

ANGOLA

22 NOVEMBER - 14 DECEMBER 2005

TOUR REPORT

LEADERS: NIK BORROW and PEDRO VAZ PINTO

GROUP MEMBERS: BOB BATES, GEOFFREY FIELD, MIKE GODDARD and DENZIL MORGAN

Perhaps one of the most amazing ornithological opportunities of recent times has got to be the opening up of the war-ravaged country of Angola. At last birders are trickling into the country to gather up the ornithological gems that are scattered over this huge country. We undertook our first exploratory visit with the assistance of Pedro Vaz Pinto, the man behind the rediscovery of many of the 'lost' endemics (including recently the Giant Sable in Cangandala National Park unfortunately outside the scope of this tour) and during our visit we recorded 469 species of birds of which 458 were seen. This total included sightings of all but one of the endemics – the elusive Swierstra's Francolin. For the African enthusiast Angola harbours some marvellous rewards and the top three birds of the trip were White-headed Robin Chat, Angola Cave Chat and the stunning Braun's Bush-shrike. Other specialties seen were Grey-striped Francolin, Red-crested Turaco, Red-backed Mousebird, Pale Olive Greenbul, Gabela Akalat, Lepe and Bubbling Cisticolas, Hartert's Camaroptera, Pulitzer's Longbill, Angola Slaty Flycatcher, White-fronted Wattle-eye, Bocage's Sunbird, Monteiro's and Gabela Bush-shrikes, Gabela Helmet-shrike and Pale-billed Firefinch. Also during our travels we encountered other highly desirable species such as Finsch's Francolin, Rüppell's Parrot, Rosy-faced Lovebird, Gabon Coucal, Damara Red-billed and Monteiro's Hornbills, Anchieta's and Black-backed Barbets, Benguela Long-billed, Stark's and Angola Larks, Red-throated Cliff Swallow, Fülleborn's Longclaw, Falkenstein's and Black-collared Greenbuls, Yellow-throated Nicator, Bocage's Akalat, Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush, Forest and Miombo Scrub Robins, Tinkling (or Grey) Cisticola, Salvadori's Eremomela, Margaret's and Angola Batises, White-tailed Shrike, Rockrunner, Carp's Tit, Anchieta's, Ludwig's Double-collared, Oustalet's and Bannerman's Sunbirds, Perrin's Bush-shrike, Sharp-tailed Starling, Golden-backed Bishop, Dusky Twinspot and Black-faced Canary.

Angola has been torn apart by civil war ever since its independence from Portugal in 1975. However a peace accord was reached in 1992 although fighting continued up until as recently as 2002 when the cease-fire was finally announced after the death of the insurgent leader Jonas Savimbi. The country is rich in oil and diamonds and it was those resources that were very much reflected amongst the type of passengers that accompanied us on our flight into the capital of Luanda. We arrived in an expensive and busy city that is throwing up new and renovated buildings everywhere with seemingly everyone grabbing and grappling for the newfound stability and wealth. Plush hotels were in stark contrast to the poverty and squalid filth on the streets. This was certainly a new land of opportunities but it is already quite clear as to whom those opportunities are open to. It took an age to get checked

in to our hotel, which was full to capacity, but we finally sank into our beds for some reviving rest expecting an early departure the next morning. However, as was to be repeatedly impressed upon us during our stay, nothing is quick and easy in Angola, and we stood and waited for transport that took an age to arrive. To while away time we studied the large pale unidentified swifts that are common in the city and breed on the buildings (certainly not Fernando Po Swifts as has been suggested), musing on their identification but drawing no conclusions. Eventually Pedro arrived with one car. He had been stuck in the horrendous traffic that curses the city, another car was searching for ice and the third had broken down! This did not seem like an auspicious start! Eventually all three vehicles appeared and we joined our place in the long procession of traffic that wound its way out of Luanda.

Our visit was timed at the beginning of the hot, rainy season but the sun beat down on a dry day and even having escaped the capital we still made slow process on the pot-holed roads. To be blunt, Angola has the most appalling roads that I have ever travelled on! We had embarked on a marathon journey and much, if not all of every day was not to be spent birding but simply getting to where we wanted to be. There was certainly a price to be paid for seeing those endemics that wasn't solely financial but also physical! Banged heads, jolted backs and numb buttocks were to be so commonplace that it was sometimes hard to believe that we were indulging in such a ritual for pleasure! Perhaps all became clear when we stopped for some relief and the sound of our first endemic reached our ears. The clear whistles of a White-fronted Wattle-eye were heard and we soon found ourselves watching a fine male and then a female that repeatedly visited the nest that they were building. Invigorated by the success of seeing a potentially tricky endemic so easily we continued on our journey. All the way enormous numbers of butterflies lifted off of the road in front of us so that it seemed at times that we were driving through confetti. As we continued we were also witness to the carcasses of vehicles in various stages of decay that littered the roadsides, either as a result of the war or indeed simply victims of the roads that they travelled on. After almost seven hours of driving we had entered the province of Cuanza Norte and were climbing the escarpment when the pick-up carrying our camping gear also decided to break down. Unfortunately this time something was seriously wrong as the vehicle showed no sign of life with a silent declaration that it was going absolutely nowhere. Fortunately we were not far from our proposed campsite that Pedro had promised us was in a beautiful forest on the scarp that we could go birding in. After a few more kilometres we arrived at the spot only to find that the chainsaws and bulldozers had got there first and created a virtual war-zone of felled and dead and dying trees. We returned to the 'main' road and as it was now getting dark resolved ourselves to the fact that we had to set up camp right there. Our broken car was towed to the spot and camp was set. Tired and rather miserable we sat and drank beer – the expedition was definitely not off to a good start. On the plus side we were surrounded by the remnants of forest and we could at least do some birding there whilst the vehicle situation was being reassessed in the clear light of day.

We woke to a gloomy morning as a grey mist draped the trees and our campsite had turned into a quagmire with overnight rain. A few birds were making an effort to sound cheerful and so we set off relishing anything that was close enough to actually see. A mournful Buff-spotted Flufftail moaned away from the undergrowth sounding rather like some distant foghorn. The guttural cries of Red-crested Turacos echoed across the hillside and amazingly we even managed to see one during a break in the gloom. What would normally have been 'colourful' but were now 'grey' Red-fronted Parrots screeched overhead and African Pied, Piping and even Black-casqued Wattled Hornbills were all seen. We began to realise that it was actually quite birdy and the visibility was improving slowly. Birds that were soon to become familiar companions such as Falkenstein's Greenbul, Yellow-throated Nicator, Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush, Bubbling Cisticola and Hartert's Camaroptera all put in an appearance. Streaky-throated Barbets hooted and Gabon Coucals boomed, Green-backed Woodpecker was found and Red-headed Bluebills were colourful additions to the list but you had to be quick to get onto them before they disappeared into the dense undergrowth! A charming Masked Apalis gave some close views and other colourful birds included Perrin's Bush-shrike, Crested Malimbe, Rufous-crowned Eremomela and Olive-bellied Sunbird. Dusky-blue Flycatchers kept low

and Black-and-white and Sooty Flycatchers high, a Least Honeyguide was seen, and Black-throated Wattle-eye, Bocage's Bush-shrike and Pink-footed Puffback obliged. All morning we had been teased by half-hearing at least what sounded like the frog-like croaks of a Braun's Bush-shrike. The bird wasn't previously known from this forest and each time we followed the sound up we drew a blank and so were drawn to the conclusion that it was all merely wishful thinking. Then suddenly Mike said something like "This bird is black, white and bright orange isn't it? Well its here!" and sure enough a pair had finally popped into view. They were a bit volatile to start with (some anxious moments for some!) but they finally settled down to perform a wonderful duet in the bare trees and vine tangles above us. Amazingly enough the bird that we were not really expecting even to look for until later that day, or even the following day, was already in the bag! A sizzling fried breakfast with hot cups of coffee awaited us and the prospect of the dead vehicle didn't seem so bad. We were now behind and ahead of schedule all at the same time! We decided that the best plan was to take essentials and squeeze into two vehicles for the first part of the tour. The broken car could then be rescued and mended to rejoin us later. We were now to continue as planned to try to get to Calandula where the White-headed Robin Chat had been collected, a journey of just over 400 kilometres and we had three full days to get there. Easy? Of course not!

After breakfast we lured a superb Gabon Coucal into view while the two remaining cars were reloaded and then we were tormented by the calls of some very close Grey-striped Francolins that resolutely refused to show. It was then time to move on and we continued on our way through the northern scarp forests towards the town of Uige in rather more cramped conditions. There was little time for birding as we were held up at the border to Uige province for passport details to be registered. We also stopped briefly at a flowering *Erythrina* that held large numbers of Blue-throated Brown Sunbirds and some punkish Naked-faced Barbets. After seven hours and only 160 kilometres completed, and with the evening drawing in, we found the ruins of an old coffee plantation to take refuge in and set up camp. The damp tents were erected but at least the drier conditions here helped make things more comfortable. However, it wasn't long before our presence had attracted the attention of the local village and we were soon visited by a procession of curious and suspicious people who had certainly never seen the likes of us in their lives before. Pedro did a great job at restoring calm and allaying the situation, and we slept soundly without further interruptions.

The next morning found us listening to Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo on one side and a Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo on the other whilst frustratingly being unable to get close to either! In the light of day we could see that where we had bedded down had been a very grand coffee plantation indeed and the huge old shade trees and neighbouring forest were still in good condition. There was no sight or sound of Braun's Bush-shrikes here and so we were very glad of the magnificent sightings that we had had the day before. Instead the avifauna had very much in common with the western African and Congolese rain forests. We spent several hours walking the road while the camp was packed up. Palm-nut Vultures were to become a common sight but a brief view of a Cassin's Hawk Eagle was somewhat more unusual. Great Blue Turacos are always a joy to see and here Green Turaco appeared to have replaced the Red-crested Turaco. Mottled Spinetails fluttered overhead, the diminutive Tit Hylia was seen, Yellow-mantled Weavers foraged in the canopy, Yellow-browed Camaropteras pumped out their strange bullfrog-like neck pouches, a Yellow-crested Woodpecker and Red-headed Malimbos inspected the boughs of the large trees, a distant Black Bee-eater was spotted and other interesting species included Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike, Buff-throated Apalis, Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatcher, Black-winged Oriole, Chestnut-winged Starling, White-breasted and Chestnut-breasted Nigritas and a surprise in the form of a colony of Bristle-nosed Barbets. Then it was time to hit the road again and sure enough we did with every bump and hole we lurched onwards to the town of Uige itself where we paused briefly to refuel before turning south back into Cuanza Norte. We escaped interrogation by officials here but got trapped by them in Negage during a quest to buy ice. Once again our passport details were carefully collected for the records before we were sent on our way at least briefly, driving over one of the few smooth roads in the country. As we crossed the rolling grassy hills Sooty Chats were numerous, a pair of White-winged Black Tits were

seen and we came across what we deduced must be the Short-winged *Cisticola* of the race *loanda* and although the voice was rather different it looked suspiciously like the mystery 'Teke' *Cisticola* that has recently been found in Gabon. Once again the day was passing too rapidly and this night we found an attractive valley to camp in on the edge of a stretch of miombo forest. An unidentified nightjar flew by the camp but it was too late for any other birding and so we waited for the morning.

The next day fine weather greeted us, as did a swarm of angry wasps that chased us from the river by which we had camped, away from the Lepe *Cisticolas*, and into the miombo and surrounding grasslands. Here we found our first Pale-billed (split from African) Firefinches in the stunted woodland as well as a pair of very obliging Miombo Scrub Robins and the unassuming Pale Wren Warbler. Noisy Whistling *Cisticolas* scolded at us and Salvadori's Eremomela, Moustached Grass Warbler, Pale Flycatchers and smart Western Violet-backed Sunbirds were all found. On an open grassy hillside we found an attractive Black-backed Barbet, Black-collared Bulbuls foraged, a Fan-tailed Grassbird performed its tail-dragging display flight and a handsome Black Coucal and a pretty Brown Twinspot were seen. The rest of the day was spent heading for Calandula. On the way we encountered our first Anchieta's Barbets and then rain came down this time thwarting our progress by turning the dirt road into a sticky mud bath that trapped the heavy lorries that had churned it up in the first place. The first vehicle we managed to squeeze by but another further on had completely blocked the road and was making slow progress in heaving itself out of the ever-deepening ruts. We waited because there was little else we could do sheltering from the rain and watching the efforts of the driver and his team to free the vehicle. The village children had also gathered and the whole operation had turned into some sort of weird spectator sport. As the rain eased we decided to go birding but saw little except a Grey Tit Flycatcher. After a while we realised that the lorry had finally been freed as the children had now found us (obviously as far as entertainment went we were the next best thing to a bogged down truck to watch that afternoon). Nik had just seen a Dusky Twinspot disappear into the sodden undergrowth and the audience stared in incomprehensible silence gazing at our antics as we stumbled in to the bush in order to refind it. Unfortunately we failed but our cars came to rescue us from the humiliation of defeat and we trundled on. We finally reached Calandula by mid afternoon and munched freshly baked rolls whilst admiring the spectacular falls and a Black-faced Canary there. However we still had a way to go and camp to set up so on we went. A river crossing produced large numbers of Red-throated Cliff Swallows nesting under the bridge as well as Fan-tailed Widowbird, an African Darter, and a pair of African Marsh Harriers quartering over the reed beds. However we made it to the locality of the White-headed Robin Chat well before dark and Pedro reacquainted himself with the nearby village that willingly granted us permission to set up camp. The gallery forest by the river there was disappointingly quiet at that time of day so we waited patiently for the morrow.

