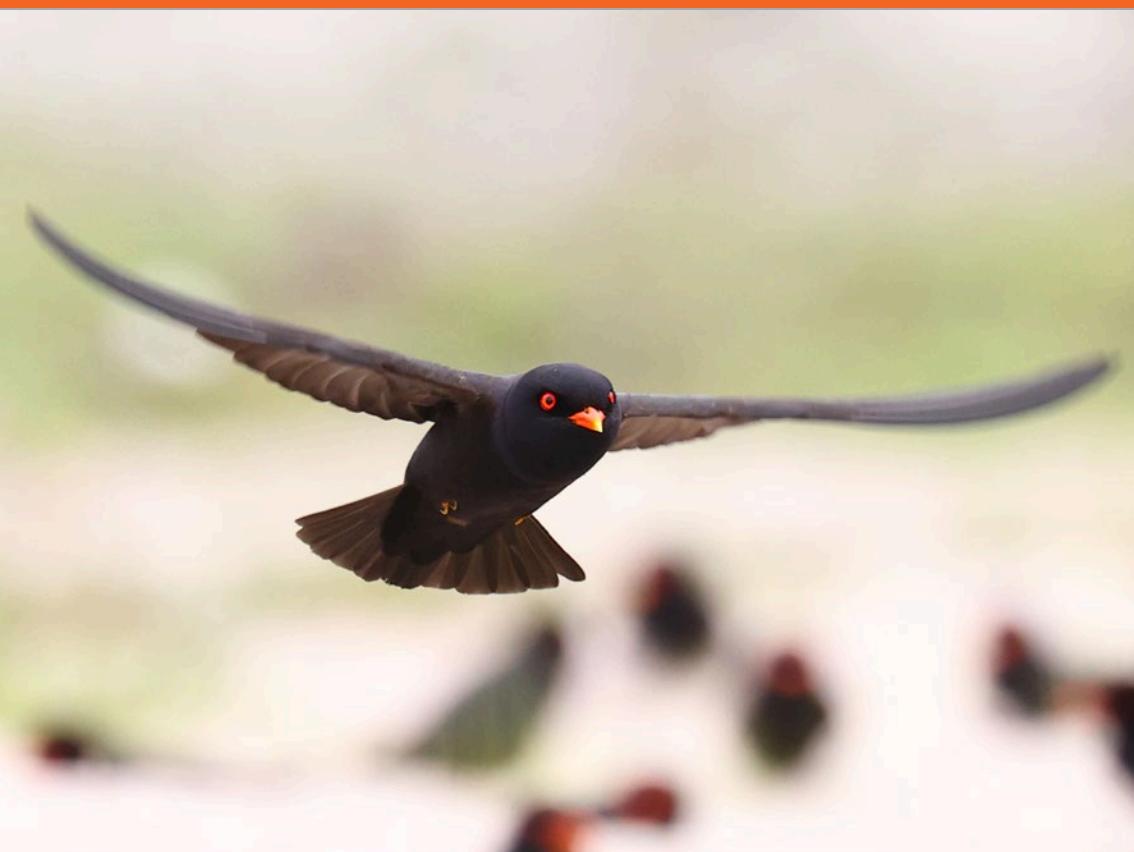




Gabon

2021 Tour Report



African River Martin © Paul Noakes

**Text by Michael Mills
Photos by Paul Noakes and Jonathan Newman**

SUMMARY

What Gabon lacks in comfort and service delivery it more than makes up in biodiversity, and this was evident on our 2021 Gabon Tour. Our top ten bird are possibly the most impressive I've ever had on tour, starting with Black-headed Bee-eater and point-blank views of Bates's Nightjar in tie for tenth. A striking Bare-cheeked Trogon came in at ninth, followed by Plumed Guineafowl, displaying Lyre-tailed Honeyguide and Sjöstedt's Barred Owlet rounding out the lower five. In fifth we had Black Guineafowl, at fourth point-blank views of Vermiculated Fishing Owl, third was White-crested Tiger Heron stood out in the open, second roosting Grey Ground Thrush, and top spot belonged to the incomparable African River Martin which treated us one of the greatest birding spectacles ever. A strong supporting caste was provided by other vertebrates, with our favourites being the scarce Long-nosed Mongoose, Demidoff's Galago, Slender-snouted Crocodile, Hammer-headed Fruit Bat, incredible views of a mother and baby Water Chevrotain, and two excellent encounters with Red River Hog.

Our travels took us first to the south-east of the country where we birded in the forest around Franceville and Bongoville before rising onto the Bateke Plateau at Lékon. The miombo woodlands, grasslands and forests in the region produced goodies such as Black-chinned Weaver, Short-tailed Pipit, Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, Black-rumped Buttonquail, Blue-throated Roller, Gabon Woodpecker, Black-collared Bulbul, Eastern Black-backed Barbet, Red-throated Cliff Swallow, Dambo Cisticola, and the undescribed "Teke Cisticola".

Black Guineafowl © Jonathan Newman



Our next major focus was Ipassa Research Station in the Ivindo National Park, with Forbes's Plover, Black-faced Canary and Little Grey Flycatcher along the way. At Ipassa we immersed ourselves in forest birding, amassing a remarkable list that included six of our top ten, plus Rachel's Malimbe, Yellow-footed Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Cuckoo, African Piculet, Woodhouse's Antpecker, Rufous-sided Broadbill, Blue-headed Wood Dove, Gosling's Apalis, Sjöstedt's Honeyguide Greenbul, Gabon Batis, White-spotted Wattle-eye, Rufous-sided Broadbill, Akun Eagle-Owl, Brown Nightjar and Fraser's Eagle-Owl, with Spot-breasted Ibis and African Olive Ibis seen briefly. Next was Lope National Park where we quickly located the localised Dja River Warbler and enjoyed Fiery-breasted Bushshrike and Rufous-bellied Helmetshrike. To end, we made our way to Loango National Park on the coast, seeing Grey Pratincole on route and finding Latham's Forest Francolin, Loango Weaver, Rosy Bee-eater, Hartlaub's Duck, White-backed Night Heron, Congo Serpent Eagle, White-crested Hornbill, Spotted Honeyguide, Black Coucal, Damara Tern, White-throated Blue Swallow, Thick-billed Cuckoo and Violet-tailed Sunbird.



Roosting Grey Ground Thrush © Jonathan Newman

ESSENTIAL DETAILS

DATES

20 September – 7 October 2021

3 Oct: Lambaréné to Omboué to Loango

4–5 Oct: Loango National Park

6 Oct: Loango to Omboué

7 Oct: Omboué to Port Gentil. Fly to Libreville

ITINERARY

20 Sep: Arrive Libreville. Outing to Cap Esterias

21 Sep: Fly to Franceville. Afternoon near town

22 Sep: Franceville to Lékon via Bongoville

23 Sep: Lékon area

24 Sep: Lékon to Franceville. Train to Booué

25 Sep: Booué to Makokou/Ipassa

26–28 Sep: Ipassa

29 Sep: Ipassa to Booué

30 Sep: Train to Lope. Full day Lope

1 Oct: Lope National Park

2 Oct: Lope to Lambaréné

PARTICIPANTS

Denzil Morgan

Michael Frost

Tim Marlow

Paul Noakes

John Wall

Ken Sutton

Jules Eden

Nick Blackwood

Jonathan Newman



Plumed Guineafowl © Paul Noakes

REPORT

With international travel much-restricted for the past 18 months, it was with some excitement that we gathered in Libreville for our much-anticipated Gabon Tour. Entry formalities were significantly more tedious than usual, but eventually we all made it through the various steps before convening at our nearby hotel. After a quick freshen-up, we set off for Cap Esterias for a seaside lunch, pausing for Ethiopian Swallow and Western Grey-throated Barbet along the way. It was raining quite heavily when we arrived, so we waited for lunch under cover, making a brief foray to the beach when the

rain abated. Carmelite Sunbird was seen in the trees lining the beach, Ruddy Turnstone fed on the rocky shore and African Royal Tern fed offshore. After lunch we headed to some nearby patches of forest. The Congo Serpent Eagle I'd seen the day before didn't materialise, but we did find Rosy Bee-eater, Thick-billed Honeyguide, Blue-throated Roller, Hairy-breasted Barbet, Red-headed Quelea, Orange-cheeked Waxbill, Chattering Cisticola, and a variety of more widespread species, before heading back to town for dinner.

Black-headed Bee-eater © Paul Noakes



Gorgeous Bushshrike © Jonathan Newman

Before breakfast the next day we enjoyed excellent views of Reichenbach's Sunbird in the hotel gardens. Shortly after breakfast we were back at the airport, this time to board an internal flight to Franceville in the south-east of the country. As we descended over the forest-savanna mosaics to land, it felt as though we were now well and truly in Gabon. We transferred to our comfortable hotel in town for lunch, before heading out to some nearby forest patches for a stint of afternoon birding. Bird activity was pretty good; we found our only Bristle-nosed Barbets of the trip at our first stop, followed by Black-shouldered Puffback, Square-tailed Saw-wing, Eastern Yellow-billed Barbet and Red-throated Cliff Swallow. The greatest interest was provided by a red-and-black finch feeding in tall grass on the verge of the road. The full red head immediately led me to identify the bird as a male Black-bellied Seedcracker, and I put the bird in the scope and stepped back for everyone to enjoy the views. It was partially obscured, but as it moved about my intrigue grew as I noticed that the tail appeared to be black. The tail of Black-bellied

Seedcracker should be deep/dull reddish, so I was intent on seeing the tail better. As we got closer it flew across the road ahead of us and up the bank, displaying what appeared to be a pitch-black tail, the same colour as the back and contrasting strongly with the bright red rump, which should indicate that it was a Red-headed Bluebill, unknown from Gabon. A few record photos had been taken so we returned to these to ponder the bird's identification. It was not fully adult, indicated by the few black feathers on the face, but one could not see the tail properly in the photos. In favour of Black-bellied Seedcracker was the fact that we couldn't see any pinkish-blue on the cutting edge of the bill, but online photos suggested that younger birds had much less of that bill colouration than adults, and was almost invisible in some photos. The hind-neck though, was clearly black, which appeared to better suit Red-headed Bluebill, but after consulting various other experts I felt that we couldn't be sure and that it was most likely a Black-bellied Seedcracker.

