

# Wild West Africa: Ghana Birding Safari

## Oct. 7 – 24, 2023 | Trip Report | by Peg Abbott



**With Paul Mensah and Naturalist Journeys guide and host Peg Abbott, with 6 participants: Lise, Steve, Ty, Carol, Valerie and Bev**



This was a fantastic inaugural journey to Ghana for Naturalist Journeys. It was designed to pair with our Southern Tanzania trip and five of the group came from that tour, arriving early to Accra where we enjoyed a well-deserved nap after the crazy time of our flight. While we enjoyed some down time at the hotel, Carol (arriving fresh for just this tour) ventured out to the botanical garden, also a good spot for birding. She thoroughly enjoyed it and we'll add it in next year as a good introduction. Sadly, Valerie was delayed in Brussels but she made the most of it with other stranded passengers and arrived fresh and happy the next day. With our flock complete, we began a grand, sometimes challenging adventure!



## Sat., Oct. 7 Accra City Tour

Peg was part of the group that arrived early, and she asked our hosts, Ashanti Tours, to set up a city tour for our added day, wanting to get a glimpse into West African history, culture and see some of the highlights of Accra. Paul, our guide, and Eric, our driver picked us up at 8AM and we headed to the National Gallery and Museum. It was impressive and easy to navigate, lovely and clean design and just the right amount of material to absorb.

From an excellent guide, Samuel, we learned of early cultures, their style of building, their clans and clan symbols. We learned a bit of geology, saw a map of early Trans-Saharan trade routes, and learned about weaving and styles of cloth that differ north to south. Beads arrived in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century along the trade routes and the making of beads remains as an important art form today. There were beautiful carved items, from furniture to large wooden spoons. Time passed quickly and we topped it off with a sighting as we left of a Double-toothed Barbet perching prominently above our bus as a bonus.

From here we went to historic Jamestown, marked by a red and white lighthouse. It has a long history dating from colonial time and was a major slave trading port, that poignant light the last point of home they would see. It was emotional to see the long concrete tunnel that led out to loading the ships; impossible to imagine such desperation and the blind attitudes and eyes of those that inflicted it. Our local guide, Nii Kotei, described how this part of the city is challenged; amid crumbling buildings and left-over lion statues of colonial days, we visited an athletic club for boxing, basketball and soccer aimed at bringing youth out of poverty. Boxing is very popular in Ghana and it's a young man's dream to shine. We saw the studio of a theater company formed with a mission to help with community disputes and domestic violence using art to diffuse tension and offer education. Sobering.

We experienced an educational and a delicious lunch at an African restaurant, where soups, stews and rice, beans were ready for us in big pots, so much to choose from! We had to try Banku, a maize and cassava dough wrapped in banana leaves that absorbs the leaf's flavors and nutrients while steaming. The aromas and colors



were so appealing! Close by were some artisan craft booths and given a few free minutes, we did a bit of damage in the basket shop... From here we went to Independence Square and the Black Star Monument, a building standing proud at the edge of the ocean in honor of 1957 independence. Ghana led the way as the first country in West Africa to claim independence. We climbed up for the view of the huge waterfront plaza, on this Saturday preparing for an elaborate funeral.

Next, we drove by the presidential palace, peeked at various public buildings and ended our sampler of the city by visiting a most unusual local business, Erico Carpentry Shop – Fantasy Coffins. We had a good time meeting a master craftsman that carves themed coffins. Specialty orders are made well in advance for someone that wishes to be buried in a special way. There were full coffin-sized fish, airplanes, chili peppers and a memorable Club Beer bottle. A lively and fun encounter. Carol said she remembered it each time she was served a beer.

Our hotel was in the city, but we found some fun birds on the grounds including a Shikra, and several Western Plantain-eaters. The hotel was simpler than our usual digs, but we managed. Paul suggested we try a local dish made with tomatoes, chilies, onions, spices, and vegetables, Jollof Rice. We chose it with either chicken or fish, making dinner simple. We caught up on plans for the next day and retired to bed.

## **Sun., Oct. 8                      The Shai Hills**

As we were all in early, we added a morning trip to Shai Hills to the published itinerary as we were eager to get right into birding. This more arid reserve (by Ghana standards) is also a good place for mammals, and we found almost 70 species of birds in our two visits there today, plus lovely butterflies, a Water Terrapin, a Forest Toad, and an Orange-headed Agama Lizard.

Our hike commenced, lured forward by the calls of Oriole Warbler but it remained elusive. More cooperative were two species of tinkerbirds, Yellow-rumped and Yellow-throated. A Stiped Kingfisher announced itself with a



loud call. Stone Partridge proved elusive other than loud calling, but later in the afternoon we saw two groups well, alongside Double-spur Spurfowl. Vieillot's Barbet did some loud calling and then flew in and perched up for

us all to study it. Ghana is rich in barbet species, and this made us feel like we were on a roll. Other highlights included seeing Senegal Coucal, Mocking Cliff Chat and Blue-bellied Roller. Two sunbirds put on a good show, Splendid and Copper. The landscape was intriguing, to one side we scanned open swaths of grassland, with attendant grazing Kob and singing cisticolas of several species. To the other rounded hills clad in vegetation that was not thick enough to hide impressive rock figurations, eroded into round domes layered one upon another. Across our path flew sunbirds, rollers, and barbets, and Senegal Cuckoo and overhead, we watched artistry in motion performed by African Palm Swift. In the distance we scoped a Long-crested Eagle.

This was our first day of experiencing Ghana's heat, and as bird song faded so did we. Eric our patient bus driver kept the bus cool and Paul had good timing to announce that we'd board to move on to another spot – just enough to cool off, rehydrate and start again. We called it quits late morning, and it was nice to return to the hotel for lunch and a break. We tried to take naps as local guests had a great time in the swimming pool blasting Bob Marley tunes as we drifted in and out of sleep.



We returned to the Shai Hills, again in the afternoon and our visit was timed to stay out after dusk for a try at night birds. The light on this intriguing landscape was lovely, particularly with an inquisitive male Kob posing for us in the grass. We had fun watching a group of White Helmet-shrike roar through the trees. At the turnaround point we found Senegal Parrots coming in to roost, and got closer looks at Violet Turaco, an amazing bird. Waiting until after dark proved to be very worthwhile. Our drive was very successful, finding Senegal Thick-knee, Long-tailed Nightjar and Grayish Eagle Owl, two of them. Wow! Our hotel in this area was the only one convenient, and fit that “simple but comfortable” description. The staff was great and we found a few nice birds, like Bar-breasted Firefinch attending the grounds. Dinner was simple, local food.