The next morning we were up with the lark or rather the robin chat but it was a White-browed Robin Chat that sang loudly at dawn and not the hoped for rarity out of which there wasn't a peep. The beautiful and little-known White-headed Robin Chat was collected as recently as 1955 and has only been seen very irregularly since then. Some visiting birders accompanied by Pedro rediscovered the species in the area in 2004 and we were assured that it had been common and very conspicuous then. That morning however seemed unusually quiet and little was singing or even moving! Some Brown Illadopsises and an African Broadbill whirling on its perch like some mechanical toy proved a slight diversion but then we had a break as a robin chat shot into view in response to playback. However, only two of us managed to set eyes on it before it disappeared again. The local people have a name for the bird, and a group of the ever-present children led us to a place where they had trapped one a few days before. Here playback produced a much more pleasing response as a pair shot in immediately landing in full view up in the branches of a large tree (strange behaviour for what the books tell us is supposed to be a skulking ground-dweller!) and then proceeded to display to each other in a strange upright posture whilst singing their rhythmic squeaky bicycle song as a duet. As we watched them we realised that a third individual was sometimes involved and these curious birds with their long, rufous, wedge-shaped tails would often run or bound along the branches like turacos

whilst their display was rather babbler-like. Were we really looking at a robin chat we wondered? We watched these marvellous creatures for ages as they were too good to simply walk away from and after all it had taken us the last three days to reach them! However with the main prize safely under the belt we were free to explore the area. White-spotted Flufftails were very noisy and it took little effort to lure a superb male out into full view. Small groups of Cabanis's Greenbuls were easy to see and a beautiful and bold Grey-winged Robin Chat put on a fine show. Square-tailed Drongos and a pair of White-chinned Prinias were also seen although the Brown-headed Apalis preferred to hide in the canopy and proved tricky to get good views of. A Black Cuckoo called persistently and along the river we found Blue-headed Coucal. The miombo here was far from being climax woodland, and the going was slow in the extreme, but we found a few things of note. Meyer's Parrot and Sharp-tailed Starlings were seen well, a Black Scimitarbill came to inspect us, a pair of Rufous-bellied Tits enchanted, pearly grey White-breasted Cuckoo-shrikes moved through and a stunning male Anchieta's Sunbird was found. We also had good views of a pair of fairly plain pale-grey apalis/prinia type birds with somewhat darker subterminal tail bands that Pedro has seen before in Cangandala National Park that we really couldn't identify. Is there indeed an undescribed species lurking in these remote woodlands?

It had been enormously pleasant being in one place for two nights but time had come for us to return to the coastal plain so another two day drive was in store for us. Once again we piled into our two cars and headed south, this time in search of fuel. We had been forced to leave our reserve supplies with the broken down pick-up and now our tanks were worryingly low. There was no diesel in Calandula and so we headed away from where we wanted to go to somewhere where we were assured had fuel. Of course when we got there we found that they had none and the petrol station was closed. We turned to the black market but they too were dry. Whilst we were there scratching our heads and contemplating our fate as so often happens things sorted themselves out. Amazingly just enough fuel to get us to the next major town appeared from nowhere and we were once again on our way, crawling at a snail's pace over those horrendous roads. There was little to see, as we needed to get all those lost kilometres behind us, but a pair of Anchieta's Tchagras made a worthwhile stop. At N'Dalatando we found fuel and retired for the night in something that resembled a hotel rather than our tents.

At first light we found ourselves in the scarp forests just outside of town in mist and rain, and we decided that the early morning birding session was hardly an option, when, miraculously, the weather cleared and we had a pleasant few hours adding some more forest species to our lists such as Blue Malkoha, Blue-breasted Kingfisher, Cassin's Honeybird, Green Hylia, Yellow Longbill and Speckled Tinkerbird. The drive ahead of us still remained a daunting prospect but we had some good news that there was a ferry working that could take us across the Cuanza River into Kissama National Park and that it was no longer necessary to return via Luanda. During the latter part of the drive we literally sped along as the road had been graded and we found ourselves at Catete in reasonable time bargaining with the ferryman to take us across the river. We breathed a sigh of relief once across and had entered the boundaries of the park. Kissama (or Quiçama) National Park is situated on the coastal plain and is a rich mosaic of thicket and riparian forest. Most of the big game was obliterated during the war but at Caua Lodge a fenced area has been set up for various reintroduced and introduced (!) species perhaps making it little more than a zoo. As we drove towards the lodge we found our first Southern Yellow-billed Hornbills of the rather interesting small race *elegans* that has been suggested as being worthy of full specific status. As we drove along we flushed a few Kurrichane Buttonquail and Ring-necked and Emerald-spotted Wood Doves were everywhere. Awkward-looking Grey Go-away-birds and Red-faced Mousebirds put in their first appearances and Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters and Lilac-breasted Rollers decorated the bare bushes that covered the dry rolling hills punctuated with imposing baobabs and the candelabra-like *Euphorbias*. We arrived at the lodge by the back entrance that turned out to be locked and we spent some time waiting here whilst a lost key was looked for. Eventually a troop of people turned up with a hammer and a new padlock as the old one was

unceremoniously disposed of and at last we were in! Here we had clean rooms, comfortable beds, hot showers (for most!) and cold beers and a good night's sleep!!

The next morning we had a rendezvous with "the boy who calls the francolins" and we were soon off into the thickets in order to search out the extremely skulking Grey-striped Francolin. This young man was equipped with a knife that he used to blow across in order to make a remarkably convincing noise that made tape recorders and MP3 players redundant! Within minutes of getting out of the car he had set up a dialogue with a pair of francolins and we soon had them sneaking past us in the undergrowth. The views may not have been leisurely as they crept nervously back and forth but at the very least we had all seen them successfully. There was a fair bit of early morning bird activity and at last everyone had a chance to study rather than just glimpse the endemic Red-backed Mousebirds. We found another White-fronted Wattle-eye and Purple-banded Sunbird and Swamp Boubous and Yellow-bellied Greenbuls were common here. Dark-backed Weavers were watched nest building, striking Red-necked Spurfowl, Senegal Coucal, Yellow-breasted Apalis and Senegal Lapwings were all seen as were a pair of very photogenic Rufous-tailed Palm Thrushes. It then started to get very hot and the bird activity died away. In the afternoon we went on a quest for Rüppell's Parrots and these proved to be numerous here and we also managed to find Carp's Tit and Acacia Pied Barbet, whilst a group of Bronze-winged Coursers proved a very popular find. As we drove back to the lodge in the dark we encountered Spotted Thick-knee and Square-tailed Nightjar. The next day we left early for another section of the park in search of the endemic Gabela Helmet-shrike. As we arrived at Pedro's site, a group of helmet-shrikes were seen flying away but these turned out to be White Hemet-shrikes. Momentarily disappointed we were then amazed by the number of Monteiro's Bush-shrikes that were calling all around us producing eerie hoots and a variety of rattling and clacking sounds and it wasn't difficult to see these large-billed and impressive creatures in the bare trees. The area was alive with birds and Perrin's Bush-shrikes whooped all around us as we set off in search for the helmet-shrike. We did not have to go far as a group of Gabela Helmet-shrikes were soon found and terrific views of them were obtained apparently joining together sociably to construct a single nest. Here we also found Angola Batis and some non-breeding plumaged Golden-backed Bishops. At some nearby riverine forest we discovered a very obliging pair of Yellow-bellied Wattle-eyes and then the heat and the sweat-bees drove us away. Besides time was once again not on our side as we had yet another drive and more car problems due to an unexpected collision with a large rock! We drove on through the park finally meeting the coast where a Martial Eagle and a Booted Eagle (an Angolan rarity) were found, and finally arrived at the Rio Longa where we transferred to a boat that would take us out to "Wings Over Africa's" comfortable lodge, idyllically situated on an island in the river. Apart from some magnificent Goliath Herons, it was perhaps a little disappointing birdwise, but it was a great place to unwind and a definite trip highlight was the 'turtle watching'. Late that evening as we indulged in the all-inclusive wine and liqueurs, the message came that a turtle had come up on the beach to lay its eggs. Several species are possible including the rare Leatherback, and we didn't know exactly which had been found. Equipped with torches and cameras we stumbled (perhaps slightly worse for wear) into a boat and were whisked across to the beach where the scouts and spotters had found the turtle. It turned out to be either an Olive Ridley or Green Turtle. The costal scutes that aid identification were covered with sand and it seemed unfair to expose her during such an intimate moment and we watched enthralled as egg after egg was squirted into the sand. The crashing waves lulled us to sleep that night and in the morning we sailed back up the river flushing Little Bitterns and Green-backed Herons and watched yodelling African Fish Eagles as we went. We rejoined our cars – the second had been replaced and the missing third pick-up had been repaired! Renewed, refreshed and revitalised we set off on the next leg of our expedition. A Peregrine and a busy little swamp sidetracked us and the latter produced Long-legged Pipit, Allen's Gallinule, a pair of Greater Painted Snipe, many African Openbills, African Spoonbill, White-faced and Comb Ducks and Spur-winged Goose. Further on the dry bush surrendered a family of Southern White-crowned Shrikes and circling White-backed Vultures. We ate lunch at the attractive Binga Falls but as this area was pretty much birdless we carried on past some salt flats that held a surprising variety of Palearctic waders as well as a number of Angola Swallows. We were now at the base of the

scarp forests below Gabela and we paused for a short stop there while a flat tyre was repaired. Here we noted that the Southern Hyliotas were particularly bright and we remarked that it would be interesting to have the 'forest' forms of this bird reassessed. Are they really the same species as the widespread form that prefers miombo? With the tyre fixed we continued (notching up a fine Ovambo Sparrowhawk for the first car) over rolling hills, dramatic inselbergs and rushing rivers and on to our destination, the Kumbira Forest, snuggled amongst the coffee plantations. Here we were allowing the luxury of two full days in order to try and find some potentially tricky endemic birds. Our campsite took over the local football pitch and we bedded down for a comfortable night, eager to find out what the next day would bring.

With the morning came the birds and it was a big surprise to everyone that the first of the specials to fall should be the Gabela Akalat. One popped into view whilst trying to see a Forest Scrub Robin but it was gone before most people could see it. We then turned our attentions to the Gabela Bush-shrike that had been calling but was proving particularly difficult to see. However eventually one was coaxed into view and we all enjoyed some excellent views. We grabbed a hasty breakfast and then we were back in the bush after the akalats. We were expecting it to be a tough one to see but a family with a juvenile virtually flaunted themselves in front of us only metres away from our camp! Part of the reason for this became evident as Nik discovered that he had inadvertently recorded the species' song whilst taping another bird. The akalats song itself was so quiet and insignificant to our human ears but thankfully very meaningful to the akalats! Glorious Red-crested Turacos were common here and we had numerous opportunities to see them well. A few Bannerman's Sunbirds were seen but from the much wanted Pulitzer's Longbill there was no sound although one of the group managed to see one while others of us were more engrossed in the akalats family. We spent all morning with ears and eyes peeled mainly for this one species, and just before lunch we finally heard it. Unfortunately it kept firmly out of sight and despite diligent searching we never did see or even hear it again! Another target bird that was proving difficult was Pale Olive Greenbul. There had been no sign or sound of this one or indeed the Monteiro's Bush-shrike that was reported to be 'easy' here. We were therefore very grateful that we had seen that one in Kissama! We consoled ourselves with other species such as Scaly-throated Honeyguide, Brown-eared Woodpecker, Petit's Cuckoo-shrike, Yellow-whiskered Greenbul, Red-capped Robin Chat, Brown-chested Alethe, Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher, Carmelite Sunbird, Many-coloured Bush-shrike and Brown-capped Weaver and we also saw the isolated endemic race of Dusky Tit well. The many paradise flycatchers seen here were very confusing, in fact there seemed to be all manner of variations, and it really appeared that Rufous-vented and the long-tailed *bannermani* race of Bates's Flycatcher occur side by side (or are they perhaps hybrids?). The next morning a pair of Monteiro's Bush-shrikes were making a lot of noise near the camps and showed well, so we hoped that our most-wanted birds would do the same, and so we spent our whole second day concentrating on the greenbul and the longbill. We finally managed to find the Pale Olive Greenbul late in the morning, but despite extensive and intensive searching the longbill never materialised. We hatched a plan to try another site that Pedro knew of the next day so we packed up camp early and set off. It was obvious from the start that someone had displeased the Gods and indeed perhaps the Spotted Eagle Owl that had visited the camp while we were breakfasting was an omen? We had not got that far before we found the route that we wanted to take was blocked by a tree fall. We turned around but the car that had already been cursed with a flat tyre on the way up to the forest now lost a second so that we were basically now stranded in the middle of nowhere. We went birding but the coffee plantation here wasn't very productive. When we returned to the cars we found the pick-up, acting as a rescue vehicle, had juggled around inner tubes and somehow we had all cars up and running again unless there was another puncture. We had basically now run out of time as well, and our last chance of everyone seeing the longbill was as flat as the tyres. We limped down to Sumbe on the coast all somewhat deflated! The few hours left at the end of the day were devoted to getting our vehicles back in shape for the long journey to Mount Moco.

Leaving early again the next day we drove and drove until a group of White-tailed Shrikes called us to a halt, and we enjoyed watching these amazing birds that looked so much like some sort of giant batis! Later a marsh en route proved a pleasant place to pause for lunch with its Yellow-billed Ducks, Coppery-tailed Coucals and Chirping Cisticolas. We finally arrived at the Huambo border to find the pick-up that had gone ahead, and a group of suspicious officials waiting for us. It transpired that a previous birding visitor had caused some sort of problem recently (we were never clear as to exactly what this 'problem' was) and the authorities were none too happy at having a group of white people with lots of strange equipment wanting to camp there and climb Mount Moco. Pedro did a great P.R. job and, after what seemed to be an excruciatingly long period of time, we were allowed to go ahead with what we wanted to do, but were carefully watched by an appointed guardian, and we were informed that the local administrator was to be summonsed! At our designated campsite we managed to see Wailing Cisticola and Oustalet's Sunbird just before it got dark while Pedro found himself an Amur Falcon!

