**ACROCEPHALIDAE (Reed Warblers and Allies)**

**Melodious Warbler** ***Hippolais polyglotta***

Two were seen very well in the scrub at the Lake Tono Dam.

**CISTICOLIDAE (Cisticolas and Allies)**

**Red-faced Cisticola** ***Cisticola erythrops***

As you walk from the main highway at Sagyamase along the dirt road to the beginning of the ridge trail at Atewa, there is a marshy area on the left and birds were common there during my first visit in September. One was found in the town of Ada Foah. Upon my return to Atewa, I was only able to find one bird in the same marshy area.

**Singing Cisticola** ***Cisticola cantans***

Up to three birds were seen on both days in the grassland at Shai Hills. Three were found on the Winneba Plains. Seen daily along the Brenu Beach Road. One was in the scrub around the Frenchman's Farm at Ankasa, and one at the Gambaga Escarpment near Nakpanduri.

**Whistling Cisticola** ***Cisticola lateralis***

A total of four birds were seen in the farmbush as I walked to the Abrafo Forest. One was found at the airstrip in Mole National Park on two separate visits.

**Dorst's Cisticola** ***Cisticola dorsti***

Endemic to West Africa. My only sighting was of a confiding bird in the grassland at Mognori in Mole National Park.

**Winding Cisticola** ***Cisticola galactotes***

Very vocal at the Sakumono Lagoon where about seven birds were seen. One was also found on the outskirts of the town of Ada Foah.

**Croaking Cisticola** ***Cisticola natalensis***

Several were seen in display flight in the grassland at Shai Hills. In the Sayu Cave area of Shai Hills the next day, one more was seen in display and another perched at close range. Two were also found on the Winneba Plains.

**Short-winged Cisticola** ***Cisticola brachypterus***

In the grassland at Shai Hills, one bird was seen in display flight and another perched for some time at close range. Two were found on the Winneba Plains. Two were spotted along the Brenu Beach Road on two separate days. Clements calls this taxon by the name of Siffling Cisticola.

**Rufous Cisticola** ***Cisticola rufus***

After striking out in Mole National Park, I did manage to get a good look at one bird along the Sapeliga Road.

**Tawny-flanked Prinia** ***Prinia subflava***

Widespread and common.

**Red-winged Warbler** ***Prinia erythroptera***

I was only able to find one bird along the Brenu Beach Road. Clements calls this taxon by the name of Red-winged Prinia.

**Black-capped Apalis** ***Apalis nigriceps***

A male was found in the canopy along the main road at Nsuta.

**Yellow-breasted Apalis** ***Apalis flavida***

One was found in the scrub in Mole National Park on two separate days.

**Sharpe's Apalis** ***Apalis sharpii***

Endemic to West Africa. A decent look at a male from the canopy walkway at Kakum. Another male was found along the main road through Ankasa, with one more in the Nsuta Forest.

**Oriole Warbler** ***Hypergerus atriceps***

Several great sightings of this impressive bird. Two birds were found at Sayu Cave at Shai Hills. Another two were surprisingly found on the outskirts of the town of Ada Foah. First a pair and then another single bird were seen along the Brenu Beach Road on one of my visits.

**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*. Those authors who lump the species aren't consistent in their usage of Grey-backed or Green-backed which adds to the confusion. The subspecies in West Africa is *brevicaudata*. Quite commonly found in scrub throughout Ghana.

**Yellow-browed Camaroptera** ***Camaroptera superciliaris***

Quite common with birds seen mostly in pairs in the farmbush at Atewa, around the Mountain Paradise Lodge, on my walk to the Abrafo Forest, at the Nsuta Forest and at the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary.

**Olive-green Camaroptera** ***Camaroptera chloronota***

One individual of the subspecies *chloronota* was heard and seen just a little bit down the waterfall trail at the Mountain Paradise Lodge. Two sightings of birds of the subspecies *kelsalli* in the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary.

**Senegal Eremomela** ***Eremomela pusilla***

Endemic to West Africa. Just one was found at Shai Hills. Common in Mole National Park with daily sightings. Very common in the scrub around the Lake Tono Dam on both visits. Two were seen at the Gambaga Escarpment near Nakpanduri, and two along the Sapeliga Road.

**Rufous-crowned Eremomela** ***Eremomela badiceps***

Only one sighting of one bird in a mixed-species flock up in the canopy along the main road through the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary.

**ZOSTEROPIDAE (White-eyes, Yuhinas and Allies)**

**African Yellow White-eye** ***Zosterops senegalensis***

Sightings in scrub and farmbush at Atewa, around the Frenchman's Farm at Ankasa, around the Nsuta Forest, on the grounds of the Mole Motel and at the Lake Tono Dam.

**PELLORNEIDAE (Ground Babblers and Allies)**

**Blackcap Illadopsis** ***Illadopsis cleaveri***

A singing bird was tracked down for a great look in the forest along the main road through Ankasa.

**Rufous-winged Illadopsis** ***Illadopsis rufescens***

Endemic to West Africa. My only sighting was of one bird on the forest floor at Ankasa.

**Pale-breasted Illadopsis** ***Illadopsis rufipennis***

Quite common by voice at Ankasa, and good views were had of two birds on two separate days. Also heard in the Nsuta Forest.

