



**BIRDING  
AFRICA**  
THE AFRICA SPECIALISTS

# Somaliland & Djibouti

## 2025 Tour Leaflet



*Little Brown Bustard © Michael Mills*

**1–12 April 2025 (Somaliland)  
12–15 April 2025 (Djibouti)**

# Somaliland & Djibouti 2025



## HORN OF AFRICA SPECIALS

- Little Brown Bustard and a chance for Heuglin's Bustard.
- Somaliland specials such as Lesser Hoopoe-Lark, Somali Lark and Somali Pigeon.
- Djibouti Francolin.

*Lesser Hoopoe-Lark © Michael Mills*



## TOUR LEADER: MICHAEL MILLS



Michael's incredible focus, dedication and ability to locate and show Africa's toughest birds is probably unequalled. He has led dozens of tours across the continent and his experience in locating birds on just the softest of calls or briefest of views impresses those who travelled with him. Michael has twice visited Somaliland and looks forward to spending more time there, birding with you.

### DATES 2025

Somaliland	1–12 Apr
Djibouti	12–15 Apr

### PRICES FOR 2025

Somaliland	TBA
Djibouti	TBA

Excludes all flights.

### BOOK ONLINE

Visit [www.birdingafrica.com](http://www.birdingafrica.com)  
Deposit (\$110) by credit card  
Email [info@birdingafrica.com](mailto:info@birdingafrica.com)



*Somali Sparrow © Michael Mills*

We were the first bird tour company to run a tour to Somaliland, back in 2010. Since then Somaliland went through an unsettled period, but we returned (for a private trip) in 2023, and hope to make it a regular on our tour calendar.

Our tour commences in Hargeisa, capital of the self-declared Republic of Somaliland. We'll start with some arid bush country birding around Hargeisa and on the road to Berbera, where we could find specials such as Somali Wheatear, Philippa's Crombec and Arabian Warbler. Near Berbera we'll look for Somali Pigeon, which we were the first group of foreign birders to ever see. Moving back inland we'll pause at the Sheikh Escarpment, where Archer's Buzzard and Sombre Rock Chat are possible. We'll enjoy a day's birding in the greater Burao area, where localised species may include Little Brown Bustard, Scaly Chatterer, Northern Grosbeak Canary, Red-naped Bushshrike and Somali Crombec, before crossing numerous plains en route to Erigavo. Roadside stops on this drive should produce Somali Lark and Lesser Hoopoe Lark. From Erigavo we'll explore the Daallo Escarpment, where top targets include

Somali Golden-winged Grosbeak, Somali White-eye and Warsangli Linnet. We then retrace our steps all the way to Hargeisa, from where we'll do a day trip to search for Sharpe's Lark, not seen for over 50 years.

From Hargeisa, those doing the Djibouti extension will fly to Djibouti City, where we overnight before making a 3-day excursion to Day Forest, where the endemic Djibouti Francolin will be our top target.

### TOUR FOCUS

This itinerary will give us a good chance to see all of Somaliland's special birds. A species list will be handed out to you as part of your tour booklet at the start of the tour and is available beforehand upon request. The tour is timed to coincide with the lead up to the main breeding season. Days will typically be warm to hot, but nights cooler in the highlands. We are likely to encounter a small amount of rain.

Travel conditions are generally reasonable, and roads have improved vastly in the last 10 years.



Somali Wheatear © Michael Mills

## ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS

Accommodation is generally of a reasonable standard. All rooms have private bathrooms and cold and hot (except at Berbera) running water is generally available. Most restaurants have WiFi.

Meals are more basic, and no alcohol is served. Vegetarian options are limited. Some breakfasts and most lunches may be taken in the field.

Water is not safe to drink so we supply free bottled water in the vehicle that you can take to your rooms for drinking and brushing teeth.

## GROUP SIZE

Maximum 9 participants.

## WALKING

This tour requires only a moderate degree of fitness. All walks will last less than four hours, and be conducted at a manageable pace. Terrain where we walk is generally flat.

## INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

Participants are required to make their own international flight reservations, including

to travel between Somaliland and Djibouti for those doing both trips (we will notify participants of the options to book).

The tours start with dinner and accommodation in Hargeisa (Somaliland) on Day 1 and Djibouti City (Djibouti) on Day D1. The tours ends in Somaliland before lunch on Day 12 and in Djibouti before dinner on Day D4.

*Northern Grosbeak Canary © Michael Mills*



## ITINERARY AND MAP

- Day 1 Arrive. Overnight in Hargeisa.
- Day 2 Hargeisa to Berbera. Overnight in Berbera.
- Day 3 Berbera to Burao. Overnight in Burao.
- Day 4 Full day in the Burao area. Overnight in Burao.
- Day 5 Burao to Erigavo. Overnight in Erigavo.
- Day 6 Full day at Daallo. Overnight in Erigavo.
- Day 7 Full day at Daallo. Overnight in Erigavo.
- Day 8 Erigavo to Burao. Overnight in Burao.
- Day 9 Full day in the Burao area. Overnight in Burao.
- Day 10 Burao to Hargeisa. Overnight in Hargeisa.
- Day 11 Full day on plains south of Hargeisa. Overnight in Hargeisa.
- Day 12 Departure.