The next morning we picked up our guide and drove as far as we could to where we were to begin our walk. No sooner had we got out of the cars and gone the first few metres than we spotted some Dusky Twinspots and then it started to rain and it continued to do so as we miserably trudged on until we reached the base of the mountain (more an overgrown hill really). As soon as it stopped we found Black-faced Canaries to be common and we added White-fronted Bee-eater, Bronzy Sunbirds and Western Green Tinkerbird to the list and things looked much brighter as the weather cleared considerably. Sparkling Ludwig's Double-collared Sunbirds were found, and as we continued we flushed an African Wood Owl that succeeded in upsetting virtually every other bird in the neighbourhood! Our guide had warned us that the walk would be difficult and he was right! There were no paths leading up to the scrap of forest that ran down the mountain clinging for dear life to one of the gullies. Our walk now became a scramble up steep sided slopes full of treacherous boulders, briars and roots that were in a conspiracy to ensnare us and send us tumbling! We were hoping to encounter the threatened endemic Swierstra's Francolin but we realised that we would have to be very lucky indeed to set eyes on this elusive species, as little is known about its habits, and simply reaching the Moco montane forests obviously involved a long scramble. To make it worse, the only visible patch of forest from our side of the mountain had served as a hiding place for local people during the war, and much had been cut down during that time. It all proved too much for some of the group and they opted out whilst the rest of us staggered on. We eventually reached the patch of forest that we could see from the bottom and were somewhat disappointed that it wasn't more extensive and only really amounted to being no more than a few trees. However it did seem to be full of birds. A Spotted Creeper was seen briefly, an Evergreen Forest Warbler was glimpsed and a Bocage's Akalat was heard, but to make amends, and best of all, was that there were Angola Slaty Flycatchers with young and they were easy to see! We then found African Hill Babbler and Thick-billed Seedeaters and African Dusky Flycatcher. Our thoughts turned to contemplating whether or not to try and get higher, but the hillsides were getting more and more diabolically steep and there was always the worry that the next fall would be a serious one. On top of that, it was clear that there was more rain on its way. We returned to the forest we had just left and were overjoyed to find a very fine male Margaret's Batis that approached closer and closer. We were very surprised to see its cherry-red coloured eye – normally golden-yellow in the Zambian race. Thunder rumbled ominously and we clambered down to rejoin the others. They had been watching a Dusky Twinspot and fortunately for them we found another Angola Slaty Flycatcher with young for them before the heavens really opened. It then rained and rained and rained, paths became skating rinks and our progress must have seemed like something from a "Keystone Cops" movie! We slid and slithered back to the car in sodden silence and were much relieved to finally get back to the comfort of our tents and reviving hot coffee and whiskey!

We awoke to dry weather and turned our attentions to the environs of our camp rather than suffer the somewhat disappointing Mt Moco again. Greater Striped Swallows swooped low and Red-throated Cliff Swallows were perched up on the grass stems drying out after a wet night. Angola Larks were

singing bright and breezily and allowed some excellent views. We decided to work the grassy dambo and formed a line to trudge through the long wet grass looking in particular for the localised Bocage's Sunbird, and it wasn't too long before we found a pair and managed some excellent scope views of them. We tried hard to see some Red-chested Flufftails but the vegetation was too thick. Instead we watched Hartlaub's Babblers and flocks of Cuckoo Finches and Fawn-breasted Waxbills. We ended the morning by flushing Black-bellied Bustards and a pair of Finsch's Francolins. Then the rain returned and although it stopped in the late afternoon nothing else of note was seen that day.

We now began the journey to our final birding destination, Tundavala, that we were aiming to reach in two days time. We fled the campsite in order to avoid another encounter with the officials who had finally left us in peace, and made our escape, pausing for lunch once we had left behind the rather wretched town of Huambo. A fortuitous lunch stop provided us with a pair of Fülleborn's Longclaws and we continued on our way nearing the Huila border to pitch camp before nightfall. It was a good choice as we found Tinkling (or Grey) Cisticola, Brown Firefinch, Black-throated Canary and more Angola Larks in the morning before we set off on the final leg of the journey. Once again a fortuitous choice of picnic spot produced a good bird, this time the distinctive *bocagei* race of Yellow-bellied (or Sweet depending on taxonomic bent) Waxbill that may indeed be a full species in its own right. Further on an Orange-winged Pytilia brought the cars to a halt and a pair of Crimson-breasted Shrikes was grabbed at the same time. It had taken us eleven hours to drive some 242 kilometres but at last we had arrived at Lubango for a three nights stay. Our desired hotel was full and so we settled for the "Grand Hotel" instead that sadly did not live up to its name.

A cool, fine morning found us on the edge of the precipice at marvellous Tundavala overlooking a wonderful view that stretched for miles before disappearing into the haze. Beneath us wheeled and screamed hordes of Bradfield's and Alpine Swifts. Red-capped Larks and Buffy Pipits were displaying, Rock Martins zipped past and as we walked through the bizarre maze of strangely shaped rocky outcrops a Freckled Nightjar was flushed and then the clear sweet song of the Angola Cave Chat reached our ears. A bit of 'pishing' brought the bird in nice and close but it didn't stay in the open for long. It was a superb looking creature and we wanted more! The first of numerous handsome Short-toed Rock Thrushes showed well and brightly coloured Jameson's Firefinches, Rufous-naped Lark and Familiar Chats were seen. A gully, that according to Pedro a year ago had been well vegetated, had recently become victim to the charcoal burners and scorched holes in the ground now replaced the trees that had once stood there. In the remaining cover we obtained marvellous views of a beautiful Bocage's Akalat but there was no sign of the Angola Slaty Flycatchers there and we realised how fortunate we all were to have found them at Mt Moco. Another gully gave us more Angola Cave Chats and this time they were bold and allowed close approach so that we all had our fill of this terrific bird. We returned to Lubango and discovered a newly opened and very comfortable lodge on the way and wasted no time checking out of the "Grand Hotel" and into "Casper's Lodge"! In the afternoon we headed down the escarpment on a superbly engineered (and smooth!) road. We paused first at the viewpoint where a Verreaux's Eagle soared past and a migrant Lesser Grey Shrike was found before dropping in elevation where the wooded slopes produced African Olive Pigeon and the rocky outcrops the amazing Rockrunner.

Our final day's birding was spent exploring the length of the same marvellous road all the way to the town of Namibe on the coast. The road passes through a wonderful range of habitat as it descends first through acacia and baobabs and stretches of riverine scrub whilst progressively getting more arid and desert-like as it nears the coast. We stopped and explored the riverine vegetation first. As we got out of the cars a pair of African Hawk Eagles flapped away. African Red-eyed Bulbuls had taken place of the Dark-capped Bulbuls that we had become so used to throughout the tour. Both Damara Red-billed and Monteiro's Hornbills were found with Meves's Starlings feeding around some fruiting trees. Along the watercourse itself, a super Half-collared Kingfisher was studied. At a dry riverbed we found many White-bellied Sunbirds, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater and a charming female Pirit Batis. As the landscape became less hospitable we found Chat Flycatchers by the roadside and then some

Benguela Long-billed Larks. Kalahari Scrub Robins and Black-chested Prinias sang from the dry leafless bushes that provided perches for Pale-winged Starlings. At some rocky inselbergs we found Mountain Wheatear, Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler, Yellow-bellied Eremomela and Sabota Lark. We carried on into the desert and a roadside flock of Grey-backed Sparrowlarks attracted our attention. Here in this arid region we also found a pair of Grey-backed Cisticolas, Tractrac Chat, a flock of Stark's Larks and a few White-throated Canaries. At the end of the day we headed back to the more lush habitat where some colourful Rosy-faced Lovebirds were a most welcome addition to the list. By now, it was getting late, and afternoon rain had produced a magnificent rainbow against the dark clouds as the sun began to sink towards the horizon. We retraced our steps back up the scarp and our Angolan adventure was all but over, but for one last puncture to remind ourselves that it hadn't all been that easy!

We had managed to see virtually all of the special birds and one hopes that with growing stability and wealth that Angola will gradually become an easier place to visit. There is certainly the scope for at least part of this itinerary that did the pioneering work to become a regular Birdquest tour to this fascinating and beautiful country – so watch this space!

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leaders are indicated by the symbol (NL).

PODICIPEDIDAE

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*: A common bird in Angola but we only had two encounters on journeys to Ussoque and Lubango.

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Reed Cormorant *Phalacrocorax africanus*: Also known as Long-tailed Cormorant we had widespread sightings of mainly single birds throughout the tour.

ANHINGIDAE

African Darter *Anhinga rufa*: Seen well on the Lucala River and Rio Longa. This species is sometimes lumped in Oriental Darter *A. melanogaster*, with the name Darter being used for the enlarged species.

ARDEIDAE

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*: At least one pair of the more colourful resident form *pavesii* was seen along the Rio Longa.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*: Widespread sightings of this common bird.

Green-backed Heron *Butorides striata*: Also known as Striated Heron, a small number were seen along Rio Longa.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*: About eight were seen along Rio Longa.

Great White Egret *Egretta alba*: A few in Luanda and very common along Rio Longa where as many as 50+ were seen.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*: Two at the Zanda River with at least ten along the Rio Longa.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*: A few in Luanda and at least ten along Rio Longa

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*: Just a few widespread sightings.

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*: This is the world's largest heron. One was seen at the Catete ferry and two were along the Rio Longa.

SCOPIDAE

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*: Small numbers were seen in the Rio Longa and Lubango areas.

CICONIIDAE

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*: Just one sighting in the Rio Longa area. This species may well have decreased in numbers as Pedro told us that it was apparently not nearly as common as suggested by the BOU checklist.

African Openbill *Anastomus lamelligerus*: No problems seeing this stork en route to Catete and with many in the Rio Longa area.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*: At least six were on the Salinas below Gabela.

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumeniferus*: Two were in Kissama NP where it is apparently an uncommon species.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*: A group of six were seen in the Rio Longa area.

ANATIDAE

White-faced Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*: Also known as White-faced Whistling Duck, a large group (80+) were seen in the Rio Longa area and a pair were at the lunchtime marsh en route to Ussoque.

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis*: About six were seen in the Rio Longa area and a pair was at the lunchtime marsh en route to Ussoque. A lone bird was also seen near Caala.

Comb Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*: Also known as Knob-billed Duck, six were seen in the Rio Longa area.

African Pygmy Goose *Nettapus auritus*: A pair was seen near Santa Maria.

Yellow-billed Duck *Anas undulata*: Eight were seen at the lunchtime marsh en route to Ussoque and a few more were seen between Huambo and Lubango.

PANDIONIDAE

[This family is often lumped (as in "Birds of Africa") in Accipitridae.]

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen in Kissama NP.

ACCIPITRIDAE

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen en route to the Catete ferry.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*: A familiar and common sight on journeys throughout the tour.

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius*: A few records of this species, which first put in an appearance as we left Rio Longa. The species is often lumped in Black Kite *M. migrans*.

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*: Small numbers were seen in Kissama NP and in the Rio Longa area. The species distinctive yodelling cry is one of the most evocative sounds of Africa!

Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis*: A familiar sight throughout the first part of the tour but it disappeared from our daily lists once we had entered Huambo. Also known as Vulturine Fish Eagle, this predominantly vegetarian raptor is certainly an eagle rather than a vulture and it is the only bird of prey that is most reliant on vegetable matter for its food although it also has a taste for carrion.

White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*: A large flock were seen south of Kissama NP.

Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*: Just two sightings; the first in Kissama NP and the second en route to Lubango.

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*: Widespread sightings of small numbers of this aberrant snake eagle throughout the tour. The name means 'juggler' in French and refers to the balancing mode of flight employed by this distinctive and spectacular birds! The Bateleur is also the magician or 'wand-user' of the Tarot Cards.

African Harrier Hawk *Polyboroides typus*: Also known as Gymnogene we had just a few sightings in Kissama NP, Gabela area and en route to Ussoque.

African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus*: A pair was seen at the Lucala River and singletons were at Ussoque and en route to Lubango.

African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro*: One seen in Kissama NP and another heard in Kumbira Forest.

Little Sparrowhawk *Accipiter minullus*: Singletons seen in Kissama NP, Mt Moco and at the base of the Leba escarpment.

Ovambo Sparrowhawk *Accipiter ovampensis*: Also known as Ovampo Sparrowhawk. Good views for the first car en route to Kumbira Forest. Ovamboland is part of northern Namibia.

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*: Seen in Kumbira Forest and again in the Mt Moco area.

Steppe Buzzard *Buteo (buteo) vulpinus*: Widespread sightings of this Palearctic migrant throughout the tour.

Red-necked Buzzard *Buteo auguralis*: Widespread sightings of ones and twos throughout the first part of the tour until Porto Amboim.

Augur Buzzard *Buteo augur*: Singletons on Mt Moco and en route to Lubango.

Wahlberg's Eagle *Aquila wahlbergi*: Singletons en route to Kumbira Forest and Huambo. Johan August Wahlberg (1810-56) was a Swedish collector who was unfortunately killed by a wounded African Elephant at Lake Ngami in Bechuanaland.

Verreaux's Eagle *Aquila verreauxi*: Also known as Black Eagle we had brief views of an adult as it flew by below us at the Leba view point. The French Verreaux family was a business run

by the father and his three sons. They owned 'Maison Verreaux' the largest ever known 'Natural History Emporium'! The eagle is named after one of the sons, Jean Baptiste Edouard Verreaux (1810-68) who was also married to Pierre Antoine Delalande's sister.

African Hawk Eagle *Hieraaetus spilogaster*: An adult and immature were seen at the base of the Leba cliffs below Tundavala.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*: A single dark phase bird was amazingly seen twice apparently making its way down the coast in the Rio Longa area on 1/12. There appear to be only two published records of this species for the country both in May 1981.

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis*: One was seen en route to Luinga and singletons were seen in Kumbira Forest.

Cassin's Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus africanus*: One was seen briefly but well in the forests south of Uige on 25/11. There are few records from Angola and it is presumed to be rare. John Cassin (1813-1869) was an American businessman and renowned systematic ornithologist. He was also curator of ornithology and Vice-President of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences.

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus*: Singletons of this majestic eagle were seen in Kissama NP, en route to Ussoque and on the Namibe day.

FALCONIDAE

Rock Kestrel *Falco rupicolus*: Regularly encountered during the latter part of the tour from Mt Moco onwards. The form concerned is usually lumped in Common Kestrel *F. tinnunculus*.

Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis*: Pedro photographed one at Ussoque while he was helping set up camp and we were off birding!

African Hobby *Falco cuvierii* (NL): Geoffrey saw one in Kissama NP on 30/11 and both he and Bob saw another in Kumbira Forest on 4/12. This is apparently a rare bird in Angola with very few documented records.