**Puvel's Illadopsis** ***Illadopsis puveli***

Heard calling from a forest patch at the end of a football field outside a small village on the road towards the Nsuta Forest on my first visit. I had been tipped off about a reliable spot for this species being the first short stretch of the ridge trail at Atewa from the start up to the blue gate, and it was along here that some patient searching on my last birding day in November led to a fabulous encounter with one bird.

**Brown Illadopsis** ***Illadopsis fulvescens***

I frequently heard an Illadopsis, which I believe was this species, along the ridge trail at Atewa, but I never managed a look to confirm my suspicion. I did manage a view of a small party of about four birds of the brown-throated subspecies *moloneyana* just a bit down the waterfall trail at the Mountain Paradise Lodge.

**LEIOTHRICHIDAE (Laughingthrushes and Allies)**

**Blackcap Babbler** ***Turdoides reinwardtii***

Patience led to a decent look at two birds amongst a skulking flock in the undergrowth at Shai Hills.

**Brown Babbler** ***Turdoides plebejus***

A poor look at one bird in Mole National Park.

**Capuchin Babbler** ***Phyllanthus atripennis***

A flock was very wary and difficult to observe in the forest at Kalakpa, but I did manage a decent look at one bird.

**HYLIOTIDAE (Hyliotas)**

**Violet-backed Hyliota** ***Hyliota violacea***

One was spotted from the canopy walkway at Kakum, and one more along the main road through the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary.

**MUSCICAPIDAE (Old World Flycatchers)**

**White-tailed Alethe** ***Alethe diademata***

Endemic to West Africa. A poor look at one bird at Ankasa, followed by a much better sighting the next day. Clements does not support the split of this species from Fire-crested Alethe.

**Pale Flycatcher** ***Bradornis pallidus***

One was found along the Brenu Beach Road. A dirt side-road passed adjacent to the guesthouse at the Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary and it was along here that I found one bird.

**Northern Black Flycatcher** ***Melaenornis edolioides***

Commonly seen in Mole National Park.

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

Widespread sightings of birds at Atewa, from the canopy walkway at Kakum, at Ankasa and in the Nsuta Forest. Common at the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary with singles on my first two days, but a relative bonanza of six birds on my last, including four at a termite emergence where it was fascinating to watch the birds catching the insects as they flew up from the ground to initiate the mating cycle.

**Spotted Flycatcher** ***Muscicapa striata***

One was found along the Brenu Beach Road.

**Ussher's Flycatcher** ***Muscicapa ussheri***

Endemic to West Africa. Three birds were characteristically seen in the canopy of a dead tree along the ridge trail at Atewa. Birds were seen on both visits to the canopy walkway at Kakum. Just one sighting at Ankasa of one bird along the main road. Easily seen at the Nsuta Forest, especially along the main road, where views of the canopy produced seven birds on my second visit. Another sighting of four birds at Atewa upon my return in November.

**Swamp Flycatcher** ***Muscicapa aquatica***

A great look at two birds in a wet area along the Samole Loop in Mole National Park.

**Little Grey Flycatcher** ***Muscicapa epulata***

Perched birds were found in dead trees first in a small clearing on the way up the ridge trail at Atewa, and another at the big clearing at the top. Upon my return to Atewa in November, an adult and juvenile were spotted just below the big clearing at the top of the ridge trail, and two adults in the same area two days later.

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

One was found near the blue gate at the bottom of the ridge trail at Atewa. One was along the main road through Ankasa, and one in the Nsuta Forest. Upon my return to Atewa, one was seen at the bottom of the ridge trail and another in the farmbush.

**Tessmann's Flycatcher** ***Muscicapa tessmanni***

A good look at a perched bird in a small clearing along the ridge trail at Atewa.

**Cassin's Flycatcher** ***Muscicapa cassini***

A pair was at the bridge right at the entrance to Ankasa on my first visit. Despite walking by and checking this location frequently, they surprisingly were not seen again.

**Grey-throated Tit-Flycatcher** ***Myioparus griseigularis***

Patience brought a good look at a very active bird along the main road at Ankasa. One more was found in the Nsuta Forest.

**Grey Tit-Flycatcher (Lead-coloured Flycatcher)** ***Myioparus plumbeus***

A good look at one bird in the Nsuta Forest. Upon leaving the forest at Bonkro, two birds were seen in the farmbush on the walk back to the village. A dirt side-road passed adjacent to the guesthouse at the Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary and it was along here that I found two birds. One was also found in Mole National Park.

**European Pied Flycatcher** ***Ficedula hypoleuca***

Two were first seen on my hike below the escarpment at the Mole Motel, and one at the viewpoint over the waterhole.

**Forest Robin** ***Stiphrornis erythrothorax***

One was spotted on the trail beyond the campsite area in back of the visitor's centre at Ankasa, a great sighting as I got to enjoy a perched bird singing with its puffed-out throat.

**Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat** ***Cossypha niveicapilla***

Common on the Winneba Plains with about six birds seen in total, including two in an elaborate courtship display. Quite common on the Brenu Beach Road.

**White-crowned Robin-Chat** ***Cossypha albicapilla***

My only observation was of two birds skulking in the riverine forest at the Mognori River near the village of Mognori in Mole National Park.

**Forest Scrub-Robin** ***Cercotrichas leucosticta***

Endemic to West Africa. A difficult bird to see. I was lucky in having one bird fly across the ridge trail at Atewa and briefly land in the open on the other side before it jumped back into cover.

**Whinchat** ***Saxicola rubetra***

One was found in a field along the road near the White Volta site.

