

# PEREGRINE BIRD TOURS

## RWANDA

4TH JULY – 18TH JULY 2005

### TOUR REPORT

**LEADERS:** Chris Doughty and Herbert Byaruhanga

One of the main reasons for visiting the East African country of Rwanda, was to observe as many as possible, of the Albertine Rift endemics. We were not to be disappointed; we saw a total of 20 Albertine Rift endemics, during the tour. We visited three outstanding national parks; the savanna grasslands of Akagera National Park, in eastern Rwanda, the seemingly endless rainforests of Nyungwe National Park, in the southwest of the country, and our final destination, was the bamboo clad slopes of the Volcanoes National Park, in the northwest. Our first destination was the vast lakes and savanna grasslands of Akagera National Park. We spent three days birding the network of dirt tracks that crisscross the park; birding highlights here included the endangered Madagascar Squacco Heron, the near threatened and extremely range-restricted Red-faced Barbet, Long-tailed Cisticola, Grauer's Warbler and the White-headed Black Chat. Mammal highlights; included Marsh Mongoose, Klipspringer, Oribi and Southern Tree Hyrax. The Nyungwe National Park, is part of one of the largest forest blocks in Africa, and was crammed full of Albertine Rift endemics and other very special birds, and birding highlights here included the near threatened Mountain Buzzard, the uncommon Cassin's Hawk-Eagle, the superb Great Blue Turaco, the range-restricted Rwenzori Turaco, the very shy Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo, the range-restricted Rwenzori Nightjar, the particularly uncommon Whalberg's Honeybird, the shy Red-throated Alethe, Kungwe, Collared and Black-throated Apalis', Grauer's Rush-Warbler, Grauer's Warbler, White-eyed Black Flycatcher, Rwenzori Batis, Archer's Robin-Chat, Blue-headed, Purple-breasted and Regal Sunbirds, both Ludher's and Doherty's Bushshrikes, Strange Weaver and Dusky Crimsonwing. The undoubted mammal highlight was a superb family party of Chimpanzee feeding in their favourite fig tree. Our final destination was the Volcanoes National Park, where we saw, what was without a doubt, the undisputed highlight of the tour, one whole hour, with a family party of Eastern Gorillas, in their natural habitat. It was a deeply moving experience for all of us. The birding highlight of the Volcanoes National Park, was observing seven species of swallows, all observed on the same day. The tour was undoubtedly a great success and this can be attributed to a great group of birders and exceptional local guides.

Following a long and tiring flight, and an unexpected day in Doha, the capital city of Qatar, we landed at Kigali Airport, in Rwanda, around mid-day, but unfortunately, a day behind schedule. Quickly clearing customs, we spent the afternoon driving to Akagera National Park, for a three night stay. We had enough time to do a little roadside birding along the way, and this produced Little Grebe, Pink-backed Pelican, Black-headed

Heron, Great and Western Cattle Egrets, Hamerkop, Yellow-billed Stork, Sacred Ibis, Yellow-billed Duck, Yellow-billed Kite, Palm-nut Vulture, Grey Kestrel, Red-eyed Dove, Bare-faced Go-away-bird, White-browed Coucal, Speckled Mousebird, Pied Kingfisher, Angola Swallow, African Pied Wagtail, Dark-capped Bulbul, great looks at the range-restricted White-headed Black Chat, Bronze Sunbird, lots of beautiful Grey-backed Fiscals, Fork-tailed Drongo, Pied Crow, Greater Blue-eared and Ruppell's Long-tailed Starlings, Northern Grey-headed Sparrow, Baglafaecht Weaver and Yellow-fronted Canary. In the park we saw our first mammals, we came across a troop of Olive Baboons, and a Bushbuck.

The lakes and savannas of Akagera National Park are home to a wide variety of both game and birds. The park provided us with an excellent introduction to the many widespread birds that occur in Rwanda. On our first full day in the park, birding in the savanna areas of the park produced Bateleur, a splendid African Harrier-Hawk, Hildebrandt's Francolin, Red-necked Spurfowl, Helmeted Guineafowl, Ring-necked Dove, Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove and a Verreaux's Eagle-Owl, sitting in the old nest of a Hamerkop! Both Little and White-rumped Swifts, Blue-naped Mousebird, Lilac-breasted Roller, Common Scimiterbill, African Grey and Crowned Hornbills, Spot-flanked Barbet, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Red-rumped Swallow, Grassland and Plain-backed Pipits, Sooty Chat, Buff-bellied Warbler, Red-faced Crombec, Croaking and Trilling Cisticolas, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Pale Flycatcher, Chinspot Batis, African Paradise-Flycatcher, White-winged Tit, African Penduline-Tit, Marico, Scarlet-chested and Collared Sunbirds, the stunningly attractive Black-headed Gonolek, Slate-coloured Boubou, Brubru, Black-crowned Tchagra, the stunning Violet-backed Starling, Holub's Golden and Red-headed Weavers, the very uncommon Orange-winged Pytillia, Red-cheeked Cordonbleu and Red-billed Firefinch. In sharp contrast, the dams and the lakes produced interesting wetland birds such as White-breasted Cormorant, African Darter, the impressive Goliath Heron, Little Egret, Egyptian and Spur-winged Geese, Knob-billed Duck, Red-billed Teal, the superb African Fish-Eagle, African Jacana, Water Thick-knee, Spur-winged and African Wattled Lapwings and Grey-headed Kingfisher. An interesting mix of mammals including Tantalus Monkey, Hippopotamus, Giraffe, Topi, Impala, Defassa Waterbuck, Burchell's Zebra and Common Warthog.

On our second full day in the park, birding along the fine network of roads in the park, produced a large number of exciting new birds, which included Hadada Ibis, Black-shouldered Kite, Lizard Buzzard, Wahlberg's Eagle, Coqui Francolin, Black-bellied Bustard, Brown Parrot, the attractive Eastern Grey Plantain-eater, Levillant's Cuckoo, Woodland and African Pygmy-Kingfisher, African Hoopoe, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Black-collared Barbet, both Rufous-naped and Flappet Larks, Lesser Striped Swallow, the beautiful, White-headed Saw-wing, Yellow-throated Longclaw, the diminutive Wing-snapping Cisticola, Grey-backed Camaroptera, the very attractive African Black-headed Oriole, Yellow-billed Oxpecker, Spectacled and Black-necked Weavers, Green-winged Pytillia and a fine Village Indigobird. New mammals today included, African Buffalo,

Common Warthog, Marsh Mongoose, Southern Tree Hyrax, Oribi, Klipspringer and Scrub Hare.

An afternoon boat-trip on Lake Iherma, the largest lake inside the park, provided us with close looks at a heron colony, on an island in the lake. New birds here included Long-tailed Cormorant, a single Intermediate Egret, many Common Squacco Herons, a solitary Madagascar Squacco Heron, several Striated Herons, a single Rufous-bellied Heron, which is a particularly uncommon bird, several Black-crowned Night-Herons, good numbers of African Open-billed Storks, an African Marsh-Harrier, a few delightful Black Crakes, Malachite Kingfisher, Little Bee-eater, a couple of Lesser Swamp-Warblers, several range-restricted and habitat-specific, Swamp Flycatchers and a few Red-chested Sunbirds.

Once again, we spent the following morning birding in Akagera National Park, where birding highlights included, a Brown Snake-Eagle, a superb Long-crested Eagle, Laughing Dove, a couple of uncommon Red-faced Barbets, a White-browed Scrub-Robin was seen very well, we observed a close pair of Green-capped Eremomelas, the decidedly uncommon Long-tailed Cisticola, Tawny-flanked Prinia, the extremely range-restricted and uncommon Pale Wren-Warbler, small groups of both Arrow-marked and Black-lored Babblers, Tropical Boubou and a splendid Grey-headed Bush-shrike. In the afternoon, we drove back to Kigali, and we admired a couple of Augur Buzzards, along the way. A birding stop at a roadside lake, produced a splendid Little Bittern, Eurasian Moorhen and a flock of Bronze Mannikins. Close to Kigali, a roadside stop at a pond in agricultural land, produced a solitary Grey Heron.

Our first birding stop the following morning, was at Nyarutarama Dam, in Kigali, where new birds included a solitary Marabou Stork, dozens of White-faced Whistling-Ducks, a rather shy Grey-capped Warbler and a fine male Yellow-backed Weaver. We made a quick stop at a small heron breeding colony, in the grounds of a police station, on the outskirts of Kigali, and here we also found African Spoonbills nesting in the trees and a solitary Hooded Vulture circled overhead. We then did a fair amount of birding at the Nyabarongo River, on the edge of Kigali. Unfortunately, this huge area of papyrus swamp was being converted into a sugarcane plantation. With heavy hearts, we did some birding in a small wetland area that was not converted into sugarcane and new birds for the tour included Lanner Falcon, a pair of Long-toed Lapwings, Wire-tailed Swallow, a pair of Cape Wagtails, a Carruther's Cisticola and a female Slender-billed Weaver.