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*: Singletons near Conda, en route to Ussoque (a very white-headed juvenile) and at Tundavala.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*: Two were seen well hunting swifts at Rio Longa, en route to Sumbe, Mt Moco and Huambo. All records presumably referred to resident birds of the race *minor*.

NUMIDIDAE

[This family is sometimes lumped in Phasianidae.]

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*: One of the race *galeata* was seen in Kissama NP. At Mt Moco we encountered a flock of the race *marungensis*. The various forms of this species have been treated as different species in the past and may well again in the future. The race *galeata* is known as West African Guineafowl and is the form from which domestic birds have been derived. The birds at Mt Moco belong to the group known as Tufted Guineafowl *N. mitrata*.

PHASIANIDAE

Finsch's Francolin *Scleroptila finschii*: After a long walk a pair was finally flushed at Mt Moco. The species is sometimes placed in *Francolinus*. Otto Finsch (1839–1917) was a German 'museum man' (Leyden and Bremen), explorer and collector and worked with Gustav Hartlaub on a monograph on parrots.

Grey-striped Francolin *Pternistes griseostriatus*: We met up with "the boy who calls the francolins" in Kissama NP and were duly led to a likely looking thicket. Here the young man aided by a knife made a sound uncannily like our quarry and had soon set up a dialogue with a pair that nervously came creeping in so that we all had a look at this shy endemic francolin. Although we heard others none could be persuaded to show making this an unexpectedly difficult bird to get views of. The species is classified as 'Vulnerable' in

"Threatened Birds of the World" and is restricted to the escarpment zone of western Angola. Habitat loss remains the biggest threat. The species is sometimes placed in *Francolinus*.

Red-necked Spurfowl *Pternistes afer*: A common and widespread francolin with sightings throughout the tour. This species is divided into two very differently plumaged groups that have in the past even been treated as separate species. We encountered the nominate race *afer* of the 'black-and-white' group in Kissama NP and the coastal lowlands. Elsewhere we found *cranchii* of the 'vermiculated or rufous-striped' group also known as Cranch's Francolin. John Cranch (1758-1816) was a British explorer of tropical Africa and was a member of Captain Tuckey's 1816 mission to find the source of the Congo. The species is sometimes placed in *Francolinus*. The distribution of races as cited in the BOU checklist appears to be incorrect.

TURNICIDAE

Kurrichane Buttonquail *Turnix sylvaticus*: Also known as Little Buttonquail we flushed three in Kissama NP and several at Mt Moco. The word Kurrichane (pronounced with a ch as in loch) is named after a Tswana chief (and locality) in the western Transvaal.

Black-rumped Buttonquail *Turnix nanus*: At least one was identified as it was flushed at Mt Moco. The species is sometimes lumped in Hottentot Buttonquail *T. hottentottus* with the name Black-rumped Buttonquail being used for the enlarged species.

RALLIDAE

White-spotted Flufftail *Sarothrura pulchra*: An almost unbelievably obliging male was seen well at the Zanda River and we all had some incredible views of this beautiful little crane.

Buff-spotted Flufftail *Sarothrura elegans* (H): Heard in Dembos Forest but we had no hope of seeing it.

Red-chested Flufftail *Sarothrura rufa* (H): We tried hard to see this one at Mt Moco but although they responded well to playback the grass was simply too deep and thick - very frustrating!

African Crane *Crecopsis egregia*: One was flushed from the roadside and seen by all en route to Luinga. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Crex*.

Black Crane *Amaurornis flavirostris*: Everyone saw this showy crane at Rio Longa.

Allen's Gallinule *Porphyryla alleni*: A much-wanted bird for Bob finally surrendered itself at Rio Longa where we counted three individuals. Rear-Admiral William Allen (1793-1864) was an English naval officer involved in fighting the slave trade. He survived two ill-fated expeditions up the Niger River and the type specimen was procured during the second. However, he himself does not seem to have been particularly interested in birds.

Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata*: Also known as Crested Coot we saw one at our productive lunch stop en route to Ussoque.

OTIDIDAE

Black-bellied Bustard *Eupodotis melanogaster*: A pair was flushed at Mt Moco and we also had exceptionally close views of a very tame female there. Another female was flushed as we set up camp at the Huila border. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Lissotis*.

JACANIDAE

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*: This lily-trotter was very common at Rio Longa with a few seen elsewhere in appropriate habitat.

ROSTRATULIDAE

Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*: Always a great bird to see well, a pair was scoped at Rio Longa.

RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*: Six were seen on the Salinas below Gabela.

BURHINIDAE

Water Thick-knee *Burhinus vermiculatus*: One was seen at night on the turtle-watching excursion at Rio Longa.

Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis*: Two sightings in Kissama NP.

GLAREOLIDAE

Bronze-winged Courser *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus*: Also known as Violet-tipped Courser we found at least ten of these intra-African migrants on recently burnt ground in Kissama NP. The views were so good of some of the less flighty individuals that you could even see the violet tips! The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Cursorius*.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*: Just two were seen in the Cuvo River area.

CHARADRIIDAE

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen on the Salinas below Gabela.

Senegal Lapwing *Vanellus lugubris*: Also known as Lesser Black-winged Lapwing, three were seen in Kissama NP.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*: At least fifty of these Palearctic migrants had gathered on the Salinas below Gabela.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*: Three of these Palearctic migrants were found on the Salinas below Gabela.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*: About thirty of these Palearctic migrants were found on the Salinas below Gabela.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*: Two of these Palearctic migrants were found at Rio Longa.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*: One of these Palearctic migrants was found on the Salinas below Gabela.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*: About thirty of these Palearctic migrants were found at Rio Longa with a couple on the Salinas below Gabela and along the flooded road through Huila.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*: Three of these Palearctic migrants were found at Catete, about 15 on the Salinas below Gabela with more along the flooded road through Huila.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*: Everyone saw a couple of these Palearctic migrants at Rio Longa.

LARIDAE

Cape Gull *Larus vetula*: Nik saw eight flying south along the coast at Sumbe.

STERNIDAE

[This family is sometimes lumped in Laridae.]

Royal Tern *Sterna maxima* (NL): Geoffrey saw one in Luanda. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Thalasseus*.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*: Small numbers of these Palearctic migrants were seen in Luanda and offshore at Sumbe.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*: One of these Palearctic migrants was watched at Rio Longa.

COLUMBIDAE

African Green Pigeon *Treron calvus*: A commonly encountered bird during the first part of the trip but absent after Kumbira Forest apart from a singleton on the Namibe excursion day.

- Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistria*: A commonly encountered bird during the first part of the trip but absent after Kumbira Forest. The name refers to its bouncing call.
- Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur afer*: Only seen in the northern scarp forested areas where it was common.
- Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos*: This replaced the preceding similar species through the coastal plain and the south.
- African Olive Pigeon *Columba arquatrix*: Small numbers were seen on the Leba slopes below Tundavala.
- Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*: Feral or 'table' birds only.
- Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*: Widespread sightings of this commonly encountered bird throughout the tour.
- Ring-necked Dove *Streptopelia capicola*: This bird put in its first appearance in Kissama NP and was commonly encountered thereafter.
- Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*: This bird put in its first appearance in Kissama NP and was occasionally encountered thereafter being most common on the Namibe excursion.

PSITTACIDAE

- Red-fronted Parrot *Poicephalus gularis*: Surprisingly common and easy to see in the northern scarp forests.
- Meyer's Parrot *Poicephalus meyeri*: Also known as Brown Parrot, small numbers were seen in the Zanda River area. Dr Bernhard Meyer (1767-1836) was a German physician interested in ornithology. It is not now known what is link with the parrot was.
- Rüppell's Parrot *Poicephalus rueppellii*: Surprisingly common in Kissama NP and small numbers seen on the Namibe excursion. Wilhelm Peter Eduard Simon Rüppell (1794-1884) was a German explorer, cartographer and zoologist, best known for ornithological discoveries in Ethiopia and the interior of northeast Africa.
- Rosy-faced Lovebird *Agapornis roseicollis*: Encountered several times at the bottom of the Leba escarpment and initially rather flighty but we all managed excellent views in the end.

MUSOPHAGIDAE

- Great Blue Turaco *Corythaeola cristata*: A few good sightings of this ridiculously top-knotted turaco in the northern scarp forests.
- Green Turaco *Tauraco persa*: One was seen in the forests south of Uige and it was also heard in the forests around N'Dalatando. The feathers of turacos possess two copper pigments, red turacin and green turacoverdin that are unique in the avian world and are responsible for producing the bright red and green colours in their plumage. Contrary to popular belief these pigments are only soluble in alkali and not water.
- Schalow's Turaco *Tauraco schalowi*: This turaco with its marvellous crest was easy to see at Mt Moco. Hermann Schalow (1852–1925) was a German banker and amateur ornithologist. He was author of a work on turacos "*Die Musophagidae*" that was published in 1886. He worked with Reichenow who named the turaco after him in 1891.
- Red-crested Turaco *Tauraco erythrophus*: This glorious endemic was most common and seen best in Kumbira Forest.
- Ross's Turaco *Musophaga rossae* (H): Heard at the Zanda River. Lady Ann Ross (1817-1857) was the wife of Rear-Admiral Sir James Clark Ross who discovered the Magnetic North Pole and the Ross Sea and Ice Shelf. The turaco was sent to her from West Africa during the time that she was stationed on St Helena. She kept the bird as a pet for ten years and sent sketches and moulted feathers to John Gould who named the turaco after her.
- Grey Go-away-bird *Corythaixoides concolor*: This strange creature was common and easy to see from Kissama NP and throughout the coastal plain southwards.

CUCULIDAE

- Jacobin Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus*: Also known as Black-and-white Cuckoo we obtained a number of widespread sightings throughout the tour. The species mainly parasitizes bulbuls but babblers and Common Fiscal have also been recorded.
- Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius*: Just one was seen by those in one car along the flooded road through Huila Province. The species mainly parasitizes crows but starlings have also been recorded.
- Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius*: More often seen than heard at widespread locations throughout the tour. The species mainly parasitizes thrushes and robins.
- Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus*: One rather barred individual was seen well at the Zanda River. The species mainly parasitizes bush-shrikes, helmet-shrikes and African Golden Oriole.
- African Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis*: Those in the first car saw just one en route to Lubango. The species is known to parasitize Fork-tailed Drongo.
- Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx mechowi* (H): One was heard at our campsite before Uige but was unfortunately too far away to do anything about. The host species remains unknown but is thought to be Brown Illadopsis.
- Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx olivinus*: We had better luck with this species at our unfortunate breakdown spot near Conda where most people even saw it well perched. The host species remains unknown.
- African Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus*: This beautiful cuckoo was more often heard than seen throughout the first part of the tour up until we left Kumbira Forest. The species appears to parasitize a wide variety of small, insectivorous passerines.
- Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas*: This cuckoo was more often heard than seen mainly throughout the first part of the tour up until we left Kumbira Forest with another heard on the Namibe excursion day. The species appears to parasitize a wide variety of small, insectivorous passerines, principally warblers and sunbirds. It was described by Stephens in 1815 and is supposedly named after one of Francois Levillant's Khoikhoi (Hottentot) servants. Popular myth has it that he was the husband of Narina who was in turn the mistress of Levillant!
- Diderick Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius*: This cuckoo was more often heard than seen mainly throughout the first part of the tour up until we left Kumbira Forest. The species mainly parasitizes weavers and the name is based on an onomatopoeic rendering of the call.
- Blue Malkoha *Ceuthmochares aereus*: A few sightings in the north and south scarp forests. The 'Green Malkoha' eastern form *australis* of Yellowbill has recently been split from the western forms (that we encountered) resulting in the present renaming of the species.

CENTROPIDAE

[This family is often lumped in Cuculidae.]

- Gabon Coucal *Centropus anelli*: It took a little bit of time but finally we all had excellent views of this huge but most retiring coucal in Dembos Forest.
- Coppery-tailed Coucal *Centropus cupreicaudus*: Several were seen well in swampy places during the latter part of the tour.
- White-browed Coucal *Centropus superciliosus*: Apparently the most common coucal with widespread sightings in appropriate habitat throughout the tour
- Black Coucal *Centropus grillii*: One seen well by all at our campsite near Luinga. Another distant bird was seen en route to Huambo.
- Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis*: Widespread sightings through the first part of the tour until we left Kissama NP.
- Blue-headed Coucal *Centropus monachus*: Just two sightings en route to and at the Zanda River.

STRIGIDAE

- Spotted Eagle Owl *Bubo africanus*: One visited our campsite in Kumbira Forest early on our last morning and Mike did well to spot another at its roost site en route to Huambo.

Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum*: One seen in Kissama NP was the only record.
African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii*: Heard at night in Dembos and Kumbira Forests and surprisingly flushed during the daytime at Mt Moco where it immediately upset all the small birds in the neighbourhood.

CAPRIMULGIDAE

Square-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus fossii*: Also known as Gabon or Mozambique Nightjar, we had some fine views in Kissama NP.
Freckled Nightjar *Caprimulgus tristigma*: One was flushed and seen well as it flew past us in daylight at Tundavala.

APODIDAE

Mottled Spinetail *Telacanthura ussheri*: Two were seen over the forests near Uige.
African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus*: A familiar species commonly encountered throughout the tour.
[Swift sp *Apus* sp: The 'famous' large unidentified swifts were seen in Luanda. As indeed many others have done before us, we puzzled over their identity but reached no firm conclusion. However one thing is for certain and that is they are definitely NOT (as has been claimed by some) Fernando Po Swift *A. sladeniae* as they are far too large and pale for this species.]
Bradfield's Swift *Apus bradfieldi*: Common and easy to see at Tundavala. R. D. Bradfield (1882-1949) was a South African farmer and naturalist living in Namibia. Austin Smith collected the swift near their farm near Okahandja and named the swift after Bradfield's wife.
Common Swift *Apus apus*: This Palearctic migrant (presumably of the nominate race) was a common sight up until the Mt Moco area where paler and browner individuals were noted and these were presumed to represent the eastern race *pekinensis*.
White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour.
Little Swift *Apus affinis*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour often showing an affinity for bridges and concrete.
Mottled Swift *Tachymarptis aequatorialis*: Small numbers were seen over Kumbira Forest.
Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*: Easy to see mixed in with the Bradfield's Swifts from the cliffs at Tundavala.