**Mocking Cliff-Chat** ***Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris***

One female was spotted at a distance atop a large boulder at an inselberg not far from the visitor's centre at Shai Hills. A pair was also seen in the Tongo Hills.

**<u>TURDIDAE (Thrushes)</u>**

**Finsch's Flycatcher Thrush** ***Stizorhina finschi***

Endemic to West Africa. Two were spotted along the ridge trail at Atewa. A pair was seen along the main road through Ankasa. Two more were found along the ridge trail upon my return to Atewa in November. Some authors name this taxon as Finsch's Rufous Thrush.

**White-tailed Ant Thrush** ***Neocossyphus poensis***

A good look at a pair just below the big clearing at the top of the ridge trail at Atewa. One was also found in the Nsuta Forest.

**African Thrush** ***Turdus pelios***

One was seen in the town of Kibi, with another at Shai Hills. In Togo I found one on my hike around Mt. Kloto and one around the Hotel Chez Fanny in Kpalimé. Singles were seen along the Brenu Beach Road on two visits. One more was in the farmbush at Atewa upon my return in November.

**STURNIDAE (Starlings)**

**Splendid Glossy-Starling** ***Lamprotornis splendidus***

My first sighting was of one bird in the farmbush on my walk to the Abrafo Forest. Ten or more were spotted from the canopy walkway at Kakum the next day. One was observed in flight along the Brenu Beach Road. Two were near the Frenchman's Farm near Ankasa, two in the forest at Ankasa, and two at the Carmelite Sunbird stakeout at Half Assini. Common in and around the Nsuta Forest on both visits. Common at the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary. Birds were seen around Kibi and in the farmbush at Atewa upon my return in November.

**Purple Glossy-Starling** ***Lamprotornis purpureus***

Several pairs were encountered on a walk from Sayu Camp to Sayu Cave and back at Shai Hills. I found one around the town of Ada Foah. Two sightings in Mole National Park. One was in the scrub at the Lake Tono Dam.

**Long-tailed Glossy-Starling** ***Lamprotornis caudatus***

Very common in Mole National Park and at the Lake Tono Dam. One was seen at the river immediately below the Gambaga Escarpment near Nakpanduri as I was travelling by motorbike to Garu. Four birds were spotted at the big bridge along the Bawku-Bolgatanga Road near the turnoff to Sapeliga.

**Chestnut-bellied Starling** ***Lamprotornis pulcher***

Just two birds seen at the Lake Tono Dam.

**Copper-tailed Glossy-Starling** ***Lamprotornis cupreocauda***

Endemic to the Upper Guinea forests from Sierra Leone to Ghana. After occasionally hearing them over the preceding days, we finally got a decent look at two birds up in the canopy along the main road through Ankasa on my last day there. Two more were seen in the Nsuta Forest.

**Violet-backed Starling** ***Cinnyricinclus leucogaster***

A pair was seen at a distance in a small tree in the grassland at Shai Hills. More than 10 birds were seen in a tree in the early morning as we made our way along the main highway towards the Nsuta Forest on my second visit.

**Chestnut-winged Starling** ***Onychognathus fulgidus***

Only seen in flight from the canopy walkway at Kakum with so-so views of one bird on visit 1 and two on visit 2.

**NECTARINIIDAE (Sunbirds and Spiderhunters)**

**Fraser's Sunbird** ***Deleornis fraseri***

Relatively common with sightings along the little trail from the HQ at Kakum to the campsite, in the Abrafo Forest, along the main road through Ankasa, and in the Nsuta Forest. On my return to Atewa, birds were seen daily along the ridge trail. Clements calls this taxon by the name of Scarlet-tufted Sunbird.

**Little Green Sunbird** ***Anthreptes seimundi***

One was found along the main road through Ankasa.

**Mangrove Sunbird** ***Anthreptes gabonicus***

About five birds were easily seen at the Ebi River. Alternate names for this taxon include Brown Sunbird and Mouse-brown Sunbird.

**Green Sunbird** ***Anthreptes rectirostris***

A male was found along the ridge trail at Atewa.

**Collared Sunbird** ***Hedydipna collaris***

A common sunbird of the southern part of Ghana where easily seen in the farmbush and along the ridge trail at Atewa. Common around the town of Ada Foah, Mountain Paradise Lodge, in and around Kakum National Park, Ankasa National Park, the Ebi River, Nsuta Forest and at Bobiri.

**Pygmy Sunbird** ***Hedydipna platura***

Three males in full breeding plumage were seen very well from the viewpoint over the waterhole at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park. One was spotted near the airstrip at Mole. A non-breeding male was found at the Lake Tono Dam. One was seen at the Gambaga Escarpment near Nakpanduri and one in the Tongo Hills.

**Reichenbach's Sunbird** ***Anabathmis reichenbachii***

A male was spotted in a palm just before the entrance to Ankasa National Park. Birds certainly seemed partial to these palms as later on, I found three more near the Frenchman's Farm and one again back by the main entrance to the park. One adult and one juvenile were also spotted roadside at the Ebi River.

**Green-headed Sunbird** ***Cyanomitra verticalis***

A male came to the flowers in the small garden at the Hotel Chez Fanny in Kpalimé, Togo. One was found around the Mountain Paradise Lodge, and two were seen along the Brenu Beach Road on two different occasions.