## **Mon., Oct. 9                      Travel Day to Rainforest Lodge | Winneba Lagoon**

Dawn broke as we ate a quick breakfast, wanting to get on the road to beat traffic as we had to route back through Accra. Paul had urged us out earlier than we could imagine, in hindsight he was right! The Monday morning traffic of Tema was something to behold and thick enough it was hard to watch the street life. Engulfed by too many people on a two-lane road, we tried to entertain ourselves with birding as we crept along. We got good looks at Pied Crow and Laughing Dove. Finally past Tema the traffic strain broke, and we zipped along at last. We also had the fun of seeing market life, which was humming with activity. All kinds of agricultural produce, wash buckets, brooms the color of rainbows, chickens, cooked foods, tires, auto parts, furniture. Paul was eager to stop for some fresh bread at a particular stand. How a vendor here courts customers and keeps them would be a fascinating study. There always seemed to be more sellers than buyers and no one seemed to be in a hurry. Peg snapped scenes with her phone, some blurry but others a smashing success and Valerie soon joined in the fun, taking the art to a higher step of themes: women, modes of transport, all ways to carry items on the head. Indeed, we marveled each day at all the goods going to and from and carried fearlessly ... atop heads.



Both our rears and fascination with street life were growing weary and just in time Paul announced a stop at a local fishing village. We were driving along the coast and were able to park and walk out to an estuary just teeming with life. The streets were lined with drying fish called Nsesaawa, densely packed on mats under what now was sun, but by afternoon would experience a torrent. Locals were there to buy the dried fish, and cooked with them in myriad ways — soups, stews, and pastes for pasta or bread. And they came, not surprisingly, in huge baskets, carried mainly on sturdy women’s heads. The weight was such that two people had to lift and unfurl, but once in motion they moved with the grace of an elegant wading bird. Which, of the feathered kind, was our reason to be here at Winneba Lagoon where we scanned and scoped a wonderful variety including Western Reef Herons in good number and close. It was a low tide, so some of the birds were distant, but in the scope, we could sort and identify Whimbrel, Curlew Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Black-winged Stilt, Spur-winged Lapwing, Common Ringed Plover, Common Greenshank and others. Three young men were fascinated with us enough to tag along, look through the scopes and try to strike up conversation. In time they grew weary of our focus and went back to stacking baskets of fish. Walking back we could peer into the palm thatch walls of homes,

which were laid out to take advantage of the cooling ocean breeze. Lunch was at a local place that had the atmosphere of a pavilion with a high ceiling, open with a nice breeze. They had all kinds of soups in ample proportion with a few quite spicy in local tradition. Some of the other local foods were less desirable and a bit worrisome for forest creatures – bush meat. A few spied dried cane rats in the market, and we could only imagine what else was there. We got in the bus in time to experience a downpour, a heavy one, and all we could think about was the impact on all those piles of drying fish. Traffic was heavy and we quieted down to let Eric concentrate on our safety.

We stopped at a convenience store where four young girls were holding down the Fort. They were fascinated by us and took our photos, and we had fun taking theirs too. Our home for the night was Rainforest Lodge, sort of a business-style hotel along the travel route, with a nice swimming pool and a lawn and trees that attracted some wonderful birds including Western Plantain-eaters and several species of hornbill. After the rain they came up on a dead tree in the back garden area to dry off in the sun, joined by Bronze Manakin and Northern Gray-headed Sparrow. Favorite items for dinner included a nice chicken curry and a beef stroganoff with a nice sauce, both



served over the always abundant rice. With our bird list tallied, we dropped into bed in preparation for tomorrow's early start.

## **Tues., Oct. 10                      Kakum National Park Canopy Walkway**

We wanted to be at the park early and it was worth the effort to get up. We walked steadily uphill to start onto the park's famous Canopy Walkway, stopping to breathe and to bird. This canopy in parts is 130 feet above the forest floor, and it goes for almost 1100 feet. It is anchored to huge 300+ year-old trees, where one can get off the swinging suspension sections and walk on a solid platform. We all took a gulp and one by one struck out, space between us to stall the sway, into a magic wonderland. To be in lush West African tropical rainforest was notable, to be up IN the realm of birds that work the canopy was just incredible. The first ones to the platform were already calling out species as we caught up, one of the first a Red-headed Malimbe, but we found that once we spotted something it often circled around, oblivious to us in general and feeding intently. A Yellowbill, also called Blue Malkoha, drew our attention feeding very much like our cuckoos do at close range. A Black Bee-eater,

perching on the walkway spans and lower canopy branches had our cameras clicking. There were loads of tiny birds to sort: Sharpe's Apalis, Lemon-bellied Crombec, Green Hylia, and Gray Longbill to name a few. Swamp and Golden Greenbuls were favorites of the six greenbul species in view. We found a pair of Africa's tiniest species, the Tit-hylia, working on a nest not far from two lovely sunbirds, Buff-throated and Blue-throated Brown. It was sunbird wonderland up there, eight species in total. We got close views of Chestnut-winged Starling, Maxwell's Black Weavers, and quick views of Yellow-billed Turaco that called often as we swung between platforms on the spans. There were seven spans and seven tree platforms in all, and Paul knew the best ones for bird finding. By 10:00 AM general tourists were arriving in number, and it was time to roll up that special magical feel that an early start had afforded us. We took photos of each other in the treetops, and from time to time just stopped long enough to marvel at the trees, their complex forms reaching for light and providing food and home for so many creatures. This is one of the most endangered habitats on the planet, and we were thankful to be in an area protected as a national park. Not all the parks we visited felt this secure, the pressure for logging and the in-creeper of development, mostly farming, was all too notable along our route.



Back to the hotel for lunch and a rest. Peg had a notable encounter with a “cheese” burger, which in Ghana means cheese (only) on a bun! Valerie took a swim, to her delight in the company of Pied Wagtails, seven in all. Her splashing caught their interest, and they dipped their beaks excitedly in at the edge of the pool, then hovered above — more magic on this amazing day.