- Day D1 Arrive Djibouti City. Overnight Djibouti City. (as Day 12)
- Day D2 Djibouti City to Day Forest. Overnight at Day Forest.
- Day D3 Full day at Day Forest. Overnight at Day Forest.
- Day D4 Day Forest to Djibouti City. Tour ends.

Somali Golden-winged Grosbeak © Michael Mills



# DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

## Day 1: Arrive in Hargeisa

Welcome to Somaliland, a country where few birders have set foot! The tour officially commences with dinner and an overnight stay in Hargeisa.

## Day 2: Hargeisa to Berbera

We commence our tour by heading north-east out of Hargeisa along the main road to Berbera. Our first stops will be at some arid hillsides where top birds may include Somali Wheatear, Arabian Warbler, Philippa's Crombec and Yellow-breasted Barbet. More widespread species we may see include Black-throated Barbet, Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird, Shining Sunbird, Brubru, Crested Francolin, Somali Crow, Crowned Lapwing, African Mourning Dove, Grey-headed Batis, White-bellied Go-away-bird, Greater Blue-eared Starling, Gillett's Lark, Blue-naped Mousebird, Little Bee-eater, Somali Bee-eater, Nubian Woodpecker, Rosy-patched

Bushshrike, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Slate-coloured Boubou, Somali Fiscal, Desert Lark, Thekla Lark, Somali Bulbul, Ethiopian Swallow, Eastern Crombec, Blackstart, Variable Sunbird, Swainson's Sparrow and White-headed Buffalo Weaver.

In the late morning we'll continue on towards the coastal city of Berbera. Our main reason for visiting this area will be to look for the endemic Somali Pigeon in some nearby arid coastal hills, which we'll do in the later afternoon. Other birds in this habitat may include Striolated Bunting, Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin and Somali Starling.

If time permits we'll spend some time scanning the mudflats of Berbera port, where a wide variety of coastal species can be seen, including Crab-plover, Sooty Gull, White-eyed Gull, Western Reef Heron, Tibetan Sand Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Eurasian Curlew and Terek Sandpiper. Somali Sparrow breeds at our hotel. Overnight in Berbera.

Philippa's Crombec © Michael Mills



Somali Pigeon © Michael Mills

## Day 3: Berbera to Burao

The sandy coastal deserts around Berbera are home to several species that we are unlikely to encounter elsewhere on the trip. We'll spend the early morning looking for the likes of Cream-coloured Courser, African Collared Dove, Nile Valley Sunbird, Great Grey Shrike, Greater Hoopoe-Lark, Crested Lark and Graceful Prinia, before turning inland to Sheikh pass. Here, lusher vegetation is home to Ethiopian Boubou and White-rumped Babbler, and on the rocky slopes we may find Archer's Buzzard and Sombre Rock Chat.

As we near Burao in the afternoon we'll keep a look out for Little Brown Bustard, and pause in some roadside bush to look for Northern Grosbeak-Canary, Scaly Chatterer, Red-and-yellow Barbet and Red-naped Bushshrike. Overnight in Burao.

## Day 4: Burao area

Today we hope to visit the deep red sands of the Buhoodle area, south-east of Burao. The area is prone to regular inter-clan fighting, so being able to visit it depends on the most recent safety information. Species that we



Somali Lark © Michael Mills

hope to find here include Yellow-vented Eremomela, Pygmy Batis and Collared Lark. However, even if we can't visit this area we should see a good variety of species today, which may include Somali Crombec, Little Owl, Buff-crested Bustard, Donaldson-Smith's Nightjar, Purple Roller, Somali Bee-eater, Abyssinian Scimitarbill, Pygmy Falcon, African Orange-bellied Parrot, Mouse-coloured Penduline Tit, Pale Prinia, Red-fronted Warbler, Brown-tailed Apalis, Grey Wren-Warbler, Banded Parisoma, Golden-breasted Starling, Superb Starling, Shelley's Starling, White-browed Scrub Robin, African Grey Flycatcher, Hunter's Sunbird, Marico Sunbird, Somali Sparrow, Rüppell's Weaver, Chestnut Weaver, Purple Grenadier, Northern Black-cheeked Waxbill, White-bellied Canary and Somali Bunting.

We'll also keep a lookout for Heuglin's Bustard. Overnight at Burao.

