NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK 20th DECEMBER 2018

Dear All,

Nigel Hunter and myself arrived at the Main Gate Nairobi National Park at 6.40am, there had been light showers overnight but it was a dry morning though started off dull.

We had a walk around the Car Park before going through the gates; here we picked up a few species not subsequently encountered such as Green-backed Honeybird, Brown-backed Woodpecker, Yellow White-eye and Northern Double-collared Sunbird. It was fairly active along the entrance road, with various woodland species including several Blackcaps, and a few Nightingales. A look at KWS Mess failed to produce anything of interest, and Ivory Burning Site was quite quiet, but did have more Blackcaps, Nightingales and a Garden Warbler. The first of only four Turkestan Shrikes was also here.

Nagalomon Causeway was attractive to a few migrants which included noisy but secretive Eurasian Reed Warblers, and an extravert but silent Great Reed Warbler, the first in NNP this season. Whilst scanning birds across Nagalomon Dam, we had a group of five Northern Shovelers flying round and around and around but never settled and after ten minutes of this they left. This was a new species for “Finch Pentad” and it has now produced most of the possible duck species but the Northern Shoveler was “missing” up until now. We continued watching and found five Darter, a Yellow-billed Stork, four African Spoonbill, two female type Western Marsh Harriers, the usual pair of adult Fish Eagles, five Black-winged Stilts, a Common and a Green Sandpiper, and White-rumped Swift which were widespread today, as were Blue-naped Mousebirds.

Taking the back road to Hyena Dam it was fairly quiet, a couple of hybrid Lovebirds were feeding on Rus, the first of two Augur Buzzards, a dozen Eurasian Bee-eaters, but a couple more Eurasian Reed Warblers remained in cover, the days only Isabelline Shrike was along here, and the first of three Spotted Flycatchers.

On Hyena Dam, it was very quiet with a Little Grebe, the tame Squacco Heron was along the Causeway, a pair of White-faced Whistling Ducks, the first three of eight Grey Crowned Cranes, five Long-toed Plovers, four Green, three Common and over forty Wood Sandpipers and a Ruff. Also a female flava Yellow Wagtail and a Rosy-breasted Longclaw not showing much colour as yet, and finally the first of four Whinchats.

The adult Greater Spotted Eagle sat tightly in his favourite tree looking a little damp (see image), and forty Parasitic Weavers fed in the weedy growth. We crossed the Mokoyeti and continued to Kingfisher passing Nagalomon again. At the Kingfisher Swamp the African Water Rail announced hi presence, and a Kori Bustard fed by the roadside, nearby a Banded Parisoma was singing and by the old burnt area was the first of four Northern Wheatears.

There was not too much of interest on the inside Maasai Gate road, but on the Mokoyeti below Baboon Cliffs, the Pallid Honeyguide was singing from his usual fig and a handsome and very tame Striated Heron was by the river. Several Speckle-fronted Weavers were in the woodland above Hippo Pools, but not sharing the area with anything else, but there were a few waders on the ox-bow including all five common Tringa-types. Rhino Circuit was very dry, four Violet Wood-Hoopoes, a couple of Willow Warblers, another Banded Parisoma, several Red-throated Tits, and along the creek was a Green Sandpiper that was unusual for being so spotted as this time of year, (see image).

Along the Pipeline were a couple of Pied and Northern and a single Isabelline Wheatear. Athi Dam was not too busy, the water level has come up and invaded the bordering grassland leaving precious little habitat for waders. However it did include the currently resident African Darter, eight Black-crowned Night-Herons roosting on the Causeway have been forced up to the upper levels of their roosting tree and are very conspicuous (see image), six Yellow-billed Storks, several African Spoonbills, the five Northern Shoveler seen at Nagalomon Dam this morning (see images), four Spotted Thick-knees in the shade of the mellifera, a few Wood, Common and Green, and two Marsh Sandpipers, three Common Greenshank, twenty Ruff and eight Little Stints, an Olivaceous Warbler sang from the Causeway.

On the return we called in at Eland Hollow, finding the only three Black-winged Kites seen today, Isabelline, Northern Wheatears and Whinchat sitting on top of the mounds, a dozen Orange-breasted Waxbills which consisted mainly of immature birds were drinking from a puddle, and several Banded Martins came in to drink.

We exited Langata Gate at 5.20pm finishing up with 184 species. African Palm Swifts were a common and widespread species today, whilst Barn Swallows were in very small numbers with no concentrations.

Best to all

Brian

**KEY TO MONTAGE 20th DECEMBER 2018**

**1 EURASIAN SHOVELER – NAGALOMON DAM**

This group of five flew round and around Nagalomon Dam

**2 EURASIAN SHOVELER – ATHI DAM**

The group of five relocated to Athi Dam where they were very approachable

**3 COMMON GREENSHANK, WOOD SANDPIPER, LITTLE STINT**

Showing how high the water is and how little shoreline is left.

**4 ORANGE-BREASTED WAXBILLS**

They must have bred locally judging by this large family group at Eland Hollow.

**5 GREEN SANDPIPER**

This bird is unusually spotted for this time of year.

**6 BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON**

Forced into open situation with the rise of the water.

**7 GREATER SPOTTED EAGLE**

Old faithful drying off after a damp night.

**8 TURKESTAN SHRIKE**

Migrant Shrikes in common with MOST migrants are extremely scarce tis season. Foul play in Middle East and southern Europe/Mediterranean/Baltic States are suspected.