Quite a few chose to return and scale the slope up to the canopy walk and platforms. We did not go all the way around but went directly to the central platform to watch as many of the large birds in late afternoon made flights to their roosting safe spot. There was a veritable (distant) parade of large hornbills, Black-casqued, Yellow-casqued and Brown-cheeked flying along one tree-lined ridge and at times across to another. To see all three, the latter two endemic to Ghana, was just a thrill, and on top of that two Yellow-billed Turacos came into view. We got repeats of some of the morning’s species and a few more. We tried for a few nightbirds once down and at the parking lot, but they were not as cooperative as we’d seen in the Shai Hills.

## **Wed., Oct. 11                      Kakum National Park’s**

The Canopy had proved to be a grand adventure, and a few snapped selfies at the “I Survived the Kakum Canopy Walkway” sign. Today we ventured off to less demanding adventures, still in Kakum National Park. We walked along some edge habitat where we got good views at a number of species including Melancholy Woodpecker and Bristle-nosed Barbet. With patience we got to see Blue-headed Coucal at close range. Lise was thrilled to find one of her most-wanted birds posing out in the sunlight, an Emerald Cuckoo. After the walk, we drove through an area of small ponds and wetlands stopping at a low roadside bridge where a huge number of Preuss’s Swallows (similar to our Cliff Swallows) were erupting out from under the bridge. It was mesmerizing, so much so we almost missed the dazzling African Pygmy Kingfisher perched just below us.

Our destination was a larger river, the Pra River, which today was running an eerie mud- color tinted with something not of nature — run off from gold mines above. The water swept under a large highway bridge towards a small island where on a sandbar and series of stranded logs we saw a lineup for Rock Pratincoles, which stayed there for quite some time affording us good scope views. More difficult to see but in time spotted



by all were the agile-flying White-throated Blue Swallows. There were two and when a small flock of Cattle Egret came in, they were quite territorial, flying repeated at them to no avail as the egrets rested and preened. To get to this spot we had to thread our way through locals fixing trucks, sawing lumber and cooking breakfast – it was fairly intimate and almost seemed like an intrusion but no one seemed very shocked so this must be a regular stop for birders. On another stop, at a slow-moving and secretive stream, Paul called out a most-wanted bird, the White-Spotted Flufftail. It made several passes back and forth, at times walking in a slow strut but always in a maze of branches. So decent looks but no good photos, we were still pleased though! The morning passed quickly, and we returned mid-day for our break and lunch.

In the afternoon we returned to the Kakum Park headquarters to walk in the forest. We had a terrific start when an African Goshawk flew in and perched for several minutes right alongside the road. We got good looks at Naked-faced Barbets investigating tree cavities with excitement, and high in the trees we spied Copper-tailed Starling, a couple of Black-winged Orioles and several sunbirds. The prize of the walk was, at almost sunset, good

scope views of Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, a thrill to see well. We tried for owls, but none were calling — back to the Rainforest Hotel for dinner and checklist and bed.

## **Thurs., Oct. 12                      Local Birding to Guide Paul’s House | Bokro Marsh | Ebi River | Ankasa Reserve**

We enjoyed a walk from the hotel this morning before packing up to leave, strolling our way up a small hill which provided us a view and some great birds at the home of our guide Paul. We passed a family packing up the car (wonderful cooking aromas!) at an early hour, preparing food to sell at the market. Right along the road we got great looks at Oriole Warbler, and then in his yard Brown Wattle-eye, Green-headed Sunbird, a Rosy Bee-eater in flight and quite a treat, a Guinea Turaco that was furtive but close in some high vegetation. Several sunbirds were working flowers in the hedgerow, Copper Sunbird being the most cooperative for photos. Walking back, we were charmed by a Black-winged Bishop displaying and then heard and saw a Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike and a



Black-headed Paradise Flycatcher, nice! Paul was proud of his home and rightfully so, it was a lovely construction and welcoming, built over many years (no credit system like ours in the US in Ghana) and now ready.

As we left to head towards the city of Cape Coast, we passed the offices of Ashanti Tours and Peg suggested we make a stop. It was great fun to meet the people who so carefully planned our journey and who patiently answered our emails about visas, clothing and gear and more. They were all smiles and one could sense the vibrant, dedicated energy here. This company has done a lot for conservation and made a difference to many people's lives! All smiles, we started our way across the southern part of the country, and the market life was vibrant as ever. This is the route to Ivory Coast, a modern trade route, and people were out and about everywhere, selling wares. The women wore beautiful dresses and both men and women donned bright colors. There are hairdressers, dress makers, one can buy a bed — all along the roadside. This economy is a big part of life in Ghana and it stretches endlessly, almost as if Ghana is one big market. We passed through the city, got glimpses of the beautiful ocean with palm trees waving and continued on. Bokro Marsh is now immediately adjacent to some big building being constructed; we walked on tamped earth against a shading wall to view the ponds. But there was loads of life and we enjoyed finding a Pied Kingfisher busy hovering, Long-tailed Cormorant, Black Crake, White-faced Whistling Ducks and among them, African Pygmy-Geese. An African Jacana walked along the far shore, and Little Bee-eaters darted about, landing on reeds. The Ebi River area had lots of traffic and the water was high, so it did not afford good looks at ducks. Along the road we spied Woodland Kingfisher and Northern Fiscal on the wires.

At long last we hit the turn off to Ankasa but had no real warning about the road. Two tattered four-wheel drives coated in mud were there to greet us. They were weathered survivors of many trips in and out, with young drivers with nerves of steel. Soon we were swerving and being launched sideways and forward as we hurled ourselves over logs laid in the mud like the old corduroy roads encountered by some of us in rural America (timber country) in our childhoods. We were not optimistic, got stuck a few times, but always managed to maneuver free without having to climb out, phew!



The lodge seemed like a mirage after the trial of getting there, beautifully constructed on a hill with bright plantings all around. A Pin-tailed Whydah male danced between trees above his ladies feeding intently on the ground. African Pied Hornbills posed atop big trees on the park edge; we were at a prime location literally right above the entrance gate. The lodge was completed just before the pandemic, prior to that birders came here and camped up by a guard station. As we arrived to rain, we were even more grateful and pleased with the amenities. It was truly lovely lodge in the middle of nowhere. The cabins are lined up along a river, and have spacious rooms, big bathrooms with walk in showers and we had ample places to hang our clothes, a patio with flowering trees to bring in birds. A menu board in the covered, open-air dining area promised wonderful food and we were not disappointed! Ashanti Tours created this lodge and we were well cared for by the sister of the owner's wife who cooked up the very tempting creations. It was a happy place, providing employment in the village and we were the lucky recipients. Night fell and our mood was notably relaxed, we were off the busy roads and had several nights ahead in this paradise. Tree Hyrax called loudly in the night.