We then drove to Nyungwe National Park and arrived in the late afternoon, just in time to do a little roadside birding, amongst the rainforest. Our first stop was at a small swamp, where in no time at all, we managed to coax in, our main target bird, the notoriously difficult Graur's Rush-Warbler. Shortly afterwards, an African Black Duck flew past us, and continued along a small stream. A Rwenzori Turaco, showed well, as did a Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, a Plain Martin flew overhead, as did several Black Saw-wings. An Olive Thrush perched in the canopy, we saw a couple of African Stonechats, a

Chubb's Cisticola sang to us from the shrubbery, we had great looks at the attractive Mountain Masked Apalis, a Yellow-crowned Canary flew around us, a Streaky Seedeater, put in a brief appearance, and a pair of White-naped Ravens, were scavenging along the edge of the road. On arrival at our very fine lodge, an African Dusky Flycatcher was waiting to greet us. The only new mammal today was a splendid Rwenzori Red Duiker, which showed amazingly well, just inside Nyungwe National Park.

Next we enjoyed a full days birding in the verdant montane forests of Nyungwe National Park; this attractive forest is full of birds and is also one of the largest tracks of forest, on the African continent. New birds came thick and fast, we had a couple of good sightings of the scarce Mountain Buzzard, we found a few perched African Green-Pigeons, we were spellbound by the superb Great Blue Turacos, we had a quick flight view of the Black-billed Turaco, a Scarce Swift flew above our heads, the attractive Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird showed well, as did a Grey Cuckoo-shrike. Yellow-whiskered and Olive-breasted Mountain Greenbuls both obliged us with prolonged views, a White-starred Robin, popped up, right in front of us, the very uncommon Red-throated Alethe, begrudgingly, showed itself, a male White-bellied Robin-Chat was far more accommodating, a Cinnamon Bracken-Warbler showed surprisingly well, Red-faced Woodland-Warblers were plentiful, the uncommon Grauer's Warbler, was greatly appreciated, a Chestnut-throated Apalis was observed well in the canopy above our heads, a pair of Collared Apalis, were feeding a fledgling, which had only recently left the nest and the particularly attractive Black-throated Apalis, was greatly admired. White-eyed Slaty-Flycatchers proved to be common in the area, and we were very pleased to have great looks at the decidedly uncommon Yellow-eyed Black Flycatcher, the Rwenzori Batis proved very co-operative and a pair of energetic White-tailed Blue-Flycatchers showed well. We regularly encountered small groups of African Yellow-White-eyes, a superb Purple-breasted Sunbird, showed off its fine plumage for us, we frequently came across the Rwenzori Double-collared Sunbird, the stunning Regal Sunbird was less common and we saw a few Variable Sunbirds, the race here has an orange breast. We enjoyed watching a Ludher's Bushshrike, a Mountain Black Boubou popped into view, along with a Northern Puffback and the stunning Doherty's Bushshrike showed unbelievably well, as this is usually a very skulking bird. We saw flocks of Waller's Starling, a few less common Sharpe's Starlings, a pair of range-restricted Strange Weavers and we found a nesting pair, of the beautiful and rarely seen Dusky Crimsonwing. The day was rounded off perfectly, with very close flight views of a pair of Rwenzori Nightjars, just on dusk. New mammals today included the diminutive Bohm's Bush Squirrel, a single Carruther's Mountain-Squirrel, the very attractive L'Hoest's Monkey and just on dusk, a Side-striped Jackal walked across the track in front of our bus.

The following morning we were up early and drove to the Cyamudongo Forest section of Nyungwe National Park, specifically, to go Chimpanzee trekking! It was quite a walk to reach the band of Chimpanzees, and not all of us made it, a couple of group members

opting to turn back. However, for those who did make it, the rewards were outstanding; with prolonged, very close looks at a family party, which was made up of a very large alpha male, several adult females and a few young Chimps. It was a real treat, and we greatly enjoyed watching their antics, as they fed in one of their favorite fig trees, as we experienced uninterrupted views of this rarely seen ape, in their natural habitat.

While watching the chimpanzees and during the return, very slow, and uphill walk, we added several new birds for the tour. They included great looks at the attractive Black Cuckoo, a few gigantic Black-and-white-casqued Hornbills, a few Grey-throated Barbets, an extremely obliging Slender-billed Greenbul, a couple of very attractive Montane Orioles and large flocks of Slender-billed Starlings. We also enjoyed watching one more new mammal, when we were entertained by a large troop of Dent's Mona Monkeys.

In the afternoon, we undertook a short walk along the edge of a stretch of forest in Nyungwe National Park, where we very much enjoyed the surprise find of a Wahlberg's Honeybird. Other new birds for the tour included the highly localised Kungwe Apalis, a Mackinnon's Fiscal, a nesting Black-billed Weaver, the beautiful Red-faced Crimsonwing, the recently split Kandt's Waxbill, a pair of Thick-billed Seedeaters and an African Golden-breasted Bunting. We also saw a new mammal on the afternoon walk, a solitary Blue Monkey.

Our final day in Nyungwe National Park, was spent in tall montane forest, where the most sought after birds of the area were to be found, and one by one, we slowly prized them out of the forest, and on to our ever growing trip list. These included a perched Cassin's Hawk-Eagle, a rather skittish Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo, great looks at a female African Emerald Cuckoo and an African Wood-Owl was disturbed from its daytime roost, by a party of L'Hoest's Monkeys, and flew onto a branch, directly above the walking trail. We all saw it very well, before it flew off, deeper into the forest. We had an all too brief look at the splendid Archer's Robin-Chat, a lucky few, got to see a Kivu Ground-Thrush, Karen got a quick look at a Mountain Illadopsis, we saw a few Stripe-breasted Tits, we added three new species of sunbirds, Blue-throated, Olive-bellied and Western Olive, and we enjoyed great looks at a couple of very obliging Grey-headed Negrofinches. We also added one new mammal, the Rwenzori Sun Squirrel. We had a little more excitement today, with the added attraction of great looks at a stunning looking, green and black, Great Lakes Bush Viper.

The following day, we set off on the long drive to the Volcanoes National Park. We broke the long drive with a birding stop at the Kamiranzovu River, near Tyaza. New birds for the tour included a large flock of Fan-tailed Widowbirds, a very obliging Northern Fiscal, a tiny Siffling Cisticola and a single Speckled Pigeon, sat on overhead telegraph wires. Continuing our journey, we came to a screeching halt, late in the morning, close to the town of Kibingo, when we spotted two Grey Crowned Cranes, feeding in farmland, close to the road. Here, we also found several more new birds for the tour, a single White-browed Robin-Chat, a single Southern Red Bishop, a single

Common Waxbill, a small flock of Black-and-white Mannikins, a single Brimstone Canary and a single Western Citril. Following a very fine lunch, we continued our journey northwards, and the only bird of note, was a Rock Martin, which flew alongside the bus, at one time.

The Volcanoes National Park is one of the world's best-known areas for gorilla trekking, and we had all decided to go in search of these marvelous creatures. Our wonderful safari ground operator, pulled some strings for us, and we managed to get to visit the nearest of the habituated Gorilla groups. This meant that we did not have to walk very far through the thick tangle of vines, nettles and bamboo, that is the Volcanoes National Park. Helped along by our expert porters and gorilla guides, in no time at all, we were all enjoying one of the most amazing wildlife spectacles, on the planet! Very patiently, our expert guides introduced us to the various family members. The time spent amongst these immense, but placid creatures, deep in the forest, is a wonderful, spirit-lifting experience, that everybody with an interest in nature, should experience at least once in their lifetime. Most of the time, the gorilla group members were oblivious of our presence, mainly interested in eating, or resting. That is, apart from the time the huge silver-backed male, charged through our group, just to remind us who the big boss really was! Something that none of us will ever forget, what a moment. The hour passed by very quickly, and sadly, hundreds of photos later, and with our minds full of unforgettable memories, it was time to leave.

In the afternoon, we did some birding in the grounds of our very fine lodge, on the edge of the Volcanoes National Park. New birds included a female Cardinal Woodpecker, a female Black Cuckoo-shrike, several very confident Cape Robin-Chats, the beautiful Mountain Yellow Warbler, a female Yellow-mantled Widowbird and a Yellow-bellied Waxbill.

We spent the following morning birding in the forested uplands of the Volcanoes National Park, where we added three new species to our ever growing trip list. The first, was a Dusky Turtle-Dove, this was followed by good looks at the Green-headed Sunbird, and the third, was the very attractive Red-headed Robin-Chat. In the afternoon, we birded Lake Karago, a small lake, close to Mukamira. Here we found the last three birds of the tour; a pair of Hottentot Teal, several Knob-billed Coots and three Three-banded Plovers.

Under the benevolent rule of President Kagame, a new Rwanda has been built, which is determined to remain peaceful and, with its friendly, and welcoming inhabitants, win the tourists back to 'The Land of a Thousand Hills'.