Early the next morning we were pleasantly surprised by an impressive buffet breakfast before we set off in the dark for Lékonî. Not long after sunrise we arrived near Bongoville, where a productive few hours of forest birding were enjoyed along the road. Afep Pigeon passed overhead, Fiery-breasted Bushshrike hooted from the thickets, showing only briefly, a female Pale-fronted Nigrita was seen well, and Black Cuckoo, Naked-faced Barbet, Yellow-throated Nicator, Velvet-mantled Drongo, Cassin's Spinetail, Cassin's Malimbe, Purple-headed Starling, Black-winged Oriole, Chestnut-capped Flycatcher, Rufous-crowned Eremomela, Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, Fraser's Forest Flycatcher, Black Bee-eater and Whistling Cisticola put in appearances. Best of all, however, were a confiding Black-headed Bee-eater spotted by Michael, and a Lyre-tailed Honeyguide watched by all in its spectacular circular display which culminated in a bizarre dive with its tail fanned.

Closer to Lékonî we made a couple more stops, first in grassland where we had spotted some Congo Moor Chat from the bus. The chats were a bit flighty but it was a good first encounter, and other species seen during the walk included Tinkling Cisticola, Teke Cisticola and Black-rumped Buttonquail, alongside a couple of Common Buttonquail for comparison. The final stop was in some miombo woodlands where we quickly found White-chinned Prinia, Green-capped Eremomela, Plain-backed Pipit, Red-necked Buzzard and Chinspot Batis. Red-capped Crombec and Wood Pipit were glimpsed several times but neither gave us good views, before it was time to head for lunch at our hotel in town.

After sorting out our accommodation and dropping our bags, we headed out for the rest of the afternoon. It was slow going, but we managed to track down Sharpe's Square-tailed Drongo, Pectoral-patch Cisticola and our first Black-collared Bulbul. Good numbers of European Bee-eater and Common Swift were evident.

Black-collared Bulbul © Paul Noakes



Dambo Cisticola © Jonathan Newman

The next morning we spent in grasslands and stunted woodlands, and around dense forest patches. The weather was gloomy and rain sent us back to town for an earlier-than-anticipated breakfast, but we managed to lose very little birding time. The undoubted highlights of the morning were a pair of Black-chinned Weavers near their nest, several Short-tailed Pipits, and, after much persistence, a showy Gorgeous Bushshrike. Breeding-plumaged Yellow-mantled Widowbird was found, as were Western Black-headed Batis, Black Saw-wing, Salvadori's Eremomela, Long-legged Pipit, Sooty Chat, Flappet Lark and Cabanis's Bunting. After lunch we headed further afield, in a different direction, to search for Dambo Cisticola, which we were pleased to find pretty quickly. Other birds seen during the afternoon included Temminck's Courser, White-winged Black Tit, Yellow-bellied Hyliota, Rufous-naped Lark, Double-toothed Barbet, White-bellied Bustard, Banded Martin and Senegal Lapwing. At the forest edge we enticed an Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo out for several good flight views, and spotted a Johanna's Sunbird feeding down at eye

level. After dark we found several Long-tailed Nightjars and a single Square-tailed Nightjar, and a Common Buttonquail on the deck.

With both flight and train schedules having been adjusted, our time at Lékonî very quickly came to an end and we had just one more morning in the area which we focussed on miombo woodlands and then grasslands. During this final outing we found Red-necked Spurfowl, Red-capped Crombec, African Cuckoo, Coqui Francolin, Western Violet-backed Sunbird, Greater Honeyguide, the first Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird for Gabon, Black-throated Canary and Black Scimitarbill. Then it was quickly back to the hotel to pack up, and a drive to Franceville for a bite to eat before getting onto the train. We were shocked when the train departed precisely on schedule, and settled into our comfortable seats for an 8-hour trip to Boué, sans dining cart. Just after midnight we all got off the train feeling rather dazed, and after a frustratingly-long wait for our luggage we transferred to our nearby hotel for a few hours' respite.



Demidoff's Galago © Jonathan Newman

The next morning we enjoyed a little bit of a lie in before making the bumpy journey to Makokou. While we waited for the drivers to get organised, we watched Black-faced Canary and Senegal Coucal in the hotel gardens, and Forbes's Plover on a nearby football field. To make the drive to Makokou more comfortable we made regular roadside stops, seeing Black-casqued Hornbill, Eastern Piping Hornbill, Black-headed Waxbill, Little Grey Flycatcher, Purple-throated Cuckooshrike and Lowland Masked Apalis. We arrived in Makokou to discover that our hotel rooms had been given away, and that all other decent hotels in town were fully booked due to a Gabon Parcs conference. Instead of staying in Makokou overnight, we had an early dinner in town before heading to nearby Ipassa Research Station one night early. We decided to make the most of a trying day, heading out for a short night walk. Not far down the track a young bird was spotted roosting above the path. The size, shape and white wing bars led us to believe that it was a ground thrush, an exciting find. We searched around nearby and also found an adult, confirming that it was indeed a Grey Ground Thrush! We manoeuvred ourselves into a good position and all enjoyed incredible views of this major rarity;

suddenly all the frustrations of the day had vanished! Continuing on a bit we heard Akun Eagle-Owl and had excellent views of Milne-Edward's Potto and Demidoff's Galago before a brewing storm drove us back to camp, where we arrived just as the heavens opened.

The next morning we watched the river for moving ibis without seeing anything. Birding along the main track brought Yellow-footed Flycatcher and Brown Illadopsis. Once it was less dark we had breakfast and headed into the forest. We hadn't gone far when Denzil spotted a probable Black Guineafowl that had flashed across the path. We moved towards where it had crossed and then waited patiently for it to return, which it did, giving excellent views. Flushed with success we continued down the track. We hadn't gone 50 meters when Tim spotted a party of Plumed Guineafowl in the track behind us, exactly where the Black Guineafowl had been. We swung the scope in their direction and enjoyed some good looks. After a couple of minutes they were disturbed off the track so we moved back towards them and managed to entice a few to return for close views. In total 19 crossed the track, mostly in flight. We had now seen two species of rare forest guineafowl in 20 minutes; we couldn't have had a better start!

The rest of our time at Ipassa was spent in the forest interior, in the more open habitat on the road in and around camp, and along the river. Along the river the undoubtedly highlight was incredible views of Vermiculated Fishing Owl, which we left alone after about 15 minutes. Here we also saw Brown Nightjar, Rock Pratincole, Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo, Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill and Gosling's Apalis. Ibis teased us quite a bit, with Olive Ibis calling very nearby and giving some brief views, and a pair of Spot-breasted Ibis spotted at great distance flying noisily across the river downstream of camp. Birding along the main road and in the clearing around camp we found Fraser's Eagle-Owl, Cassin's

Honeybird, Willcocks's Honeyguide, Lyre-tailed Honeyguide (heard only), Gabon Woodpecker, White-spotted Wattle-eye, Lowland Sooty Boubou, Simple Greenbul, Lemon-bellied Crombec, Gabon Coucal (heard only), Little Grey Greenbul, many Grey Parrot, Golden Greenbul, Buff-throated Apalis (the male with a black throat), Gabon Batis, Yellow-browed Camaroptera, Forest White-eye, Bates's Sunbird, Woodhouse's Antpecker and African Palm Civet. Overhead there wasn't much happening, except for a mixed flock of forest swifts containing several Mottled Spinetail, a pair of Sabine's Spinetail, one Bates's Swift, and at least one Black Spinetail.

Vermiculated Fishing Owl © Jonathan Newman



The bulk of our time was spent slowly stalking around the forest interior, gradually picking off shy forest birds. In the dark Akun Eagle-Owl and Sjöstedt's Barred Owlet were highlights, and during daylight hours we enjoyed scoped views of Yellow-throated Cuckoo, African Piculet, Rufous-sided Broadbill and Blue-headed Wood Dove. Raptors were hard to come by, but we did have a fly-over Red-chested Goshawk at dawn, and heard and glimpsed Congo Serpent Eagle. The bird that gave us the greatest trouble was the much-coveted Bare-cheeked Trogan. It was only on the final afternoon that we heard one calling in the distance, which, after some scrambling off-trail, we enjoyed excellent views of, much to Jules's delight. Other species seen included Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill, Eastern White-crested Hornbill, African Dwarf

Kingfisher (brief glimpses for most), Gabon Batis, Blue Cuckooshrike, Western Black-headed Oriole, Shining Drongo, Bates's Paradise Flycatcher, Ansorge's Greenbul, Sjöstedt's Honeyguide Greenbul, Icterine Greenbul, Xavier's Greenbul, Yellow-lored Bristlebill, Eastern Bearded Greenbul, White-bearded Greenbul, Blackcap Illadopsis, White-tailed Ant Thrush, Fire-crested Alethe, Rufous Flycatcher-Thrush, Little Green Sunbird, a pair of shimmering Rachel's Malimbe, and Western Bluebill.

