Ethiopia

Endemics Birding

Lalibela Historical Extension



Ruspoli's Turaco by Clayton Burne

Ethiopia is, quite simply, one of Africa's most extraordinary and rewarding birding destinations! Few countries can rival its remarkable concentration of endemic birds, spectacular landscapes and sheer diversity of habitats. From the towering Afro-alpine moorlands of the Bale Mountains and ancient highland forests to the bird-filled lakes of the Great Rift Valley and sun-baked acacia savannas of the south, this tour offers an astonishing variety of birding experiences. Among the many highlights we hope to encounter are the spectacular Ruspoli's Turaco, enigmatic Ethiopian Bushcrow, elegant White-tailed Swallow, Abyssinian Owl and a host of other highly sought-after endemics. The contrasting Awash lowlands add another dimension, with impressive bustards, colourful rollers, sandgrouse and an abundance of raptors inhabiting the dry country. A rich assemblage of forest, wetland and savanna species, complemented by numerous wintering Palearctic migrants, ensures that birding is seldom anything less than exhilarating! Ethiopia's mammals are equally fascinating, with the exceedingly rare Ethiopian

Wolf, magnificent Mountain Nyala and striking Guereza Colobus among the highlights. Add the country's ancient history, colourful cultures, dramatic scenery and excellent photographic opportunities, and the result is a truly memorable African adventure. Little wonder Ethiopia consistently ranks among our guides' favourite birding destinations on the continent!

To do full justice to the cultural and historical aspects of this tour, we offer a short yet very worthwhile extension to the northern town of Lalibela, where we explore the unique 12th century monolithic churches, hewn out of solid rock and now appropriately considered one of the wonders of the world. These structures must be seen to be believed, and we encourage you to take advantage of this great opportunity to witness and investigate these marvels of human effort and ingenuity!