## **SYSTEMATIC LIST**

### *GREBES PODICIPEDIDAE*

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* A few birds were observed at a small wetland during the drive to Akagera National Park, plus a few more, inside the park.

PELICANS *PELECANIDAE*

**Pink-backed Pelican** *Pelecanus rufescens* Small numbers observed at a number of wetlands throughout the tour.

CORMORANTS *PHALACROCORACIDAE*

**White-breasted Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax lucidus* Large numbers present in some wetland areas.

**Long-tailed Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax africanus* Common throughout all wetland areas.

DARTERS *ANHINGIDAE*

**African Darter** *Anhinga rufa* Commonly observed at Lake Iherma, in Akagera National Park.

HERONS, EGRETS and BITTERNs *ARDEIDAE*

**Black-headed Heron** *Ardea melanocephala* By far the commonest species of heron in Rwanda, it was present in a number of different habitats, often occurring far from water.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* Small numbers present in most wetland areas.

**Goliath Heron** *Ardea goliath* We enjoyed a few good sightings of this monstrous species of heron, at Lake Iherma, in Akagera National Park.

**Great Egret** *Ardea albus* Small numbers scattered throughout most wetland areas.

**Intermediate egret** *Egretta intermedia* A single pair were nesting in the large heron colony, on the small island in Lake Iherma, in Akagera National Park.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* Small numbers present throughout most wetland areas.

**Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* Common and conspicuous throughout the whole country.

**Common Squacco Heron** *Ardeola ralloides* Small numbers were nesting in the large heron colony, on the small island in Lake Iherma, in Akagera National Park.

**Madagascar Squacco Heron** *Ardeola idea* An uncommon, non-breeding, winter visitor to Rwanda, from breeding grounds in Madagascar. We were very fortunate to observe one of these birds, at the large heron colony, on the small island in Lake Iherma, in Akagera National Park. This species is classified as Endangered by Birdlife International. It is estimated that the population is between 1,300-4,000 individuals, and unfortunately, declining.

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striatus* Large numbers were present at Lake Iherma, in Akagera National Park.

**Rufous-bellied Heron** *Ardeola rufiventris* A solitary individual of this very uncommon species of heron was observed at the large heron colony, on the small island, in Lake Iherma, in Akagera National Park. A second bird was observed the

following day at a small wetland, close to Nyankorg, during the drive to Kigali.  
This species is at the northern end of its range in Rwanda.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* Small numbers were nesting in the large heron colony, on the small island at Lake Iherma, in Akagera National Park. This species is an uncommon bird in Rwanda.

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus* An adult bird flushed from cover at a small wetland, close to Nyankorg, during the drive to Kigali.

#### HAMERKOP SCOPIDAE

**Hamerkop** *Scopus umbretta* This bizarre, but common species, is in a family all of its own. We observed it in most of the wetlands we visited.

#### STORKS CICONIIDAE

**Yellow-billed Stork** *Mycteria ibis* We enjoyed many good, close sightings, of this attractive species of stork.

**African Open-billed Stork** *Anastromus lamelligerus* Small numbers present in several wetland areas.

**Marabou Stork** *Leptoptilos crumeniferus* A single bird was observed well in the scope, at Nyarutarama Dam, in Kigali.

#### IBIS and SPOONBILLS THRESKIORNITHIDAE

**Sacred Ibis** *Threskiornis aethiopicus* Small numbers present in most wetland areas.

**Hadada Ibis** *Bostrychia hagedash* Frequently encountered throughout the tour.

**African Spoonbill** *Platalea alba* We found several nesting pairs, in a small heron colony, in the grounds of a police station, on the outskirts of Kigali. A single bird was also observed at the nearby Nyabarongo River.

#### SWANS, GEESE and DUCKS ANATIDAE

**White-faced Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna viduata* Up to 100 or so birds were present at Nyarutarama Dam, in Kigali.

**Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiacus* Small numbers were observed on dams, in Akagera National Park.

**Spur-winged Goose** *Plectropterus gambensis* Small numbers of this species were also observed at small dams, in Akagera National Park.

**Knob-billed Duck** *Sarkidiornis melanotos* Small numbers of this species were also observed at a large dam in Akagera National Park. A few more were also present at Nyarutarama Dam, in Kigali.

**African Black Duck** *Anas sparsa* A single bird of this uncommon species, flew right past the group, and disappeared along a small stream, in Nyungwe National Park.

**Yellow-billed Duck** *Anas undulata* Good numbers were present at a number of wetlands we visited.

**Red-billed Teal** *Anas erythrorhyncha* A family party were observed at a large dam in Akagera National Park.

**Hottentot Teal** *Anas hottentota* A pair of birds were present at Lake Karago, close to Mukamira.

KITES, HAWKS and EAGLES *ACCIPITRIDAE*

**Black-shouldered Kite** *Elanus caeruleus* Seen well on a couple of occasions, in Akagera National Park.

**Yellow-billed Kite** *Milvus aegyptius* This common intra-African migrant was observed on most days of the tour.

**African Fish-Eagle** *Haliaeetus vocifer* The call of this splendid raptor is the sound of the African bush; it was a common bird in Akagera National Park.

**Palm-nut Vulture** *Gypohierax angolensis* It was pleasing to find that this normally uncommon species of vulture, proved to be fairly common in Rwanda.

**Hooded Vulture** *Necrosyrtes monachus* Good numbers present throughout the larger towns of the country.

**Brown Snake-Eagle** *Circaetus cinereus* Observed in flight, on one occasion, in Akagera National Park.

**Bateleur** *Terathopius eandatus* We enjoyed good sightings of this attractive species of raptor, in both Akagera and the Volcanoes National Parks.

**African Marsh-Harrier** *Circus ranivorus* We enjoyed a few good sightings, in Akagera National Park.

**African Harrier-Hawk** *Polyboroides typus* We enjoyed a prolonged sighting of this very interesting bird-of-prey, in Akagera National Park.

**Lizard Buzzard** *Kaupifalco monogrammicus* We saw this species well, on a couple of occasions in Akagera National Park.

**Mountain Buzzard** *Buteo oreophilus* We enjoyed two good sightings of this uncommon and range restricted species. Both sightings took place in the Nyungwe National Park. This species is classified as Near Threatened by Birdlife International. It is estimated that the population is between 670 - 6,700 individuals, and unfortunately, declining.

**Augur Buzzard** *Buteo augur* We had many good looks at this common, but very attractive, large species of raptor.

**Wahlberg's Eagle** *Aquila wahlbergi* A single bird was observed in flight, on one occasion, during our time in Akagera National Park. Johan August Wahlberg (1810-1856) was a Swedish naturalist and collector. He traveled and collected widely in southern Africa between 1838 and 1856, sending thousands of specimens home to Sweden. He was exploring the headwaters of the Limpopo River, when like Prince Eugenio Ruspoli, he was killed by a wounded elephant.

**Cassin's Hawk-Eagle** *Spizaetus africanus* We enjoyed super looks at a solitary bird of this uncommon species, during our time in the Nyungwe National Park. John

Cassin (1813-1869) was a Quaker businessman and the unpaid Curator of Ornithology at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia for over a quarter of a century. He is regarded as one of the giants of American ornithology. He described 198 species of birds, many of them from his own expeditions, around the world.

**Long-crested Eagle** *Lophaetus accipitalis* Another spectacular raptor, which proved to be common, throughout Rwanda.

#### CARACARAS and FALCONS *FALCONIDAE*

**Grey Kestrel** *Falco ardosiaceus* This attractive species of falcon was seen well, close to Kabuga, during the drive to Akagera National Park. We then enjoyed an even better sighting of a second bird eating a small bird, high in a roadside tree, not far from Nyankorg, during the drive from Akagera National Park to Kigali.

**Lanner Falcon** *Falco biarmicus* This uncommon falcon was observed on two separate occasions; one was seen in flight, close to the Nyabarongo River, during the drive to Nyungwe National Park, and the second, much better sighting, was of a perched bird, not far from the Volcanoes National Park.

#### PARTRIDGES and PHEASANTS *PHASIANIDAE*

**Coqui Francolin** *Francolinus coqui* This uncommon species was observed only once, we saw a pair of birds very well, in Akagera National Park.

**Hildebrandt's Francolin** *Francolinus hildebrandti* A single bird showed particularly well, in Akagera National Park. Johann Maria Hildebrandt (1847-1881) was a German who collected in East Africa, Madagascar and the Comoro Island from 1872 until his death. He was also interested in languages and in 1876 published *Zeitschrift für Ethiopia*.

**Red-necked Spurfowl** *Francolinus afer* A common species, which we saw well on a few occasions, during our time in Akagera National Park.

#### GUINEAFOWL *NUMIDIDAE*

**Helmeted Guineafowl** *Numida meleagris* We observed a small number, in Akagera National Park.

#### CRANES *GRUIDAE*

**Grey Crowned Crane** *Balearica regulorum* We observed a pair of this very attractive species of crane, in farmland close to Kibingo, during the drive to the Volcanoes National Park. There was also, what appeared to be a hand-raised individual, in the grounds of our lodge, in the Volcanoes National Park.