**Blue-throated Brown Sunbird** ***Cyanomitra cyanolaema***

A good sighting of a male along the ridge trail at Atewa. One was also found at the entrance gate to Ankasa National Park.

**Olive Sunbird** ***Cyanomitra olivacea***

Several sightings along the ridge trail at Atewa. One was found along the main road through Ankasa on two occasions. Single sightings also in the Nsuta Forest and at Bobiri.

**Buff-throated Sunbird** ***Chalcomitra adelberti***

Endemic to West Africa. A male was perched atop a dead snag in a clearing along the ridge trail at Atewa, and another was in the farmbush. Just one was seen at the Mountain Paradise Lodge. An excellent look at two birds at the Kakum NP headquarters. Two were seen along the main road through the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary, and on my return to Atewa, one bird was seen in the farmbush.

**Carmelite Sunbird** ***Chalcomitra fuliginosa***

After some patient waiting, a male appeared at the well-known stakeout at the Hotel Gracia in Half Assini.

**Scarlet-chested Sunbird** ***Chalcomitra senegalensis***

Common in northern Ghana. One or two birds were seen daily in Mole National Park. Common at the Lake Tono Dam with five birds observed in the surrounding scrub. One was seen at the Gambaga Escarpment near Nakpanduri. Two birds were also found in the scrub along the Sapeliga Road and two in the Tongo Hills.

**Olive-bellied Sunbird** ***Cinnyris chloropygius***

Daily sightings in the farmbush at Atewa. Singles were found around the Mountain Paradise Lodge. Single birds were seen in the farmbush on the way to the Abrafo Forest, along the Brenu Beach Road, in the scrub near the Frenchman's Farm at Ankasa and at the Ebi River. Small numbers were seen in the scrub around the Nsuta Forest on both visits. On my return to Atewa, birds were again found daily in the farmbush.

**Tiny Sunbird** ***Cinnyris minullus***

Despite their habitat differences, I had a difficult time separating this species from Olive-bellied Sunbird. A Tiny Sunbird was first identified at the forest edge at Atewa. One was in the forest at the Mountain Paradise Lodge. A pair was seen at the forest edge at the park headquarters of Kakum National Park, and one from the canopy walkway. Seen daily along the road in the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary.

**Beautiful Sunbird** ***Cinnyris pulchellus***

My only sighting was of a male attending a bank of flowers at the entrance to carpark at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park.

**Splendid Sunbird** ***Cinnyris coccinigastrus***

A pair was seen nicely at the Sayu Cave at Shai Hills. Singles were found around the Mountain Paradise Lodge and a male in the town of Winneba. First a pair and then a male were seen along the Brenu Beach Road on one of my walks. A pair was also seen the Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary.

**Johanna's Sunbird** ***Cinnyris johannae***

A pair was found near the Kpimé, waterfall near Kpalimé, Togo. A male was seen on my walk to the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary and another male was spotted in the Nsuta Forest.

**Superb Sunbird** ***Cinnyris superbus***

One male was along the ridge trail at Atewa. A female was attending the makings of a nest at the Mountain Paradise Lodge, while another female was building a nest on the grounds at the headquarters of the Kalakpa Reserve. On my return to Atewa, a pair was seen in the farmbush.

**Variable Sunbird** ***Cinnyris venustus***

A pair came to the small garden at the Hotel Chez Fanny in Kpalimé, Togo.

**Copper Sunbird** ***Cinnyris cupreus***

Quite common with sightings in the town of Kibi, at Shai Hills, in Ada Foah, at the Hotel Chez Fanny in Kpalimé, Togo, at the Mountain Paradise Lodge, in Winneba and on the plains, at the Kakum National Park HQ and along the Brenu Beach Road.

**MOTACILLIDAE (Wagtails and Pipits)**

**Yellow-throated Longclaw** ***Macronyx croceus***

A single bird was seen in the scope in the grassland at the Sakumono Lagoon, and two more were spotted in flight at the Winneba Plains.

**Plain-backed Pipit** ***Anthus leucophrys***

I found one at the Sakumono Lagoon and two in the grassland at Shai Hills. Singles were also observed along the Brenu Beach Road and in the big open area at Atewa.

**African Pied Wagtail** ***Motacilla aguimp***

My first sighting was of one bird on the roof at the Linda Dor Restaurant at Bunso Junction. While waiting a long time for my air-con van to leave Cape Coast on Oct. 23, one was spotted at the adjacent garage. My return to Atewa resulted in two birds again at the Linda Dor Restaurant.

**FRINGILLIDAE (Finches, Euphonias and Allies)**

**Yellow-fronted Canary** ***Serinus mozambicus***

Three birds were seen at the viewpoint over the waterhole at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park just after I arrived, and small numbers were found in the park daily thereafter. One was at the Gambaga Escarpment near Nakpanduri.

**EMBERIZIDAE (Old World Buntings)**

**Gosling's Bunting** ***Emberiza goslingi***

Split from Cinnamon-breasted Bunting. Two were found at the edge of a small waterhole in Mole National Park and one along the Samole Loop. Single birds were seen in the scrub at the Lake Tono Dam on both visits. Very common at the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri and in the Tongo Hills.

**PASSERIDAE (Old World Sparrows)**

**House Sparrow** ***Passer domesticus***

On Oct. 3, I jumped off a trotro in the pouring rain at the junction of the Jukwa road and the main highway at Cape Coast on my way to Ayensudo Junction and saw two House Sparrows. Birds were also seen in both Essiama and Half Assini.