## **Fri., Oct. 13                      Ankasa Reserve**

We woke early, eager to get up and into the forest, having come so far to this famed location for birding. The action started quickly as we spotted a Piping Hornbill in flight from the garden area as we assembled. Then our keen guide Paul said, "everyone, follow me!" with authority. Off we went as he'd heard a White-crested Hornbill at the creek. We were able to find it, and with patience got views of its outrageous crown of white feathers, facial markings and long tail as it fed in the treetops, what a start to the day! Our rugged four-wheel drive vehicles were ready, and we set off knowing we'd buck mud, puddles, and logs on this old road that once was the main route to Ivory Coast. Our plan was to drive in and walk various sections of the road and a park ranger joined us to explore.

We entered the reserve through a gate, manned by guards though the visitor center was closed and looking a bit forlorn. We were immediately enveloped in lush forest. This was wet, swamp forest, Tropical Evergreen Forest, and our road at times was a muddy berm just above standing water. We threaded our way, thankfully with



expert drivers, and parked near an opening along a utility line. From here we walked in to a couple of ponds in the low lying area. There were some massive, buttressed trees to scan the crowns of as we heard Yellow-billed Turacos. We caught sightings of Blue-headed Wood Dove feeding in the road track and a couple of sunbirds, Fraser's and Green in clearings. Crested Malimbe's put on a good show, spotted by Valerie in some palms. But it was at the pond itself we saw some of the finest gems of our trip, White-bellied Kingfisher, Blue-breasted Kingfisher and to our delight, a male Red-fronted Antpecker, a regional specialty, taking nest material from an old nest to make a new one. We watched him pull material from the nest, close enough to take photos and videos, a thrill. Chestnut-breasted Nigrita and Black-headed Paradise Flycatcher also worked the pond margin. Time passed quickly before we headed back to the lodge in time for lunch.

Break time at Ankasa was lovely, we could sit on our porches and listen to bird sounds. Bev found a Cassin's Flycatcher and Peg had a Honeyguide Greenbul visit a flowering tree just off her porch. A Pygmy Kingfisher called from its perch and a male Pin-tailed Whydah relentlessly displayed for the girls. Ty was not feeling up to the walks but came out on the porch for some soup and fresh air. He'd been ill for some time now and all of us were worried. Perhaps we fell too deeply into the allure of our comfortable lodge and grounds as the afternoon search for Red-chested Owlet back in the park seemed a bit of a slog, first bucking the mud with our 4-wheel drives straining, then hiking up a trail in a drizzle on wet leaves. Peg and Val each picked up sticks to brace with and make the going easier. The guard cut some for others on the way down. We tried diligently, calling and calling, but to no avail. After our efforts failed, Carol declared it a gin and tonic night and our plan was to meet ahead of dinner at the bar. But just after dark Paul was outside our cabins calling excitedly for us to get into the vehicles and hurry! Back up the muddy road, not far – four Nkulenga Rails were huddled together in their night roost – right over the park road! We got terrific views of this sought-after species and were so appreciative of the rangers help to find them. And after this highlight, we could enjoy our fine meal! While at Ankasa, we actually ordered each meal the meal before, so the chef and crew had time to carefully prepare everything. And each dish was so well done! The sauces were delicious, and choices varied, pork ribs, lamb chops, fresh fish changing daily, even lobster! Soups were creative (chicken and corn was the favorite) and yeah — back to desserts. So far, we'd been served fresh fruit, a healthy choice, but compared to chocolate mousse, flan and profiteroles with ice cream...? Our bird list was growing, and we ended the night with our tally.

**Sat., Oct. 14**

**Ankasa Forest Reserve**



We woke this morning and thoroughly enjoyed our breakfast in the lovely open-air dining room at the lodge, always nice to eat within range of bird sound. We piled in the 4-wheel drive vehicles, each with their own idiosyncrasies, and headed back through the muddy trail. We got out at a section of forest we had not yet explored and right off the bat Paul heard Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill, one of our most sought-after species. We got wonderful looks, even some photos, then as they flew to a large tree across the road, still in view, we were pulled away with calls from Olivaceous Flycatcher which we saw well too. We spent the rest of the morning working on harder and more elusive species, Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, Red-rumped Tinkerbird, Western Bearded Greenbul, African Forest (Fraser's) Flycatcher, and Western Nictator. In the clearing around the guard station where groups used to camp, we watched a beautiful Cassin's Hawk Eagle in flight overhead with several Square-tailed Sawwings. The camp now housed an anti-poaching team that were donning their gear, all business as they headed down the trail with guns at the ready, out for the full day.

We got back at 11:00 AM, and figured, how nice to have some free time, but ... more birds stopped us in the garden! A Pin-tailed Whydah male caused a photo jam up as he showed off his long tail feathers to a couple of females — singing in flight and parading through trees on the lawn. An Olive-breasted Sunbird fed in hibiscus flowers, and several species of bright butterflies joined them. African Pied Hornbills called overhead, right at our cottages there was so much to see! Carol got the prize sighting though, she heard a splash while resting on her porch, below her on the river and found ... African Finfoot! Such a secretive and elusive bird, wow. Several of us tried to find it later with no luck.

## **Sun., Oct. 15                      Ankasa Reserve | Brenn Beach Grasslands**

We had a magical morning birding from the lodge over to the visitor center and entry of Ankasa Reserve. A parade of sunbirds of several species worked the hibiscus flowers lining the driveway. African Pied and Piping Hornbills flew by, perching to announce their presence. We then heard the more secretive call of White-crested Hornbill and we rushed out to the open area of the bridge for better viewing. What an audacious bird! Calming down from that great find, Paul leaned on the bridge rail and soon uttered urgently, come, come here! He



spotted a Shining Blue Kingfisher below us, just about an inch above the water. Miraculously we all maneuvered to see it well before it took off. Hooray, this was on our checklist cover and a much-wanted species to find. We then sorted through greenbuls (Gray, Slender-billed, Icterine) and saw Tit-Hylia feeding in the same area. We were back by 7:00, had breakfast and by 8:00 to be ready to go.