#### RAILS, GALLINULES and COOTS *RALLIDAE*

**Black Crake** *Amaurornis flavirostris* Observed very well on several occasions, during our time in Akagera National Park.

**Eurasian Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* Seen well on one occasion, at a small wetland, close to Nyankorg, during the drive from Akagera National Park to Kigali.

**Red-knobbed Coot** *Fulica cristata* Good numbers were present at Lake Karago, close to Mukamira, on the last day of the tour.

BUSTARDS *OTIDIDAE*

**Black-bellied Bustard** *Eupodotis melanogaster* We observed a female very well, on one occasion, in Akagera National Park.

JACANAS *JACANIDAE*

**African Jacana** *Actophilornis africanus* Commonly observed throughout most wetland areas we visited.

THICK-KNEES *BURHINIDAE*

**Water Thick-knee** *Burhinus vermiculatus* We enjoyed a few good sightings of this species, during our time in Akagera National Park.

LAPWINGS and PLOVERS *CHARADRIIDAE*

**Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus* We saw this species very well, in Akagera National Park.

**Long-toed Lapwing** *Vanellus crassirostris* Always associated with water, we saw a single bird very well, at the Nyabarongo River, on the outskirts of Kigali.

**African Wattled Lapwing** *Vanellus senegallus* A common grassland species, which we saw well in Akagera National Park.

**Three-banded Plover** *Charadrius tricollaris* A common and widespread African plover, we observed three birds at close quarters, along the shore of Lake Karago, close to the township of Mukamira.

PIGEONS and DOVES *COLUMBIDAE*

**Speckled Pigeon** *Columba guinea* We enjoyed several good sightings of this attractive species.

**Dusky Turtle-Dove** *Streptopelia lugens* This highland species, was seen very well in the Volcanoes National Park. It is an uncommon bird in Rwanda.

**Red-eyed Dove** *Streptopelia semitorquata* Seen on almost every day of the tour.

**Ring-necked Dove** *Streptopelia capicola* Commonly encountered throughout Akagera National Park.

**Laughing Dove** *Streptopelia senegalensis* Small numbers present in Akagera National Park.

**Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove** *Turtur chalcospilos* Proved to be common in Akagera National Park.

**African Green-Pigeon** *Treron calva* We enjoyed several good sightings in Nyungwe National Park.

PARROTS *PSITTACIDAE*

**Brown Parrot** *Poicephalus meyeri* Small numbers observed in Akagera National Park.

#### TURACOS MUSOPHAGIDAE

**Great Blue Turaco** *Corythaeola cristata* This huge species of turaco was seen very well in Nyungwe National Park.

**Black-billed Turaco** *Tauraco livingstonii* This uncommon species of turaco, was observed in flight, on one occasion, in Nyungwe National Park.

**Rwenzori Turaco** *Tauraco johnstoni* This Albertine Rift endemic is common within its restricted range, we saw it very well, in the Nyungwe National Park.

**Bare-faced Go-away-bird** *Corythaixoides personata* This range restricted species was seen well on several occasions.

**Eastern Grey Plantain-eater** *Crinifer xonurus* Seen well, on a couple of occasions, while birding in Akagera National Park.

#### CUCKOOS CUCULIDAE

**Levaillant's Cuckoo** *Oxylophus levaillantii* We saw this uncommon intra-African migrant only once, in flight, in Akagera National Park. Francois Le Vaillant (1753-1824) was a French traveler, explorer, collector and naturalist. He was born in Dutch Guiana (Suriname), the son of the French consul there. Birds attracted his interest from an early age and he spent a lot of his time collecting specimens. As a result, he became acquainted with many of Europe's private collectors. He went to the Cape Province of South Africa, in 1781, in the employ of the Dutch East India Company, the first real ornithologist to visit the area. There he both explored and collected specimens, eventually publishing, a six volume book, *Historie Naturelle des Oiseaux d'Africa*, which is a classic of African ornithology. This work was published between the years 1801 and 1806, in Paris, and contained 144 colour-printed engravings. Le Vaillant sent over 2,000 skins of birds to Jacob Temminck, who financed his expeditions.

**Black Cuckoo** *Cuculus clamosus* This more common intra-African migrant was seen very well, on one occasion, while watching the Chimpanzees in the Cyamudongo Forest section of Nyungwe National Park. It was an adult female, of the distinctive *gabonensis* race.

**Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo** *Cercocoaccyx montanus* This uncommon and very elusive species, was eventually coaxed out into the open, in Nyungwe National Park.

**African Emerald Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx cupreus* This very beautiful and uncommon intra-African migrant, was observed very well on two separate occasions. Regrettably, both sightings were of the much drabber female. The first sighting occurred in Nyungwe National Park, and the second, in the Volcanoes National Park.

**White-browed Coucal** *Centropus supercillosus* This large species of cuckoo, proved to be common in Akagera National Park.

#### OWLS STRIGIDAE

**Verreaux's Eagle-Owl** *Bubo lacteus* We very much enjoyed watching one of these huge owls, roosting in the old nest of a Hamerkop, in daylight hours, while we were birding in Akagera National Park. Jules Pierre Verreaux (1807-1873) was a French natural historian, a nephew of Delalande and married to the latter's sister. He was employed as an ornithologist and plant collector for the Musee of d'Histoire Naturelle, in Paris, which sent him to Australia in 1842. He returned to France, around 1851, with a collection of natural history specimens, reported to number 115,000 items.

**African Wood-Owl** *Strix woodfordii* We were extremely fortunate that a troop of L'Hoste's Monkeys disturbed one of these large species of owls from its daytime roost, in Nyungwe National Park. It suddenly flew into a large tree just a few meters away from us, directly above the trail we were walking!

#### NIGHTJARS and ALLIES *CAPRIMULGIDAE*

**Rwenzori Nightjar** *Caprimulgus ruwenzori* We watched a pair of these Albertine Rift endemics, when they responded very well to tape playback, in Nyungwe National Park.

#### SWIFTS *APODIDAE*

**Little Swift** *Apus affinis* This common species, was nesting under the eaves of our lodge in Akagera National Park. We also found a large colony nesting under a bridge over the Nyabarongo River, on the outskirts of Kigali.

**White-rumped Swift** *Apus caffer* Less common than the preceding species, they too were nesting under the eaves of our lodge, in Akagera National Park.

**Scarce Swift** *Schoutedenapus myoptilus* As the name would imply, this is a scarce species throughout its range, we were fortunate to find a solitary bird flying above the forest, in Nyungwe National Park.

#### MOUSEBIRDS *COLIIDAE*

**Speckled Mousebird** *Colius striatus* A common and conspicuous bird throughout Rwanda.

**Blue-naped Mousebird** *Urocolius macrourus* This species prefers drier areas of arid savanna, it proved to be fairly common in Akagera National Park.

#### KINGFISHERS *ALCEDINIDAE*

**Pied Kingfisher** *Ceryle rudis* Common and conspicuous throughout all wetland areas.

**Grey-headed Kingfisher** *Halcyon leucocephala* A common bird of savanna areas, we enjoyed a few good sightings in Akagera National Park.

**Woodland Kingfisher** *Halcyon senegalensis* We saw a single bird very well, on one occasion, in Akagera National Park.

**Malachite Kingfisher** *Alcedo cristata* We enjoyed scattered sightings, at a number of wetland areas we visited.

**African Pygmy Kingfisher** *Ispidina picta* This woodland species was observed on one occasion in Akagera National Park, and then we had a second, much better sighting, on the last day of the tour, in the Volcanoes National Park.

BEE-EATERS *MEROPIDAE*

**Little Bee-eater** *Merops pusillus* Small numbers observed around Lake Iherma, in Akagera National Park.

**Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater** *Merops oreobates* This extremely range restricted species, proved to be common at higher altitudes in Nyungwe and Volcanoes National Parks.

ROLLERS *CORACIIDAE*

**Lilac-breasted Roller** *Coracias canudata* A savanna species which we commonly encountered in Akagera National Park.

HOOPOES *UPUPIDAE*

**African Hoopoe** *Upupa africana* Seen well on a couple of occasions, in Akagera National Park.

WOODHOOPOES and SCIMITARBILLS *PHOENICULIDAE*

**Common Scimitarbill** *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas* Seen well on a number of occasions, in Akagera National Park.

HORNBILLS *BUCEROTIDAE*

**African Grey Hornbill** *Tockus masutus* Commonly encountered in Akagera National Park.

**Crowned Hornbill** *Tockus alboterminatus* This species of hornbill was observed in Akagera National Park and in the Cyamudongo section of Nyungwe National Park.

**Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill** *Bycanistges subcylindricus* This very large species of hornbill, was seen well in the Nyungwe National Park.

BARBETS *CAPITONIDAE*

**Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus bilineatus* Seen well on a couple of occasions in Nyungwe National Park.

**Grey-throated Barbet** *Gymnobucco bonapartei* We enjoyed several good looks at this interesting species of barbet, in the Cyamudongo section, of Nyungwe National Park.

**Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* A common species, which we saw well on a few occasions, in Akagera National Park.

**Spot-flanked Barbet** *Tricholaema lacrymosa* This range restricted species was seen very well on a few occasions, in Akagera National Park.

**Black-collared Barbet** *Lybius torquatus* We observed this beautiful species very well, on one occasion in Akagera National Park.

**Red-faced Barbet** *Lybius rubrifacies* We were very fortunate to observe this uncommon and incredibly range restricted, Albertine Rift endemic, in the grounds of our lodge, in Akagera National Park. It has the smallest range of any African barbet. This species is classified as Near Threatened by Birdlife International, its total population is unknown, but it is thought to be decreasing.

#### HONEYGUIDES *INDICATORIDAE*

**Whalberg's Honeybird** *Prodotiscus regulus* An uncommon bird that avoids dense forest, however, it does like to patrol along the edge of dense forest, exactly the habitat we found it in, on the edge of Nyungwe National Park, where we saw it extremely well.

#### WOODPECKERS and ALLIES *PICIDAE*

**Tullberg's Woodpecker** *Campethera tullbergi* This range restricted and uncommon species, was observed briefly, by some of our group, in Nyungwe National Park. Tycho Fredrick Hugo Tulberg (1842-1920) was a Swedish zoologist. He gained a doctorate in philosophy at Uppsala in 1869 and became a lecturer there in 1871. He was instrumental in the development of modern zoological veterinary medicine in Sweden. Between 1882 and 1907 he was Professor of Zoology at Uppsala and after 1902 he was the Chairman of the Linnean Society of Hammarby. He was an academic as opposed to someone active in the field. He published several book in Swedish, English and German.

**Golden-tailed Woodpecker** *Campethera abingoni* We enjoyed one very good sighting of this large species of woodpecker, early in the tour, in Akagera National Park.

**Cardinal Woodpecker** *Dendropicos fuscescens* A female of this widespread and common species, was seen well, in the grounds of our lodge, in the Volcanoes National Park.

#### LARKS *ALAUDIDAE*

**Rufous-naped Lark** *Mirafra africana* Seen well on a couple of occasions in Akagera National Park.

**Flappet Lark** *Mirafra rufocinnamomea* A single bird was seen in flight, in Akagera National Park.

#### SWALLOWS *HIRUNDINIDAE*

**Rock Martin** *Hirundo fuligula* First observed flying alongside the bus, close to Kibuye, during the long drive to the Volcanoes National Park. We had a much better sighting of a second bird, at Lake Karago, near Mukamira, on the last day of the tour. It was the seventh species of swallow, we had seen that day!

**Plain Martin** *Riparia palundicola* A common species in Africa, we saw it well on a few occasions.

**Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica* We observed this uncommon species of swallow very well, in both Akagera and the Volcanoes National Parks.

**Lesser Striped Swallow** *Hirundo abyssinica* We observed this common resident in both Akagera and the Volcanoes National Parks.

**Angola Swallow** *Hirundo angolensis* By far the commonest swallow throughout Rwanda, observed on almost every day of the tour.

**Wire-tailed Swallow** *Hirundo smithii* Our first sighting of this attractive species of swallow, was at the Nyabarongo River, on the outskirts of Kigali. This was followed by a second sighting, at the Kamiranzovu River, near Tyaza, during the long drive to the Volcanoes National Park.

**Black Saw-wing** *Psalidoprocne holomelas* We enjoyed many good sightings throughout the tour.

**White-headed Saw-wing** *Psalidoprocne albiceps* We enjoyed good sightings of a small flock of this range restricted species, in Akagera National Park. This was followed by very close looks at an adult male, in the Volcanoes National Park.

#### WAGTAILS and PIPITS *MOTACILLIDAE*

**African Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla aguimp* Common and conspicuous throughout the whole tour.

**Cape Wagtail** *Motacilla capensis* Mainly a bird of southern Africa, this species is at the northern end of its range in Rwanda. We saw it well on a couple of occasions, at the Nyabarongo and Kamiranzovu Rivers.

**Yellow-throated Longclaw** *Macromyx croceus* We enjoyed good looks at this widespread species, on one occasion, in Akagera National Park.

**Grassland Pipit** *Anthus cinnamomeus* We saw this common and widespread species on a few occasions throughout the tour.

**Plain-backed Pipit** *Anthus leucophrys* A few pairs of this uncommon species of pipit, were observed extremely well, during our time in Akagera National Park.

#### CUCKOO-SHRIKES *CAMPEPHAGIDAE*

**Black Cuckoo-shrike** *Campephaga flava* We enjoyed good looks at two females of this uncommon species of cuckoo-shrike, in the Volcanoes National Park.

**Grey Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina caesia* Another uncommon species of cuckoo-shrike, which we saw well on one occasion, in Nyungwe National Park.

#### BUBBULS *PYCNONOTIDAE*

**Dark-capped Bulbul** *Pycnonotus tricolor* By far the commonest bird in Rwanda, which we observed on every day of the tour.

**Yellow-whiskered Greenbul** *Andropadus latirostris* We enjoyed a few good sightings of this species, during our time in Nyungwe National Park.

**Olive-breasted Mountain Greenbul** *Andropadus kikuyuensis* This species has two isolated populations; one in southwestern Kenya, centered around Kakamega Forest, and the other throughout the Albertine Rift. We saw it well on several occasions in Nyungwe National Park.

**Slender-billed Greenbul** *Andropadus gracillrostris* We saw this species very well, on a couple of occasions, in Nyungwe National Park.

THRUSHES and ALLIES *TURDIDAE*

**Kivu Ground-Thrush** *Zoothera tanganjicae* This very uncommon Albertine Rift endemic, was observed by Marie and Karen, on one occasion, in the Nyungwe National Park.

**Olive Thrush** *Turdus olivaceus* We enjoyed many good looks at this attractive species, in both Nyungwe and the Volcanoes National Parks.

**Red-throated Alethe** *Alethe poliophrys* An unobtrusive Albertine Rift endemic, fortunately for us, we saw it fairly well, on one occasion, in the Nyungwe National Park.

CISTICOLAS and ALLIES *CISTICOLIDAE*

**Wing-snapping Cisticola** *Cisticola ayresii* Seen well on one occasion, in Akagera National Park, at the northern edge of this birds range.

**Croaking Cisticola** *Cisticola natalensis* Proved to be common in Akagera National Park.

**Carruther's Cisticola** *Cisticola carruthersi* This extremely range restricted species only occurs in papyrus swamps. We saw it extremely well on one occasion, at the Nyabarongo River, on the outskirts of Kigali. Alexander Douglas Mitchell Carruthers (1882-1962) was an explorer and naturalist. He was educated at Haileybury and Trinity College, Cambridge and then trained in land survey and taxidermy. He went with the British Museum expedition to Ruwenzori from 1905 to 1906 and traveled in Russian Turkistan and the borders of Afghanistan from 1907 until 1908. He also explored the deserts of Outer Mongolia and the upper Yenisey River in 1910, with John H. Miller and Morgan Philips Price. Carruthers was honorary secretary of the Royal Geographical Society between 1916 and 1921. His publications include *Unknown Mongolia*, in 1913, *Arabian Adventure* in 1935 and *Beyond the Caspian, A Naturalist in Central Asia*, in 1949.

**Chubb's Cisticola** *Cisticola chubby* This range restricted species proved to be common in rank vegetation throughout the highlands of Rwanda. Ernest Charles Chubb (1884-1972) was an ornithologist who became curator of the Museum of Durban, South Africa. His father Charles, a fellow ornithologist, had been a curator at the British Museum but was knocked down and killed by a car as he left the premises, in 1924. Chubb senior wrote the *Birds of British Guiana*, based on the collection of Frederick Vavasour McConnell, and with Lord Brabourne, *The birds of South America*. In 1945 Ernest became president of the Southern African Association for Advancement of Science.

**Trilling Cisticola** *Cisticola woosnami* A common species of savanna grasslands, we saw it well during our time in Akagera National Park.

**Siffling Cisticola** *Cisticola brachypterus* A bird of tall grassland, we saw it very well, on one occasion, at the Kamiranzovu River, close to Tyaza, during the long drive to the Volcanoes National Park.