It was now time to head to Lope National Park, which involved a bumpy ride back to Booué and a short train journey to the town of Lope. Along the drive we added Banded Prinia to our lists, before catching a few hours' sleep in Booué, hopping

Sjöstedt's Barred Owlet © Paul Noakes



Red River Hog © Jonathan Newman

on the train to Lope for a 90-minute ride, and finishing our night in the comfortable Lope Hotel. After a slightly later start than usual we made our first foray into the park, driving through the rolling, grass-covered hills with scattered forest patches, pausing for Forest Elephant, Red River Hog and Forest Buffalo adorned with Yellow-billed Oxpecker. Our destination was a small swamp in the forest, where the scarce Dja River Warbler was seen well shortly after getting there. In the surrounding grasslands we found Broad-tailed Warbler, Blue-breasted Bee-eater and African Pygmy Kingfisher, and in the forests a Fiery-breasted Bushshrike remained well hidden. We returned to town for lunch and a much-deserved siesta, before heading out in the late afternoon.

As we waited for darkness to arrive, we spotted Forest Chestnut-winged Starling in flight and unsuccessfully tried to extract a calling Latham's Forest Francolin from the dark understorey, but it was after dark that the real action happened. Swamp Nightjar fluttered in the spotlight beside the road, and a large, dark Bates's Nightjar perched beside the road at eye level. Eventually we had to leave with the bird still sitting there.

Our final morning at Lope was dedicated to mopping up some forest goodies, with Rufous-bellied Helmetshrike top of our lists. As we drove through town we paused to admire several Red-chested Swallow. Once in forest the going was slow, but eventually we connected with a

group of four helmetshrikes and enjoyed some good views. Also seen were Narina Trogan, Forest Robin, Fiery-breasted Bushshrike, Lühdor's Bushshrike, Blue-breasted Kingfisher, Bates's Sunbird and Red-tailed Ant Thrush. A Western Bronze-naped Pigeon called from nearby but stubbornly refused to move. We also saw several primates, including Black Colobus, Grey-cheeked Mangabey, Moustached Monkey and Putty-nosed Monkey, Central Bushbuck and Peter's Duiker. In the afternoon and pre-breakfast the next morning, a spot of birding around the hotel turned up Shining-blue Kingfisher, Orange Weaver, Purple-throated Cuckooshrike White-crowned Lapwing, Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, White-browed Forest Flycatcher, Forbes's Plover and several Black-chinned Quailfinch.



Rufous-bellied Helmetshrike © Paul Noakes

Moving on, we were back in vehicles on a bumpy road (our onward train had been cancelled). We paused to lunch in Ndjolé, and finally arrived in Lambaréne in the evening, where Hammer-headed Fruit-Bat performed well in the hotel gardens. The next day was a long one, commencing with a long boat ride to Omboué. The numerous sandbars along the river held flocks of Grey Pratincole and African Skimmer, joined by smaller numbers of the resident population of Little Tern, Rock Pratincole and Grey-rumped Swallow, but we were pleased to eventually arrive in Omboué. From there it was a shortish drive to the northern border of Loango National Park, and a longish boat ride to our comfortable camp set in forest on the banks of a river. The tone for our stay was immediately set; Vermiculated Fishing Owl was waiting for us in camp.



Violet-tailed Sunbird © Paul Noakes

The next three and a half days were spent exploring the waterways, savannas and forests of this spectacular area, which impressed with both birds and mammals. From the deck of our lodge we spotted Thick-billed Cuckoo, Violet-tailed Sunbird, many Rosy Bee-eater and a pair of mating African River Martins. The waterways produced numbers of Hartlaub's Duck, Sabine's Spinetail, African Finfoot, Shining-blue Kingfisher, White-backed Night Heron, Goliath Heron, Great White Pelican, Pink-backed Pelican, Western Osprey, White-throated Blue Swallow, Cassin's Flycatcher, White-browed Forest Flycatcher, Rosy Bee-eater, Violet-tailed Sunbird and Red-capped Mangabey, and good views of Red-tailed Leaflove and Western Sitatunga. Ten Damara Tern were spotted along the coast, alongside a single Gull-billed Tern. However, the undoubtedly highlights were incredible views of the secretive White-crested Tiger Heron, a baby and mother Water Chevrotain, Slender-snouted

Crocodile, and the scarce Long-nosed Mongoose. Some of us also had glimpses of West African Manatee! Forest birding was slow going, but not without reward. It took three attempts, but in the end about half of the group had enjoyed decent views of Latham's Forest Francolin, and we also saw Yellow-billed Turaco, Spotted Honeyguide, Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill, Forest Robin, Eastern White-crested Hornbill and Crowned Monkey.

The grasslands and forest edge, however, produced the spectacle of the tour and one of the top birding experiences of our lives. A few other species, such as Black Coucal, Senegal Lapwing, Congo Serpent Eagle, Swamp Boubou, Carmelite Sunbird, Slender-billed Weaver and Loango Weaver, are worthy of brief mention. But it is the three hours that we spent in the company of two colonies of African River Martin, each several hundred strong, that we will most carry home with us. The colonies were in the early stages of their breeding cycle,

busily excavating tunnels, energetically fending off intruding neighbours, and enthusiastically courting their mates. The chitter-chatter was endless and every few minutes the entire colony

would fly up and make a loop across the savanna before settling down again at their burrows. On top of that, it certainly didn't feel like one was watching a swallow. The sleek black plumage is offset by

coral red eyes, pinky-red legs and a bill shading from blood red to bright orange. With their large heads they looked more like comical wind-up toys, and some of the group even suggested that

they belong in their own family. It's certainly an experience not to be missed, and one that we enjoyed at close range, creating a fitting finale to a successful trip!

Hammer-headed Fruit Bat © Jonathan Newman





ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS RECORDED

Numididae

Black Guineafowl *Agelastes niger* — Good views of a single bird at Ipassa

Plumed Guineafowl *Guttera plumifera* — Excellent views of a flock of c 20 at Ipassa (*plumifera*)

Phasianidae

Latham's Forest Francolin *Peliperdix lathami* — Heard at Lope and seen by most of the group at Loango (*lathami*)

Coqui Francolin *Peliperdix coqui* — A pair was flushed at Lékoní (*coqui*)

Scaly Francolin *Pternistis squamatus* — A few roadside birds between Booué and Makokou (*squamatus*)

Red-necked Spurfowl *Pternistis afer* — Good views at Lékoní (*cranchii*)

Anatidae

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata* — Quite a few at Loango

Hartlaub's Duck *Pteronetta hartlaubii* — Several seen well at Loango, including roosting birds

Caprimulgidae

Brown Nightjar *Veles binotatus* — Seen by all at Ipassa

Fiery-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus [p.] pectoralis* — Heard at Lékoní (*fervidus*)

Swamp Nightjar *Caprimulgus natalensis* — Great views at Lope (*natalensis*)

Bates's Nightjar *Caprimulgus batesi* — Incredible views at Lope

Long-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus climacurus* — Great views of several at Lékoní (*sclateri*)

Square-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus fossii* — One at Lékoní (*fossii*)

Apodidae

Mottled Spinetail *Telacanthura ussheri* — Several at Ipassa (*sharpei*)

Black Spinetail *Telacanthura melanopygia* — At least one in a flock of mixed swifts at Ipassa

Sabine's Spinetail *Rhaphidura sabini* — Several at Loango

Cassin's Spinetail *Neafrapus cassini* — Widespread in small numbers

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus [p.] parvus* — Common (*brachypterus*)

Common Swift *Apus apus* — Most numerous at Lékoní (*apus*)

Little Swift *Apus affinis* — Common and widespread (*aerobates*)

Bates's Swift *Apus batesi* — One at Ipassa and several at Lope

Musophagidae

Great Blue Turaco *Corythaeola cristata* — Most conspicuous at Ipassa

Guinea Turaco *Tauraco persa* — Seen well at Ipassa, heard elsewhere (*zenkeri*)

Yellow-billed Turaco *Tauraco macrorhynchus* — Seen well at Loango, heard elsewhere (*verreauxii*)

Otididae

White-bellied Bustard *Eupodotis senegalensis* — Three sightings at Lékoní (*mackenziei*)

Cuculidae

Gabon Coucal *Centropus anselli* — Several heard at Ipassa but always remained well hidden

Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis* — Good views at Booué (*senegalensis*)

Blue-headed Coucal *Centropus monachus* — Seen at Lope (*occidentalis*)

Black Coucal *Centropus grillii* — One breeding-plumaged bird seen well at Loango

Blue Yellowbill [Yellowbill] *Ceuthmochares [a.] aereus* — Several sightings in forest (*aereus*)

Thick-billed Cuckoo *Pachycoccyx audeberti* — Good flight views at Loango for those standing on the deck at our lodge (*brazzae*)

Diederik Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius* — Widespread

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* — Widespread, but heard only

Yellow-throated Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx flavigularis* — One scoped for all at Ipassa

African Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus* — Seen well a few times

Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx [m.] mechowi* — Seen at Ipassa

Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx olivinus* — Good flight views at Lékoní, where the bird made several close passes

Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus* — Seen at Bongoville and heard elsewhere (*gabonensis*)

Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius* — Seen at Loango and heard elsewhere

African Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis* — A calling bird seen at Lékoní

Columbidae

Rock Dove or Feral Pigeon *Columba livia* — Seen

Afep Pigeon *Columba unicincta* — Two fly-by sightings at Bongoville and Ipassa, and heard at Lope

Western Bronze-naped Pigeon *Columba iriditorques* — Heard nearby at Lope but refused to show

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata* — Common

Ring-necked Dove / Cape Turtle Dove *Streptopelia capicola* — Seen at Lékoní (*tropica*)

Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur afer* — Common

Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistria* — A few seen

Blue-headed Wood Dove *Turtur brehmeri* — Good looks at Ipassa (*brehmeri*)

African Green Pigeon *Treron [c.] calvus* — Quite common and widespread (*calvus*)

Sarothruridae

White-spotted Flufftail *Sarothrura pulchra* — Heard at Ipassa (*zenkeri*)

Heliornithidae

African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis* — Excellent views at Loango; the males were exceptionally dark (*senegalensis*)

Rallidae

Nkulengu Rail *Himantornis haematopus* — Heard distantly at Ipassa

African Crake *Crex egregia* — One seen by some of the group at Lope

Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostra* — Seen at Loango, heard at Lope

Turnicidae

Common Buttonquail *Turnix sylvaticus* — Several seen at Lékoní, including one bird on the deck at night (*lepurana*)

Black-rumped Buttonquail *Turnix [hottentottus] nanus* — Good flushed views at Lékoní

Burhinidae

Water Thick-knee *Burhinus vermiculatus* — Seen at Lope (*buettikoferi*)

Charadriidae

White-crowned Lapwing *Vanellus albiceps* — Seen from Lope coast-wards

Senegal Lapwing *Vanellus lugubris* — Seen at Lékoní and Lope, but our best views were at Loango

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius* — Brief views at Loango

Forbes's Plover *Charadrius forbesi* — Great views at Booué, and also seen at Lope and Loango

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus* — A few between Lambaréne and Omboué

Jacanidae

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus* — Several at Loango and Lambaréne

Scolopacidae

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius [p.] phaeopus* — Seen at Loango

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* — Seen at Cap Esterias

Sanderling *Calidris alba* — Seen at Cap Esterias

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucus* — Widespread sightings

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* — Seen at Loango

Glareolidae

Temminck's Courser *Cursorius temminckii* — Two sightings at Lékoní

Rock Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis* — Seen at Ipassa and near Lambaréne (*nuchalis*)

Grey Pratincole *Glareola cinerea* — Many on the boat trip from Lambaréne to Omboué

Laridae

African Skimmer *Rynchops flavirostris* — Many on the boat trip from Lambaréne to Omboué, and a few at Loango

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon [n.] nilotica* — One at Loango; rare in Gabon (*nilotica*)

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* — Seen along the coast

African Royal Tern [Royal Tern] *Thalasseus [maximus] albididorsalis* — Seen at Loango and Cap Esterias

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* — Seen at Loango and Cap Esterias (*sandvicensis*)

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons* — Many of the resident breeding population (*guineae*) on the boat trip from Lambaréne to Omboué

Damara Tern *Sternula balaenarum* — About 10 seen well at Loango

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* — Common along the coast (*hirundo*)

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* — One along the coast (*niger*)

Ciconiidae

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis* — Several at Loango

African Woolly-necked Stork [Woolly-necked Stork] *Ciconia [episcopus] microscelis* — Seen at Lope and Loango

Phalacrocoracidae

Reed Cormorant *Microcarbo africanus* — Many around Lambaréne (*africanus*)

Anhingidae

African Darter *Anhinga rufa* — Common at Loango (*rufa*)

Threskiornithidae

Olive Ibis *Bostrychia olivacea* — Heard very close by, and seen briefly by some, at Ipassa (*cupreipennis*)

Spot-breasted Ibis *Bostrychia rara* — A pair of calling seen distantly in flight by some of the group at Ipassa

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash* — Seen at Ipassa, Lope and Loango (*brevirostris*)

Ardeidae

White-crested Tiger Heron *Tigrisoma leucomelas* — Incredible views at Loango, where four birds in total were seen

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus [m.] minutus* — Two brief sightings at Loango

White-backed Night Heron *Gorsachius leuconotus* — Excellent views of several at Loango

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* — Seen at Lambaréne and Loango (*nycticorax*)

Striated Heron [Green Heron] *Butorides [s.] striata* — A few between Lambaréne and Omboué (*atricapilla*)

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* — Quite a few at Loango

Western Cattle Egret [Cattle Egret] *Bubulcus [i.] ibis* — Common

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* — Seen from Lambaréne coast-wards (*cinernea*)

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* — Seen at Loango

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* — Seen from Lambaréne coast-wards (*purpurea*)

African Great Egret [Great Egret] *Ardea [alba] melanorhynchos* — Seen from Lambaréne coast-wards

Little Egret *Egretta [g.] garzetta* — Seen from Lambaréne coast-wards

Scopidae

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* — Quite a few at Loango (*umbretta*)

Pelecanidae

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* — Seen in the coastal wetlands

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* — Seen in the coastal wetlands

Pandionidae

Western Osprey [Osprey] *Pandion [h.] haliaetus* — Several at Loango

Accipitridae

African Harrier-Hawk *Polyboroides typus* — Several seen (*pectoralis*)

Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis* — Very common along the coast

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* — Seen twice

Congo Serpent Eagle *Circaetus spectabilis* — One bird seen atop a bare tree at Loango, where being mobbed by a Pied Hornbill, but it didn't stay long; also heard at Loango and Ipassa (*batesi*)

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* — One female seen at Lékoní

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus* — One at Omboué (*monogrammicus*)

African Goshawk *Accipiter [t.] tachiro* — Just one displaying at Loango in the early morning

Red-chested Goshawk [African Goshawk] *Accipiter [tachiro] toussenelii* — One at Ipassa (*toussenelii*)

Yellow-billed Kite [Black Kite] *Milvus [migrans] aegyptius* — A few in the Lékoní area (*parasitus*)

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer* — Several at Loango and one at Ipassa

Red-necked Buzzard *Buteo auguralis* — Seen at Lékoní and Loango

Tytonidae

Western Barn Owl [Barn Owl] *Tyto [a.] alba* — One seen in the day at Lékoní (*affinis*)

Strigidae

Fraser's Eagle-Owl *Bubo [p.] poensis* — Excellent views at Ipassa at night and Lope by day

Akun Eagle-Owl *Bubo leucostictus* — Scope views for all at Ipassa

Pel's Fishing Owl *Scotopelia peli* — Brief views at Loango

Vermiculated Fishing Owl *Scotopelia bouvieri* — Incredible views at Ipassa and seen again at Loango

African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii* — Heard at Ipassa and Loango (*nuchalis*)

Sjöstedt's Barred Owlet *Glaucidium sjostedti* — Excellent scope views at Ipassa

Coliidae

Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus* — Seen around Franceville and Lékoní (*nigricollis*)

Trogonidae

Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina* — Good views at Lope (*brachyurum*)

Bare-cheeked Trogon *Apaloderma aequatoriale* — Good views of a calling male at Ipassa

Upupidae

African Hoopoe [Hoopoe] *Upupa [epops] africana* — One sighting at Lékoní

Phoeniculidae

Black Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus aterrimus* — Seen at Lékoní (*anchietae*)

Bucerotidae

Congo Pied Hornbill [African Pied Hornbill] *Lophoceros [f.] fasciatus* — Common

Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill *Lophoceros camurus* — Seen well at Ipassa and Loango

Eastern Piping Hornbill [Piping Hornbill]

Bycanistes [fistulator] sharpii — Common in forested areas (*sharpii*)

White-thighed Hornbill *Bycanistes albotibialis* — Many seen in the Makokou area; one pair at Loango

Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill *Bycanistes subcylindricus* — Seen well in flight at Ipassa (*subquadratus*)

Black-casqued Hornbill *Ceratogymna atrata* — Good numbers at Ipassa, Lope and Loango

Western Black Dwarf Hornbill [Black Dwarf Hornbill] *Horizocerus [h.] hartlaubi* — One heard and seen briefly by Michael, but it vanished

Eastern White-crested Hornbill [White-crested Hornbill] *Horizocerus [albocristatus] cassini* — Good views at Ipassa and Loango

Coraciidae

Blue-throated Roller *Eurystomus gularis* — Several good looks (*neglectus*)

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus* — Seen at Lékoní

Alcedinidae

Chocolate-backed Kingfisher *Halcyon badia* — Brief views at Bongoville and heard elsewhere

Brown-hooded Kingfisher *Halcyon albiventris* — Seen at Lékoní (*prentissgrayi*)

Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti* — Seen at Lékoní (*chelicuti*)

Blue-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon malimbica* — Seen well at Lope and Loango; often heard (*malimbica*)

Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis* —

Common in open areas

African Dwarf Kingfisher *Ispidina lecontei* — A few brief sightings at Ipassa, but they never stopped

African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ispidina picta* — Great views at Lope, where common

White-bellied Kingfisher *Corythornis leucogaster* — One seen by Michael at Loango, but unfortunately it flew before anyone else could get onto it (*leucogaster*)

Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis [c.] cristatus* — Seen at Loango (*cristatus*)

Shining-blue Kingfisher *Alcedo quadribrachys* — Several at Loango and one at Lope (*guentheri*)

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima* — Common at Loango and one at Lékoní

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* — Seen a few times (*rudis*)

Meropidae

Black-headed Bee-eater *Merops breweri* — Superb views at Bongoville and brief views at Loango

Black Bee-eater *Merops gularis* — Several good sightings (*australis*)

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus* — Seen at Lékoní (*meridionalis*)

Blue-breasted Bee-eater *Merops [v.] variegatus* — First seen well at Lope; common at Loango (*variegatus*)

White-fronted Bee-eater *Merops bullockoides* — Seen at Lékoní

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* — Common at Lékoní

Rosy Bee-eater *Merops malimbicus* — Hundreds seen well at Loango, and also seen at Cap Esterias

Lybiidae

Western Grey-throated Barbet [Grey-throated Barbet] *Gymnobucco [b.] bonapartei* — Seen at Cap Esterias and near Franceville

Bristle-nosed Barbet *Gymnobucco peli* — Seen near Franceville

(Common) Naked-faced Barbet *Gymnobucco [c.] calvus* — Seen at Bongoville and Lope (*calvus*)

Speckled Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus scolopaceus* — Great views at Ipassa; heard elsewhere (*flavisquamatus*)

Red-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus atroflavus* — Seen well at Ipassa

Yellow-throated Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus subsulphureus* — Seen well at Ipassa and heard elsewhere (*flavimentum*)

Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus [b.] bilineatus* — Seen a few times (*leucolaimus*)

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* — One seen well at Lékoní, a first for Gabon (*chrysoconus*)

Eastern Yellow-spotted Barbet [Yellow-spotted Barbet] *Buccanodon [d.] duchaillui* — Scoped for all at Bongoville and heard elsewhere

Hairy-breasted Barbet *Tricholaema hirsuta* — Seen at Cap Esterias and heard elsewhere (*flavipunctata*)

Eastern Black-backed Barbet [Black-backed Barbet] *Lybius [minor] macclounii* — A pair seen quite well at Lékoní

Double-toothed Barbet *Lybius bidentatus* — Several seen at Lékoní (*bidentatus*)

Eastern Yellow-billed Barbet [Yellow-billed Barbet] *Trachyphonus [p.] purpuratus* — Good views near Franceville and at Ipassa, and heard elsewhere (*purpuratus*)

Indicatoridae

Cassin's Honeybird *Prodotiscus insignis* — One displaying bird scope once perched at Ipassa (*insignis*)

Willcocks's Honeyguide *Indicator willcocksi* — Good views at Ipassa (*willcocksi*)

Thick-billed Honeyguide [Lesser Honeyguide] *Indicator [minor] conirostris* — Seen at Cap Esterias

Spotted Honeyguide *Indicator maculatus* — Good looks at Loango (*stictithorax*)

Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator* — Seen at

Lékoní

Lyre-tailed Honeyguide *Melichneutes robustus* — Every saw a bird in its incredible display and Bongoville, and heard also at Ipassa and Lope

Picidae

African Piculet *Sasia africana* — Excellent views at Ipassa

Green-backed Woodpecker *Campetherina [cailliautii] permista* — Several sightings

Brown-eared Woodpecker *Campetherina caroli* — Brief views at Lope and Loango (*caroli*)

Yellow-crested Woodpecker *Chloropicus xantholophus* — Heard at Ipassa

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens* — A few sightings (*sharpii*)

Gabon Woodpecker *Dendropicos [g.] gabonensis* — Seen well at Bongoville and Ipassa (*gabonensis*)

Psittacidae

Grey Parrot *Psittacus [e.] erithacus* — Many great sightings

Calyptomenidae

Rufous-sided Broadbill *Smithornis rufolateralis* — A male was watched displaying at Ipassa (*rufolateralis*)

Platysteiridae

Chinspot Batis *Batis molitor* — Seen at Lékoní (*pintoi*)

Western Black-headed Batis *Batis erlangeri* — Seen well at Lékoní

Angola Batis *Batis minulla* — Heard at Lékoní

Gabon Batis *Batis minima* — Two sightings at Ipassa

Fernando Po Batis *Batis [p.] poensis* — A pair heard and seen near Makokou

Chestnut Wattle-eye *Platysteira [c.] castanea* — Several seen

White-spotted Wattle-eye *Platysteira tonsa* — Excellent views at Ipassa

Brown-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira cyanea* —
A few sightings (*cyanea*)

Malaconotidae

Fiery-breasted Bushshrike *Malaconotus cruentus* — Brief views for some at Bongoville and seen by all at Lope

Bocage's Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus bocagei* — Good views at Lékoní (*bocagei*)

Gorgeous Bushshrike *Telophorus viridis* — Excellent views at Lékoní (*viridis*)

Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis* — Heard, and seen by some, at Lékoní (*emini*)

Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus* — A few at Lékoní (*armenus*)

Sabine's Puffback *Dryoscopus sabini* — Heard near Bongoville but refused to show

Red-eyed Puffback *Dryoscopus senegalensis* — Seen well near Franceville and heard elsewhere

Northern Puffback *Dryoscopus gambensis* — One seen well at Lékoní (*conicus*)

Lowland Sooty Boubou *Laniarius leucorhynchus* — Seen by all at Ipassa, and heard to Lope and Loango

Lüdger's Bushshrike *Laniarius [l.] luehderi* — Brief views at Lékoní and good looks at Lope

Swamp Boubou *Laniarius bicolor* — Seen well at Loango (appeared to be *guttatus*)

Vangidae

Rufous-bellied Helmetshrike [Red-billed Helmetshrike] *Prionops [caniceps] rufiventris* — Good views at Lope and a larger flock seen briefly at Loango (*rufiventris*)

African Shrike-flycatcher *Megabyas flammulatus* — Heard at Ipassa (*flammulatus*)

Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher *Bias musicus* — Seen well at Bongoville and Lékoní (*musicus*)

Campephagidae

Petit's Cuckooshrike *Campephaga petiti* — Brief views of a pair at Lékoní

Purple-throated Cuckooshrike *Campephaga quisocalina* — Good views en route to Makokou (*quisocalina*)

Blue Cuckooshrike *Cyanograeaculus azureus* — Seen at Ipassa, with better views en route to Booué

Laniidae

Northern Fiscal [Common Fiscal] *Lanius [collaris] humeralis* — A couple around Lékoní (*capelli*)

Oriolidae

Western Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus brachyrynchus* — Seen well at Ipassa (*laetior*)

Black-winged Oriole *Oriolus nigripennis* — Seen well at Bongoville

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* — One at Lope

Dicruridae

Sharpe's Drongo [Square-tailed Drongo] *Dicrurus [ludwigii] sharpei* — Heard at Lékoní (*sharpei*)

Shining Drongo *Dicrurus atripennis* — Seen well at Lope, and also at Ipassa

Southern Fork-tailed Drongo [Fork-tailed Drongo] *Dicrurus [a.] adsimilis* — Seen at Lékoní (*apivorus*)

Velvet-mantled Drongo *Dicrurus [m.] modestus* — Seen at Bongoville, Ipassa and Lope (*coracinus*)

Monarchidae

Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher *Trochocercus nitens* — Heard, and seen by some, at Ipassa (*nitens*)

Bates's Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone batesi* — Several good sightings at Ipassa (*batesi*)

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone [v.] viridis* — Fairly common; many of the males were white (*speciosa*)

Corvidae

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* — Quite common

Paridae

White-winged Black Tit *Melaniparus leucomelas* — Seen at Lékoní (*insignis*)

Nicatoridae

Western Nicator *Nicator chloris* — Seen at Ipassa

Yellow-throated Nicator *Nicator vireo* — Seen briefly at Bongoville and en route to Makokou

Alaudidae

Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafra [a.] africana* — Good views at Lékoní (*malbranti*)

Flappet Lark *Mirafra rufocinnamomea* — Common at Lékoní (*schoutedeni*)

Pycnonotidae

Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus [b.] barbatus* — Common and widespread (*gabonensis*)

Dark-capped Bulbul [Common Bulbul] *Pycnonotus [barbatus] tricolor* — Seen at Lékoní and Loango (*tricolor*)

Slender-billed Greenbul *Stelgidillas gracilirostris* — A few sightings (*gracilirostris*)

Little Greenbul *Eurillas virens* — Common and widespread, but hard to see (*virens*)

Little Grey Greenbul *Eurillas gracilis* — Good views at Ipassa (*gracilis*)

Ansorge's Greenbul *Eurillas ansorgei* — Superb views at Ipassa (*ansorgei*)

Plain Greenbul *Eurillas curvirostris* — A few seen (*curvirostris*)

Yellow-whiskered Greenbul *Eurillas latirostris* — A couple of sightings (*latirostris*)

Golden Greenbul *Calyptocichla serinus* — One seen well at Ipassa

Honeyguide Greenbul *Baeopogon indicator* — Heard often, seen briefly a few times (*indicator*)

Sjöstedt's Honeyguide Greenbul *Baeopogon clamans* — Good looks at Ipassa; heard at Loango

Spotted Greenbul *Ixonotus guttatus* — Common

Falkenstein's Greenbul *Chlorocichla falkensteini* —

Heard near Bongoville

Simple Greenbul *Chlorocichla simplex* — Excellent views at Ipassa

Pale-throated Leaflove [Yellow-throated Leaflove] *Atimastillas [flavicolles] flavigula* — Seen at Lékoní and Lope (*soror*)