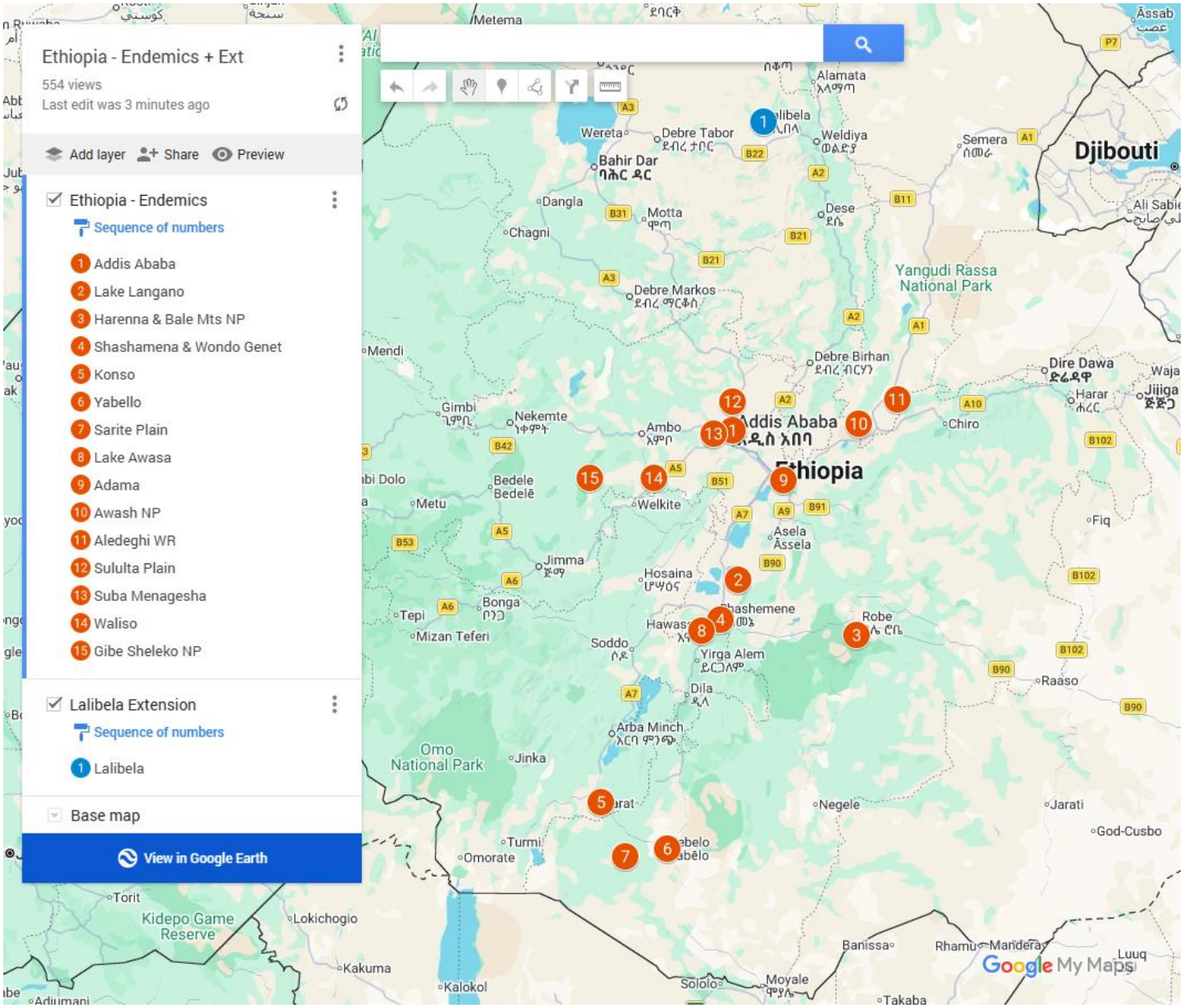
Itinerary & Map

Endemics Birding

Day 1	**Arrival into Addis Ababa**
Day 2	**Addis Ababa to Lake Langano**
Day 3	**Lake Langano area**
Day 4	**Lake Langano to Robe via Dinsho**
Day 5	**Sanetti Plateau & Dinsho (Bale Mountain National Park)**
Day 6	**Robe to Shashamena via Wondo Genet**
Day 7	**Shashamena to Konso**
Day 8	**Konso to Yabello via Arero Forest**
Day 9	**Sarite Plain (Borana National Park)**
Day 10	**Yabello to Lake Awassa**
Day 11	**Lake Awassa to Adama via Lake Ziway**
Day 12	**Adama to Awash via Lake Beseka**
Day 13	**Awash National Park**
Day 14	**Aledeghi Wildlife Reserve & Bilen area**
Day 15	**Awash to Sululta Plain via Addis Ababa**
Day 16	**Sululta to Woliso via Suba Menagesha Forest**
Day 17	**Gibe Sheleko National Park to Addis Ababa & final departure**

Lalibela Historical Extension

Day 1	**Arrival into Addis Ababa**
Day 2	**Addis Ababa to Lalibela**
Day 3	**Asheton Maryam & Lalibela**
Day 4	**Lalibela to Addis Ababa**


Ethiopia - Endemics + Ext
554 views
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Ethiopia - Endemics
Sequence of numbers
1 Addis Ababa
2 Lake Langano
3 Harenna & Bale Mts NP
4 Shashamena & Wondo Genet
5 Konso
6 Yabello
7 Sarite Plain
8 Lake Awasa
9 Adama
10 Awash NP
11 Aledeghi WR
12 Sululta Plain
13 Suba Menagesha
14 Waliso
15 Gibe Sheleko NP
Lalibela Extension
Sequence of numbers
1 Lalibela
Base map
View in Google Earth
Djibouti
Ethiopia
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Bahir Dar
Yangudi Rassa National Park
Omo National Park
Google My Maps

Birding sites in detail



White-collared Pigeon by Greg de Klerk

Addis Ababa. The capital of Ethiopia still has a few open spaces and parks that can be good for birding. Noteworthy species that may be seen include White-backed Black Tit, Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher, Brown-rumped Seedeater, Tacazze Sunbird, White-collared Pigeon, Wattled Ibis, and a host of raptors overhead, including both Egyptian and Hooded Vultures.

Lake Chelekleka. This is an excellent site for migrant ducks and waders. Regular species encountered here include Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Garganey, Green-winged Teal, Tufted Duck, Black-tailed Godwit and Temminck's Stint. Sorting through the rafts of ducks and other migrants can be very challenging due to the distraction caused by the sheer number of species moving through the scrubby vegetation near the lake edge. Common Cranes often roost in staggering numbers on the far side of the water, and we may see them flying off to forage in huge, noisy flocks.

