NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK 9th AUGUST 2019

Dear All,

Nigel Hunter and myself met up with Mustafa Adamjee visiting from Lunga Lunga on the south coast, at the Main Gate to Nairobi National Park a little after 6.30am, and were soon through the formalities but the entry through the gate was a little tardier. It was Mustafa’s first visit to NNP, so we were in for Atlassing and impressing him with what we had!

The week had been a dry one, and now it was a glorious sunrise and whilst we appreciated it, it magically disappeared as mist rose immediately to obscure it and it grew colder. Birds were reluctant to call or show themselves, but we slowly picked up the commoner species with our first stop at Ivory Burning Site. With nothing of note here, and missing the Zanzibar Greenbuls in such a long time we continued to Nagalomon Dam. Whilst the Sacred Ibis colony further down the dam was in full swing, the only nesting birds on the island were Darters, with about ten present including young birds. Around the edge were four Yellow-billed Storks, five Great Cormorants which might be the highest count of birds together for this Park, the first of about twenty Black-winged Kites recorded today throughout the Park, a Red-knobbed Coot is possibly the first on this dam, four Grey Crowned Cranes, no migrant waders but two Violet-backed Starling were however migrants from within Africa (or the southern Middle-east).

Taking the back road to Hyena Dam it was quiet apart from numerous White-winged Widowbirds and Red-billed Queleas which were both throughout much of the Park today. We had the first of three Augur Buzzards, but that was it apart from the delightful House Sparrows! Hyena Dam gave us very little, a Yellow-billed Egret, three more Crowned Cranes, the first three returning adult Black-winged Stilts and a Wood Sandpiper, an adult African Jacana, the days only Barn Swallow, three Chestnut Sparrows which is the first in the far north of the Park, and the first of the Quailfinch which were throughout the grasslands. We continued along the Mokoyeti and back around to Nagalomon Dam, there was a Great Egret, but nothing else on the ox-bow whatsoever, the first of two Red-faced Cisticolas with the other being at Ololo, but the grass was abounding with seedeating species including many Common, two Black-faced and thirty or more Orange-breasted Waxbills (see image), a few Parasitic Weavers, thee Cardinal Queleas and the days only Rosy-breasted Longclaw in non-breeding dress.

Heading towards Kingfisher area, we had the only Diederic Cuckoo of the day, and at Kingfisher swamp coaxed a pair of African Water Rails in with one coming into view (see image), whilst the female sounded if she were staying out of sight with chicks. Out-of-plumage noisy Yellow-crowned Bishops whistled past us without stopping, and a Highland Rush Warbler called from cover. The Picnic Site was reasonably productive, the days only Red-chested Cuckoo called towards the river, as did the first evidence of Fish Eagle for the day. Otherwise it was the usual Red-throated Tit, Brown Parisoma and the Red-fronted Barbets were nesting in a branch. The only Greater Blue-eared Starlings for the day were also here. Further along the road we had a pair of Secretarybirds, it was a good day for them with eight individuals of which three were pairs, and likely no duplication.

On the road to Ololo there were numbers of Chestnut Sparrows including full breeding plumaged males, a few Speckle-fronted Weavers, and Grey-headed Social-Weavers both carrying nesting material and a very young bird. Banded Parisomas were also here. At Ololo there was a surprising amount of activity with many common bush birds including an African Pygmy Kingfisher in the same place as last week, another Brown Parisoma, Hildebrandt’s Starling, and a pair of Crimson-rumped Waxbills. After leaving here we had a Long-crested Eagle and a second bird near Rhino Circuit.

It was quiet as we passed Baboon Cliffs up to the woodland above Hippo Pools, the days only Long-billed Pipit (see image) and Cinnamon-breasted Buntings were on the ascent, but in the woodland we only added a pair of Ruppell’s Starlings. Quiet also along the Mbagathi and Rhino Circuit where there were numbers of Marabous here and at Athi Dam, a Striated Heron, a number of new birds for the day included all three normal Woodpeckers, Southern Black Flycatcher and Lesser Masked Weaver. Near the Pipeline, there was a pair of Painted-snipe in the same place in the run-off which still has water, and Vitelline Masked Weaver close by.

Athi Dam was a disappointment, so much has left with no interesting substitutes, plenty of Marabous, four Yellow-billed and two Open-billed Storks, the days first two African Spoonbills, three roosting Black-crowned Night-Herons, a Fish Eagle, pair of Crowned Cranes, the only thick-knee was one Spotted, two Black-winged Stilts, a single Kittlitz’s Plover, three Common Sandpipers and a Little Stint. The day’s only Laughing Doves were in the bushes. The Vulture Drinking Pools were only attracting White-backed as well as many Marabous and there was another Little Stint.

On the homeward run we had a male Hartlaub’s Bustard and a dozen Wattled Starlings in the grasslands, nothing at Karen PS Dam, and numerous Black-headed Herons at Eland Hollow (as well as all over the Park), and the days only pair of Banded Martins. Another Striated Heron was at the Nagalomon run-off but nothing additional on the dam. Finally heading towards Langata Gate we added a beautiful African Goshawk, Hartlaub’s Turaco, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Yellow-whiskered and Cabanis’ Greenbuls, White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher, White-starred Robin and Amethyst Sunbird.

We were through the gate at 5.15pm, having recorded an all time August high of 187 species, for a first time visit you would have to be impressed with the place!

ALL IMAGES TAKEN BY MUSTAFA ADAMJEE

KEY TO MONTAGE

1. AFRICAN WATER RAIL

Presumed male of the pair at Kingfisher Swamp which sounded as if they had chicks.

1. LITTLE STINT

This worn adult at Athi Dam is not showing much of the rufous breeding plumage but may be one of the less colourful individuals.

1. ORANGE-BREASTED WAXBILL

Quite a frequent sight usually flying away over the grasslands, particularly the circuit from Hyena Dam, along the Mokoyeti and back to Nagalomon Dam.

1. GROSBEAK WEAVER

One of three dependent fledglings at Nagalomon Dam.

1. LONG-BILLED PIPIT

On the ascent road towards the woodland above Hippo Pools. It had a large tick on the neck,