Swamp Palm Bulbul *Thescelocichla leucopleura* — Common

Red-tailed Leaflove *Phyllastrephus scandens* — Excellent views at Loango (*orientalis*)

Icterine Greenbul *Phyllastrephus [i.] icterinus* — Seen at Ipassa, heard at Lope and Loango

Xavier's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus xavieri* — Seen well at Ipassa (*xavieri*)

Red-tailed Bristlebill *Bleda syndactylus* — Brief views for some at Ipassa, and heard at Lope and Loango (*syndactylus*)

Yellow-lored Bristlebill *Bleda [n.] notatus* — Fairly good looks at Ipassa and Lope

Eastern Bearded Greenbul *Criniger chloronotus* — Good looks at Ipassa, and heard at Loango

Red-tailed Greenbul *Criniger calurus* — Seen at Ipassa (*calurus*)

White-bearded Greenbul *Criniger ndussumensis* — Great looks at Ipassa

Black-collared Bulbul *Neolestes torquatus* — Several good sightings at Lékoní

Hirundinidae

African River Martin *Pseudochelidon eurystomina* — Incredible!!! Hundreds seen at their nesting colonies and point-blank range, and even seen mating from the balcony of our lodge

Square-tailed Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne nitens* — Several widespread sightings (*nitens*)

Black Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne pristoptera* — Seen several times (*petiti*)

Grey-rumped Swallow *Pseudhirundo griseopyga* — Numerous at Loango (*melbina*)

Banded Martin *Riparia cincta* — Seen at Loango and Lékoní

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* — Seen in small numbers (*rustica*)

Red-chested Swallow *Hirundo lucida* — Seen at Lope (*subalaris*)

Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo aethiopica* — Good views near Cap Esterias (*aethiopica*)

White-throated Blue Swallow *Hirundo nigrita* — Many great sightings in the Loango area

Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica* — Common (*unitatis*)

Red-breasted Swallow *Cecropis semirufa* — Seen a few times (*gordoni*)

Red-throated Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon rufigula* — Good numbers seen at Lékoní, and a few near Franceville

Macrosphenidae

Yellow Longbill *Macrosphenus flavicans* — Heard at Ipassa (*flavicans*)

Grey Longbill *Macrosphenus concolor* — Heard at Ipassa

Red-capped Crombec *Sylvietta ruficapilla* — Three sightings at Lékoní, but all fairly brief (*rufigenis*)

Green Crombec *Sylvietta virens* — Common by voice; seen a few times, including roosting at Ipassa (*virens*)

Lemon-bellied Crombec *Sylvietta denti* — Good views at Ipassa (*denti*)

Erythrocercidae

Chestnut-capped Flycatcher *Erythrocercus mccallii* — Several good sightings (*mccallii*)

Hyliidae

Green Hylia *Hylia prasina* — Seen a few times (*prasina*)

Phylloscopidae

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* — Just one at Lékoní (*trochilus*)

Locustellidae

Broad-tailed Warbler *Catriscus brevirostris* — Seen at Lope (*alexinae*)

Dja River Warbler *Bradypterus grandis* — Good views at Lope

Cisticolidae

Whistling Cisticola *Cisticola lateralis* — Seen at Lope and Bongoville and heard at Lope (*modestus*)

Chattering Cisticola *Cisticola anonymus* — Several good looks, first at Cap Esterias

Tinkling Cisticola *Cisticola rufulatus* — Seen at Lékoní (*ansorgei*)

Winding Cisticola *Cisticola [galactotes] marginatus* — Seen at Loango (*amphilectus*)

Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis* — Seen at Lékoní and Lope (*strangei*)

Short-winged Cisticola *Cisticola brachypterus* — Seen at Lékoní and Lope (*brachypterus*)

Teke Cisticola *Cisticola sp. nov.* — Seen well at Lékoní

Neddicky *Cisticola fulvicapilla* — Heard at Lékoní (*dispar*)

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* — Seen at Lékoní and Loango (*terrestris*)

Dambo Cisticola *Cisticola dambo* — Excellent views at Lékoní

Pectoral-patch Cisticola *Cisticola brunnescens* — Seen well at Lékoní and heard at Lope (*gabun*)

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava* — A few seen at Lékoní and Lope (*melanorhyncha*)

Banded Prinia *Prinia [b.] bairdii* — Seen near Makokou and heard at Loango (*bairdii*)

White-chinned Prinia *Schistolais leucopogon* — Seen at Lékoní and heard at Lope (*leucopogon*)

Lowland Masked Apalis *Apalis binotata* — Seen well near Makokou

Buff-throated Apalis *Apalis [r.] rufogularis* — Excellent views at Ipassa of black-throated males (*rufogularis*)

Gosling's Apalis *Apalis goslingi* — Great views at Ipassa

Grey-backed Camaroptera [Bleating Camaroptera] *Camaroptera [brachyura] brevicaudata* — Widespread (*tincta*)

Yellow-browed Camaroptera *Camaroptera superciliaris* — Superb views at Ipassa

Olive-green Camaroptera *Camaroptera [c.] chloronota* — Seen at Ipassa (*chloronota*)

Salvadori's Eremomela [Yellow-bellied Eremomela] *Eremomela [icteropygialis] salvadorii* — Several sightings at Lékoní

Green-capped Eremomela *Eremomela scotops* — Seen at Lékoní (*congensis*)

Rufous-crowned Eremomela *Eremomela badiceps* — Excellent views at Bongoville and seen at Ipassa (*badiceps*)

Pellorneidae

Blackcap *Illadopsis cleaveri* — Seen by most at Ipassa (*batesi*)

Pale-breasted Illadopsis *Illadopsis [r.] rufipennis* — Heard distantly at Ipassa (*rufipennis*)

Brown Illadopsis *Illadopsis fulvescens* — Seen at Ipassa (*fulvescens*)

Zosteropidae

Forest White-eye [African Yellow White-eye] *Zosterops [senegalensis] stenocricotus* — Excellent views at Ipassa and heard at Lope

Hyliotidae

Yellow-bellied Hyliota *Hyliota flavigaster* — Good looks at Lékoní (*barbozae*)

Sturnidae

Purple-headed Starling *Hylopsar purpureiceps* — Several sightings

Splendid Starling *Lamprotornis splendidus* — Regular sightings in forest (*splendidus*)

Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* — Seen at Lékoní (*verreauxi*)

Forest Chestnut-winged Starling *Onychognathus fulgidus* — Several at Lope and one, briefly, at Cap Esterias (*hartlaubii*)

Buphagidae

Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus africanus* — Seen at Lope and Loango (*langi*)

Turdidae

Red-tailed Ant Thrush *Neocossyphus rufus* — Seen by some at Lope, and heard at Ipassa (*gabunensis*)

White-tailed Ant Thrush *Neocossyphus poensis* — Seen by all at Ipassa (*poensis*)

Rufous Flycatcher-Thrush *Stizorhina [f.] fraseri* — Seen at Ipassa, Lope and Loango (*rubicunda*)

Grey Ground Thrush *Geokichla princei* — Incredible views of an adult and juvenile roosting at Ipassa (*batesi*)

African Thrush *Turdus pelios* — Common (*saturatus*)

Muscicapidae

Fire-crested Alethe *Alethe castanea* — Seen fairly briefly at Ipassa and heard at Loango (*castanea*)

White-browed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas leucophrys* — Seen at Lékoní (*munda*)

Fraser's Forest Flycatcher *Fraseria ocreata* — Good views at Ipassa (*ocreata*)

White-browed Forest Flycatcher *Fraseria cinerascens* — Seen well at Lope and Loango (*ruthae*)

Grey-throated Tit-Flycatcher *Myioparus griseigularis* — Brief views at Ipassa (*griseigularis*)

Grey Tit-Flycatcher *Myioparus plumbeus* — Brief views at Lékoní (*plumbeus*)

Pale Flycatcher *Melaenornis pallidus* — Seen at Lékoní (*murinus*)

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa [s.] striata* — Seen at Lékoní

Ashy Flycatcher *Muscicapa caerulescens* — Seen at Ipassa (*brevicauda*)

Cassin's Flycatcher *Muscicapa cassini* — Many at Loango

Little Grey Flycatcher *Muscicapa epulata* — One good roadside sighting en route to Makokou

Yellow-footed Flycatcher *Muscicapa sethsmithi* — A couple of good sightings at Ipassa

Dusky-blue Flycatcher *Muscicapa comitata* — Seen en route to Makokou (*comitata*)

Sooty Flycatcher *Muscicapa infuscata* — Seen at Bongoville and Ipassa (*infuscata*)

Brown-chested Alethe *Chamaetylas poliocephala* — Brief views for Michael at Lope (*compsonota*)

Red-capped Robin-Chat *Cossypha natalensis* — Heard at Loango (*larischii*)

Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat *Cossypha niveicapilla* — Brief views at Lope and heard at Lékoní

Olive-backed Forest Robin [Forest Robin] *Stiphrornis [erythrothorax] pyrrholaemus* — Seen briefly at Loango and quite well at Lope

Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* — A female Ficedula at Lékoní was seen by Paul and Tim. The large white primary patch suggests that it was this species

African Stonechat [Common Stonechat] *Saxicola [t.] torquatus* — Seen at Lékoní and Loango (*salax*)

