

Kenya

11–28 July 2005

Participants:

Bob and Kathleen Foskett

Peter and Eileen Knight

Nigel Messenger

Terry Wilson



Denham's Bustard

Leader: Steve Easley

Day 1: Flight from London to Nairobi and overnight.

Day 2: Our first day in Kenya was magical with nearly all of our target species encountered. Areas visited on the day included, Maxwell Adventist Academy (just outside of Nairobi), Mwea (a large wetland area near the Tana River, Wajee Nature Park and finally the gorgeous forests near Mountain Lodge. Highlights seen on the day were, Long-tailed Cormorant, Purple Heron, Fulvous Whistling-duck, Hottentot Teal, African Harrier-hawk, Lanner Falcon, Black Crake, Blacksmith and Spur-winged Lapwings, Dusky Turtle-dove, African Wood-owl, Mottled and White-rumped Swifts, Malachite and Grey-headed Kingfishers, White-headed Wood-hoopoe, Silvery-cheeked and Crowned Hornbills, White-eared Barbet, Red-fronted Tinkerbird, Rufous-necked (Red-throated) Wryneck, Lesser Striped and Red-rumped Swallows, Cape Wagtail, Singing and Winding Cisticolas, Dark-capped Yellow Warbler, Brown Parisoma, White-starred Robin, Cape and Rüppell's Robin-chats, the endemic Hinde's Pied-babbler, Amethyst, Scarlet-chested, Variable, Bronze and Golden-winged Sunbirds, Abyssinian White-eye, Black-backed Puffback, Superb, Waller's and Kenrick's Starlings, Grosbeak and Brown-capped Weavers, African and Holub's Golden-weavers, Yellow-crowned and Yellow Bishops, Common and Crimson-rumped Waxbills, Bronze Mannikin, Village Indigobird, Pin-tailed Whydah and Kenya Yellow-rumped and Streaky Seedeaters. Mammals seen in the evening hours around Mountain Lodge were, Cape Hare, Common Genet, Spotted Hyena, Marsh and White-tailed Mongooses, African Buffalo, (Masai) Bushbuck and Defassa Waterbuck.

Day 3: In the morning we birded in the Mountain Lodge area and then transferred to the dry semi-desert country of the Buffalo Springs Game Reserve. Some of the better species seen on the day were Somali Ostrich, Black-shouldered Kite, Brown Snake-eagle, Bateleur, Eastern Chanting-goshawk, Black Goshawk (Great Sparrowhawk), Augur Buzzard, Tawny Eagle, African Crowned-eagle (nesting near Mountain Lodge), Secretary-bird, Pygmy Falcon, Yellow-necked Spurfowl, Kori, White-bellied and Buff-crested Bustards, Somali Courser, Black-winged and Crowned Lapwings, Black-faced and Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse, Speckled, Rameron (Olive) and Delegorgue's (Eastern Bronze-naped) Pigeons, Tambourine and Namaqua Doves, African Green-pigeon, Hartlaub's Turaco, White-bellied Go-away-bird, Speckled and Blue-naped Mousebirds, African (Black) Swift, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Lilac-breasted Roller, Red-billed, Von der Decken's and African Grey Hornbills, Moustached and Yellow-rumped Tinkerbirds, Nubian and Cardinal Woodpeckers, Grey Cuckoo-shrike, Eastern Mountain-greenbul, Olive Thrush, Hunter's, Rattling and Boran Cisticolas, Chestnut-throated Apalis, Yellow-

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bellied Eremomela, Banded Parisoma, African Stonechat, Pygmy Batis, African Hill-babbler, Mouse-coloured Penduline-tit, Malachite and Hunter's Sunbirds, Montane White-eye, Black-tailed (Montane) Oriole, Taita Fiscal, Brubru, Three-streaked Tchagra, Tropical Boubou, Sharpe's and Abbott's Starlings, Red-billed Oxpecker, Red-billed and White-headed Buffalo-weavers, White-browed and Donaldson-smith's Sparrow-weavers, Black-capped Social-weaver, Speke's and Baglafaecht Weavers, Red-collared and Jackson's Widowbirds, Grey-headed Negrofinch, Abyssinian Crimson-wing, Cut-throat, Thick-billed Seedeater and the colourful Yellow-crowned Canary. Many species of mammals were seen on the day, these included, Eastern Black-and-white Colobus, Olive Baboon, Black-faced Vervet Monkey, Blue Syke's Monkey, Cape Hare, Unstriped Ground-squirrel, Black-backed Jackal, African Civet, African Savannah Elephant, Common and Grevy's Zebras, Reticulated Giraffe, African Buffalo, (Masai) Bushbuck, Suni, Steinbuck, Kirk's Dikdik, Common and Defassa Waterbucks, Thomson's and Grant's Gazelles, Gerenuk, Impala and the striking Beisa Oryx.