#### Days 5: Burao to Erigavo

The drive from Burao to Erigavo crosses numerous open plains, home to Lesser Hoopoe-Lark, Somali Lark, Chestnut-headed Sparrow-Lark and Somali Short-toed Lark. Today is mostly a travel day, although we'll make several roadside stops. Other species we may encounter include Double-banded Courser, Somali Courser, Short-tailed Lark, Eastern Chanting Goshawk, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Lilac-breasted Roller, Desert Cisticola, Ashy Cisticola, White-crowned Starling, Greater Kestrel, Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark and Tawny Pipit. Heuglin's Bustard is also possible along the route. Overnight in Erigavo.

#### Days 6–7: Daallo

We have two days to explore the impressive Daallo escarpment near Erigavo. This area holds several of Somaliland's most sought-after species. Top targets include Somali Thrush, Somali Golden-winged Grosbeak and the erratic Warsangli Linnet. A spectacular, winding road descends rapidly from over 2400 to sea level, and we'll bird both the juniper forests at the top and the more arid habitat lower down. Other species in this area include Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill, Abyssinian Wheatear, Archer's Francolin (rare), Yellow-necked Spurfowl, Archer's Buzzard, African Olive Pigeon, Long-billed Pipit, Brown Woodland Warbler,

Black-billed Wood Hoopoe, Bruce's Green Pigeon, Grey-headed Batis, Nyanza Swift, Common Kestrel, Hemprich's Hornbill, Red-fronted Tinkerbird, Black-crowned Tchagra, Fan-tailed Raven, Northern Grey Tit, Dodson's Bulbul, Red-rumped Swallow, Pale Crag Martin, Somali White-eye, Somali Starling, Little Rock Thrush, Shining Sunbird and Brown-rumped Seedeater. Nights in Erigavo.

#### Day 8: Erigavo to Burao

Today we retrace our steps to Burao, pausing to search for any species we may have missed on Day 5. Overnight in Burao.

Somali Bee-eater © Michael Mills



**Day 9: Burao area**

We have another full day in the Burao area to visit various plains and bushveld, depending on what species we are missing. Trickier birds in the area include Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse and Magpie Starling. Overnight in Burao.

**Day 10: Burao to Hargeisa**

Today we drive from Burao to Hargeisa, either along the tarred road via Berbera or the slow, direct route, depending on what species we're still missing. Overnight in Hargeisa.

*Somali Courser © Michael Mills*

**Day 11: Southern Plains Day Trip**

On our final full day we make a day trip out of Hargeisa to the moister (but still arid) plains to the south of the city. This is the area where Sharpe's Lark occurs, but has yet to be discovered. It is also the best area to see Rufous-capped Lark. Night in Hargeisa.

**Days 12: Tour ends**

After some final birding in the Hargeisa area, the tour ends before lunch.



*White-crowned Starling © Michael Mills*

**Day D1: Arrive in Djibouti City**

Welcome to Djibouti! This evening we overnight in the sweltering coastal Djibouti City.

**Day D2: Djibouti City to Day Forest**

This morning we'll start off near Djibouti City birding some of the coastal habitats. Our main target will be Arabian Golden Sparrow, but other species may include Crab-plover and African Collared Dove. We'll then drive to Day Forest, where the endemic Djibouti Francolin will be our main target.. Overnight at Day Forest.

**Day D3: Day Forest**

We have a full day to explore Day Forest. Other species may include Gambaga Flycatcher, Yellow-throated/White-rumped Seedeater, Bonelli's Eagle, African Olive Pigeon, Bruce's Green Pigeon, Hemprich's Hornbill, Yellow-breasted Barbet, Grey-headed Batis, Ethiopian Boubou, Fan-tailed Raven, Somali Bulbul, Brown Woodland Warbler, Somali Starling and Blackstart. Overnight at Day Forest.

**Day D4: Day Forest to Djibouti**

After some final birding at Day Forest we return to Djibouti City, where the tour ends.

## INCLUDED

- Guiding services of the Birding Africa tour leader
- Entry fees and activities as per itinerary
- Hotel accommodation throughout
- Airport transfers in Hargeisa and Djibouti City
- Bottled water in the vehicle
- One soft drink at each sit-down meal
- General tips

## QUESTIONS?

Please email the office, [info@birdingafrica.com](mailto:info@birdingafrica.com), to reserve a place or ask questions (you can also cc [michael@birdingafrica.com](mailto:michael@birdingafrica.com) and [callan@birdingafrica.com](mailto:callan@birdingafrica.com) who are both involved in the planning of this tour).

## BOOKLET AND CHECKLIST

Birding Africa provides:

1. this tour leaflet with detailed itinerary
2. the tour information pack, emailed to you
3. the tour booklet with checklists, on the tour

## HOW TO BOOK

1. Complete our easy online booking form.
2. Secure your booking deposit by credit card on our 3D secure online payment site (\$110).
3. Settle the balance by bank transfer 150 days before the tour. We will email you a reminder and the banking details.