COLIIDAE

Red-faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus*: A common bird in Kissama NP and along the coastal plain.
Red-backed Mousebird *Colius castonotus*: This proved to be a common and easily seen endemic with our best views being obtained in Kissama NP.
Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus*: More or less replaced the endemic Red-backed Mousebird in the northern scarp forests.

ALCEDINIDAE

Brown-hooded Kingfisher *Halcyon albiventris*: Only two sightings with the first en route to Dembos and the second near Luinga.
Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala*: One for some en route to Rio Longa and a couple during the Namibe excursion day.
Blue-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon malimbica*: Heard at the Zanda River and in Kissama NP and seen in the N'Dalatando Forest.
Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis*: Widespread sightings throughout the first part of the tour up until Rio Longa. At least one bird seen along the river there appeared to be of the more southerly race *cyanoleuca* historically treated as a separate species, Angola Kingfisher.
Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti*: Just three sightings in Kissama NP and the southern coastal plain.

African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ispidina picta*: Widespread sightings of this pretty little kingfisher throughout the first part of the tour until Kumbira Forest. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Ceyx*.

Malachite Kingfisher *Alcedo cristata*: Widespread sightings in suitable habitat. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Corythornis*.

Half-collared Kingfisher *Alcedo semitorquata*: Geoffrey found us one of these uncommon kingfishers during the Namibe excursion day.

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima*: Just a few sightings and first seen at Rio Longa.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*: Small numbers seen in appropriate habitat.

MEROPIDAE

Black Bee-eater *Merops gularis*: A distant bird was a most welcome addition to the list in the forests near Uige.

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus*: First seen at the Zanda River with widespread sightings thereafter.

Blue-breasted Bee-eater *Merops variegatus*: Sightings at the Lucala River and en route to Lubango.

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus*: Just a few widespread sightings and finally seen by all during the Namibe excursion day.

White-fronted Bee-eater *Merops bullockoides*: Most numerous and easily seen in the Mt Moco area.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus*: This non-breeding migrant was most common and conspicuous in and around Kissama NP.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*: This Palearctic migrant was clearly on the move with widespread sightings throughout the tour.

CORACIIDAE

Purple Roller *Coracias naevius*: Also known as Rufous-crowned Roller, we saw small numbers on journeys south of Kissama NP.

Lilac-breasted Roller *Coracias caudatus*: Small numbers were seen in Kissama NP and en route to Lubango.

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*: Quite common in the forests near Uige although the BOU checklist claims that it is not known from this area!

PHOENICULIDAE

Green Wood-hoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus*: A small group of four were seen in Kissama NP.

Violet Wood-hoopoe *Phoeniculus damarensis*: A few sightings for some en route to Ussoque.

Black Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus aterrimus*: Also known as Black Wood-hoopoe we had great views of a pair in the miombo near the Zanda River. Sibley and Monroe placed the members of the genus *Rhinopomastus* in a separate family *Rhinopomastidae*.

UPUPIDAE

African Hoopoe *Upupa africana*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour but most common in Kissama NP. This form is often lumped in Eurasian Hoopoe *U. epops* with the name Hoopoe being used for the enlarged species.

BUCEROTIDAE

Monteiro's Hornbill *Tockus monteiri*: A pair was seen well at the bottom of the Leba escarpment. Joachim João Monteiro (1833-78) author of "Angola and the River Congo" was a Portuguese mining engineer and collector in Angola.

Damara Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus damarensis*: At least four were seen at the bottom of the Leba escarpment. Recent studies suggest that the five races of Red-billed Hornbill *T. erythrorhynchus* of which this was just one are genetically distinct and that there are also differences in plumage and behaviour.

Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill *Tockus leucomelas*: We first encountered the race *elegans* in Kissama NP. The taxonomy over this form has been surrounded by controversy and some

taxonomists do not even recognise the race. However it is distinctly smaller and there are differences in plumage and bare-part colour so that others suggest that it may well be more than a race and indeed a separate species!

African Pied Hornbill *Tockus fasciatus*: Small numbers were seen in the northern scarp forests.

Crowned Hornbill *Tockus alboterminatus*: A common and widespread hornbill with sightings throughout the tour.

Piping Hornbill *Bycanistes fistulator*: Small numbers were seen in the northern scarp forests.

Black-casqued Wattled Hornbill *Ceratogymna atrata*: Small numbers of this enormous hornbill with its noisy whirring wing beats were seen in the northern scarp forests.

CAPITONIDAE

[Sibley & Monroe place the African barbets in a separate family Lybiidae.]

Bristle-nosed Barbet *Gymnobucco peli*: A small number were seen well in the forests near Uige on 25/11. The pale nasal tufts above the bill (much more obvious than those of the *congius* race of the following species) were seen quite clearly on all individuals. The BOU checklist gives no records for Angola other than in Cabinda.

Naked-faced Barbet *Gymnobucco calvus*: First seen in the busy flowering *Erythrina* en route to Uige with more in the N'Dalatando forest.

Anchieta's Barbet *Stactolaema anchietae*: This localised barbet was easily seen en route to Calandula and in the Zanda River area. José de Anchieta (died in 1897) was a Portuguese naturalist working particularly in Angola and Mozambique. Bocage was responsible for describing the bird.

Speckled Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus scolopaceus*: A couple was seen in the forest near N'Dalatando.

Western Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus coryphaeus*: Also known as Western Green Tinkerbird we saw this attractive little barbet at Mt Moco.

[Red-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus atroflavus* (H): What sounded very much like this species was heard in the forests near Uige but the bird was not seen. The BOU checklist gives no records for Angola except Cabinda but it should be noted that we found Bristle-nosed Barbet at the same location.]

Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus*: Heard more often than seen in the scarp forests.

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus*: only seen and heard at the bottom of the Leba escarpment.

Streaky-throated Barbet *Tricholaema flavipunctata*: A number of chances to get good looks at this chunky barbet in the scarp forests. This species is often lumped in Hairy-breasted Barbet *T. hirsuta*.

Acacia Pied Barbet *Tricholaema leucomelas*: Sightings of this striking barbet in Kissama NP and on the Namibe excursion.

Black-collared Barbet *Lybius torquatus*: First seen at Mt Moco and thereafter we obtained widespread sightings throughout the rest of the tour.

Black-backed Barbet *Lybius minor*: We all saw an individual of the race *macclounii* also known as MacClounie's Barbet near Luinga. Some saw the race *minor* at Mt Moco. The two forms look very different and have been treated as separate species.

Yellow-billed Barbet *Trachyphonus purpuratus*: Heard far more often than it was seen throughout the scarp forests.

INDICATORIDAE

Cassin's Honeybird *Prodotiscus insignis*: One was seen in the forest near N'Dalatando. This small honeybird is known to parasitize flycatchers, warblers (such as apalises) and perhaps white-eyes.

Scaly-throated Honeyguide *Indicator variegatus*: Two sightings of what was probably the same individual in Kumbira Forest. The species is known to parasitize a variety of tinkerbirds, barbets and woodpeckers.

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*: Four widespread sightings the last being at Tundavala where we saw the paler race *damarensis* that lacks the moustachial streak thus making it look superficially similar to Pallid Honeyguide *I. meliphilus*. The species is known to parasitize a variety of hole-nesting species.

Least Honeyguide *Indicator exilis*: One was seen briefly but well in Dembos Forest. The host species are as yet unproven but are thought to include tinkerbirds and barbets.

PICIDAE

Golden-tailed Woodpecker *Campethera abingoni* (H): Only heard in Kissama NP.

Green-backed Woodpecker *Campethera cailliautii*: Sightings were obtained in Dembos Forest and at the Zanda River.

Buff-spotted Woodpecker *Campethera nivosa* (H): Heard in Kumbira Forest but could not be persuaded to leave the dense cover in which it was hiding.

Brown-eared Woodpecker *Campethera caroli*: Seen well in Kumbira Forest.

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens*: Widespread sightings throughout the first part of the tour and last seen in Kissama NP.

Yellow-crested Woodpecker *Dendropicos xantholophus*: One was seen in the forest near Uige.

Olive Woodpecker *Dendropicos griseocephalus*: Just one was seen on Mt Moco.

EURYLAIMIDAE

African Broadbill *Smithornis capensis*: First seen at the Zanda River and later in Kumbira Forest.

ALAUDIDAE

Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafr africana*: A few widespread sightings, mainly on journeys.

Angola Lark *Mirafr angolensis*: We had some excellent views of this restricted range lark at Mt Moco and again at our campsite on the Huambo/Huila border.

Flappet Lark *Mirafr rufocinnamomea*: One seen en route to Calandula and more at our campsite on the Huambo/Huila border.

Sabota Lark *Calendulauda sabota*: One was seen well en route to Namibe. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Mirafr*. The race concerned is *ansorgei* that is classed as part of the 'large-billed' *naevia* group sometimes split as a separate species, Bradfield's Lark *C. naevia*.

Benguela Long-billed Lark *Certhilauda benguelensis*: Some excellent views of this approachable species during the Namibe excursion. This species was previously lumped in Cape Long-billed Lark *C. curvirostris* with the name Long-billed Lark being used for the enlarged species.

Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea*: A couple were seen at Tundavala.

Stark's Lark *Spizocorys starki*: A small flock was seen and good views obtained of this somewhat nomadic species during our Namibe excursion. Arthur Cowell Stark (1846-99) was a British physician, collector and co-author with W. L. Sclater of "Fauna of South Africa". He was killed during the Boer War at Ladysmith.

Grey-backed Sparrowlark *Eremopterix verticalis*: A small flock was seen during our Namibe excursion.

HIRUNDINIDAE

Black Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne pristoptera*: A commonly encountered and widespread species. There has always been much controversy over the taxonomy of this group of swallows that vary in the colour of the gloss of the plumage and the underwing colour throughout its African range. The birds we saw represent the race *reichenowi* that is sometimes included in those split off as a separate species, Eastern Saw-wing *P. orientalis*.

Banded Martin *Riparia cincta*: Just a few widespread sightings with the highest count being about six in the Mt Moco area.

- Red-breasted Swallow *Hirundo semirufa*: Widespread sightings and rather more common than the following rather similar species. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Cecropis*.
- Mosque Swallow *Hirundo senegalensis*: Widespread sightings during our long journeys but exact numbers hard to estimate because of the superficial similarity between this and the previous species. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Cecropis*.
- Lesser Striped Swallow *Hirundo abyssinica*: A common and familiar species throughout the first part of the tour up until we reached Mt Moco. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Cecropis*.
- Greater Striped Swallow *Hirundo cucullata*: Appeared to basically replace the previous species from Mt Moco onwards. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Cecropis*.
- Red-throated Cliff Swallow *Hirundo rufigula*: A large breeding colony was enjoyed under a bridge over the Lucala River. Smaller numbers, presumably wandering birds were seen at Mt Moco. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Petrochelidon*.
- Rock Martin *Hirundo fuligula*: Common and easy to see around the cliffs at Tundavala. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Ptyonoprogne*.
- Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*: Seen at Porto Amboim and by some en route to Ussoque.
- White-throated Swallow *Hirundo albigularis*: A pair was seen on a bridge over the Lucala River and another more distant pair at a river crossing after Ussoque.
- Angola Swallow *Hirundo angolensis*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour with highest numbers seen during the drive to Lubango.
- Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*: Only small numbers of this Palearctic migrant were encountered with highest numbers seen during the drive to Lubango.
- Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum*: Only small numbers of this Palearctic migrant were encountered with highest numbers seen during the drive to Lubango.

MOTACILLIDAE

- African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*: Just two sightings en route to Calandula and at Rio Longa.
- African Pipit *Anthus cinnamomeus*: Also known as Grassland Pipit we saw one in fields along the flooded road through Huila.
- Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys* (NL): Geoffrey saw one en route to Lubango.
- Buffy Pipit *Anthus vaalensis*: A pair was seen at Tundavala.
- Long-legged Pipit *Anthus pallidiventris*: A pair was seen well at the marsh by the Rio Longa bridge on 2/12. This appears to represent a southward extension of their known range as cited in the BOU checklist. This sighting mirrors this species fortune as it is currently also apparently extending its range along the coast north and westwards through Cameroon and into Nigeria.
- Fülleborn's Longclaw *Macronyx fuellebornii*: A chance stop south of Caala for lunch produced a pair of these handsome longclaws. Dr Friederich Fülleborn (1866-1933) was a German physician and expert on tropical diseases who worked in Tanzania.

CAMPEPHAGIDAE

- Black Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga flava*: Everybody saw those on and below the Leba escarpment.
- Petit's Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga petiti*: Easy to see in Kumbira Forest. Louis Petit (1856-1943) was a French naturalist who collected in Angola between 1876 and 1884.
- Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga quiscalina*: Four sightings in the scarp forests.
- White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina pectoralis*: Just two were seen in the miombo woodlands around the Zanda River.

PYCNONOTIDAE

- Little Greenbul *Andropadus virens*: More often heard than seen in the northern scarp forests.
- Plain Greenbul *Andropadus curvirostris* (H): Also known as Cameroon Sombre Greenbul we only heard it in the N'Dalatando forest.
- Slender-billed Greenbul *Andropadus gracilirostris*: A couple were seen well in Dembos Forest.