Lake Hora. The woodlands around the lake also teem with birds and again it may prove difficult to keep up with the seemingly endless flow of lifers. Ethiopian Bee-eater, Black-billed Barbet, Common Redstart, Eurasian Blackcap, Red-throated Wryneck, African Yellow Warbler, Rüppell's Robin-Chat, Western Black-headed Batis, Beautiful Sunbird, Rüppell's Weaver and a variety of waterbirds, especially deep-water diving ducks, can be seen here.

Lake Bishoftu. Here we'll be searching for Maccoa and Ferruginous Ducks, Southern Pochard, Singing Cisticola, gorgeous Tacazze Sunbird, Mocking Cliff Chat, Abyssinian Wheatear, Little Rock Thrush and flocks of Black-winged Lovebird – just some of our targets here.



Ethiopian Bee-eater by Greg de Klerk

Lake Langano. Birding in the Langano area is especially good, and we will visit some beautiful fig forest and associated woodlands that teem with birds. Here we will look for Hemprich's and Silvery-cheeked Hornbills, Lemon Dove, Narina Trogon, Lesser and Scaly-throated Honeyguides, Green Malkoha, African Hill Babbler, Double-toothed Barbet, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Thick-billed Weaver, Crested Francolin, Scaly Spurfowl, endemic Yellow-fronted Parrot, Abyssinian Ground Thrush, Green



Spot-breasted Lapwing by Rob Williams

Twinspot, Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike and Red-headed Weaver. Pods of lazing Common Hippopotamuses are sometimes seen in deeper water and mammoth Goliath Herons stalk the shallows.

Lake Langano to Dinsho. Roadside stops en route could produce several endemics and other species, including White-collared Pigeon, Moorland Chat, Ethiopian Thrush (formerly considered to be a race of Groundscraper Thrush), Blanford's Lark, Blue-winged Goose, and the highly sought-after Spot-breasted Lapwing.

Bale Mountains National Park (Dinsho). We'll bird the high-altitude forests at the Bale Mountains National Park headquarters of Dinsho for Chestnut-naped Spurfowl, Abyssinian Owl, the secretive Abyssinian Ground Thrush, vocal Abyssinian Catbird, and the endemic White-backed Black Tit. Mammals that we may encounter include Mountain Nyala (Gedemsa), now entirely restricted to the Bale Mountains, Northern Bushbuck and Common Warthog, unusual at this high altitude.

Bale Mountains National Park (Sanetti Plateau). This will be a day of amazing scenery and birding. On the Sanetti Plateau, which lies between 3,800m and 4,100m (12,540 and 13,530ft) above sea level, we will be driving on Africa's highest road – passing close to the summit of Ethiopia's second highest mountain. This habitat is termed 'Afro-alpine moorland' and is characterised by Giant Lobelias that tower like monolithic giants over the rich tussock grasslands and extensive cushions of yellow Everlasting flowers. This site is an Important Bird Area of immense significance, supporting seven globally threatened species and nearly all of Ethiopia's highland biome species. The plateau holds the only Afrotropical breeding populations of Ruddy Shelduck, Golden Eagle and Red-billed Chough. We will also search for Wattled Ibis, Chestnut-naped Spurfowl, Moorland Francolin, Rouget's Rail (particularly common and confiding here), Blue-winged Goose, Spot-breasted Lapwing, African Snipe, Wattled Crane, Thekla's Lark, Abyssinian Longclaw, Rusty-breasted Wheatear, Moorland Chat, and flocks of endemic Ethiopian Siskins.



Rouget's Rail by Adam Riley

These grasslands are estimated to support an incredible biomass of 4,000kg (8,800lb) of rodents per hectare. This obviously attracts an array of raptors, and we should see Augur and Mountain Buzzards and, if we are very lucky, the rare Golden Eagle. They share this abundant food source with the plateau's most celebrated resident, the Ethiopian or Simien Wolf,



Ethiopian Wolf by Meg Taylor

crowned with the unenviable title of "the world's rarest canid". Watching these vibrantly coloured animals, most closely related to the Grey Wolf, exhibiting their hunting prowess whilst pouncing on Giant Root Rats (another endemic to the Sanetti Plateau) is surely among Africa's greatest wildlife experiences. We should enjoy excellent photographic opportunities in this unique montane habitat.