**Northern Grey-headed Sparrow** ***Passer griseus***

Widespread and common, especially around human habitation.

**Bush Petronia** ***Gymnornis dentata***

Very common in Mole National Park with small numbers seen daily. Common around the Gambaga Escarpment near Nakpanduri, and one was in the Tongo Hills.

**PLOCEIDAE (Weavers and Allies)**

**Speckle-fronted Weaver** ***Sporopipes frontalis***

Common at the Lake Tono Dam, including a pair building a nest in a small, isolated tree.

**Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver** ***Plocepasser superciliosus***

About four birds were initially seen on my walk below the escarpment at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park. One was spotted at the Mognori River in Mole. Another two attended an active mob disturbed by a Pearl-spotted Owlet at the viewpoint over the waterhole at the Mole Motel.

**Red-vented Malimbe** ***Malimbus scutatus***

An obscured look at one bird in the canopy along the main road through Ankasa. Common in the Nsuta Forest on both visits.

**Blue-billed Malimbe** ***Malimbus nitens***

Birds were seen on the ridge trail at Atewa, and in the farmbush on the way to the Abrafo Forest. Common at Ankasa with daily sightings, the most notable being breeding colonies at pools 1 and 3 beyond Nkwanta Camp. Single birds were found in the Nsuta Forest on both visits. One was in the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary. A few were seen on my return to Atewa. Clements names this taxon as Grey's Malimbe.

**Crested Malimbe** ***Malimbus malimbicus***

Two were initially seen on the ridge trail at Atewa . An interesting observation of one adult and one juvenile just a little bit down the waterfall trail at the Mountain Paradise Lodge. What was notable was that the juvenile was totally black with a chestnut cap, completely different than the juvenile illustrated in the Birds of Western Africa field guide. One was in the Abrafo Forest. Singles were seen almost daily at Ankasa. Common in the Nsuta Forest. Two sightings in the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary. Fairly common along the ridge trail at Atewa in November.

**Red-headed Malimbe** ***Malimbus rubricollis***

Single birds were seen on the ridge trail at Atewa, on my hike at Mt. Kloto near Kpalimé, Togo and on my walk to the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary. Common in the Nsuta Forest. Daily observations in the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary. Three birds were seen along the ridge trail upon my return to Atewa.

**Red-headed Weaver** ***Anaplectes rubriceps***

About four females/non-breeding males associated with a flock of White Helmetshrikes along the Samole Loop in Mole National Park, while just one was found in the same general area the next day.

**Little Weaver** ***Ploceus luteolus***

Fairly common in Mole National Park with one or two birds being seen almost daily. Three birds were seen at the Lake Tono Dam. I found a final two birds along the Sapeliga Road.

**Slender-billed Weaver** ***Ploceus pelzelni***

Two or three females were seen on the Winneba Plains, and birds were common along the Brenu Beach Road

**Black-necked Weaver** ***Ploceus nigricollis***

Very common in the farmbush at Atewa between the main road and the beginning of the ridge trail, as well as in the town of Kibi. A male was seen at the Hotel Chez Fanny in Kpalimé, Togo. Small numbers were around the Mountain Paradise Lodge. Common along the Brenu Beach Road and in the farmbush upon my return to Atewa.

**Orange Weaver** ***Ploceus aurantius***

Three males were found in a few trees in front of the Sunny Corner Lodge in the town of Essiama.

**Vitelline Masked-Weaver** ***Ploceus vitellinus***

Two birds were seen in the riverine forest at the bridge just below the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri. One was found at the same spot the next day on my way to Garu.

**Vieillot's Black Weaver** ***Ploceus nigerrimus***

Very common in the farmbush at Atewa between the main road and the beginning of the ridge trail, with occasional sightings in the town of Kibi as well. Several were seen on my walk to the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary. A big colony was found in a marshy area on the way to the Abrafo Forest. Common along the Brenu Beach Road and again in the farmbush at Atewa upon my return in November.

**Village Weaver** ***Ploceus cucullatus***

A large colony was adjacent to my hotel in Kibi. Just a single bird was spotted in Ada Foah. A big colony was at Max's Hotel near the village of Woe on the edge of the Keta Lagoon. Occasional sightings around the Mountain Paradise Lodge and the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary. A big colony was found in a marshy area on the way to the Abrafo Forest. Common along the Brenu Beach Road. Several colonies were roadside between Essiama and Half Assini. Several were observed in the farmbush at Atewa in November.

**Yellow-mantled Weaver** ***Ploceus tricolor***

First a pair and then another single bird were seen from the canopy walkway at Kakum National Park on my first visit. Just one was observed on my second trip to the canopy walkway.

**Maxwell's Black Weaver** ***Ploceus albinucha***

Common in the Nsuta Forest.

**Preuss's Weaver** ***Ploceus preussi***

One foraged like a nuthatch in a nearby tree at eye level along the canopy walkway at Kakum National Park. One was spotted at the top of a distant emergent tree from the main road through the Nsuta Forest. A final observation of one bird at Bobiri.

**Compact Weaver** ***Pachyphantes superciliosus***

A small flock was found in the farmbush between the main road and the beginning of the ridge trail at Atewa. About five birds were seen around the village of Ada Foah. One was seen in the farmbush on my return to Atewa in November.

**Red-headed Quelea** ***Quelea erythrops***

One male in partial breeding plumage was found along the "goldfields" road near Bunso Junction.