- Long-tailed Cisticola** *Cisticola angusticaudus* This range restricted species is confined to lightly wooded savanna. It has only recently been recorded in Rwanda, it just makes it across the border from Tanzania into Akagera National Park, where we played hide-and-seek with a pair of birds.
- Tawny-flanked Prinia** *Prinia subflava* Observed with the preceding species, on one occasion, in Akagera National Park.
- Yellow-breasted Apalis** *Apalis flavida* A common and widespread species of open woodland, we saw it well on a couple of occasions, in Akagera National Park.
- Kungwe Apalis** *Apalis argentea* This Albertine Rift endemic, is an uncommon resident of the forest canopy in Nyungwe National Park, where we saw it very well, on more than one occasion.
- Chestnut-throated Apalis** *Apalis porphyrolaema* This range restricted species was observed very well, on a couple of occasions, during our time in Nyungwe National Park.
- Collared Apalis** *Apalis ruwenzorii* This Albertine Rift endemic was observed very well in Nyungwe National Park, where we watched a pair feeding a recently fledged bird, that had only just left the nest.
- Black-throated Apalis** *Apalis jacksoni* This very attractive species was also seen well on a couple of occasions, in Nyungwe National Park.
- Mountain Masked Apalis** *Apalis personata* Another Albertine Rift endemic, it proved to be common in Nyungwe National Park.
- Grey-capped Warbler** *Eminia lepida* Another range restricted species; it was glimpsed at Nyarutarama Dam, in Kigali, we then enjoyed a second, much better sighting, in the Volcanoes National Park.
- Grey-backed Camaroptera** *Camaroptera brachyura* We observed this common species very well, in Akagera and the Volcanoes National Parks.
- Miombo Wren-Warbler** *Calamonastes undosus* A locally common resident of open forest, we saw a pair very well in the grounds of our lodge, in Akagera National Park.

#### SYLVIIDAE

- Grauer's Rush-Warbler** *Bradypterus graueri* This Albertine Rift endemic only occurs in a few small swamps within Rwanda, Burundi, eastern areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and southwestern Uganda. We enjoyed a few brief looks at this species in a small swamp in Nyungwe National Park. This is the only site for this species, which has any kind of protection, all other sites are threatened by human encroachment. This species is classified as Endangered, by 'Birdlife International'. The total population is unknown, but is thought to be decreasing. Rudolf Grauer (1870-1927) was an Austrian explorer and zoologist who collected extensively during an expedition to the Belgian Congo (1909) and again (1910-1911) on an expedition paid for by the Austrian Imperial Museum. His research focused on the Albertine Rift. He suffered from actinomycosis, which he contracted in Africa and eventually succumbed to it.

- Cinnamon Bracken Warbler** *Bradypterus cinnamomeus* This common but ultra skulking species, was observed amazingly well, on one occasion, in Nyungwe National Park.
- Lesser Swamp-Warbler** *Acrocephalus gracilirostris* We enjoyed a couple of good sightings of this species, at the small island, in Lake Iherma, in Akagera National Park.
- Mountain Yellow Warbler** *Chloropeta similis* This range restricted species was seen very well, in the grounds of our lodge, in the Volcanoes National Park.
- Buff-bellied Warbler** *Phyllolais pulchella* We enjoyed a very good sighting of this attractive species, in Akagera National Park.
- Grauer's Warbler** *Graueria vittata* This uncommon, and unobtrusive species, is endemic to montane forest of the Albertine Rift escarpment. We were very fortunate to enjoy a couple of good sightings of this extremely range-restricted species, during our time in Nyungwe National Park.
- Green-capped Eremomela** *Eremomela scotops* This locally common, but unobtrusive species of warbler, was seen well, in the grounds of our lodge, in Akagera National Park. This is at the extreme northern edge of this birds range.
- White-browed Crombec** *Sylvietta leucophrys* This very range restricted species of montane forest, was seen by some members of our group, in the Nyungwe National Park.
- Red-faced Crombec** *Sylvietta whytii* A common resident of savanna woodland, which we encountered on several occasions, during our time in Akagera National Park.
- Red-faced Woodland-Warbler** *Phylloscopus laetus* Yet another Albertine Rift endemic, we saw this common species on several occasions, during our time in Nyungwe National Park.

#### OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS *MUSCICAPIDAE*

- Pale Flycatcher** *Bradornis pallidus* This widespread species was seen well on many occasions, during our time in Akagera National Park.
- White-eyed Slaty-Flycatcher** *Melaenornis pammelaina* Commonly observed in montane forest, in both Nyungwe and the Volcanoes National Parks.
- Yellow-eyed Black Flycatcher** *Melaenornis ardesiacus* This species is an uncommon Albertine Rift endemic. We were very fortunate to enjoy good looks at this species, on at least two occasions, in Nyungwe National Park.
- Swamp Flycatcher** *Muscicapa aquatica* A common bird of the papyrus swamps of Rwanda.
- African Dusky Flycatcher** *Muscicapa adusta* Proved to be very common, throughout Nyungwe National Park.
- White-starred Robin** *Pogonocichla stellata* This very attractive altitudinal migrant, was seen very well, on a couple of occasions, in Nyungwe National Park.
- Cape Robin-Chat** *Cossypha caffra* This species was very common and exceptionally tame, in the grounds of our lodge, in the Volcanoes National Park.

**White-browed Robin-Chat** *Cossypha heuglini* Somewhat surprisingly, this common and very attractive species, was only observed on one occasion, when seen in flight, while watching the Grey Crowned Cranes, close to Kibingo.

**Red-capped Robin-Chat** *Cossypha natalensis* This attractive species, was seen well on a couple of occasions, in the Volcanoes National Park.

**Archer's Robin-Chat** *Cossypha archeri* A high altitude Albertine Rift endemic, this species was seen fairly well, on one occasion, in the Nyungwe National Park. Sir Geoffrey Francis Archer (1882-1964) was an explorer and administrator who was posted to British Somaliland in 1913, serving as Deputy Commissioner, HM Commissioner, and finally, as Governor (1919-1922). He carried out extensive field observations and collected 3,000 skins and 1,000 clutches of eggs. He became Governor-General of the Sudan (1924-1926). He co-authored, with Eva M. Godman, the 4-volume *Birds of British Somaliland and the Gulf of Aden: their Life Histories, Breeding Habits and Eggs* (1937-1961). F.J. Jackson, who was Archer's uncle, collected the robin chat in Uganda.

**White-bellied Robin-Chat** *Cossyphicula roberti* Almost an Albertine Rift endemic, this species also occurs in western Cameroon. We were fortunate to see it very well, on one occasion, in Nyungwe National Park.

**White-browed Scrub-Robin** *Cercotrichas leucophrys* Seen very well on one occasion, in Akagera National Park.

**African Stonechat** *Saxicola torquatus* A common and conspicuous species, throughout the highlands of western Rwanda.

**Sooty Chat** *Myrmecocichla nigra* This species was a common and conspicuous feature of Akagera National Park.

**White-headed Black Chat** *Myrmecocichla arnoti* This is a very interesting bird; somewhat surprisingly, this species frequents different habitats, in different areas of Africa. In Rwanda and neighbouring Burundi, it favours human habitation, in most areas of Africa it is found only in open woodland. We saw it around human habitation, during the drives to and from Akagera National Park.

#### WATTLE-EYES *PLATYSTEIRIDAE*

**Chin-spot Batis** *Batis molitor* Seen well in both Akagera and the Volcanoes National Parks.

**Rwenzori Batis** *Batis diops* This Albertine Rift endemic, proved to be fairly common in Nyungwe National Park.

#### MONARCH FLYCATCHERS *MONARCHIDAE*

**White-tailed Blue-flycatcher** *Elminia albicauda* Seen well on a few occasions, in Nyungwe National Park.

**African Paradise-Flycatcher** *Terpsiphone viridis* Commonly encountered throughout the tour.

#### BABBLERS *TIMALIIDAE*

**Mountain Illadopsis** *Illadopsis pyrrhoptera* Seen by Karen, in Nyungwe National Park.

**Arrow-marked Babbler** *Turdoides jardineii* Small flocks present in Akagera National Park.

**Black-lored Babbler** *Turdoides sharpie* Small flocks were also observed in Akagera National Park.

#### TITS and CHICKADEES *PARIDAE*

**White-winged Tit** *Parus leucomelas* This fairly common species was observed well in Akagera National Park.

**Stripe-breasted Tit** *Parus fasciiventer* We enjoyed good looks at this Albertine Rift endemic, in Nyungwe National Park.

#### NECTARINIDAE

**Bronze Sunbird** *Nectarinia kilimensis* Common and widespread, throughout Rwanda.

**Purple-breasted Sunbird** *Nectarinia purpureiventris* We observed this beautiful Albertine Rift endemic, very well, on one occasion, in Nyungwe National Park.

**Green-headed Sunbird** *Cyanomitra verticalis* Seen well on the last day of the tour, in the Volcanoes National Park.

**Blue-headed Sunbird** *Cyanomitra alinae* Another Albertine Rift endemic which we saw well, in both Nyungwe and the Volcanoes National Parks.

**Olive-bellied Sunbird** *Cinnyris chloropygia* Seen well, on one occasion, in Nyungwe National Park.

**Rwenzori Double-collared Sunbird** *Cinnyris stuhlamanni* This range restricted species, was very common in both Nyungwe and the Volcanoes National Parks.

**Regal Sunbird** *Cinnyris negia* This uncommon, and very attractive species of sunbird, is yet another Albertine Rift endemic. We saw it very well in the Nyungwe National Park.

