12 April 2019

Trip report Ethiopia: birding tour to the roof of Africa

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About the tour

Tour	Trip report Ethiopia: birding tour to the roof of Africa
When	2 december 2017 - 18 december 2017
Number of travelers	7
Guide	& & & & & & & & &

In Ethiopia you have to go for an exceptional biodiversity and a record number of bird species that you won't find anywhere else. Dream away at these highlights from the trip report of participant Guido Orbie. About a minibus full of cheering travelers, monkeys pretending you to be made of thin air and birds that act as an alarm clock.

Critters everywhere

In a bird-rich country like Ethiopia you don't always have to look far. Even within the hotel gardens you already get "tasty sightings" as Guido describes them nicely. "In the capital Addis Abbeba our bird adventure begins immediately, in the green garden of the hotel.

> *Even Starling tour guide Jef as well as the local guide Ashinati proof immediately what they're worth. After day 1 we already have 32 species on the counter, including spectacular sightings of theAbyssinian Slaty Flycatcher and Tacazze Sunbirds.*

After a night full of exotic sounds of growling hippos and howling hyenas, noisy hadada ibises wake us up from the trees above the lodge. At 6.30 am, everyone is ready for the appointment at the breakfast table. A couple of white-cheeked turacus land in the giant trees in front of the restaurant and a couple of yellow-fronted parrots climb. "



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Not only birds

On a Starling tour throughout this diverse country you will also bump into other animals, will people leave a deep impression and will a pinch of culture provide the finishing touch.

“From Debark we head into the mountains. The beautiful, arid highlands are interchanged with deep gorges and valleys. We drive past meager huts made of branches and clay, everywhere enthusiastically waving children pop up. A track brings us to the grassy Gelada baboons. We take a break in their company, during which they won’t care about our presence. We are happy to see this endemic species in the land of primal ape Lucy. ”

In the famous rock churches of Lalibela, a well-visited UNESCO monument, we are introduced to the religion of this Orthodox Christian church and to the profound conviction of its adepts. We admire these imposing structures carved from the rock. Our sympathetic guide Ashinati skilfully guides us from church to church through this spiritual sanctuary. Everywhere there are helping hands to climb the steep rock steps. But there are also birds! During lunch in a nice restaurant on top of an excellent rock, lammergeiers and fan-tailed ravens circle above and below us. We enjoy being dressed in white blankets that protect us against the strong mountain wind.

We leave for a ride through one of the most extraordinary landscapes of Ethiopia: the “moorlands” of the Senetiplateau in the Bale Mountains. The most appealing species that lives here is perhaps the seriously endangered Ethiopian wolf or *Abyssinian Wolf*. This highland is also figuratively one of the highlights of the trip.

> *We see over 20 augur buzzards and no less than 7 Ethiopian wolves, only a few meters from the bus.*

Near a lake we see *Blue-winged Geese, White-Billed Duck and Ruddy Shellduck.*”



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Rare mega’s

Sometimes you have to get out of bed before the dawn. Another Sometimes you have to get out of bed before getting out of bed. Another time they just come by while you are having a picnic. But it is certain that one topper follows the other. They just come by while

you are picnicking. But it is certain that one topper follows the other.

> *We'll have lunch while viewing a waterfall where Nile crocodiles are sunbathing, the fish eagle is calling and the hamerkop feels at home.*

A warm afternoon follows, spiced with wonderful observations. The topper is the proudly patrolling Kori Bustard, with its permanent companion and driver: the Northern Carmine Bee eater. Our luck cannot be if two Secretary Birds also fall from the sky. "

At 4.30 we are packed and ready to take the bus to Ankobar and the "target of the day": the extremely rare Harwood's Frankolin. With small eyes and well-protected against the wind, we wind down the nocturnal kilometers through the – still dark – Rift Valley. At dawn we have arrived at a place where, according to our guide, the bird in question has its territory. A local shows us the primitive floor where the birds come to eat. Immediately we hit jackpot. A beautiful Verreaux' eagle is startled and there they are: Harwood's Frankolins with chicks! Restrained jubilation in the group when observing this highly endangered species.

In a river valley we find a picnic spot that immediately takes us away. A lot is flying and hopping in the bed and on the banks of the river. The real "beauty" is an Egyptian Plover, perhaps one of the crown jewels of this Ethiopia trip. "



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