**Red-billed Quelea** ***Quelea quelea***

One big flock was seen as I descended the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri.

**Northern Red Bishop** ***Euplectes franciscanus***

Two males and a female were seen in the village of Ada Foah, and a male in a field at Max's Hotel in the village of Woe at the edge of the Keta Lagoon. Small numbers were along the Brenu Beach Road. Common at the airstrip in Mole National Park and along the Mognori Road. One male was seen as I left Mole by motorbike on my way to Damongo. Clements gives the name of Orange Bishop to this taxon.

**Black-winged Red Bishop** ***Euplectes hordeaceus***

Quite common in grassland throughout Ghana with sightings of males in breeding plumage and females at the Sakumono Lagoon, the town of Kibi and the Atewa farmbush, the Winneba Plains, the Abrafo Forest, along the Brenu Beach Road, at the Nsuta Forest and along the Gambaga Escarpment. Some authors use the name of Black-winged Bishop for this taxon.

**Yellow-mantled (Yellow-shouldered) Widowbird** ***Euplectes macroura***

Males were seen in the grassland at Shai Hills. A displaying male was spotted on my walk to the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary. Several males and females were on the Winneba Plains. One was spotted on my walk to the Abrafo Forest. Common along the Brenu Beach Road, but just one sighting of one bird in Mole National Park.

**Grosbeak Weaver** ***Amblyospiza albifrons***

One female was seen in the town of Kibi, and six females were spotted at the abandoned mine at Atewa.

**ESTRILDIDAE (Waxbills and Allies)**

**Grey-headed Nigrita** ***Nigrita canicapillus***

One bird was first seen in the farmbush between the main road and the ridge trail at Atewa. One was sighted around the Mountain Paradise Lodge and one from the canopy walkway at Kakum. Single birds were seen twice at Ankasa during my five-day stay. Up to two birds were found at the Nsuta Forest on both visits. One was in the Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary, and a final two birds were seen along the ridge trail at Atewa in November.

**Chestnut-breasted Nigrita** ***Nigrita bicolor***

Two birds were seen in the farmbush between the main road and the ridge trail at Atewa on two separate days in September. One was found on my walk to the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary. Relatively common at Ankasa with pairs found on four out of my five days. At Bobiri, a total of three birds were seen along the main road.

**White-breasted Nigrita** ***Nigrita fusconotus***

One bird was seen on three occasions in the farmbush between the main road and the ridge trail at Atewa. One was also spotted from the canopy walkway at Kakum.

**Red-fronted Antpecker** ***Parmoptila rubrifrons***

Endemic to the Upper Guinea forests from Sierra Leone to Ghana. A very scarce and difficult bird to find. After striking out during all my visits to the southern forests, I finally had success with one female in a mixed-species flock along the trail beyond the clearing at the top of the ridge at Atewa in November. This is apparently the most reliable spot, at least at Atewa, for this flock-loving species. Unfortunately, my view was brief.

**Green Twinspot** ***Mandingoa nitidula***

One male was spotted along the ridge trail at Atewa, and a pair was later seen in the farmbush. Clements gives the name of Green-backed Twinspot to this taxon.

**Lavender Waxbill** ***Estrilda caerulescens***

Strangely absent from Mole National Park where I had assumed it was common. My only sighting was a brief glimpse of a bird along the road as I descended the Gambaga Escarpment at Nakpanduri.

**Orange-cheeked Waxbill** ***Estrilda melpoda***

Widespread and fairly common with sightings as far north as Mole National Park.

**Black-rumped Waxbill** ***Estrilda troglodytes***

Common along the Brenu Beach Road. Just one sighting at Mole National Park, that being of a single bird along the Yagbon Loop. A small flock was also observed along the Sapeliga Road.

**Western Bluebill** ***Spermophaga haematina***

Two birds were found at the abandoned mine at Atewa. An adult with two juveniles were also spotted along the Brenu Beach Road.

**Black-bellied Seedcracker** ***Pyrenestes sanguineus***

Excellent sightings of a single male along the Brenu Beach Road on two occasions.

**Red-cheeked Cordonbleu** ***Uraeginthus bengalus***

Common at Mole National Park and at the Lake Tono Dam. One was seen at the Gambaga Escarpment near Nakpanduri. A male was found along the Sapeliga Road, and two birds were in the Tongo Hills.

**Red-winged Pytilia** ***Pytilia phoenicoptera***

My only sighting was of a pair at the airstrip at Mole National Park.

**Red-billed Firefinch** ***Lagonosticta senegala***

A pair was seen on the ground in the town of Ada Foah in a small flock with three Wilson's Indigobirds. This I thought was somewhat odd in that this firefinch is supposedly parasitized by Village Indigobird, which apparently does not range into this part of coastal Ghana, and not by Wilson's. Three birds were found in the town of Winneba, again being attended by what appeared to be Wilson's Indigobirds. Somewhat common at Mole with a male and two females on the Samole loop and a pair the next day. One male was seen at the Gambaga Escarpment near Nakpanduri.

**Bar-breasted Firefinch** ***Lagonosticta nitidula***

One was found in the farmbush at Atewa. Common along the Brenu Beach Road. One was spotted along the Samole Loop at Mole National Park. Three birds were seen in the farmbush at Atewa when I returned in November.