- Yellow-whiskered Greenbul *Andropadus latirostris*: More often heard but also easy to see in Kumbira Forest.
- Honeyguide Greenbul *Baeopogon indicator*: Heard by all and seen by some in the N'Dalatando forest.
- Yellow-bellied Greenbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris*: A common and conspicuous species in appropriate scrubby, wooded areas throughout the tour.
- Falkenstein's Greenbul *Chlorocichla falkensteini*: Also known as Yellow-necked Greenbul it was amazing to see how common and conspicuous this species was throughout the scarp forests. Johann Falkenstein (1842-1917) was a German surgeon who collected in Africa.
- Simple Greenbul *Chlorocichla simplex*: Also known as Simple Leaflove we saw one in Dembos Forest.
- Yellow-throated Leaflove *Chlorocichla flavicollis*: Easily seen in the Zanda River area and again on Mt Moco.
- Pale Olive Greenbul *Phyllastrephus fulviventris*: This one proved to be rather hard work to find but we all finally got lucky in Kumbira Forest where we saw one individual well.
- Cabanis's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus cabanisi*: Easy to see at the Zanda River. Jean Louis Cabanis (1816-1906) was a German ornithologist working at the Berlin Museum.
- Red-tailed Bristlebill *Bleda syndactylus* (H): Heard in the forest near N'Dalatando but it could not be persuaded to show itself.
- Dark-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus tricolor*: A very common species seen throughout the tour finally giving way to the following species as we travelled to Namibe.
- African Red-eyed Bulbul *Pycnonotus nigricans*: Replaced the previous species as we travelled to Namibe.
- Black-collared Bulbul *Neolestes torquatus*: This handsome bird was seen well near Luinga and again at Mt Moco. Some authorities place this species with the bush-shrikes but DNA evidence suggests that it be better placed with the bulbuls although it has also been suggested that it may merit being placed in a separate family with the nicators.
- Yellow-throated Nicator *Nicator vireo*: A familiar voice throughout the scarp forests meant that there were numerous opportunities to see this very attractive species well. Some authorities place this species with the bush-shrikes but DNA evidence suggests that it be better placed with the bulbuls although it has also been suggested that the nicators with *Neolestes* may merit being placed in a separate family.

TURDIDAE

[The genera *Sheppardia*, *Cossypha*, *Xenocopsychus*, *Cichladusa*, *Cercotrichas*, *Saxicola*, *Oenanthe*, *Myrmecocichla*, and *Monticola* are sometimes placed in the family Muscicapidae.]

- Bocage's Akalat *Sheppardia bocagei*: Absolutely amazing views of this glorious little robin-like bird at Tundavala. This form is increasingly being treated as a separate species from those forms occurring in Cameroon and Bioko. They are then known as Alexander's Akalat *S. poensis* (= *insulana* but this is a synonym and *poensis* takes precedence). José Vicenta Barboza du Bocage (1823-1907) was Portuguese and Director of the National Zoological Museum of Lisbon and had a specialist interest in the birds of Angola.
- Gabela Akalat *Sheppardia gabela*: No less than six individuals of this unassuming endemic were seen in one day in Kumbira Forest. These sightings included a pair with a juvenile. The species is classified as 'Endangered' in "Threatened Birds of the World" and it is only known from a few forest patches within 40 kilometres of Gabela where it is considered to be uncommon. It is most threatened by habitat loss.
- Grey-winged Robin Chat *Cossypha polioptera*: We obtained incredible views of this colourful bird at the Zanda River. The species is sometimes placed with the akalats in *Sheppardia*.
- White-browed Robin Chat *Cossypha heuglini*: Also known as Heuglin's Robin Chat and more often heard than seen at widespread localities through the tour. Theodor von Heuglin (1824-1876) was a German explorer and ornithologist who wrote a two-volume book dealing with the birds of Ethiopia and northern Somalia.

- Red-capped Robin Chat *Cossypha natalensis*: We managed sightings of this beautiful robin throughout the scarp forests.
- White-headed Robin Chat *Cossypha heinrichi*: This stunning bird put on a wonderful performance for us and was most deservedly voted the bird of the trip. Surprisingly it proved not to be a skulker at all and was most at home bouncing along the limbs of the large trees in the mid-canopy rather than the undergrowth. Several behavioural traits were very peculiar for a robin chat. The birds seemed to keep in pairs or even trios. The song was also unlike other robin chats and the birds would duet with each other in an upright posture and with the head held slightly downwards. The song was a simple, slightly variable but repetitive phrase somewhat reminiscent of a squeaky bicycle that would run on and on starting very softly and ending loudly. The wedge shaped tail was a noticeable feature and the whole feel of the bird was of a babbler rather than a robin chat. The species is classified as 'Vulnerable' in "Threatened Birds of the World" and is only known from a small area around Calandula in Angola and from Bombo-Lumene Forest and nearby Nkiene and Nguma in Democratic Republic of Congo. Habitat loss remains the biggest threat.
- Angola Cave Chat *Xenocopsychus ansorgei*: This marvellous endemic with its lovely song took the number two spot in our top ten birds. It proved easy to see at Tundavala and was remarkably tame. The species is classified as 'Near-threatened' in "Threatened Birds of the World" and is restricted to localised areas on the escarpment of western Angola. However it is considered to be common where it is found.
- Brown-chested Alethe *Pseudaethe poliocephala*: One was seen well in Kumbira Forest. Sinclair & Ryan mistakenly invert the species placed in the genera *Alethe* and *Pseudaethe*. The species was previously placed in the genus *Alethe*.
- Fraser's Rufous Thrush *Neocossyphus fraseri*: Seen well in Dembos Forest. Louis Fraser (1819-1866) was a British 'museum man', naturalist, explorer, author and member of the infamous ill-fated Niger River Expedition of 1841-42. He also collected specimens from Fernando Po (Bioko) and was eventually appointed British Consul at Ovidah in West Africa.
- Rufous-tailed Palm Thrush *Cichladusa ruficauda*: We had numerous opportunities to see this species well in Dembos Forest, Kissama NP and on the Namibe excursion.
- Forest Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas leucosticta*: We managed to get some first class views of this sweet songster in Kumbira Forest.
- Miombo Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas barbata*: We had some excellent views near Luinga and at the Zanda River.
- White-browed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas leucophrys*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour. Those in the coastal plain were noticeably less streaked and almost plain on the breast.
- Kalahari Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas paena*: A couple were seen during the Namibe excursion.
- African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*: A commonly encountered species at widespread localities throughout the tour. Recent DNA tests and genetic evidence suggests that the resident African forms, should be treated as part of a separate species, African Stonechat. The species retains the same scientific name because Linnaeus described the type specimen in 1776 from a specimen collected (of all places!) from the Cape of Good Hope! Common Stonechat is then renamed *S. rubicola*.
- Mountain Wheatear *Oenanthe monticola*: This attractive and amazingly variable polymorphic species was seen well during our Namibe excursion.
- Tractrac Chat *Cercomela tractrac*: A few were seen during our Namibe excursion.
- Familiar Chat *Cercomela familiaris*: A family party was seen at Tundavala.
- Sooty Chat *Myrmecocichla nigra*: A very common and conspicuous bird on journeys through areas of open savannah and grassland.
- Short-toed Rock Thrush *Monticola brevipes*: This attractive species was common and easy to see at Tundavala.
- African Thrush *Turdus pelios*: Seen well in Dembos and Kumbira Forests.

SYLVIIDAE

[Some taxonomists place the genera *Cisticola*, *Prinia*, *Schistolais*, *Apalis*, *Camaroptera* and *Calamonastes* in a separate family Cisticolidae.]

Little Rush Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala*: First seen at our campsite near Luinga with better views had en route to Huambo.

Evergreen-forest Warbler *Bradypterus mariae*: Nik glimpsed one on Mt Moco. This species is often lumped in Cameroon Scrub Warbler *B. lopezi* with the name Evergreen Forest Warbler being used for the enlarged species.

Moustached Grass Warbler *Melocichla mentalis*: Also known as African Moustached Warbler we had several good sightings near Luinga, Zanda River and at Mt Moco.

Broad-tailed Warbler *Schoenicola brevirostris*: Also known as Fan-tailed Grassbird we saw a couple near Luinga, Zanda River and at Mt Moco.

Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris*: Seen at Rio Longa and en route to Huambo.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*: Three of these Palearctic migrants were seen at the bottom of the Leba escarpment.

Lepe Cisticola *Cisticola lepe*: This noisy cisticola was more often heard than seen at widespread localities throughout the tour. The species is often lumped in Red-faced Cisticola *C. erythrops* but it was interesting to note that this paler and somewhat greyer form although sounding superficially similar would only respond to playback of its own vocalisations when tested.

Whistling Cisticola *Cisticola lateralis*: Commonly encountered between Luinga and Calandula.

Bubbling Cisticola *Cisticola bulliens*: A very common cisticola seen throughout the first part of the tour up until we left for Mt Moco.

Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana*: Perhaps overlooked but only knowingly seen at the bottom of the Leba escarpment.

Tinkling Cisticola *Cisticola rufilatus*: Also known as Grey Cisticola we had excellent views of several at our campsite on the Huila border.

Grey-backed Cisticola *Cisticola subruficapillus*: A pair was seen near Namibe.

Wailing Cisticola *Cisticola lais*: Seen at Mt Moco and again at Tundavala.

Chirping Cisticola *Cisticola pipiens*: Seen at several swamps and river crossings through Huambo and Huila.

Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis*: Sightings of this heavyweight cisticola were obtained en route to Luinga, at Mt Moco and en route to Huambo.

Short-winged Cisticola *Cisticola brachypterus*: Also known as Siffling Cisticola this turned out to be a common bird in open miombo grasslands. The form here is *loanda*, which shows a marked similarity to the mystery 'Teke' Cisticola in south-east Gabon. Several song types were heard and show a similarity to 'Teke' and are rather unlike 'normal' *brachypterus*. There may well be a cryptic species lurking here!

Neddicky *Cisticola fulvicapillus* (H): Also known as Piping Cisticola we only heard it in the miombo by the Zanda River.

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*: Also known as Fan-tailed Cisticola this was one of the most common sounds that accompanied us on our travels through Huambo and Huila.

Wing-snapping Cisticola *Cisticola ayresii*: Also known as Ayres's Cisticola this tiny little cisticola was seen well at Tundavala. Thomas Ayres (1828-1913) was a British collector working in South Africa for John Henry Gurney. He even operated a very successful brewery for a while making his very own special brew!

Tawny-flanked *Prinia* *Prinia subflava*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour finally being replaced as we neared Namibe by the following species.

Black-chested *Prinia* *Prinia flavicans*: A few good sightings were obtained during our excursion to Namibe.

Banded *Prinia* *Prinia bairdii* (H): Heard in Dembos and Uige forests but unfortunately remained stubbornly hidden.

White-chinned *Prinia* *Schistolais leucopogon*: Great views of a pair at the Zanda River.

- Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida*: One was seen in Kissama NP.
- Masked Apalis *Apalis binotata*: One was seen well in Dembos Forest and also heard in the forests near Uige.
- Black-throated Apalis *Apalis jacksoni*: Good views were obtained in Kumbira Forest.
- Buff-throated Apalis *Apalis rufogularis*: Two rather different appearing races were encountered. In the forests near Uige we found *angolensis* that has a dark crown contrasting with the back. In Kumbira Forest we found the paler and far more uniform *brauni* that confusingly seemed closer in appearance to Grey Apalis.
- Grey Apalis *Apalis cinerea*: Exceptionally good views at Mt Moco (where the birds had noticeably browner heads) and Tundavala where they whizzed around us just missing us by centimetres!
- Brown-headed Apalis *Apalis alticola*: Seen at the Zanda River but they always kept high up in the canopy.
- Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brevicaudata*: We obtained sightings near Uige in coffee plantations alongside Hartert's Camaroptera and also in the dry habitats in the south-west. The form concerned is often lumped in Green-backed Camaroptera *C. brachyura* with the name Bleating Warbler being used for the enlarged species.
- Hartert's Camaroptera *Camaroptera harterti*: This was the common camaroptera throughout most of the tour and we had numerous opportunities to see this endemic well. The species is usually lumped in either Grey-backed Camaroptera *C. brevicaudata* or Green-backed Camaroptera *C. brachyura* with the name Bleating Warbler being used for the enlarged species. Ernst Johann Otto Hartert (1859-1933) was a German ornithologist working for Walter Rothschild and curator of his private museum at Tring that now houses the bird collection of the British Museum (Natural History).
- Yellow-browed Camaroptera *Camaroptera supercilialis*: A pair was seen well in the forests near Uige where we enjoyed watching them inflating their bullfrog-like neck pouches with every call note.
- Pale Wren Warbler *Calamonastes undosus*: Also known as Miombo Wren Warbler, we had excellent views near Luinga.
- Yellow Longbill *Macrosphenus flavicans*: Heard in the forest near Uige we finally got a view of one in the N'Dalatando Forest.
- Pulitzer's Longbill *Macrosphenus pulitzeri*: One of the few disappointments of the trip was that this endemic didn't show for all. We all heard it as it called for a short period of time but then stopped completely and could not be traced. Only Denzil was fortunate enough to see one. Ralph Pulitzer (1879-1939) is the son of Joseph Pulitzer of 'Pulitzer Prize' fame. He was an American publisher and sponsor of speed flying! Perhaps this is why the longbill shot off so quickly? The species is classified as 'Endangered' in "Threatened Birds of the World" and is only known from two forest areas on the southern scarps. Deforestation and habitat destruction remains the biggest threat.
- Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis*: A couple were seen during our Namibe excursion.
- Salvadori's Eremomela *Eremomela salvadorii*: This species is a more brightly coloured version of Yellow-bellied Eremomela *E. icteropygialis* with which it is often lumped. We saw several between Luinga and Calandula. Conte Adelardo Tommaso Paleotti Salvadori (1835-1923) was, amongst other things an eminent physician, ornithologist and Vice-Director of the Museum of Zoology at Turin.
- Green-capped Eremomela *Eremomela scotops*: A small number were seen at Mt Moco and elsewhere in Huambo.
- Rufous-crowned Eremomela *Eremomela badiceps*: This attractive little warbler was seen well in the forests at Dembos and N'Dalatando.
- Long-billed Crombec *Sylvietta rufescens*: Seen well east of Caxito and also at Tundavala and en route to Namibe.

- Green Crombec *Sylvietta virens*: Another species that was heard far more often than it was seen all through the first part of the trip until we left Kumbira Forest. However we managed to get great views on a few occasions.
- Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*: This Palearctic migrant was seen in Kumbira Forest, Mt Moco and the Tundavala areas.
- Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen in Dembos Forest.
- Chestnut-vented Tit-babbler *Parisoma subcaeruleum*: Excellent looks at a pair en route to Namibe.
- Southern Hyliota *Hyliota australis*: It surely is about time that someone looked more closely at the more brightly-coloured highland, forest-dwelling version of this species. In the field populations also seem to show far less marked sexual dimorphism than their miombo-dwelling counterparts. Perhaps there is yet another cryptic species lurking here? We had excellent views of them in the southern scarp forests.
- Green Hylia *Hylia prasina*: Heard near Uige and two sightings in the forests at N'Dalatando and Kumbira.