**Western Olive Sunbird** *Cyanomitra obscura* Seen well, on one occasion, in Nyungwe National Park.

**Marico Sunbird** *Cinnyris mariquensis* We saw this attractive species very well, in the Akagera National Park.

**Scarlet-chested Sunbird** *Chalcomitra semegalensis* Seen well in both Akagera and Nyungwe National Parks.

**Red-chested Sunbird** *Cinnyris erythrocneca* We saw this range restricted species very well, around Lake Iherma, in Akagera National Park.

**Variable Sunbird** *Cinnyris vermusta* This widespread species, proved to be common in both Nyungwe and the Volcanoes National Parks.

**Collared Sunbird** *Hedydipna collaris* Common and widespread throughout Rwanda.

#### WHITE-EYES *ZOSTEROPIDAE*

**African Yellow White-eye** *Zosterops senegalensis* A common bird throughout all forested areas of Rwanda.

OLD WORLD ORIOLES *ORIOLIDAE*

**African Black-headed Oriole** *Oriolus larvatus* Proved to be not uncommon, in Akagera National Park.

**Montane Oriole** *Oriolus percivali* Commonly encountered in Nyungwe National Park.

SHRIKES *LANIIDAE*

**Northern Fiscal** *Lanius humeralis* A few observed in the more open areas, throughout the tour.

**Grey-backed Fiscal** *Lanius excubitoroides* This very handsome species, was commonly encountered in Akagera National Park.

**Mackinnon's Fiscal** *Lanius mackinnoni* This is an uncommon species of the forest edge, which we saw well on a few occasions, in both Nyungwe and the Volcanoes National Parks. Archibald Donald Mackinnon CMG, OBE (1864-1937) served as a medical officer in Uganda from 1894 to 1897 and was then Director of Transport there from 1898 to 1899. Sharpe described the shrike from a specimen collected in Kenya by F.J. Jackson.

BUSHSHRIKES and ALLIES *MALACONOTIDAE*

**Tropical Boubou** *Laniarius aethiopicus* Seen well, in Akagera National Park.

**Ludher's Bush-shrike** *Laniarius luehderi* This very attractive species, was seen well on a couple of occasions, in Nyungwe National Park. W. Luehder (1847-1873) was a German naturalist who collected in Cameroon in 1872. He wrote an article, *Notizen uber den Bock*, in 1871.

**Black-headed Gonolek** *Laniarius erythrogaster* This stunningly attractive species of bushshrike, was seen well on a couple of occasions, in Akagera National Park.

**Slate-coloured Boubou** *Laniarius funebris* An uncommon bird of savanna thickets, we saw it very well on a couple of occasions, in Akagera National Park, at the extreme western edge, of this birds range.

**Mountain Black Boubou** *Laniarius poensis* This extremely range restricted species is an ultra skulker and almost never seen. We were very fortunate to enjoy good looks at this species, in both Nyungwe and the Volcanoes National Parks.

**Brubru** *Nilaus afer* A diminutive species of bushshrike, which occurs in arid savanna. We saw it well, on a couple of occasions, in Akagera National Park.

**Northern Puffback** *Dryoscopus gambensis* We enjoyed a few good looks at this species, during our time in Nyungwe National Park.

**Black-crowned Tchagra** *Tchagra senegala* A common bird of savanna areas, which we saw well, in Akagera National Park.

**Grey-headed Bushshrike** *Malaconotus blanchoti* Seen very well, on one occasion, in the grounds of our lodge, in Akagera National Park.

**Doherty's Bushshrike** *Malaconotus dohertyi* This exceptionally beautiful species of bushshrike, only occurs in the Albertine Rift and one area of Kenya. In both areas it is a very secretive and skulking species, which is very difficult to observe. Somewhat surprisingly, we saw it amazingly well, on one occasion, in the Nyungwe National Park. William Doherty (1857-1901) was an American collector, regarded by Rothschild as the best he had ever employed. Before becoming a collector he traveled (1877) through Europe, Turkey and into Palestine and Egypt and thence to Persia (Iran) (1881). He started (1882) collecting entomological specimens seriously, to bolster his finances, and (1882-1883) he roamed through India, Burma (Myanmar), the Malay Archipelago and was in the far reaches of Indonesia (1887). He went to England, to visit Hartert at Tring (1895) and it was there that he met Lord Rothschild, who recruited him as a bird collector. An article by B.I Verdcourt in The Conchologists' Newsletter (1992) mentioned him collecting molluscs in East Africa, where, in Nairobi, he died of dysentery.

#### DRONGOS *DICRURIDAE*

**Fork-tailed Drongo** *Dicrurus adsimilis* Proved to be common in Akagera National Park.

#### JAYS, MAGPIES and CROWS *CORVIDAE*

**Pied Crow** *Corvus albus* Common and conspicuous throughout the whole of Rwanda.

**White-naped Raven** *Corvus albicollis* A common bird throughout mountainous areas of Rwanda.

#### STARLINGS *STURNIDAE*

**Greater Blue-eared Starling** *Lamprotornis chalybaeus* Proved to be common in Akagera National Park.

**Ruppell's Long-tailed Starling** *Lamprotornis purpuropterus* Large flocks encountered throughout Akagera National Park. Wilhelm Peter Eduard Simon Ruppell (1794-1884) was a German collector. He made two extended expeditions to northern and eastern Africa in the first quarter of the 19th century. Although he brought back large zoological and ethnographical collections, his expeditions impoverished him. He was also a collector in the broadest sense of the word and presented his collection of coins and rare manuscripts to the Historical Museum of Frankfurt, his home town.

**Violet-backed Starling** *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* We encountered several small flocks in both Akagera and Nyungwe National Parks.

**Slender-billed Starling** *Onychognathus tenuirostris* We found a large flock, while watching the Chimpanzees, in the Cyamudongo Forest section, of Nyungwe National Park.

**Waller's Starling** *Onychognathus walleri* We observed several large flocks, during our time in both Nyungwe and the Volcanoes National Parks. Gerald Waller was an English naturalist who collected in East Africa. In about 1888 the British East Africa Association became known as the Imperial British East Africa Company and two members of the company submitted a Draft of Concession to his Highness the Sultan of Zanzibar, by which he ceded to Britain, his land on the African mainland. One of these officers was Gerald Waller. The Gerenuk or Giraffe Gazelle *Litocranius walleri* also commemorates Waller in the binomial.

**Sharpe's Starling** *Cinnyricinclus sharpie* An uncommon and thinly distributed species, we were very fortunate to enjoy good close looks at a small flock feeding in a fruiting tree in Nyungwe National Park. Richard Bowdler Sharpe (1847-1909) was a British zoologist. He was the Assistant Keeper of the Vertebrate Section of the British Museum's, Zoology Department from 1895 until his death from pneumonia in 1909. He had a particular interest in classification and phylogeny and its relation to evolution. He wrote descriptions of over 200 species of birds. He was co-author of the series *Birds of Europe*. While working for the British Museum in the Department of Zoology, he commenced his massive *Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum*, which appeared in 27 volumes between 1874 and 1898. Sharpe founded the British Ornithologists' Club in 1892 and edited its Bulletin for many years. The Western Negrofinch *Nigrita (canicapilla) emiliae* was originally named after his wife Emily. They had many children, judging by the title of C.E. Jackson's book, published in 1994, *Richard Bowdler Sharpe and His Ten Daughters!*

**Yellow-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus africanus* Small numbers observed in Akagera National Park.

#### OLD WORLD SPARROWS *PASSERIIDAE*

**Northern Grey-headed Sparrow** *Passer griseus* A common and conspicuous bird throughout the whole of Rwanda.

#### WEAVERS and ALLIES *PLOCEIDAE*

**Spectacled Weaver** *Ploceus ocularis* This uncommon species, was observed well on one occasion, in Akagera National Park, and this was followed by a second sighting, on the last day of the tour, in the Volcanoes National Park.

**Black-necked Weaver** *Ploceus nigricollis* This forest weaver was observed very well on one occasion, in Akagera National Park.

**Baglafaecht Weaver** *Ploceus baglafaecht* Commonly observed throughout the tour.

**Slender-billed Weaver** *Ploceus pelzelni* A fairly common bird of swamps, we saw it well on one occasion, when we watched an adult female, at the Nyabarongo River, on the outskirts of Kigali.

**Yellow-backed Weaver** *Ploceus melamocephalus* This attractive species of weaver is always associated with water. We observed this species at Nyarutarama Dam, in Kigali and then we enjoyed a second, much better sighting, at the Nyabarongo River, on the outskirts of Kigali.

**Holub's Golden Weaver** *Ploceus xanthops* This attractive species proved to be common in both Akagera and the Volcanoes National Parks. Emil Holub (1847-1902) was a Bohemian (Czech) naturalist who also studied South African fossils. Like his father he trained as a physician but was always fascinated by wildlife and foreign lands, and his compelling ambition was to follow in the footsteps of David Livingstone. He has been described as 'a doctor of medicine, a zoologist, a botanist, a hunter, a taxidermist, an artist and cartographer, an avid collector of specimens and above all a keen observer'. His first trip to Africa was in 1872 and he practiced as a doctor to pay his way. He traveled extensively in south-central Africa gathering varied and valuable natural history material, including over 30,000 specimens! On his return from his first trip he wrote *Seven years in Africa*. In 1883 he took another trip to Africa, which ended in disaster, after ten weeks, when a number of the party died from malaria and all the equipment was lost. When he returned to Europe he fell upon hard times and was forced to sell much of his collection. He, too, eventually died from malaria, which he had contracted on his second trip.