**Black-faced Firefinch** ***Lagonosticta larvata***

A male flew in and dropped to the tarmac at the airstrip at Mole National Park, but very quickly flew off.

**Black-bellied Firefinch** ***Lagonosticta rara***

My only sighting was of a single female in the farmbush at Atewa, the last new bird for my trip.

**African (Blue-billed) Firefinch** ***Lagonosticta rubricata***

Up to about four birds were spotted along the Brenu Beach Road on two separate days.

**Black-faced Quailfinch** ***Ortygospiza atricollis***

My only observation was of one male on the Winneba Plains flying in to land on the track right in front of me and then quickly flying off.

**Bronze Mannikin** ***Spermestes cucullatus***

Very common.

**Black and White Mannikin** ***Spermestes bicolor***

Very common.

**VIDUIDAE (Indigobirds)**

**Pin-tailed Whydah** ***Vidua macroura***

Common in farmbush and other open environments, including towns and villages, throughout southern Ghana and as far north as Mole National Park. At this time of year, males were in breeding plumage and very active.

**Exclamatory Paradise-Whydah** ***Vidua interjecta***

According to Daniel, Exclamatory Paradise-Whydah is more common along the loop roads and areas closer to the Mole Motel than Togo Paradise-Whydah. Along the Samole Loop at Mole, I did see a male and two females. In the same area the next day, I had a wonderful experience seeing two males competing in full display. Clements gives the name of Long-tailed Paradise-Whydah to this taxon.

**Togo Paradise-Whydah** ***Vidua togoensis***

My only sighting was of a breeding male displaying in the grassland at the Mognori River in Mole National Park. A great look at it through the scope. According to Daniel, this area of the park is a good spot for this species.

**Village Indigobird** ***Vidua chalybeata***

Relatively common in Mole National Park with up to four birds seen daily. One was seen in the scrub at the Lake Tono Dam, a pair at the Gambaga Escarpment near Nakpanduri and a final pair in the Tongo Hills.

**Wilson's Indigobird** ***Vidua wilsoni***

Presumably it was three Wilson's Indigobirds I saw feeding on the ground in the town of Ada Foah. Although difficult to separate from Village Indigobird, the males I saw did seem to have a purplish gloss, a brown edge to the flight feathers, a pale bill and light-reddish legs. And the range of Village Indigobird is apparently only in the north of Ghana. However, these indigobirds were associating with Red-billed Firefinch which is a known host for Village Indigobirds. I also found a male and two females in the town of Winneba. The male had field marks that seemed consistent with Wilson's Indigobird, but again, these birds were associating with Red-billed Firefinches. Something about this doesn't seem quite right. Two were found in Winneba the next day as well, this time without the firefinches. Clements assigns the name of Pale-winged Indigobird to this taxon.

## Mammal List

Taxonomy essentially follows what has been published to date in the volumes of the Handbook of the Mammals of the World.

**PTEROPODIDAE (Megabats)**

**Straw-coloured Fruit Bat** ***Eidolon helvum***

Large numbers flew over Kibi at dusk during my visit to Atewa in September, and a few would be seen returning in the early morning. Occasional sightings elsewhere including a few during the day in Ada Foah, and a large roosting colony not far from the Kpimé waterfall near Kpalimé, Togo. Also seen at dusk at the Nsuta Forest.

**EMBALLONURIDAE (Sac-winged Bats)**

**Egyptian Tomb Bat** ***Taphozous perforatus***

There seems to be some question as to whether the bats in Sayu Cave at Shai Hills are this species or Mauritian Tomb Bat, but I'm going with this one.

**<u>CERCOPITHECIDAE</u> (Old World Monkeys)**

**Olive Baboon** ***Papio anubis***

Common at Shai Hills. Also, while passing Shai Hills along the highway during my trotro trip from Ho to Accra on Sept. 28, a troop was mulling about by the side of the road. Also common at Mole National Park.

**Patas Monkey** ***Erythrocebus patas***

Three were seen well along the Samole Loop at Mole National Park, and a great view of a troop of seven on the grounds of the Mole Motel.

**Tantalus Monkey** ***Chlorocebus tantalus***

Based on accepted ranges, a "vervet-type" monkey seen at a great distance in Shai Hills was determined to be this species and not a Green Monkey.

**Green Monkey** ***Chlorocebus sabaceus***

My only sighting was of one around the Mole Motel.

**Mona Monkey** ***Cercopithecus mona***

A couple of habituated troops were encountered during my visit to the Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary.

**Lowe's Monkey** ***Cercopithecus lowei***

Habituated troops were easy to see at the Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary.

**Spot-nosed Monkey** ***Cercopithecus petaurista***

A troop was found at the Kpimé waterfall near Kpalimé, Togo. Just one was observed from the canopy walkway at Kakum. A small troop was seen at Monkey Hill in Takoradi, and one individual was found at Ankasa.

**White-thighed Colobus** ***Colobus vellerosus***

A distant look at a troop in the Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary on my afternoon visit, but then two big troops were fairly easy to spot the next morning.

**<u>LEPORIDAE</u> (Hares and Rabbits)**

**African Savanna Hare** ***Lepus victoriae***

One was found at night in Mole National Park.

**<u>ANOMALURIDAE</u> (Anomlures)**

**Pel's Anomalure** ***Anomalurus pelii***

Probably my least exciting mammal sighting ever. While on the canopy walkway at Kakum, I could see several centimetres of a white tail of one individual sticking out of a resting hole.