Harenna Forest. This is the largest intact forest block in Ethiopia, and the largest protected Afro-alpine forest on the continent. It still supports populations of Lion, and the only surviving forest-dwelling African Wild Dogs. Although it's unlikely that we will see either of these species, the descent through this breathtakingly beautiful, moss-draped forest is inspirational. Here we will search for the uncommon Ayres's Hawk Eagle, African Olive Pigeon, Lemon and Tambourine Doves, African Emerald Cuckoo, Abyssinian Woodpecker, Narina Trogon, Brown Parisoma (represented by a subspecies endemic to this National Park), Abyssinian Crimsonwing, African Citril and Yellow-crowned Canary.

Wondo Genet. Heavily logged in the late 20th century, the degraded forest was mostly ignored as a birding destination thereafter. However, remnant patches of indigenous forest host an interesting selection of species. We'll spend time walking the trails for the tricky Scaly Spurfowl, African Emerald Cuckoo, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Brown Parisoma, camouflaged African Spotted Creeper, very rare Bamboo Warbler, noisy Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, Lemon Dove, Green-backed Honeyguide, endemic Abyssinian Woodpecker, Red-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike, endemic Ethiopian Oriole, Brown Woodland Warbler, stunning Narina Trogon, Green Twinspot and Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher.

Shashamena to Konso. Whilst mostly a travel day, we'll make stops along the route for the localised Boran Cisticola, Long-billed Pipit, Little Rock Thrush, White-fronted Black Chat, Northern Masked Weaver, and rare Stripe-breasted Seedeater.

Arero Forest Reserve. This new site is home to one of Ethiopia's most sought-after endemics, Ruspoli's Turaco. The bird is named after an Italian Prince, its hapless discoverer, who was killed by an African Elephant soon after collecting the type



Yellow-fronted Parrot by David Hoddinott



Vulturine Guineafowl by Lev Frid

specimen in the 1890s. It took another 50 years before explorers saw the turaco again, and only in the 1970s was anything revealed about this bird. We will search fruiting fig trees and should hopefully enjoy excellent views of this very unusual and beautiful turaco. With some luck, we may also find the enigmatic Salvadori's Seedeater, White-breasted Cuckooshrike, Northern Puffback and Hunter's Sunbird.

Sarite Plains - Borana National Park. These plains have been a reliable site for encountering Masked Lark, a species known only from a few sites in Ethiopia and Kenya. Aside from this rare lark, we may also find large flocks of spectacular Vulturine Guineafowl waltzing about, as well as Bateleur, Peregrine Falcon, White-browed Coucal, Shelley's Sparrow, Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark, D'Arnaud's Barbet and Pectoral-patch Cisticola. Mammals in the area include Bright's Gazelle, Gerenuk and Grevy's Zebra.

Yabello area. The Yabello region is home to two of Ethiopia's most sought-after endemic birds, both listed as globally threatened: the enigmatic Ethiopia (Stresemann's) Bushcrow and glistening White-tailed Swallow. This area of Acacia savanna is characterised by giant red termite mounds (some towering 5m above the plains!) and both these birds seem to be associated in some way with these marvels of natural architecture. The social Ethiopian Bushcrow (or *Zavattariornis*) was only discovered in 1938 and its affinities have yet to be established with certainty. Although it appears starling-like, it is presumed to be most closely related to Crows.

Other birds we will be looking for are Gabar Goshawk, the shrike-sized Pygmy Falcon, Yellow-necked Spurfowl, glamorous flocks of Vulturine Guineafowl, Black-faced Sandgrouse, Mottled Swift, Tree Pipit, the localised Bare-



White-tailed Swallow by Clayton Burne



Masked Lark by Rob Williams

eyed Thrush, ventriloquial Spotted Palm Thrush, African Grey Flycatcher, Pale Prinia, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Banded Parisoma, Hunter's and Shining Sunbirds, Superb and Wattled Starlings, Chestnut Sparrow, Yellow-spotted Petronia, Grey-capped Social Weaver, Chestnut Weaver, Green-winged Pytilia, White-bellied Canary and White-winged Widowbird.

A night drive in this exciting area could produce Donaldson-Smith's and Slender-tailed Nightjars, Greyish Eagle-Owl, Northern White-faced Owl, and Three-banded Courser. Nocturnal mammal sightings have included Striped and Spotted Hyenas, Serval, African Wild Cat, and Ethiopian Genet.