**Strange Weaver** *Ploceus alienus* This well-named, uncommon and easily overlooked species, is an Albertine Rift endemic. It is a bird of dense rainforest, that forages around in the mid-canopy, creeping along branches, like a nuthatch! We were very fortunate to see this species well on a couple of occasions, during our time in Nyungwe National Park.

**Black-billed Weaver** *Ploceus melanogaster* This attractive rainforest species is fairly common, but it is shy and retiring and seldom seen, as it creeps along in the undergrowth and tangled vines of highland rainforest. Therefore, we were very fortunate to observe a pair of birds very well, while birding in Nyungwe National Park.

**Red-headed Weaver** *Anaplectes rubriceps* This uncommon and widespread species was observed nest building, in the grounds of our lodge, in Akagera National Park.

**Fan-tailed Widowbird** *Euplectes axillaris* A common bird of reedbeds, rank grassland and stands of sugar cane. We saw a large flock at the Kamiranzovu River, close to Tyaza, during the long drive to the Volcanoes National Park.

**Yellow-mantled Widowbird** *Euplectes macrourus* An uncommon bird of damp grassland and marshy areas, somewhat surprisingly, we found a solitary female, in the grounds of our lodge, in the Volcanoes National Park.

**Southern Red Bishop** *Euplectes orix* A single male, was observed very well, while we were watching the pair of Grey Crowned Cranes, in farmland close to Kibingo, during the long drive to the Volcanoes National Park.

#### WAXBILLS and ALLIES *ESTRILDIDAE*

**Grey-headed Negrofinch** *Nigrita camicapilla* Seen very well on a couple of occasions, in Nyungwe National Park.

**Green-winged Pytilia** *Pytilia melba* This very attractive species, is a common bird of semi-arid acacia country. We enjoyed a couple of good sightings, during our time in Akagera National Park.

**Orange-winged Pytilia** *Pytilia afra* Observed by Karen, from the bus, during our time in Akagera National Park.

**Red-faced Crimsonwing** *Cryptospiza reichenovil* We were fortunate to enjoy good looks at this uncommon species, on one occasion, in Nyungwe National Park.

**Dusky Crimsonwing** *Cryptospiza jacksoni* This uncommon and easily overlooked species is an Albertine Rift endemic. We were very fortunate to find a nesting pair, in the Nyungwe National Park.

**Red-cheeked Cordonbleu** *Uraeginthus bengalus* A common and conspicuous bird of Akagera National Park.

**Red-billed Firefinch** *Lagonosticta senegala* This is also a common and conspicuous bird throughout Rwanda.

**Yellow-bellied Waxbill** *Estrilda quartinia* Observed by some members of the group, in the grounds of our lodge, in the Volcanoes National Park.

**Common Waxbill** *Estrilda astrild* Surprisingly, this common species was only observed on one occasion, a single bird was seen in farmland, while we were watching the pair of Grey Crowned Cranes, during the long drive to the Volcanoes National Park.

**Kandt's Waxbill** *Estrilda kandti* A recent split from Black-crowned Waxbill. We saw it well on one occasion in Nyungwe National Park and then it proved to be very common in the grounds of our lodge, in the Volcanoes National Park. Dr. Richard Kandt (1867-1918) was a physician and the first German 'Resident' in Rwanda (1907-1913). He was sent on an expedition by the Kaiser and Bismarck to find the source of the Nile (1898). He wrote *Caput-Nili, eine Empfindsame Reise zu den Quellen des Nils* (1904). A mammal is also named after him.

**Bronze Mannikin** *Lonchura cucullata* Common and conspicuous throughout Rwanda.

**Black-and-white Mannikin** *Lonchura bicolor* Far less common than the preceding species, we were fortunate to find a small flock in farmland, while watching the pair of Grey Crowned Cranes, during the long drive to the Volcanoes National Park.

#### INDIGOBIRDS *VIDUIDAE*

**Pin-tailed Whydah** *Vidua macroura* Observed by some members of the tour party, while driving along in the bus.

**Village Indigobird** *Vidua chalybeata* An adult male of this uncommon nest parasitic species, was seen very well on one occasion, in Akagera National Park.

#### SISKINS, CROSSBILLS and ALLIES *FRINGILLIDAE*

**Brimstone Canary** *Serinus sulphuratus* An adult male was seen well on one occasion, in farmland, while watching the pair of Grey Crowned Cranes, during the long drive, to the Volcanoes National Park.

**Yellow-fronted Canary** *Serinus mozambicus* A common and conspicuous bird throughout Akagera National Park.

**Yellow-crowned Canary** *Serinus flavicollis* An uncommon bird of montane grassland and gardens. We only saw this species on one occasion, in Nyungwe National Park.

**Thick-billed Seedeater** *Serinus burtoni* We saw this uncommon species very well, on a few occasions, in Nyungwe National Park.

**Western Citril** *Serinus frontalis* Commonly observed throughout the tour.

**Streaky Seedeater** *Serinus striolatus* Proved to be common in Nyungwe and the Volcanoes National Parks.

BUNTINGS, SPARROWS, SEEDEATERS and ALLIES *EMBERIZIDAE*

**African Golden-breasted Bunting** *Emberizida flaviventris* A male of this stunningly attractive species, was observed feeding on the track ahead of us, in the Nyungwe National Park.

## MAMMALS

- Scrub Hare** *Lepus saxatilis* A couple of this species were observed from our bus at dusk, one evening, in Akagera National Park.
- Rwenzori Sun Squirrel** *Heliosciurus ruwenzorii* This attractive grey-coloured squirrel was observed well in Nyungwe National Park.
- Boehm's Bush Squirrel** *Paraxerus boehmi* We enjoyed good looks at this uniquely marked squirrel, in Nyungwe National Park.
- Carruther's Mountain Squirrel** *Funisciurus carruthersi* Seen well on a couple of occasions in Nyungwe National Park.
- Marsh Mongoose** *Atilax paludinosus* Observed briefly, at Lake Iherma, in Akagera National Park.
- Side-striped Jackal** *Canis adustus* Observed crossing the road, in front of our vehicle, at dusk, one evening, in Nyungwe National Park.
- Olive Baboon** *Papio anubis* We saw many large troops, during time in Akagera National Park.
- Dent's Monkey** *Cercopithecus denti* A small troop was observed very well on one occasion, in Nyungwe National Park.
- L'Hoest's Monkey** *Cercopithecus lhoesti* This attractive species proved to be common in Nyungwe National Park.
- Blue Monkey** *Cercopithecus mitis* We enjoyed a couple of good sightings, of this common species, during our time in Nyungwe National Park.
- Tantalus Monkey** *Chlorocebus tantalus* Small numbers observed during our time in Akagera National Park.
- Chimpanzee** *Pan troglodytes* Undoubtedly one of the highlights of the trip, few people get to enjoy such good looks at this normally very shy species of ape.
- Eastern Gorilla** *Gorilla beringei* For many tour participants this was the highlight of the trip. It was a very special experience to stand next to a family party of these huge apes.
- Common Warthog** *Phacochoerus africanus* Several family parties observed, in Akagera National Park.
- Hippopotamus** *Hippopotamus amphibius* We observed large numbers at Lake Iherma, in Akagera National Park.
- Giraffe** *Giraffa camelopardalis* We observed small numbers in Akagera National Park.
- Klipspringer** *Oreotragus oreotragus* We observed a single individual, of this uncommon species of antelope, in Akagera National Park.
- Oribi** *Ourebia ourebi* An adult male of this uncommon species of antelope, was observed well, on one occasion, in Akagera National Park.
- African Buffalo** *Syncerus caffer* Africa's most dangerous mammal, proved to be fairly common, in Akagera National Park.
- Bushbuck** *Tragelaphus scriptus* We observed several of these attractive animals, in Akagera National Park.

**Defassa Waterbuck** *Kobus defassa* Small numbers present in Akagera National Park.

**Topi** *Damaliscus lunatus* Small numbers present in Akagera National Park.

**Impala** *Aepyceros melampus* Large herds present in Akagera National Park.

**Rwenzori Red Duiker** *Cephalophus rubidus* Normally a very shy species, somewhat surprisingly, we enjoyed prolonged views of a single animal, feeding in a wet meadow, in Nyungwe National Park.

**Burchell's Zebra** *Equus burchellii* Small numbers present in Akagera National Park.

**Southern Tree Hyrax** *Dendrohyrax dorsalis* It was a great surprise to find this nocturnal animal, sitting in the fork of a tree, along the edge of Lake Iherma, in Akagera National Park.