MUSCICAPIDAE

- Angola Slaty Flycatcher *Dioptrornis brunneus*: Great views of this little-known flycatcher at Mt Moco. They had obviously just had a successful breeding season as several young were seen. We were hoping to see it again at Tundavala but the accessible areas are rapidly becoming victims to the charcoal burners and the trees are rapidly disappearing. The species is often placed in the genus *Melaenornis*.
- Pale Flycatcher *Bradornis pallidus*: Sightings of this large flycatcher were obtained near Luinga, Mt Moco and en route to Lubango. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Melaenornis*.
- Chat Flycatcher *Bradornis infuscatus*: This large and showy flycatcher was easy to see en route to Namibe. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Melaenornis*.
- Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*: This Palearctic migrant put in an appearance on journeys to Ussoque, Lubango and Namibe.
- Ashy Flycatcher *Muscicapa caerulescens*: A few sightings in Kissama NP and again in Kumbira Forest.
- African Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta*: Small numbers of this dumpy little flycatcher were seen on Mt Moco.
- Dusky-blue Flycatcher *Muscicapa comitata*: One was seen in Dembos Forest.
- Sooty Flycatcher *Muscicapa infusca*: A conspicuous and strangely hirundine-looking flycatcher seen well in the forests at Dembos and Uige.
- Grey Tit-flycatcher *Myioparus plumbeus*: Also known as Lead-coloured Flycatcher, one was seen where the truck was stuck blocking the road en route to Calandula and another in Kissama NP.

MONARCHIDAE

- African Blue Flycatcher *Elminia longicauda*: Good views of this charming bird in Dembos and Kumbira Forests.
- White-tailed Blue Flycatcher *Elminia albicauda*: Perhaps, with its white tail-tips even more attractive than the previous species. We had good views on Mt Moco.
- Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher *Trochocercus nitens*: A secretive fantail-like flycatcher but a pair was seen well in Kumbira Forest.
- African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis*: It must be said that the paradise flycatchers in Angola appear to be from a birders point of view a complete and utter mess! We were often left scratching our heads when faced with them and it is highly likely that at times assumed correct identifications were wrong. No less than four species overlap in the northern half of the country and some must certainly have been hybrids as mixed or obscured characters were often noted. Any with a white or whitish vent were 'ticked' as this species, which ultimately (and expectedly) proved to be the most widespread.

Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone rufocinerea*: The situation with this species is confused anyway as various taxonomists have treated it as conspecific with either African Paradise Flycatcher *T. viridis* or Bates's Paradise Flycatcher *T. batesi*. We were fairly confident of the crested individuals with rufous vents in the forests near Uige but similar individuals were also seen in Kissama NP and Kumbira Forest.

Bates's Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone batesi*: This species is sometimes treated as conspecific with Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatcher *T. rufocinerea* and to confuse things further, the race in Angola is the long-tailed *bannermani*. We saw at least a few individuals in Kumbira Forest that seemed to fit the requirements for this species but it was also in Kumbira that we saw the greatest variety of plumage combinations! George Latimer Bates (1863-1940) was a British naturalist who worked in West Africa, especially Cameroon between 1895 and 1931. He was author of "Handbook of the Birds of West Africa" published in 1930.

PLATYSTEIRIDAE

Black-and-white Flycatcher *Bias musicus*: Also known as Vanga Flycatcher we saw several in the forests at Dembos and Uige.

Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye *Dyaphorophya concreta*: This stunning little wattle-eye was seen well in Kissama NP and again in Kumbira Forest.

White-fronted Wattle-eye *Platysteira albifrons*: A pair of this endemic species was watched nest building east of Caxito on our first day but this species was remarkably thin on the ground and we only ever saw one other female in Kissama NP during the entire trip. The species is classified as 'Near-threatened' in "Threatened Birds of the World". It is locally common in Angola where habitat loss remains the biggest threat.

Black-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira peltata*: Sightings in Dembos Forest, Zanda River and Mt Moco.

Margaret's Batis *Batis margaritae*: Terrific views of a male as it came closer and closer on Mt Moco. Interestingly it had deep cherry red eyes as opposed to the expected orange-yellow given in the text books. The forests that remain, clinging on to the few deeper gullies on the 'mountains' in the area are pathetically small and one wonders about the future of the populations of birds that inhabit them. Margaret Lander Holt was the wife of an American ornithologist E. G. Holt. Quite what the connection is between her and the batis is unclear. Its alternative name is Boulton's Batis named after Wilfred Rudyard Boulton (1901-83) who described the bird in 1934 from a specimen from Mt Moco in Angola.

Chinspot Batis *Batis molitor*: A female was seen at the Zanda River and a pair was at Tundavala.

Pririt Batis *Batis pririt*: Fantastic looks at a female en route to Namibe. Pririt is the French word used for batis.

Angola Batis *Batis minulla*: Excellent views in Kissama NP and Kumbira Forest.

White-tailed Shrike *Lanioturdus torquatus*: This amazing species earned the nickname of 'Giant Batis'. First seen en route to Ussoque we also had excellent looks en route to Namibe. It is believed by some taxonomists to be more closely related to the *Malaconotus* shrikes whilst its eggs are more like those of the helmet-shrikes!

TIMALIIDAE

Rockrunner *Chaetops pycnopygius*: Also known as Damara Rock-jumper this is another very special bird seen well on the Leba escarpment. It is another species with a chequered taxonomic history and some taxonomists believe it to show strong links to Cape Grassbird *Sphenoeacus afer* and that it is better placed with that species and the warblers in Sylviidae rather than the rockjumpers.

Brown Illadopsis *Illadopsis fulvescens*: Good views were obtained at the Zanda River and again in Kumbira Forest.

African Hill Babbler *Pseudoalcippe abyssinica*: Just one individual was seen well on Mt Moco.

Hartlaub's Babbler *Turdoides hartlaubii*: Best views of this babbler were had in the Mt Moco area. Karel Johan Gustav Hartlaub (1814-1900) was a German collector and ornithologist with a specialist interest in Africa and Central Polynesia.

PARIDAE

Dusky Tit *Parus funereus*: Small numbers of the isolated endemic race *gabela* were seen well in Kumbira Forest.

Rufous-bellied Tit *Parus rufiventris*: A pair was seen well in the miombo woodlands at the Zanda River.

White-winged Black Tit *Parus leucomelas*: A few widespread sightings en route to Luinga and Calandula and at Mt Moco.

Carp's Tit *Parus carpi*: First seen in Kissama NP somewhat further north than the limit of range given in the BOU checklist. More were seen near Sumbe and another on the Leba escarpment. Bernhard Carp (1901-66) was a Dutch South African businessman and naturalist who sponsored collecting expeditions, particularly to Namibia where the tit was collected and described as recently as 1957.

REMIZIIDAE

Tit-hylia *Pholidornis rushiae*: A pair was seen in the forests near Uige. This species along with Mouse-coloured Penduline Tit lays claim to being Africa's smallest bird.

SALPORNITHIDAE

[This family is sometimes lumped in Certhiidae or alternatively Sittidae.]

Spotted Creeper *Salpornis spilonotus*: Nik saw one on Mt Moco. Very different songs between populations suggest that there may be a cryptic species involved and it has been proposed to split the eastern and southern African forms (of which this is part) as Eastern African Spotted Creeper *S. salvadori*. Strangely it is the form in western Africa that sounds identical to the Asiatic birds.

NECTARINIIDAE

Western Violet-backed Sunbird *Anthreptes longuemarei*: several sightings near Luinga and at the Zanda River.

Grey-chinned Sunbird *Anthreptes rectirostris*: More usually known as Green Sunbird as western populations have yellow chins! We saw males in Dembos Forest and at Zanda River.

Anchieta's Sunbird *Anthreptes anchietae*: This glorious sunbird sadly never stayed around for long but males were seen at Zanda River and Mike saw another at Mt Moco.

[Green-headed Sunbird *Cyanomitra verticalis*: What appeared to be a dark-capped female of this species was seen in Kumbira Forest but this closely related species to Bannerman's Sunbird is apparently not known from the southern scarp forests and it is possible that we merely saw an unusually well-marked female Bannerman's.]

Bannerman's Sunbird *Cyanomitra bannermani*: Several typical males were seen well in Kumbira Forest but the only female plumaged bird was that mentioned under the previous species. David Armitage Bannerman (1886-1979) was a staff member of British Museum (Natural History) and author of the important work "Birds of Tropical West Africa".

Blue-throated Brown Sunbird *Cyanomitra cyanoaema*: A flowering *Erythrina* that we passed en route to Uige was a magnet for a good number of these large sunbirds.

Western Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra obscura*: A common species seen throughout all the scarp forests. This recent controversial split has since been judged to be invalid and it should really be lumped again in Eastern Olive Sunbird as Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra olivacea*.

Green-throated Sunbird *Chalcomitra rubescens*: A few sightings in the northern scarp forests and Zanda River.

Carmelite Sunbird *Chalcomitra fuliginosa*: Small numbers were seen in Kumbira Forest. The species is presumably named after the Carmelite friars whose costume was a brown cape with a white hood.

Amethyst Sunbird *Chalcomitra amethystina*: A few widespread sightings but most numerous at the Zanda River.

- Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis*: One at the Zanda River and more during the Namibe excursion.
- Bocage's Sunbird *Nectarinia bocagei*: A pair of these very localised sunbirds was seen at Mt Moco and a female en route to Huambo.
- Bronzy Sunbird *Nectarinia kilimensis*: Common and easy to see at Mt Moco.
- Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris*: A common and widespread sunbird throughout the northern forests.
- Olive-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris chloropygia*: A common sunbird throughout the northern scarp forests.
- Ludwig's Double-collared Sunbird *Cinnyris ludovicensis*: Common and easy to see on Mt Moco and at Tundavala. The correct taxonomic position of this form is controversial and it is sometimes lumped in Greater Double-collared Sunbird *C. afra*. It is not exactly clear who in particular the bird is named after.
- Purple-banded Sunbird *Cinnyris bifasciatus*: A common species through the coastal plain and abundant in Kissama NP.
- Oustalet's Sunbird *Cinnyris oustaleti*: Common and easy to see from Mt Moco to Tundavala. Emile Oustalet (1844-1905) was a French zoologist who worked in the Far East. However, in 1873 he succeeded Jules Verreaux at the Paris Natural History Museum.
- White-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris talatala*: Positively identified from the bottom of the Leba escarpment towards Namibe.
- Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus*: Small numbers were seen from Mt Moco to Tundavala.
- Superb Sunbird *Cinnyris superbus*: A female was seen in Dembos Forest and a male and more females in Kumbira Forest.
- Copper Sunbird *Cinnyris cupreus*: A common and widespread species seen in appropriate habitat throughout the tour.

ZOSTEROPIDAE

- Yellow White-eye *Zosterops senegalensis*: Widespread sightings from the northern scarp to Kumbira Forest, Mt Moco and Tundavala.

LANIIDAE

- Common Fiscal *Lanius collaris*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour of the race *capelli* however en route to Namibe we encountered the distinctive white-browed race *subcoronatus* that has been proposed as a separate species, Latakoo Fiscal.
- Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*: One of these Palearctic migrants was seen at the Leba lookout point.
- Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*: Two of these Palearctic migrants were found at the bottom of the Leba escarpment.
- Southern White-crowned Shrike *Eurocephalus anguitimens*: A family group were found en route to Porto Amboim and more were seen during the Namibe excursion. The species is alternatively placed with the helmet-shrikes in Prionopidae.

MALACONOTIDAE

- Monteiro's Bush-shrike *Malaconotus monteiri*: Surprisingly common and very vocal in Kissama NP where probably three or four birds could be heard calling at one time. In contrast to this they were rather silent in Kumbira Forest but we managed views of a single quiet bird and a vocal pair. Historically this species was treated as a race of Grey-headed Bush-shrike *M. blanchoti* but vocal similarities to that species and Green-breasted Bush-shrike *M. gladiator* and morphological similarities to Fiery-breasted Bush-shrike *M. cruentus* complicate the issue. The species is classified as 'Data Deficient' in "Threatened Birds of the World" but is probably more common in Angola than once thought. Its presence in Cameroon remains a mystery.

- Grey-headed Bush-shrike *Malaconotus blanchoti* (H): Heard at Zanda River and en route to Lubango.
- Many-coloured Bush-shrike *Malaconotus multicolor*: A male was seen well in Kumbira Forest.
- Bocage's Bush-shrike *Malaconotus bocagei*: Singletons in Dembos Forest and en route to Calandula. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Chlorophoneus*.
- Orange-breasted Bush-shrike *Malaconotus sulfureopectus*: Also known as Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike widespread sightings were obtained throughout the tour. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Chlorophoneus*.
- Perrin's Bush-shrike *Telophorus viridis*: More often heard than seen during the first part of the tour until we left Kumbira Forest. However we had ample opportunity to see this stunning shrike well. Here it is treated as a monotypic species but sometimes it is treated as conspecific with Four-coloured Bush-shrike *T. quadricolor* using the name Gorgeous Bush-shrike for the enlarged species. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Chlorophoneus*. Jean Perrein (1750-1805) was a French naturalist who collected in northern Africa and elsewhere. The bird is possibly named after him.
- Anchieta's Tchagra *Tchagra anchietae*: A pair was seen en route to N'Dalatando and a male was seen at Mt Moco. The species is usually lumped in Marsh Tchagra *T. minutus* or placed in the genus *Antichromus*.
- Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis*: A number of sightings at widespread localities throughout the tour.
- Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus*: A number of sightings at widespread localities throughout the tour.
- Pink-footed Puffback *Dryoscopus angolensis*: Common and easy to see in the scarp forests.
- Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla*: A common and widespread bird at widespread localities throughout the tour.
- Braun's Bush-shrike *Laniarius brauni*: A pair of this colourful endemic (confusingly also known as Orange-breasted Bush-shrike) was found in Dembos Forest, a new locality for the species. This and the following species, although sharing some vocalisations with Lühder's Bush-shrike *L. luehderi* with which they were once lumped also seem to have a repertoire of their own as well. Since its discovery in 1939 remarkably few birders have seen this little known and highly localised species. It is classified as 'Endangered' in "Threatened Birds of the World" and was previously only known from two sites in Cuanza Norte and at Dondo in Bengo Province. It is considered rare at these sites and the species is threatened by deforestation. R. H. Braun (1908-?) was a German collector working in Angola and elsewhere.
- Gabela Bush-shrike *Laniarius amboimensis*: More often heard than seen in Kumbira Forest but we all managed to get some excellent views of this highly localised endemic. The species is classified as 'Endangered' in "Threatened Birds of the World" and is only known from a small area around Gabela. It is considered uncommon at these sites and the species is threatened by deforestation.
- Tropical Boubou *Laniarius aethiopicus*: Seen in the Zanda River area and Mt Moco.
- Swamp Boubou *Laniarius bicolor*: The name is a bit of a misnomer in Angola as during our travels it seemed to favour thickets in dry bush country where we had numerous opportunities to see it well.
- Crimson-breasted Shrike *Laniarius atrococcineus*: Great looks at this intensely coloured shrike en route to Lubango.
- Brubru *Nilaus afer*: Nik saw one en route to Ussoque.