We were anxious to go as Ty needed to get to a doctor, his health taking a sudden turn overnight. The kind staff assisted him to the vehicle, and not a one of us perceived this would be his last ride. Ty loved adventures, and he had shared many on Naturalist Journeys' adventures over the last thirty years. In hindsight this was quite an exit and Peg could see him smiling about that if writing his trip reflections. We had to buck deep mud and wait for a big stuck truck to get pulled out — the road was worse going out than coming in. Another birding group would meet this shuttle; we worried about them making it at all! But once on the highway we made very good time, a special driver called in to rush Ty to a clinic, by then we made the decision to go to the hospital. Richard from Ashanti became a good friend forged by sharing this sad situation, and he drove straight to Cape Coast, expertly honking and clearing the way for a smooth delivery and immediate care.

For the rest of the group returning to the Rainforest Hotel, our bus driver Eric was there with his big smile and super comfortable Toyota Coaster air-conditioned bus, yeah! Paul suggested a stop in grassland habitat. Singing Cisticola, Red-winged Prinia were both new. Carol saw a beauty we'd seen earlier in the trip, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, happy to spot it again. Overall, it was hot mid-day and quiet, but still worth stopping for something new. They stopped by the hospital going through Cape Coast to check on Peg, Steve and Ty and were heartened that he seemed stabilized with an IV, oxygen and care. At sunset, on a Sunday, Peg was called back to the hospital, thinking they were ready to release Ty and planning how to care for him in days ahead to gain his strength. Instead, we received the sad news he had passed away, shock from a combination of stress factors including low blood pressure and shock. Ty was deeply religious, and he loved Africa travel. The doctors and hospital staff were incredibly caring and personal, but his death was unexpected to us all and a first in hundreds of trips abroad for Naturalist Journeys. Peg left the trip for several days to make necessary arrangements with Ty's family. The entire Ashanti Tours office provided support and concern and helped every step of the way.



## **Mon., Oct. 16                      Rainforest Hotel to Paul's House Walk 2 | Nyamebe Bepo Forest Reserve | Picathartes!**

The group continued on, and today was the day for a much-anticipated hunt for a most unusual bird, one of only two species in its odd family. White-necked Rockfowl (*Picathartes*) lives in a narrow belt of lush forest, nesting near huge rock boulders scattered across its range. They nest in a mud cup they adhere to the rock, in cool, protected shade. Paul told us in this part of Ghana they have 13 sites they monitor, two of which they visit. Today was our turn!

As the rockfowl are mainly seen coming in to roost in the late afternoon, there was time to repeat the walk we enjoyed so much from the Rainforest Hotel up to Paul's home. We found the Red-faced Cisticola with ease (missed the first time around), and while looking for it found a busy Western Bluebill building a nest. The Black-winged Bishop was posing once again, Splendid Sunbird posed on flowers, a Rosy Bee-eater flew by and several species of sunbirds perched nicely for us. Walking a bit further uphill, the group spied a Lanner Falcon. It was then time to drive north, passing as always, the moving theater of Ghana street life. It was quiet being Monday, a non-market day, but the following day when Peg and Steve caught back up to the group, they had a wild show of street life on Tuesday, market day. Women strode by with all manner of goods atop their heads. We laughed at some wonderful business signs, admired the mix of market materials: piles of vegetables, tires, bread rolls, cassava...

The group arrived in time to have lunch and settle into the small but comfortable casitas with private bathrooms built here by Ashanti Tours. At this location, to inspire protection for this special bird, our stay benefits the community 100%! This incredible gift by the company to allow local ecotourism in turn protects this amazing habitat and bird. And keeps us from having to drive 2+ hours out from Kumasi, a large city. The rooms were comfortable, roomy, with ceiling fans, good ventilation, big showers and comfortable beds. A wonderful treat to be able to stay close to the site.

By 2:30 PM we were on the trail to a rocky area of the forest where the *Picathartes* roost and nest, winding our way past various food crops, then into lush forest. At the reserve boundary sign we started to find large trees with complex twisting vines. We crossed two small streams and climbed a steep hill and then — benches! It was



time to wait for the show. We had to keep still and silent and wait, facing the large rock that they frequented. They came in early, about 3:30 PM this day, and hopped around in their queer way of jumping and leaping rock to tree branch to vine. They were close and communicated in very soft whispers. The local guide explained they had a nest, and as the birds were tolerant, allowed the group to take a quick peek. Made of mud adhered to the massive boulder, it was the size of a basketball, most impressive! They stayed just a few minutes but with enough light to get good photos. They returned again after 4:30 when it was much darker, but every moment with these odd birds seemed a treasure. Surely one of the highlights of the trip! Dinner was good home cooking at the lodge. Vegetable soup, Jalloff rice and chicken with a tomato gravy. And nice cold beer!

## **Tues., Oct. 17                      Kwabena Sam Reserve AM & PM**

There was a lot of good forest around the area, and Paul selected a site for the morning where a powerline cut through giving good views of edge habitat. It was fortuitous as into this open view flew a pair of Long-tailed Hawk, and they stuck around for a good 30 minutes! It was a gray morph and the more common chestnut morph, both beautiful to study and photograph in detail. Another highlight moment of the morning occurred when Lise called out “woodpecker”. Paul put his bins up and grabbed the scope and started calling an urgent come, come, come! It was one of the most prized sightings of our trip, a Black Dwarf Hornbill and as the Brits would say, “cracking views”. Stunningly beautiful was the Blue Cuckooshrike. Tiny Sunbird was a new species, as was White-headed Woodhoopoe. A very distant Congo Serpent Eagle gave us a lesson in proportions. Naked-faced Barbet sat placidly, then yawned showing off its great gape. Orange-cheeked Waxbills appeared in a small puddle.

We enjoyed local food for lunch at the lodge — “red-red” (black eyed peas and plantains) and had a quick break, during which a House Gecko seen on the walls earlier fell on Carol’s head in her tent during her nap, causing a jolt and creating for the rest of us a good story and laugh. After lunch, with looming rain, we ventured over to the local school, built by Ashanti funding for the village. An energetic teacher led the scores of children in singing songs for us, loudly with great enthusiasm. The kids were so happy to see the group, wanted to touch our



hands, hear our voices. A few of the group brought donations and it was fun to present them. The teacher's happiest find in our loot was a pencil sharpener that clever Valerie thought to bring, score!