Lake Awassa. A birding stroll around the well-wooded lake shore will likely reveal African Spotted Creeper, Little Weaver, Black-billed Wood Hoopoe, Double-toothed Barbet, Woodland Kingfisher, huge Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, the attractive Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike, Western Black-headed Batis, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Mourning Collared Dove, Grey-backed Fiscal, Northern Puffback and Bronze Mannikin. Reedbeds in the vicinity support Greater Painted-snipe, Black Crake, Purple Swamphen, Blue-headed Coucal, Red-faced Cisticola, Lesser Swamp Warbler and Common Waxbill. The woodland also supports families of Grivet Monkey, though it is the regal Guereza (Black-and-white Colobus) that will certainly steal our attention as they leap through the trees, their shaggy pelts and long tails trailing behind.

Time-permitting, we may visit the Lake Awassa fish market. This large lake is particularly rich in fish, and the fishermen gut their catch and discard the waste around the market. This, in turn, attracts large numbers of menacing Marabou Storks and other birds. Photographic opportunities are unrivalled. We should also see Great White Pelican, Great and Reed Cormorants, Hamerkop, African Sacred Ibis, Black-headed, Grey-headed and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, and sometimes massively equipped Thick-billed Ravens squabbling over the fish remains.



Ethiopian Bushcrow by Lev Frid

Koka Dam & Lake Ziway. Both these sites are classified as Important Bird Areas, supporting vast numbers of both resident and migrant waterbirds. Species we will search for include the spectacular Black Crowned Crane, Pink-backed Pelican, African Darter, Yellow-billed Egret, Goliath Heron, Hamerkop, Yellow-billed and Saddle-billed Storks, Spur-winged and Egyptian Geese, Knob-billed Duck, the elegant



Arabian Bustard by David Hoddinott

African Pygmy Goose, African Fish Eagle, Western Marsh Harrier, African and Lesser Jacanas, Common Snipe, Senegal Thick-knee, Sedge Warbler, Spur-winged Lapwing, Gull-billed Tern, and Pied and Malachite Kingfishers. Strolling along the lakeshore at Lake Ziway will allow us excellent views of confiding Great White Pelicans and the huge Marabou Stork, while dazzling Northern Carmine Bee-eaters, migrant White and Western Yellow Wagtails (including some of the striking *feldegg* race) and the less colourful Ethiopian Cisticola can be seen around the lake edge.

Lake Beseka. We will make a concerted effort to find the very rare and localised Sombre Rock Chat, Striolated Bunting and Blackstart near Lake Beseka, while we also have a decent chance of seeing Hamadryas Baboon sitting atop the edge of escarpments in large troops, soaking up the early morning sun.

Awash National Park. We'll bird the Awash River and Kirayawa Gorge, exploring riverine forests, wetlands, acacia woodlands, savanna grasslands, rocky hills, cliffs, and escarpments. The park boasts a bird list of around 460 species and we will make an effort to find, amongst many others, Egyptian Vulture, Bateleur, Tawny and Greater Spotted Eagles, African Harrier-Hawk, Eastern Chanting Goshawk, Scissor-tailed Kite, Shikra, Helmeted Guineafowl, Common Buttonquail, the nocturnal Three-banded Courser, mega Star-spotted Nightjar, Eastern Plantain-eater, the diminutive Pearl-spotted Owlet, giant Verreaux's Eagle-Owl, Blue-naped Mousebird, gaudy Purple, Lilac-breasted and Abyssinian Rollers, Abyssinian Scimitarbill, Common Hoopoe, Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill, Greater Honeyguide, Wire-tailed Swallow, Red-winged, Gillett's and Singing Bush Larks, White-browed Scrub Robin, over-wintering Common Rock Thrush, localised Ashy Cisticola, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, Grey Wren-Warbler, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Grey-headed Batis, Mouse-coloured Penduline Tit, Slate-coloured Boubou, Northern White-crowned Shrike, Northern Puffback, Somali Fiscal, Nile Valley and Marico Sunbirds, Grey-headed, Orange-breasted and Rosy-patched Bushshrikes, Fan-tailed Raven and Red-billed Quelea.



Soemmerring's Gazelle by Clayton Burne

With some luck, we'll find a dazzling Northern Carmine Bee-eater perched atop the back of a striding Kori Bustard, a seldom observed phenomenon. In fact, this is bustard kingdom deluxe and nowhere else on the planet can boast the chance of no fewer than six bustard species in one day (Kori, Arabian, Buff-crested, White-bellied, Black-bellied and Hartlaub's).