Day 4: We spent all day exploring the fantastic Buffalo Springs Game Reserve. Highlight species sited along the Uaso Nyiro River and adjacent dry scrub were, Goliath and Striated Herons, Palm-nut Vulture, Black-chested Snake-eagle, Gabar Goshawk, African Hawk-eagle, Martial and Long-crested Eagles, Red-necked Falcon, Crested Francolin, Helmeted and Vulturine Guineafowls, Spotted Thick-knee, Three-banded Plover, African Orange-bellied Parrot, Verreaux's Eagle-owl, Pearl-spotted Owllet, White-headed Mousebird, Little and Somali Bee-eaters, Rufous-crowned Roller, Green Wood-hoopoe, Abyssinian Scimitarbill, Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill, D'arnaud's and Red-and-yellow Barbets, Lesser Honeyguide, Singing Bushlark, Pink-breasted Lark, Northern Brownbul, African Bare-eyed Thrush, Ashy and Desert Cisticolas, Pale Prinia, Yellow-vented Eremomela, Grey Wren-warbler, Red-fronted Warbler, Southern Black-flycatcher, Spotted Morning-thrush, Rufous Chatterer, Kenya Violet-backed and Black-bellied Sunbirds, Rosy-patched Bush-shrike, Slate-coloured Boubou, Fan-tailed Raven, Parrot-billed and Chestnut Sparrows, Black-cheeked Waxbill and White-bellied Canary. A few of the impressive mammals seen on the day were, Olive Baboon, Black-faced Vervet Monkey, Dwarf Mongoose, Leopard (a pair guarding a kill), Lion (a pride of 10 stunning specimens), African Savannah Elephant, Grevy's Zebra (endangered), Reticulated Giraffe, Kirk's Dikdik, Grant's Gazelle and the bizarre Gerenuk.

Day 5: Several targets were added in the reserve before our departure for the highlands once again. In the afternoon we birded the thick forest around the Naro Moru River Lodge. Specialties sited during the day included, Scissor-tailed Kite (two individuals seen together soaring above the dry grassland), African Goshawk, Peregrine Falcon, Grey Crowned-crane, African Hoopoe, Fawn-coloured (Foxy) Lark, Chestnut-headed and Fischer's Sparrow-larks, Angola, Mosque and Wire-tailed Swallows, Black Saw-wing, Yellow-whiskered and Placid Greenbuls, Grey-backed Camaroptera, White-browed Robin-chat, White-winged Scrub-robin, Somali (Northern Grey) Tit, Northern Double-collared, Tacazze and Green-headed Sunbirds, Northern White-crowned (White-rumped) Shrike, Kenya Rufous-sparrow, Golden Palm-weaver, Red-headed and Spectacled Weavers, Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu and Cinnamon-breasted (Rock) Bunting. A gorgeous Cheetah was located on our morning game drive. Our driver Peter was able to position us close enough to get several nice photos of this sought after species. Also as we were leaving the reserve we located a second Cheetah, but this one was a bit more skittish and left fairly quickly.

Day 6: We started early and ascended to Mount Kenya National Park. All morning was spent birding the montane forests on Mount Kenya, Africa's 2nd highest mountain. After lunch we departed for Lake Nakuru National Park in the Great Rift Valley, with several birding stops en route. Some of the exciting species seen on the day were, Little Grebe, Great (White-breasted) Cormorant, Yellow-billed and African Black Ducks, Jackson's Francolin, Red-knobbed Coot, Black-bellied Bustard, Red-fronted Parrot, Cape (Mackinder's) Eagle-owl, Nyanza Swift, Giant Kingfisher, Broad-billed Roller, Rock and Plain Martins, Abyssinian Ground-thrush, Mountain Yellow Warbler, White-browed Crombec, Moorland Chat, Northern Anteater-chat, Black-lored Babbler (Sharpe's Pied-Babbler), Eastern Double-collared Sunbird and the stunning combo of Yellow-bellied and Black-headed Waxbills. New mammals on the day were Rock Hyrax and the massive Eland.