We went out again in the afternoon, to the same reserve but a different section, and one of the prize sightings after hearing it on so many days was a very cooperative Yellow-billed Barbet, a species we'd heard day after day, but this day it decided to pose. We walked a trail into the forest, where we found a Black Cuckoo (light morph with red throat) and a couple of Red-chested Cuckoos for a nice comparison. A local hunter passed by as we scoped the cuckoo and got a chance to look through the scope, voicing his amazement "so close!". We chased a flock of twinspots around, supposedly Green Twinspot, but decided we needed a better look. Thunder and

lightning and some rain started up, so we headed back. Dinner was a chicken stir-fry, and Steve had picked up gin and tonic on the way up, a nice treat for the group after a rewarding day.

## **Wed., Oct. 18                      Travel Day to Mole National Park**

Paul warned us accurately that it would be a long travel day. It was, but in Eric's air-conditioned bus the hours passed quickly. Several worked on projects, sharing photos by airdrop. Peg caught up on trip notes interviewing others for the time she had missed. Watching out the window was always entertaining, mile after mile of small stores line the road, with piles of goods from hardware to auto parts to furniture made on site, to foodstuffs,

fruits, breads, sodas. There seemed to be many more vendors than buyers but this market culture is woven deeply into life here and is a big part of the daily life of many. We had a lunch break at a restaurant serving local food and it was very good, baked chicken and various types of rice. Peg and Val tried a ginger drink that was very potent and refreshing. After lunch there were more open miles and we started to see birds on the wire, Rufous-crowned Roller, Lizard Buzzard and on a brick wall, a Levaillant's Cuckoo. We had a brief look at a Beaudouin's Snake Eagle on a utility tower; we hopped out of the bus to scope it just as it flew.

We were thrilled at last to see signs for Mole National Park. And then even more thrilled to walk into the impressive lobby of Zaina Lodge, our splurge lodge for the trip, and as Val said, "worth every penny". By this time in the trip, we were ready for a little indulgence and big beds, awesome sheets (two of them), AC, porches with



views, African textiles, loads of storage, showers inside and out and a bar and infinity pool promised a great three night stay. Recent rains have hatched the season's tsetse flies in vengeance, thankfully around the lodge we barely noticed them as a nice breeze blew up to the escarpment from the forest and ponds below. The arriving rains also brought out midges and other insects that flew towards any light, so we dined in near darkness and made dashes into our cabins not to let them in. The chef (from South Africa) was very creative but seemingly immune to hot temperatures, serving up a lovely but heavy oxtail soup – a winter's night meal in our minds! They served one continental and one local dish each meal, fun to sample and try things.

### **Thurs., Oct. 19 & Fri., Oct. 20                      Two Full Days in Mole National Park**

We met out on the patio before breakfast as the sun rose, hearing so many bird calls. From this viewpoint we found African Wattled Lapwings down by the ponds, and a perched Palm Nut Vulture. A Rock-loving Cisticola hopped into view on an adjacent brush pile, staying long enough for us to snap some photos.

They called us to breakfast, Eggs Benedict among the choices, wow! Fortified, we hopped in the bus, entered the park gate and headed off on the Samole Loop track. We stopped by the visitor center to pick up John, a very knowledgeable ranger of 14 years here, for the day. He added a lot to the experience with his stories and interpretation. It was obvious that this park gets more attention and funding too, poor Ankasa's visitor center in contrast was abandoned.

We had two full days in Mole NP, and we met each day with anticipation. The area was far more wooded than we'd anticipated, and grass in some sections was shoulder high! Our best mammal viewing, coming out of the dry season, was actually on the cleared lawns of the local school where we had great looks at Kob, Warthog, Bushbuck, Patass and Olive Baboons.

We started each day on the patio of our lovely hotel, gazing over the infinity pool for views of Palm Nut Vulture, Wooley-necked Stork, and Abyssinian Ground Hornbill. Paul called in a Pearl-spotted Owlet he'd heard, which brought on quite the show of Little Weaver, Chestnut-headed Sparrow Weaver, Sahel Sparrow, and Yellow-



fronted Canary. To get out with efficiency, we pre-ordered our breakfast. There was fresh fruit, baked goods, all served efficiently so we could be off to explore. Long-tailed Glossy Starling flew back and forth in our view as we dined.

The first morning we walked quite a ways, and new birds cropped up over and over. Red-throated Bee-eaters were common and so beautiful! We found Rufous Cisticola, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Red-headed Weaver, a Brubru female and a showy Beautiful Sunbird. We hit a wet area, almost got stuck but our skilled driver Eric got us through. We hopped out to a mixed flock with Swamp Flycatcher, Yellow-breasted Huliota, White-shouldered Black Tit, Northern Crombec, and Northern Black Flycatcher. We then went over to a hide near the pool below the Mole Motel. There a big bull Elephant feeding from standing in the water. We saw a Yellow Bishop, and a group of roosting Cattle Egrets. We were relaxing in the shade and enjoying it when Paul called us to come over urgently. A Pearl-spotted Owlet had answered a call in and was now perched, causing quite a commotion starting about in every direction. There was a Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike, Northern Puffback, African Paradise Flycatcher. Driving over to another hide, we enjoyed an explosion of Red-headed Bee-eaters near a nest area in a sandbank along a small river. A flock of Orange-cheeked Waxbill and Red-cheeked Cordonbleu put on a good show. Overhead, a Gray Kestrel.

Back for lunch and a break. Warthogs grazed in the clearing below, our views punctuated by Pin-tailed Whydah males flashing their flowing tails.

Afternoons were a mess, literally! Tsetse Flies, yuk! They literally swarmed and kept us in the bus. Not to be daunted we found Whinchat and Double-spurred Spurfowl, Striped Squirrels. We pushed on to a more open grassland area. Ones there we found Sun Lark with little problem and good views. Forbes's Plover proved elusive. Poor Paul piled out of the bus, and we watched him swat Tsetse flies every second, playing the tape, calling, and looking. Finally, we had Eric honk the horn to return, enough was enough. We were willing to admit defeat and Paul jumped back on the bus. As soon as we turned the bus around, there it was — next to a few feeding Vinaceous Doves, bingo. There was a beautiful Forbes's Plover in a very short grass area, giving us superlatives views. This bird is often difficult, and we were really thrilled to find it. We stayed out till dusk and



found a Grayish Eagle Owl on the way home. Dinners at Zaina Lodge were an affair. We often had an appetizer, followed by pork or lamb, or other continental dish, or the choice of local foods, including guinea fowl. The chef was creative but chose way too heavy entrees for the climate. We were full!