**<u>SCIURIDAE</u> (Tree, Flying and Ground Squirrels, Chipmunks, Marmots and Prairie Dogs)**

**Striped Ground Squirrel** ***Euxerus erythropus***

One was seen along the Brenu Beach Road. Two were observed along the roads in Mole National Park on two separate days.

**Gambian Sun Squirrel** ***Heliosciurus gambianus***

Two sightings along the ridge trail at Atewa.

**Red-legged Sun Squirrel** ***Heliosciurus rufobrachium***

Singles were seen at Atewa along the ridge trail on two occasions. A couple of sightings in the forest at Ankasa as well.

**Small Sun Squirrel** ***Heliosciurus punctatus***

My only sighting was of a single individual along the little trail past the HQ at Kakum towards the campsite.

**Forest Giant Squirrel** ***Protoxerus stangeri***

A single individual was seen from the canopy walkway at Kakum.

**Fire-footed Rope Squirrel** ***Funisciurus pyrropus***

One was found at Atewa along the ridge trail.

**Kintampo Rope Squirrel** ***Funisciurus substriatus***

One was found at Mognori in Mole National Park.

**Green Bush Squirrel** ***Paraxerus poensis***

My only sighting was of one at Ankasa.

**MURIDAE (True Mice and Rats, Gerbils and relatives)**

**Typical Striped Grass Mouse** ***Leminiscomys striatus***

One mouse gave me a good look along the Brenu Beach Road.

**Tullberg's Soft-furred Mouse** ***Praomys tullbergi***

A forest mouse which likely was this species was found along the ridge trail at Atewa.

**HERPESTIDAE (Mongooses)**

**Common Cusimanse** ***Crossarchus obscurus***

Three were nosing around in the undergrowth along the waterfall trail at the Mountain Paradise Lodge. Four were found along the main track through Ankasa.

**PROCAVIIDAE (Hyraxes)**

**Western Tree Hyrax** ***Dendrohyrax dorsalis***

Commonly heard at night at Kakum, Nsuta and Bobiri but never seen.

**ELEPHANTIDAE (Elephants)**

**African Savanna Elephant** ***Loxodonta africana***

The viewpoint at the Mole Motel overlooks a large waterhole below the escarpment, and there seemed to almost always be at least one elephant cooling off, and once there was a total of seven.

**SUIDAE (Pigs)**

**Common Warthog** ***Phacochoerus africanus***

Common in Mole National Park, with sightings around the park buildings as well as inside the park itself.

**BOVIDAE (Hollow-horned Ruminants)**

**Central Bushbuck** ***Tragelaphus phaleratus***

Common in Mole National Park, especially around the Mole Motel at night.

**Buffon's Kob** ***Kobus kob***

Two lone males and a herd of about eight animals were sighted on my walk from Sayu Camp to Sayu Cave in Shai Hills. Common in Mole National Park.

**Defassa Waterbuck** ***Kobus defassa***

Three were foraging in a marshy area in Mole National Park.

**Maxwell's Duiker** ***Philantomba maxwelli***

A female with a young calf crossed the main track through Ankasa.

## Reptile List

**Olive Ridley Turtle** ***Lepidochelys olivacea***

After striking out with my attempts to observe sea turtles at Ada Foah because nobody could find the guy with the keys for the vehicle that is used to take visitors out on to the beach (true story!), I had much more success at Winneba on the evening of Sept. 29. I was impressed with the wildlife office's organization and dedication to turtle conservation. After being picked up at about 7 pm, I and about seven other visitors were trucked out to the beach. We then walked the beach, which in total is about 4 km, but we didn't go to the end. During our visit we came across two females that each had reached beyond the high-water mark and were getting ready to construct their nests. Watching from a safe distance to avoid any disturbance, we saw how the turtle uses her back flippers to essentially "cup out" a hole in the sand. She seems to know it is deep enough when she can no longer remove any sand. The egg-laying process then begins and during this stage, the female apparently goes into a kind of trance whereby she becomes oblivious to whatever may be going on around her. This allows any curious visitors to go right up to the nest hole and watch the eggs being dropped. Absolutely fascinating! Each female dropped just over 100 eggs. The female then uses her front flippers to fill in the hole and then packs it down by lifting up her plastron and bringing it down hard on the sand making a loud thumping sound. She then turns and moves, surprisingly quickly, back to the water. The whole process took about 45 minutes and was a wonderful experience.

**Bell's Hinge-back Tortoise** ***Kinixys belliana***

One was seen in the grassland at Shai Hills.

**African Helmeted Turtle (Marsh Terrapin)** ***Pelomedusa subrufa***

One was found at night while we travelled by motorbike along the roads in Shai Hills.

**Tropical Skink** ***Trachylepis polytropis***

Widespread sightings.

**Red-headed Agama** ***Agama agama***

Common.

**African Five-lined Skink** ***Trachylepis quinquetaeniata***

Common around the buildings at the Mole Motel in Mole National Park.

**West African Crocodile** ***Crocodylus suchus***

Singles were seen in on two occasions in Mole National Park. A few were visible in the Chief's Pool in Paga where I went for a visit on a day trip on November 13.

**Nile Monitor** ***Varanus niloticus***

One sighting of a single monitor in Mole National Park.

## Amphibian List

**Gaboon Caecilian** ***Geotrypetes seraphini***

I was amazed to see my first caecilian with singles found along the ridge trail at Atewa on two occasions in September.