Abyssinian Longclaw by David Hoddinott

Mammals are also well represented and we may see Beisa Oryx, Soemmering's Gazelle, elegant Gerenuk (the giraffe-proportioned relative of the widespread Impala), Abyssinian Hare, African Wildcat, Black-backed Jackal, Spotted and Striped Hyenas, Greater and Lesser Kudus, Common Warthog and Salt's Dikdik.

Aledeghi Wildlife Reserve. Here we will search for Somali Ostrich, Martial and Short-toed Snake Eagles, Yellow-necked Spurfowl, the rare Arabian Bustard (perhaps the best location on earth for this species), Black-headed Lapwing, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse and Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark. Occasionally highly nomadic species such as Pale Rock Finch or Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark move into the area as well. Depending on conditions, we may also see several mammals such as African Golden Wolf, Beisa Oryx, Grevy's Zebra and Soemmering's Gazelle.

This land is inhabited by nomadic Afar tribesmen who we will see dressed in their fine white cotton tunics, bedecked with traditional jewellery, daggers and spears. The men sport a unique bushy hairstyle, while women and girls are also extravagantly attired and adorned. They adhere strictly to their ancestral ways of tending their camel and goat herds while roaming throughout this inhospitable land.

Doho. This increasingly arid landscape is a haven for dry country resident and migrant species. Watercourses and rocky outcrops harbour Eurasian Sparrowhawk, African Collared and European Turtle Doves, the range-restricted, Yellow-breasted Barbet, Chestnut-headed Sparrow-Lark, Common Nightingale, Blue Rock Thrush, Rufous-tailed and Black Scrub Robins, Boran Cisticola, skulking Upcher's and Ménétries's Warblers, groups of Red-fronted Prinias, Rüppell's Starling, Black-crowned Tchagra, Great Grey Shrike, Red-billed Buffalo Weaver, and Chestnut-crowned and White-browed Sparrow-Weavers.



Sombre Rock Chat by Clayton Burne

The area has numerous hot springs which we may be able to visit, whilst an optional night walk may reveal Greyish Eagle-Owl or Slender-tailed Nightjar.

Sululta Plain. The extensive high-altitude grasslands, agricultural fields and seasonal wetlands of the Sululta Plain provide excellent opportunities for several Ethiopian endemics. We shall



Red-billed Pytilia by Clayton Burne

concentrate our efforts on finding the localised Abyssinian Longclaw, Blue-winged Goose, Ethiopian Cisticola and Ethiopian Siskin, while other possibilities include Wattled Ibis, Spot-breasted Lapwing, African Black Duck, Yellow-billed Duck, Thekla's Lark, Moorland Chat, Rusty-breasted Wheatear and Thick-billed Raven. The streams and remaining wetlands may also harbour African Snipe, Three-banded Plover and various migrant waders. During the northern winter, the grasslands attract numerous Palearctic visitors, including Red-throated Pipit, Ortolan Bunting, Northern and Isabelline Wheatears, and several species of wagtails and harriers.

Suba Menagesha Forest. Situated on the slopes of Mount Wechecha, this magnificent tract of indigenous Afromontane forest is one of the oldest protected forests in Africa, with a conservation history dating back to the reign of Emperor Zara Yaqob in the 15th century. Dominated by towering African Junipers and African Yellowwoods, the forest offers excellent opportunities for the endemic Yellow-fronted Parrot, Abyssinian Catbird, Abyssinian Woodpecker, White-backed Black Tit and Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher. Other species we shall search for include White-cheeked Turaco, Black-winged Lovebird, Narina Trogon, Banded Barbet, Lemon Dove, Abyssinian Ground Thrush, Brown Woodland Warbler, Rüppell's Robin-Chat and African Citril. The forest also supports several interesting mammals, including the endemic Menelik's Bushbuck and Guereza.