The second day was more of the same with new and additional species. We went to the big pond by the Mole Motel, looking at it from below, then above from the motel's patio. A huge Elephant was feeding at the water's edge. Then we went out to the airstrip, an area free of Tsetse Flies. We had wonderful views of Pygmy and then Scarlet-chested Sunbirds. A noisy group of Brown Babblers was fun, they flew across the road and put on a good show. And at a little side pass through fields, we found the Red-winged Prinia, Singing Cisticola, and to our delight, a Fine-spotted Woodpecker flew in. We were able to get photos and watch it for some time. Back at the lodge the cooling waters of the infinity pool gave us a decadent treat. It was lovely to splash and float among the soothing tile colors, look at the lodge architecture, then rest on the lip of such a fine view. A bright male Bushbuck grazed below alongside a Kob and baby and two Warthogs.

The afternoon was a bit slow but started out strong with two White-headed Vultures over the parking lot. We returned to the airstrip, walking and calling for a few species we were destined to miss. But then opportunity knocked! Three Exclamatory Paradise-Whydahs, two of which were males parading their tails. A Bearded Barbet, and then a surprise even to Paul: Black-faced Firefinch. We had reached the end of our energies and staying another hour until dark to try for nightbirds was voted down. Driving back, we located two different pair of Abyssinian Ground Hornbills roosting up on trees. The second couple was very close to the road, and we looked up at their silhouettes against a golden sky, unforgettable. Our consolation prize for giving up.

## **Sat., Oct. 21                      Egyptian Plover Search at the White Volta River near Daboya**

As we packed to go, Lesser Blue-eared Starlings came in as they had each morning, briefly before going on into deeper forest. We said our good-byes, passed the now-familiar mammals grazing on the village lawns. We had a crazy long drive today and a decision to make. We could detour an hour and a half off route with hopes of finding Egyptian Plover (not seen by a group two weeks ago due to high water levels) along the White Volta River. As the



two-trip clan had started our trip with Crab Plover seen in Tanzania, we really hoped to end it with this equally special plover. Peg finally weighed in, “if we don’t try, we won’t know”, and a plea for Paul to connect by phone with a local in the know. It looked possible and off we went.

Watching life along the road proved insightful, Paul interpreting our questions to point out that this part of the country was not in line with the services of other, it was just receiving safe, clean water and life here was hard. We saw lots of bags of charcoal, and men and women bent over crops that looked sparse and struggling. People were poorer and it showed.

We got to a busy village that all of a sudden seemed to be a hub of life, we were at the edge of the river and it was a weekend, so there were boats being loaded, a busy set of 20+/- passenger ferries going back and forth across the current, and women and children doing various chores while seated in the shade of large riverine trees. Atop the trees was a colony of Black-headed Herons with 40 or more birds joining into the local cacophony. We got out so fast a few of us left cameras behind – BIG mistake as very quickly Lise said – “I’ve got one, over here!” There right at the cut in the river that the ferry boats were going in and out of was a stunning, Egyptian Plover. As quick as it was visible, it was not, ducked around the corner. Do we wait, do we move there, but here comes the ferry...

Luck was with us and not one but two flew out as the ferry boat landed, and they came right towards us! They landed some distance away but close enough for super scope views, and digiscope photos. Paul was skilled at this and quickly we passed him our phones. They were as gorgeous as we expected, wearing tuxedo like plumage, and obviously a pair. They ignored local fisherman going by, and in time flew even closer to a set of rocks, where we watched them poke and probe for food. Mission accomplished; we were thrilled. Thankfully this happy feeling carried us into the early afternoon when we realized we would not get to our lodgings until after dark. We opted for lunch at a convenience store just to stay on track. Passing through Kumasi, on a busy market day, also the day of gatherings for funerals, was slow, at times we did not move at all. The endless market scene



here was not as charming as those in rural areas, and truck traffic was grim. We saw an accident and felt the weariness and wariness of our driver. Peg quizzed Paul on flights, thinking ahead to another year... (thankfully they exist and we can avoid going through Kumasi twice). Dinner, more Jollof rice, but okay and off to bed. Thankfully we had more birding and nature areas ahead.

## **Sun., Oct. 22                      Bobiri Butterfly Reserve | Atewa Mountains Lower Road & Mining Concession**

We were excited to get back into lush rainforest and try for a few new birds, and better looks at a few species we had not seen well before. We were unaware of how severe the logging threats are here; it turns out the Bobiri Reserve is small, just 54 sq. kilometers, with unmanaged logging trucks going right through it, far too many of them. Our bus was not able to navigate a thick patch of mud going in, but Paul liked the more open habitat leading into the visitor facility for birding anyway, so we walked in with the center and its gardens as our destination. Sadly, it was a gray, cloudy day so the butterflies were not very active; we had to look closely at flowering shrubs and mineral licks on the road to find them. Birds were active and we had good views of notable species, mostly by standing in clearings and waiting for sound or activity. We got good views of Velvet-mantled (Fanti) Drongo, Chestnut-capped Flycatcher, Buff-throated Woodpecker, Green Crombec, at the gardens a noisy group of Red-billed Helmet-shrikes, and a good find, Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike. All in all the place felt a little sad, only one person around trying to sun-dry laundry (with the relative humidity, not likely) and no sense the place was being visited much. We saw two logging trucks going in empty to load up, stepping out of the way as they barely cleared the trail. This is also true in parts of Atewa Reserve, both places closer to civilization and under threat. But oh, such beautiful BIG trees and birds.

We found a good place for lunch with local stews, many chose red-red, one of our favorites now. Fortified, we continued on, noticing hills coming into view, part of the Atewa Range. We got into our rooms at the Nelsban Palace, sort of a rambling place that seemed more of a conference center than daily hotel, then soon left to make a first run to the forest. We also saw they had pizza on the menu, but we were looking for quick and they warned it could take an hour. Our solution was to order some ahead and take it back to our hotel when passing back through after birding.



Skies were dark and threatening, but we tried to be optimistic. Only a few grabbed rain gears, so when the skies opened, there was a rush back to the bus. About four of us continued on, not wanting to sit any longer, and protected by our ponchos. Birds were still active, surprisingly so, and we had a great show put on by Malachite Kingfisher at one of the small ponds. This is an active mining concession, though the part we walked through was not active and had vegetation, we got looks at a massive bare patch further along. Among the rubble and shrubs, we found African Firefinch in with the more common Bronzed Manakins and further up the trail, Black-and-white Manakin. A Little Bee-eater posed by the pond and a Blue-throated Roller called, which drew our attention. Western Bluebill were working on a seed patch under a cut-out embankment. A pair of Double-toothed Barbets were bold and confiding. We did not want to leave those in the bus for too long, so despite the activity we returned. Pizza and beer for dinner, our checklist tally and time for bed. We had a big day tomorrow for our last hurrah.