PRIONOPIDAE

[This family is sometimes lumped in Malaconotidae.]

- White Helmet-shrike *Prionops plumatus*: A common species that is always a pleasure to see. We found flocks in Kissama NP and en route to Lubango.

Gabela Helmet-shrike *Prionops gabela*: A group of these endemic helmet-shrikes were watched nest building in Kissama NP. The species is classified as 'Endangered' in "Threatened Birds of the World". It was previously only known from a small area near Gabela until Pedro discovered the species in Kissama NP and it may yet prove to be more widespread. It is threatened by habitat loss.

ORIOLIDAE

Black-winged Oriole *Oriolus nigripennis*: Seen well in the northern scarp forests.

Eastern Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus larvatus*: Seen well in Kissama NP, Kumbira Forest and en route to Namibe.

African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus*: The only sightings were in Kissama NP and en route to Lubango.

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*: just one male of this Palearctic migrant was seen by some in Kissama NP.

DICRURIDAE

Square-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus ludwigii*: Easy to see at the Zanda River where the form concerned is the *sharpei*, the squarest-tailed of the group and perhaps merits full specific status.

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*: A common and widespread species seen throughout the tour.

Velvet-mantled Drongo *Dicrurus coracinus*: Easy to see in the Dembos and Uige forests. The species is sometimes lumped in Príncipe Drongo with the name Velvet-mantled Drongo being used for the enlarged species. Alternatively both have been lumped in Fork-tailed Drongo *D. adsimilis*.

CORVIDAE

Cape Crow *Corvus capensis*: Also known as Cape Rook, we saw small numbers en route to Namibe.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*: A common and widespread species seen throughout the tour.

STURNIDAE

Narrow-tailed Starling *Poeoptera lugubris*: About five were seen in the *Erythrina* that was busy with the Naked-faced Barbets and Blue-throated Brown Sunbirds.

Chestnut-winged Starling *Onychognathus hartlaubii*: Two were seen in the forests near Uige. The species is usually lumped in São Tomé Chestnut-winged Starling *O. fulgidus*, with the name Chestnut-winged Starling being used for the enlarged species.

Pale-winged Starling *Onychognathus nabouroup*: Small numbers were seen en route to Namibe.

Cape Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis nitens*: A common and widespread species seen throughout the tour.

Sharp-tailed Starling *Lamprotornis acuticaudus*: Small numbers were seen in the miombo woodlands at Zanda River and one was at Mt Moco.

Splendid Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis splendidus*: Good numbers were seen in the forests near Uige.

Meves's Starling *Lamprotornis mevesii*: Small numbers were seen at the bottom of the Leba escarpment.

Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*: This striking starling was common and easy to see in the fruiting trees in Kumbira Forest and in the Tundavala area.

Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea*: Just one large flock of about 80 was seen in Kissama NP.

BUPHAGIDAE

Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus africanus*: Small numbers were seen at the bottom of the Leba escarpment.

PASSERIDAE

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus*: Small numbers were seen between Luanda and Luinga.

Southern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer diffusus*: Seen at widespread localities from Kumbira Forest onwards.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*: This introduced species was seen in Luanda, N'Dalatando and Porto Amboim. It is not known when the first arrivals in Angola appeared.

Yellow-throated Petronia *Petronia supercilialis*: Singletons in Kissama NP and at Tundavala were somewhat surprisingly the only sightings. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Gymnoris*.

PLOCEIDAE

Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger*: Small numbers were seen in Kissama NP.

White-browed Sparrow Weaver *Plocepasser mahali*: Two were seen en route to Ussoque and more during the Namibe excursion.

Crested Malimbe *Malimbus malimbicus*: Four were seen in Dembos Forest.

Red-headed Malimbe *Malimbus rubricollis*: Seen well in the forests near Uige and again in Kumbira Forest.

Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps*: Just one was seen at Mt Moco.

Slender-billed Weaver *Ploceus pelzelni*: Small numbers were seen along the Rio Longa.

Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis*: Seen in the scarp forests and at the Zanda River but particularly numerous in Kumbira Forests where they were moving in loose flocks. On one day we estimated as many as 80 were seen. Many text books insist that this species is not gregarious but this is certainly not true.

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis*: A pair at Rio Longa was the only sighting.

Holub's Golden Weaver *Ploceus xanthops*: A common and widespread species seen throughout the tour. Emil Holub (1847-1902) was a Czech naturalist who travelled in Africa finally succumbing to an attack of Malaria that he had caught there.

Southern Masked Weaver *Ploceus velatus*: good numbers were seen en route to Namibe.

Vieillot's Black Weaver *Ploceus nigerrimus*: Very common in the northern scarp forests and a few also seen in Kumbira Forest. Louis Jean Pierre Vieillot (1748-1831) was a French businessman forced to take refuge in the United States during the French Revolution and later because of slave rebellions on San Domingo where he had his business in the spice trade. He had a consuming passion for ornithology dedicating his life to it.

Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*: An abundant species seen throughout the scarp forests and Kissama NP. They represented the distinctive form *collaris* also known as Mottled Weaver.

Yellow-mantled Weaver *Ploceus tricolor*: A couple were seen in the forests near Uige and three were found in the N'Dalatando Forests.

Dark-backed Weaver *Ploceus bicolor*: Also known as Forest Weaver, this species was easy to see in Kissama NP and Kumbira Forest. More than one species may be hiding in this complex. Our birds represented the distinctive form *amaurocephalus* belonging to the group also known as Grey-backed Weaver.

Brown-capped Weaver *Ploceus insignis*: Two pairs were seen in the Kumbira Forest.

Compact Weaver *Pachyphantes superciliosus*: A pair was seen at Conda. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Ploceus*.

Thick-billed Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons*: Also known as Grosbeak Weaver, we obtained sightings of this chunky and distinctive weaver at the Zanda River, N'Dalatando Forest and en route to Ussoque.

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*: Seen on journeys to Rio Longa, Ussoque and Namibe.

Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix*: A male in breeding plumage was seen by some as it flew across in front of the car in Namibe.

Black-winged Bishop *Euplectes hordeaceus*: Widespread sightings from Calandula to Lubango.

Yellow-crowned Bishop *Euplectes afer*: Two males of the nominate race in breeding plumage were seen near Catete.

Golden-backed Bishop *Euplectes aureus*: Other than the introduced birds on São Tomé this is basically an Angolan endemic. We saw a few in non-breeding plumage in Kissama NP.

Yellow Bishop *Euplectes capensis*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour with many in breeding plumage.

White-winged Widowbird *Euplectes albonotatus*: Widespread sightings throughout the tour.

Yellow-mantled Widowbird *Euplectes macrourus*: Widespread sightings between Dembos and N'Dalatando.

Red-collared Widowbird *Euplectes ardens*: The only positive identifications were of birds in non-breeding plumage at Mt Moco.

Fan-tailed Widowbird *Euplectes axillaris*: First seen as we crossed the Lucala River and commonly encountered in suitable habitat through Huambo and Huila.

ESTRILDIDAE

Grey-headed Nigrita *Nigrita canicapillus*: Small numbers seen in the scarp forests. The nigratas are more often known as negrofinches.

Chestnut-breasted Nigrita *Nigrita bicolor*: A couple were seen well in the forests near Uige.

White-breasted Nigrita *Nigrita fusconotus*: One was seen in the forests near Uige.

Yellow-bellied Waxbill *Coccygia quartinia*: Controversy surrounds the endemic race *bocagei* that we saw so well en route to Lubango. Sinclair & Ryan place it in this species but Birds of Africa consider it to be treated as a race of the more similar Sweet Waxbill *C. melanotis*. However there is some evidence to suggest that *bocagei* should be treated as an endemic species in its own right. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Estrilda*.

Grey Waxbill *Estrilda perreini*: Also known as Black-tailed Waxbill, Denzil saw one in Dembos Forest and two were seen by some in Kumbira Forest.

Fawn-breasted Waxbill *Estrilda paludicola*: Great views of the colourful race *benguellensis* at Mt Moco.

Orange-cheeked Waxbill *Estrilda melpoda*: This attractive waxbill was seen well through the forests from Dembos to Kumbira.

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*: A widespread species commonly encountered throughout the tour.

Red-headed Bluebill *Spermophaga ruficapilla*: Small numbers of this striking species were seen in the forests at Dembos, Uige and Kumbira.

Blue Waxbill *Uraeginthus angolensis*: A widespread species commonly encountered throughout the tour.

Dusky Twinspot *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea*: Nik saw one en route to Calandula but everyone caught up with this localised species at Mt Moco.

Brown Twinspot *Clytospiza monteiri*: One was seen near Luimba.

Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba*: Also known as Melba Finch, several were seen en route to Calandula and N'Dalatando.

Orange-winged Pytilia *Pytilia afra*: A pair was hunted down en route to Lubango.

Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala*: Very common at the bottom of the Leba escarpment.

Brown Firefinch *Lagonosticta nitidula*: A trio were seen at our campsite on the Huila/Huambo border.

Pale-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta landanae*: Many opportunities to see this brightly coloured Firefinch well between Luimba and Kumbira. The species is usually lumped in African Firefinch *L. rubricata*.

Jameson's Firefinch *Lagonosticta rhodopareia*: The sightings in the Tundavala area all referred to *ansorgei*, the most brightly coloured of all the races of this species. James Sligo Jameson (1856-1888) was an Irish naturalist explorer. In Africa he collected in South Africa and the Belgian Congo where he died whilst with Stanley on a mission to 'rescue' Emin Pasha.

Orange-breasted Waxbill *Amandava subflava*: Also known as Zebra Waxbill, about five were seen near Catete.

Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullatus*: A widespread species commonly encountered throughout the tour. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Lonchura*.
Black-and-white Mannikin *Spermestes bicolor*: Small flocks were seen in forests between Dembos, Uige and Kumbira. The species is sometimes placed in the genus *Lonchura*.

VIDUIDAE

Cuckoo-finch *Anomalospiza imberbis*: At least twenty were seen at Mt Moco. This species parasitizes prinias and cisticolas and has had a varied taxonomic history. It was originally described as a canary, then a weaver hence the alternative name Parasitic Weaver. Latest molecular studies now suggest that it is better placed with the indigobirds and whydahs.
Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*: Widespread sightings between Kissama NP and Tundavala. The species parasitizes mainly waxbills.

FRINGILLIDAE

Black-faced Canary *Serinus capistratus*: First seen at Calandula Falls and again in Kumbira Forest but it was most common at Mt Moco.
Black-throated Canary *Serinus atrogularis*: A small flock were feeding in a weedy field near our campsite on the Huila/Huambo border.
Yellow-fronted Canary *Serinus mozambicus*: Widespread sightings through Uige and Malanje but most common en route to Lubango.
Brimstone Canary *Serinus sulphuratus*: Sightings at Mt Moco, en route to Lubango and at Tundavala.
White-throated Canary *Serinus albogularis*: Four were seen en route to Namibe.
Thick-billed Seedeater *Serinus burtoni*: Three were seen on Mt Moco.

EMBERIZIDAE

Golden-breasted Bunting *Emberiza flaviventris*: Two were seen en route to Namibe.
Cinnamon-breasted Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi*: One at Tundavala and another on the Leba escarpment were surprisingly the only sightings.

MAMMALS

Yellow Baboon *Papio cyanocephalus*: One lone individual was seen on Mt Moco.
Vervet Monkey *Cercopithecus pygerythrus*: Seen in Kissama NP and en route to Ussoque.
Gentle Monkey *Cercopithecus mitis*: The very black nominate race was seen in Kissama NP and at Rio Longa.
Cape Hare *Lepus capensis* (NL): One individual was seen by some at Tundavala.
Scrub Hare *Lepus saxatilis*: Pedro saw one en route to Ussoque.
Lunda Rope Squirrel *Funisciurus bayoni*: One was identified at the Zanda River.
Congo Rope Squirrel *Funisciurus congicus*: A few widespread sightings in the forests near Uige, Kissama NP and Kumbira.
Smith's Bush Squirrel *Paraxerus cepapi*: A couple were seen en route to Namibe.
Gambian Sun Squirrel *Heliosciurus gambianus*: seen in the forests near Uige and Kumbira.
Ichneumon Mongoose *Herpestes ichneumon*: Seen on the Leba escarpment and en route to Namibe.
African Civet *Civettictis civetta*: One was seen by the first car in Kissama NP.
Yellow-spotted Hyrax *Heterohyrax brucei*: Common on the Leba escarpment.
Bushbuck *Tragelaphus scriptus*: Seen well in Kissama NP.
Bush Duiker *Sylvicapra grimmia*: Singletons in Kissama NP and Mt Moco.
Blue Duiker *Cephalophus monticola*: Seen well in Kissama NP and in Kumbira Forest where two in a heated chase with each other nearly ran straight into us.