Gibe Sheleko National Park (Gibe Gorge). Descending from the Ethiopian Highlands into the warmer Gibe River Valley, we encounter a mosaic of dry woodland, scrub-covered slopes, agricultural clearings and riverine thickets. This productive area supports several sought-after species, including the rare endemic Red-billed Pytilia, elusive Yellow-rumped and Stripe-breasted Seedeaters, Clapperton's Spurfowl, Moustached Grass Warbler and Four-banded Sandgrouse. Other possibilities include Vinaceous Dove, Purple Roller, Ethiopian Bee-eater, Striped Kingfisher, Northern Puffback, Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike, Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, Abyssinian Waxbill, Bar-breasted and Black-faced Firefinches, Brown-rumped Bunting and Yellow-fronted Canary. We shall also explore the Gibe River and its associated thickets, where, with considerable luck, we may encounter the extraordinary Egyptian Plover, occasionally recorded along the river.



Egyptian Plover by Clayton Burne



Salvadori's Seedeater by Wade Lee

***Melka Ghebdu track.** The typically hot and dry Melka Ghebdu track hosts another scarce endemic, the Yellow-throated Seedeater. This area is also excellent for Yellow-breasted Barbet, Bruce's Green Pigeon, Bare-faced Go-away-bird and several species of sunbirds. Red-billed Pytilia, a rare and tricky endemic has also been recorded here.*

***Ankober Escarpment.** The escarpment road is one of the most picturesque in the entire country. Along the drive, we'll make the odd roadside birding stop for the endemic Blue-winged Goose, Abyssinian Longclaw, Blanford's Lark and Thick-billed Raven. A stunning gorge near Gemassa Gedel is an excellent site for the localised Ankober Serin, a rare and elusive Ethiopian endemic. Discovered only in 1976, they survive along a few kilometres of this wind-blasted grand escarpment, as do many Gelada Baboons. This densely pelted, shaggy baboon is endemic to Ethiopia, and the males can often be seen flipping back their lips in a show of dominance. These animals have the closest vocal repertoire to humans of any mammal, pronouncing all consonants and four vowels! They forage on the grasslands above the escarpment during the day and roost on inaccessible cliff ledges at night. Other possible species to be found here include Ethiopian Siskin, Streaky Seedeater, Moorland Chat, White-billed Starling, Bearded Vulture, Verreaux's Eagle, Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk, Peregrine Falcon, the seldom recorded Somali Starling, and Long-billed Pipit.*



Gelada Baboon by David Hoddinott



Harwood's Spurfowl by Clayton Burne

***Jemma Valley.** An early departure is essential to be at our chosen site when the en demic Harwood's Spurfowl is at its most vocal, thus providing our best opportunity for seeing this elusive species.*

The Jemma River is one of the main tributaries of the Blue Nile and it cuts a 700m (2,300ft) deep gorge through the landscape. The habitat in the gorge is dominated by acacia woodland, while the steep sides provide habitat for some excellent endemic birds. We will concentrate our search here for Rüppell's Vulture, Verreaux's Eagle, African Hawk-Eagle, Augur Buzzard (dark morph birds are commonly seen here), Lanner and Peregrine Falcons, Erckel's Spurfowl, Nyanza Swift, Hemprich's Hornbill, African Red-rumped Swallow, Abyssinian Wheatear, the endemic and localised Rüppell's Black Chat, endemic White-winged Cliff Chat and its more familiar cousin, Mocking Cliff Chat, endemic White-billed Starling, elusive Yellow-rumped Seedeater and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting.

We will have a picnic lunch at the river and bird the surrounding woodlands for Blue-spotted Wood Dove, Klaas's Cuckoo, Black-billed Barbet, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Foxy and Singing Cisticolas, African Paradise Flycatcher, Masked, Woodchat and Isabelline Shrikes, Swainson's Sparrow, Sahel Bush Sparrow, Speckle-fronted Weaver, Red-collared Widowbird, Black-winged Red and Yellow Bishops, and both Crimson-rumped and Fawn-breasted Waxbills. With a good dose of luck, we may stumble upon the quiet and inconspicuous Red-billed Pytilia, one of the trickier endemics that is regularly found in the Jemma Valley.



Old Nakuto Leab manuscript by Steve Davis

Lalibela. At the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries, King Lalibela of the Zaghwe dynasty excavated a series of rock-hewn churches, the New Jerusalem as he called it, now rightly acknowledged as one of the wonders of the world. There are eleven churches in this town named after him, with others in the surrounding countryside, all of which are currently still in use. It is estimated that the churches took 25 years to construct, using an enormous labour force.