Sooty Chat *Myrmecocichla nigra* — Seen at Lékoní

Congo Moor Chat *Myrmecocichla tholloni* — Good looks at Lékoní

Nectariniidae

Fraser's Sunbird *Deleornis [f.] fraseri* — Several sightings at Ipassa

Mangrove Sunbird *Anthreptes gabonicus* — Brief views at Loango

Western Violet-backed Sunbird *Anthreptes longuemarei* — Seen at Lékoní (*angolensis*)

Violet-tailed Sunbird *Anthreptes aurantius* — Incredible views at Loango, where quite common

Little Green Sunbird *Anthreptes seimundi* — Just one sighting at Ipassa (*minor*)

Grey-chinned Sunbird *Anthreptes [rectirostris] tephrolaemus* — Several seen

Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris* — Common in forested areas (*somereni*)

Reichenbach's Sunbird *Anabathmis reichenbachii* — Seen well in Libreville, and also at Lékoní, Ipassa and Lope

Green-headed Sunbird *Cyanomitra verticalis* — Heard only (*cianocephala*)

Blue-throated Brown Sunbird *Cyanomitra cyanolaema* — Several good sightings (*octaviae*)

Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra olivacea* — Common in forested areas (*cephaelis*)

Carmelite Sunbird *Chalcomitra fuliginosa* — First seen at Cap Esterias and several good sightings at Loango (*aurea*)

Green-throated Sunbird *Chalcomitra rubescens* — Several seen at Lékoní (*rubescens*), where all dark sunbirds seen well belonged to this species and not Amethyst Sunbird, even in woodland

Olive-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris chloropygius* — Seen a few times (*chloropygius*)

Tiny Sunbird *Cinnyris minullus* — Seen well at Bongoville and Ipassa

Purple-banded Sunbird *Cinnyris bifasciatus* — One seen at Lékoní (*bifasciatus*)

Johanna's Sunbird *Cinnyris johannae* — A few scattered sightings (*johannae*)

Superb Sunbird *Cinnyris superbus* — A few scattered sightings (*superbus*)

Bates's Sunbird *Cinnyris batesi* — Some remarkably good views of these small and unobtrusive birds at Ipassa and Lope

Copper Sunbird *Cinnyris cupreus* — Seen at Lékoní and Lope (*cupreus*)

Passeridae

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* — Widespread in towns

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer [g.] griseus* — Widespread (*ugandae*)

Ploceidae

Black-chinned Weaver *Ploceus nigricmentus* — Good views of a pair at Lékoní, and other bird seen briefly

Slender-billed Weaver *Ploceus pelzelni* — Quite common at Loango (*monacha*)

Loango Weaver *Ploceus subpersonatus* — Good views at Loango after much persistence

Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus [n.] nigricollis* — Seen a few times (*nigricollis*)

Orange Weaver *Ploceus aurantius* — Seen at Lope and Makokou (*aurantius*)

Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus* — Quite common with *collaris* at Loango and *bohndorffi* elsewhere

Vieillot's Black Weaver *Ploceus [n.] nigerrimus* — Seen several times

Dark-backed Weaver *Ploceus bicolor* — Seen at Lope (*tephronotus*)

Red-crowned Malimbe *Malimbus coronatus* — Just a nest seen at Ipassa; it seemed to be occupied but we never saw the birds

Cassin's Malimbe *Malimbus cassini* — Several good looks

Rachel's Malimbe *Malimbus racheliae* — Seen quite well at Ipassa

Blue-billed Malimbe *Malimbus nitens* — Brief views at Lope and heard at Loango

Crested Malimbe *Malimbus malimbicus* — Seen near Makokou (*malimbicus*)

Red-headed Quelea *Quelea erythrops* — Seen at Cap Esterias and Loango

Black-winged Red Bishop *Euplectes hordeaceus* — One at Lékoní in non-breeding plumage (*hordeaceus*)

Yellow-mantled Widowbird *Euplectes macroura* — Seen at Lope, Lékoní (where in full breeding plumage) and Loango (*macroura*)

Estrildidae

Woodhouse's Antpecker *Parmoptila woodhousei* — Good views of a single bird at Ipassa (*woodhousei*)

White-breasted Nigrita *Nigrita fusconotus* — A few sightings (*fusconotus*)

Chestnut-breasted Nigrita *Nigrita bicolor* — Heard at Ipassa (*brunneiceps*)

Pale-fronted Nigrita *Nigrita luteifrons* — A female seen well at Bongoville (*luteifrons*)

Grey-headed Nigrita *Nigrita canicapillus* — Several sightings (*canicapillus*)

Black-bellied Seedcracker *Pyrenestes ostrinus* — Seen near Franceville, at Lambaréné and Loango, and heard at Lope

Western Bluebill *Spermophaga haematina* — Two sightings at Ipassa (*pustulata*)

Fawn-breasted Waxbill *Estrilda [p.] paludicola* — Seen at Lékoní

Orange-cheeked Waxbill *Estrilda melpoda* — Many good looks

Common Waxbill *Estrilda [a.] astrild* — Seen around Makokou (*occidentalis*) and at Loango (*rubriventris*)

Black-headed Waxbill *Estrilda [a.] atricapilla* — Just one fairly brief sighting en route to Makokou (*atricapilla*)

Black-chinned Quailfinch [Quailfinch]

Ortygospiza [atricollis] gabonensis — Seen on the deck at Lope and in flight at Lékoní (*gabonensis*)

Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura cucullata* — Seen often (*cucullata*)

Black-and-white Mannikin *Lonchura [b.] bicolor* — Seen several times (*poensis*)

Magpie Mannikin *Lonchura fringilloides* — Just one brief sighting near Makokou

Viduidae

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura* — Fairly common

Motacillidae

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp* — Seen at Lope and Loango (*vidua*)

Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus* — Seen at Lékoní, Lope and Loango

Wood Pipit *Anthus nyassae* — Seen at Lékoní (*schoutedeni*)

Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys* — One pair at Lékoní (*bohndorffi*)

Long-legged Pipit *Anthus pallidiventris* — Common in open areas (*pallidiventris*)

Short-tailed Pipit *Anthus brachyurus* — Seen in impressive numbers at Lékoní, and some of the group even managed to see it on the ground (*leggei*)

Fringillidae

Black-faced Canary *Crithagra capistrata* — Excellent views of a male in Booué (*capistrata*)

Black-throated Canary *Crithagra atrogularis* — Seen at Lékoní (*lwenerum*)

Yellow-fronted Canary *Crithagra mozambica* — Fairly common at Lékoní (*tando*)

Emberizidae

Cabanis's Bunting *Emberiza cabanisi* — Good looks at Lékoní (cognominata)

Red-capped Mangabey *Cercocebus torquatus* —

Seen at Loango

Moustached Monkey *Cercopithecus cephus* — Good views at Lope

Putty-nosed Monkey (Greater Spot-nosed Monkey) *Cercopithecus nictitans* — Good views at Lope

Crowned Monkey *Cercopithecus pogonias* — Good views at Loango

Grey-cheeked Mangabey *Lophocebus [albigena] albigena* — Seen at Lope

Northern Talapoin *Miopithecus ogouensis* — Seen by Ken at Ipassa

Black Colobus *Colobus satanas* — Seen at Lope

African Pygmy Squirrel *Myosciurus pumilio* — Seen and photographed by Paul at Ipassa

African Giant Squirrel *Protoxerus stangeri* — Seen en route to Makokou

Hammer-headed Fruit Bat *Hypsignathus monstrosus* — Seen in flight at Ipassa and perched at Lambaréne

African Palm Civet *Nandinia binotata* — Great views at Ipassa

Common Slender Mongoose [S M] *Galerella [sanguinea] sanguinea* — Brief views at Lope

Long-nosed Mongoose *Xenogale naso* — Good but fairly brief views at Loango

Red River Hog *Potamochoerus porcus* — Fantastic encounters at Lope

Common Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* — Several seen at Loango

Water Chevrotain *Hyemoschus aquaticus* — Incredible views of a mother and baby at Loango

Forest Buffalo *Synacerus [caffer] nanus* — Many at Lope and a few at Loango

Central Bushbuck [B] *Tragelaphus [scriptus] phaleratus* — Seen at Lope

Western Sitatunga [S] *Tragelaphus [spekii] gratus* — Seen at Loango

Peters's Duiker *Cephalophus callipygus* — Seen at Lope

Black-fronted Red Duiker *Cephalophus [nigrifrons] nigrifrons* — Seen briefly at Lope

ANNOTATED LIST OF MAMMALS RECORDED

Western Tree Hyrax *Dendrohyrax dorsalis* — Heard at Ipassa

Forest Elephant *Loxodonta cyclotis* — Seen well at Lope and Loango

West African Manatee *Trichechus senegalensis* — Seen by some at Loango

Milne-Edwards's Potto [P] *Perodicticus [potto] edwardsi* — Excellent views at Ipassa