## **Mon., Oct. 23                      Atewa Forest Reserve Hike**

We had been told in advance this was a challenging day, but we did not want to miss the chance to see Blue-moustached Bee-eater, a really local species and one that required us to climb. Peg and Bev love mountain walks and were eager to go on a final day after a couple of weeks of dawn starts, intense heat and long days, not all the others were as keen. We decided not to march up but to take our chances the bee-eaters would be there, which made it far more enjoyable as we birded en route. We found quite a few species including the Lowland Sooty Bulbul, a skulker that only Carol had seen the day previous. We also found Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher, a striking bird. A Marsh Tchagra teed up on some bullrushes to the delight of our photographers. We put a lot of effort into finding Red-cheeked Wattle-eye and later on the walk also found African Wattle-eye, only

heard previously. Paul paused especially in clearings, where catching our breath we also found some birds. One thrill was finding a pair of Forest Penduline Tits making a nest. It was a huge nest and we were able to digiscope



some images, wow! Along some shaded cover we found White-tailed Ant-Thrush, Gray Tit-Flycatcher, and a wonderful mix of sunbirds, including Little Green Sunbird, tiny and new for the trip. We saw both Crested and Red-headed Malimbos, such colorful birds and dapper in black and red. One of our pauses was to talk with a group of guards that had five men in handcuffs, illegal hunters poaching bush meat. Probably just hungry locals, but the impact is high on species in this protected area and cannot be sustained. Our privileged life, to fly tens of thousands of miles to admire the forest and its birds, was such a massive contrast, later conversations found us returning to community conservation, local stakeholders and how we can work to retain such precious places as population pressure and poverty push in.

Paul heard the first Blue-moustached Bee-eater and thankfully it kept returning to the same perch, so we got very good views, scope views, though all against gray sky. Further along, we found a pair down lower, with vegetation behind them and got even better looks. Success! We had weathered a rain blast, climbed a lot, and other than missing the view from the top were very pleased. Over cheese sandwiches perched on our ponchos on the ground, Peg suggested maybe we turn around. No arguments heard; we'd had a splendid final day. We returned at a birder's pace and picked up a few more species.

While our minds might have wanted to explore further, we all felt satisfied and ready to return home. Over dinner we recounted highlights, from watching a Senegal Chameleon saunter across the road in Mole NP to that amazing nest building by the Red-fronted Antpecker close enough to photograph. Of course, the White-necked Rockfowl (*Picathartes*) had many votes, Abyssinian Ground Hornbills at dusk, for Lise finding the Black Dwarf Hornbill (at first thinking it was a woodpecker), and the fun of seeing nine species of kingfisher, including that sneaky Shining Blue at Ankasa. We also loved completing groups on our checklist and 13 species of the barbet family felt pretty special. For some, the beauty of Egyptian Plover, a bird in its own family, got top rating. We all agreed Ghana was sweltering hot, with long drives and muddy trails but oh, so special. We laughed at a birder's conception of paradise, but at times we were there!



## Tues., Oct. 24                      Return to Accra | Flights Out

Sadly, it was time to go! We found a few familiar birds with a return to the lower mining concession area, and then returned to pack up and go. Paul saved the day finding our coffee tins in the van as the restaurant (mostly open for conventions here) was out of coffee. We stopped to shop at a market with many booths, each of course wanting our business. What more could we fit in our suitcases; it was simply time to go. Peg would stay on in Accra for several more days to help with the logistics of Ty's passing and had amazing support from Ashanti Tours. We had become like family, and they held her up in true family style.

*African Gray Hornbill (Valerie Gebert - VG), Black-headed Paradise-Flycatcher (VG), Group in the Shai Hills (Peg Abbott - PA), Elephant (VG), White-necked Rockfowl (NJ Stock), Red-throated Bee-eater (VG), Local Baskets (PA), Feast! (PA), Fantasy Coffin Burial Tradition (PA), Independence Square (PA), Purple Starling (VG), Walking in the Shai Hills (VG), Yellow Longclaw (VG), Stone Partridge (VG), Violet-backed Starling (VG), Lesser Spot-nosed Monkey (VG), Shai Hills Scenic (PA), Shai Hills Scenic (PA), African Kob (PA), Western Plantain-eater (PA), Exploring Town (PA), Lovely Ladies (VG), Boat (VG), Scenic (VG), Kakum Canopy Walkway (VG), Blue Malkoha (VG), Red-headed Malimbe (VG), Akwaaba Entrance (PA), Canopy Walkway View (PA), Enjoying the Walkway (PA), Rufous-sided Broadbill (VG), African Goshawk (VG), Street Life (PA), Cocoa Farm (PA), Group at cocoa farm (PA), Group at the Ashanti Office (PA), Ashanti Staff (PA), All smiles (PA), Nkulengu Rail (PA), Oriole Warbler (VG), Ashanti Office (VG), Copper Sunbird (VG), Red-fronted Antpecker (VG), White-headed Hornbill (VG), Olive-bellied Sunbird (VG), Pied-billed Hornbill (VG), Ankasa Forest Reserve (NJ Stock), African Finfoot (NJ Stock), Walk to see Picathartes (PA), Yellow-headed Picathartes (VG), New Friends (VG), West African Pied Hornbill (VG), Long-tailed Hawk (VG), Yellow-billed Barbet (VG), Exploring (VG), Common Genet (VG), All Smiles! (VG), Speckled Dove (VG), Zaina Lodge (VG), Group Lunch (VG), Bushbuck (VG), Elephant (VG), Birding Mole National Park (PA), Fine-spotted Woodpecker (VG), Bruce's Green-Pigeon (VG), Pearl-spotted Owlet (PA), Red-throated Bee-eater (VG), Agama Lizard (VG), Exclamatory Paradise-Whydah (VG), Street Life (VG), Patas Monkey (VG), Scenic (VG), Blue Homes (PA), Group Birding (PA), White Volta River (PA), Bobiri (PA), Group (PA), Val (PA), Lise (PA), Steve (PA), Bev (PA), Marsh Tchagra (VG), Bar-breasted Firefinch (VG), Butterfly (VG), Peg (PA), Grasshopper (PA)*