Whilst our focus here will certainly be the churches and their associated history, we will also find ourselves constantly distracted by the numerous, White-collared Pigeons, White-winged Cliff Chats and White-billed Starlings that inhabit the area.

Asheton Maryam. We will set off for the steep climb up to the church of Asheton Maryam. Hewn out of the rock atop a 3,100m (10,200ft) high ridge to the east of Lalibela village, this church affords spectacular views of the surrounding rugged countryside. The well-vegetated slopes support a healthy avifauna typical of northern Ethiopia, and we may find Erckel's Spurfowl, the handsome Augur Buzzard, Egyptian Vulture, White-fronted Black Chat, Abyssinian Catbird, Little Rock Thrush, Thick-billed Raven and Yellow-bellied Waxbill. The Lalibela area also supports numerous endemics, with previous tours recording up to thirteen Ethiopian endemics in a single day, including the stunning White-backed Black Tit.

Na'akuto La'ab. We plan to visit the picturesque cave church of Na'akuto La'ab and spend some time birding in the area. The waterfall behind which the church is situated attracts large numbers of birds in the late afternoon and we hope to find Hemprich's Hornbill, the scarce endemic Banded Barbet, Black-billed Wood Hoopoe, and large flocks of White-billed Starlings, amongst others.



St. George's Chapel by Steve Davis

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Birding is undemanding but long travel days, low food diversity & some basic accommodations are taxing.
Birding Ease		One of the most enjoyable & prolific birding destinations in Africa. Many species are approachable & provide good visuals in open conditions.
Accommodation		Very variable. Modern & comfortable in the Rift Valley to basic/rustic in the south. Average elsewhere.
Walking / Trails		Mostly short walks on flat ground. Predominantly roadside birding. Short walks in forest habitat.
Vehicles / Roads		4x4 Landcruiser style vehicles. Numerous long drives. Unsealed roads are variable, sealed roads have potholes & livestock. Dust is more prevalent in winter.
Photography		Good to excellent. No dedicated hides. Many species are approachable, habitat & lighting are often conducive.
Annoyances		Food diversity is limited in many areas, accommodation in the south is basic. The south can be very hot.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to dinner on day 17 of the main tour
- All meals from dinner on day 1 to lunch on day 4 of the extension;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve & historical site entrance fees;
- All guiding services
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- It can be very hot in some areas, especially in the extreme south, whilst the highland areas can get cold especially at night. Light rain may be experienced in the Bale Mountains.
- Our visits to the Bale Mountains (Sanetti Plateau) ascends to 4,200m (13,780ft) above sea level, but very little walking is done at this altitude.
- There are several long, all-day drives. Although lengthy, these drives are scenic and full of interesting waypoints.
- Road conditions are variable and unsealed dirt roads can be quite bumpy and very dusty. It is advisable to bring a mask/buff that can be tied around your face to cover your nose and mouth.
- Accommodation varies from very comfortable in the Rift Valley, to very basic in the south (particularly Yabello). The lodges/hotels we use in the south are the best available. Some hotels and restaurants have dirty bathrooms.
- Mosquito nets are present at some lodges, but many are shredded or unusable. It is advisable to bring your own.
- The food in Ethiopia is quite basic and mostly consists of local cuisine only. We will be able to enjoy western cuisine at some hotels in the Rift Valley only.
- Special dietary requirements (other than vegetarians) are for all intents and purposes impossible to cater for in Ethiopia.
- Certain sites listed in the itinerary, such as the Jemma Valley, Ankober Escarpment and Melka Ghebdu track, are currently not accessible due to travel advisories and/or security conditions. As circumstances may change at any time, these locations remain included in the itinerary but may not be visited. Final routing decisions will be made during the tour based on prevailing security assessments. Likewise, night drives are contingent on prevailing security conditions and may be modified or cancelled if circumstances are deemed unsafe.

Arrival and Departure Details

Day 1 of the Endemics tour is set aside as an arrival day, and you may arrive at any time in advance of our introductory group dinner. The tour will conclude at Bole International Airport, Addis Ababa after a farewell dinner in the evening of day 17.

The Lalibela Historical Extension will depart from Bole International Airport, Addis Ababa in the morning of day 2 of the extension and will conclude here in the late afternoon of day 4.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Addis Ababa Bole International Airport, Addis Ababa (IATA: ADD) is the main port of entry for international flights for this tour and is well serviced by most of the world's major airlines.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.