Demidoff's Dwarf Galago *Galago demidovii* — Excellent views at Ipassa

Thomas's Dwarf Galago *Galagothomasi* — Seen briefly at Ipassa

African River Martin colony © Paul Noakes

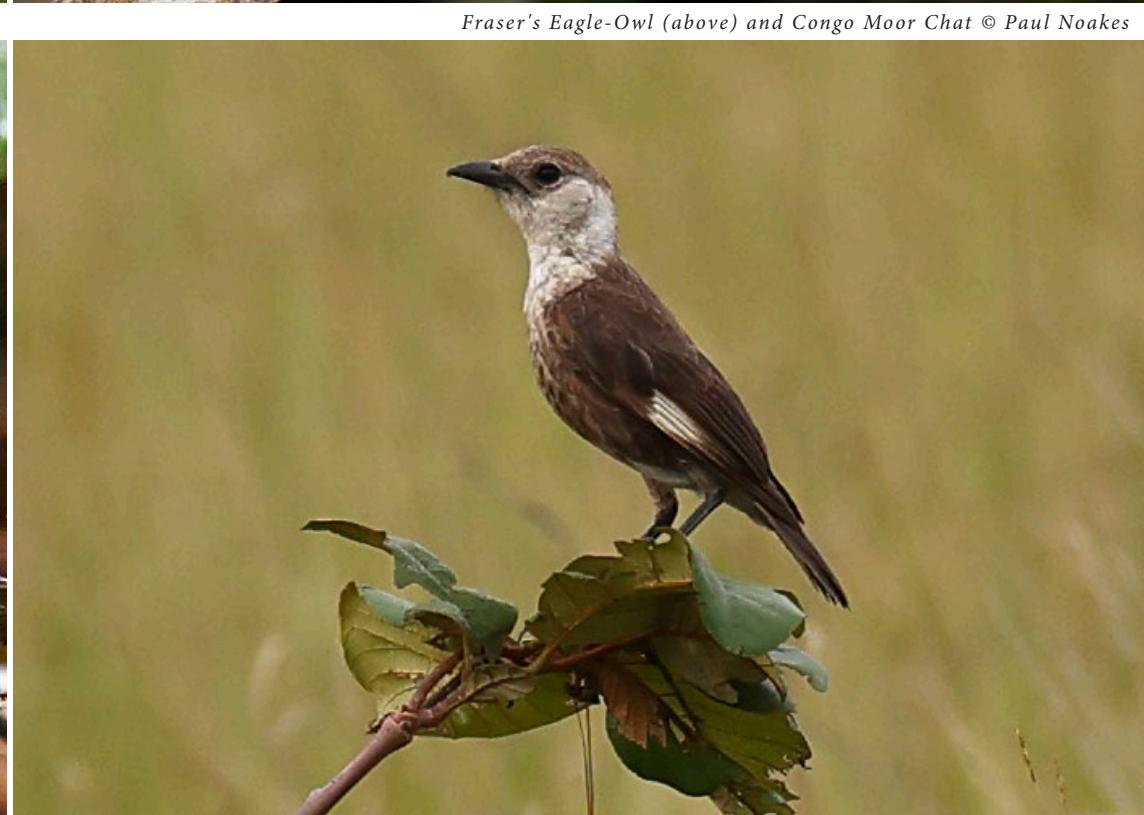




Dja River Warbler © Jonathan Newman (above) and Forest Robin © Paul Noakes



Fraser's Eagle-Owl (above) and Congo Moor Chat © Paul Noakes





White-backed Night Heron (above) and Hartlaub's Duck © Jonathan Newman



Slender-snouted Crocodile (above) and young Grey Ground Thrush © Jonathan Newman





Rosy Bee-eater (above) and Little Grey Flycatcher © Paul Noakes



Water Chevrotain (above) and Ansorge's Greenbul © Paul Noakes

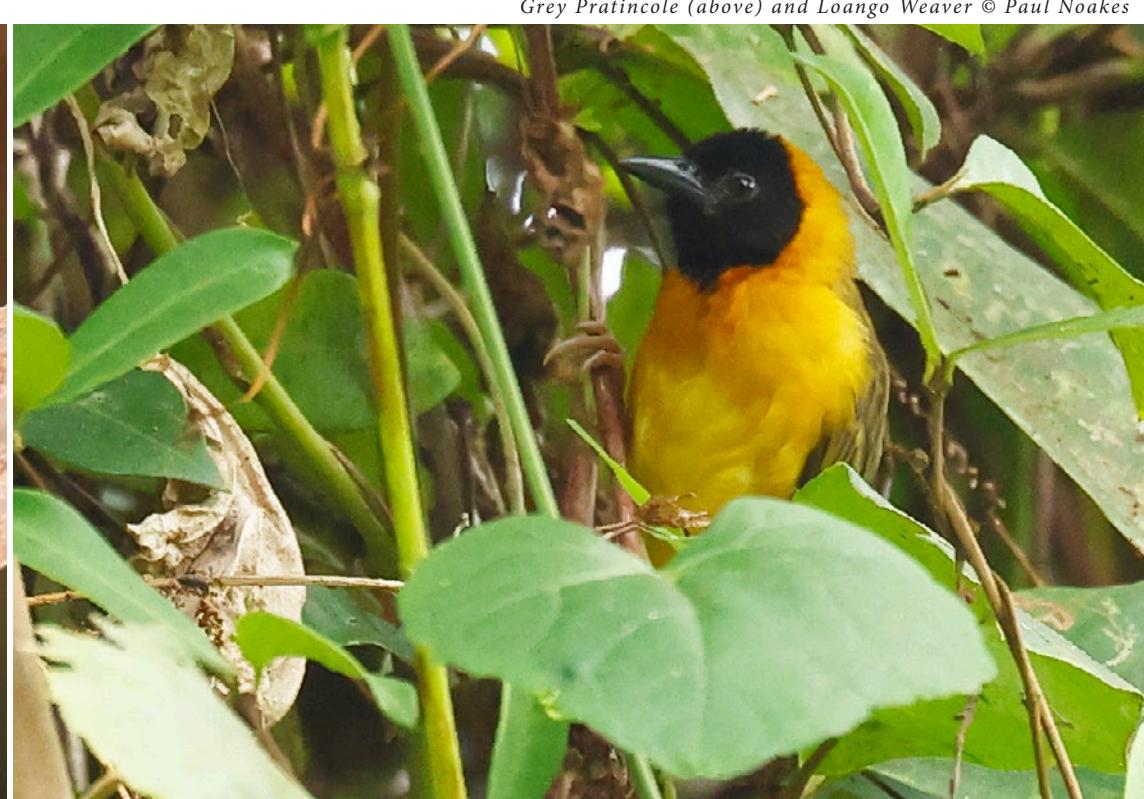
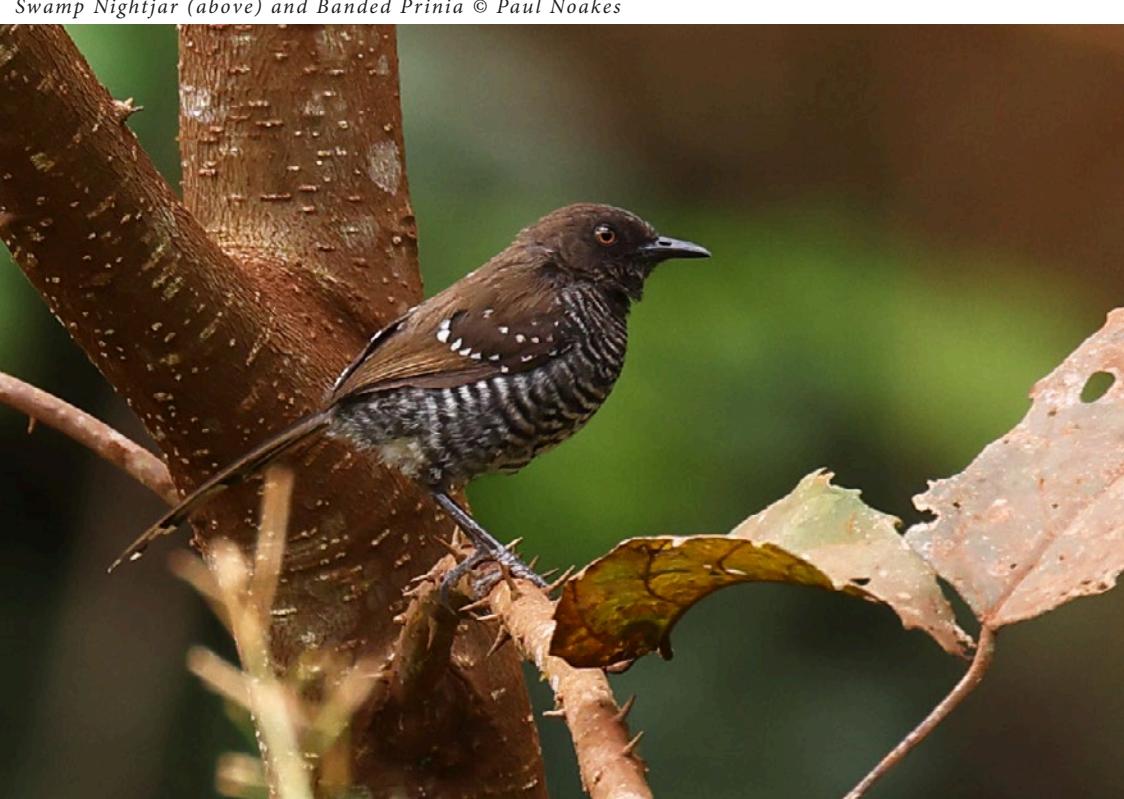




Swamp Nightjar (above) and Banded Prinia © Paul Noakes



Grey Pratincole (above) and Loango Weaver © Paul Noakes





African River Martin © Jonathan Newman



African River Martin © Paul Noakes