Day 7: The morning was spent in the incredible Lake Nakuru National Park. The main attraction in the National Park is the unusual pink glow shimmering around the entire lake. A closer view reveals more than 1 million flamingos, very impressive! In the afternoon we made our way to further north to Lake Baringo. Birds seen during the day included, Masai Ostrich, Great White Pelicans (1,000+), Little and Intermediate Egrets, Squacco Heron, Glossy Ibis, African Spoonbill, Greater and Lesser Flamingos, Egyptian Goose, Cape Teal, African Fish-eagle, Ruff, Marsh and Common Sandpipers, Grey-headed Gull, Gull-billed and Whiskered Terns, Red-chested, Black, Klaas's and Dideric Cuckoos, African Palm-swift, Pied Kingfisher, White-fronted, White-throated and Madagascar Bee-eaters, Eurasian Hoopoe, Common Scimitarbill, Red-fronted Barbet, Greater and Scaly-throated Honeyguides, Bearded and African Grey-headed Woodpeckers, Rufous-naped and Red-capped Larks, Yellow-throated and Rosy-throated Longclaws, Black Cuckoo-shrike, Little Rock-thrush, African Thrush, Pectoral-patch Cisticola, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Red-faced Crombec, Silverbird, Mocking Cliff-Chat, Arrow-marked Babbler, White-bellied Tit, African Black-headed Oriole, Northern Puffback, Brown-crowned and Black-crowned Tchagra, Common and Grey-backed Fiscals, Grey-headed Bush-shrike, White Helmet-shrike, Greater Blue-eared and Rüppell's Glossy-starlings and the impressive Long-tailed Widowbird. Mammals added to our quickly growing list were, White and Black Rhinos (both species are endangered), Hippopotamus, Common Warthog and the graceful Rothchild's Giraffe. An enormous Leopard Tortoise was also seen along the drive.

Day 8: All day was spent bird watching in several areas around Lake Baringo. Highlights seen on this amazing day were, Pink-backed Pelican, White-faced Whistling-duck, Comb (Knob-billed) Duck, African Skimmer, Dark Chanting-goshawk, Shikra, Rock (Common) Kestrel, Harlequin Quail, African Jacana, Water Thick-knee, Three-banded (Heuglin's) Courser, Long-toed Plover, Great Spotted, Black-and-white and African Cuckoos, Northern White-faced Owl, Greyish Eagle-owl, Slender-tailed Nightjar, Woodland Kingfisher, Jackson's and Hemprich's Hornbills, Zitting Cisticola, African Paradise-flycatcher, Brown-tailed (Rock) Chat, Beautiful Sunbird, Red-winged and Bristle-crowned Starlings, Speckle-fronted, Chestnut, Village and Little Weavers, Jackson's Golden-backed Weaver, Northern, Vitelline and Lesser Masked-weavers, Red-billed and Cardinal Queleas, Northern Red Bishop, Green-winged Pytilia, Blue-capped Cordon-bleu, Purple Grenadier, Grey-headed and African Silverbills, Eastern Paradise-whydah and the elegant Somali Golden-breasted Bunting.

Day 9: We departed early for the Kakamega Rainforest in western Kenya. Most of the day however was spent birding in Kerio Valley and surrounding areas. Specialties sited on the day were, Banded Snake-eagle, African Marsh-harrier, Little Sparrowhawk, Wahlberg's Eagle, Wattled Lapwing, Meyer's (Brown) Parrot, Ross's and White-crested Turacos, African Emerald Cuckoo, Spot-flanked, White-headed and Double-toothed Barbets, White-headed Saw-wing, Red-faced and Levaillant's Cisticolas, Grey-capped Warbler, Green-backed Eremomela, Little Rush-warbler, Lesser Swamp-warbler, Pale Flycatcher, Northern Black-flycatcher, Grey Tit-flycatcher, African Yellow White-eye, Black-headed Gonolek, Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike, Cape Crow, Bronze-tailed Glossy-starling, Fan-tailed Widowbird, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-weaver, Black-crowned Waxbill, Stripe-breasted Seedeater and African Golden-breasted Bunting. Also while hiking in the Kerio Valley we spotted a Yellow-winged Bat in a large acacia.

Day 10: All day was dedicated to the unbelievable avifauna of the Kakamega Rainforest. Some of the many exciting species sited while hiking the forest trails were, White-spotted Flufftail, Great Blue Turaco, African Pygmy-kingfisher, Blue-headed Bee-eater, Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill, Yellow-spotted, Hairy-breasted and Yellow-billed Barbets, Brown-eared, Buff-spotted and Yellow-crested (Golden-crowned) Woodpeckers, Petit's Cuckoo-Shrike, Joyful, Kakamega (Shelley's), Little Grey, Ansorge's, Plain (Cameroon Sombre), Slender-billed, Honeyguide, and Cabanis's Greenbuls, Red-tailed Bristlebill, Brown-chested Alethe, Chubb's Cisticola, Black-faced (Banded) and White-chinned Prinias, Black-collared Apalis, Olive-green Camaroptera, Black-faced Rufous Warbler, Turner's Eremomela, Uganda Woodland-warbler, Southern Hyliota, Equatorial Akalat, Grey-winged, Snowy-crowned and

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Blue-shouldered Robin-Chats, African Shrike-flycatcher, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, African Blue Flycatcher, Brown Illadopsis, Dusky Tit, Grey-chinned (Green), Collared, Western Olive and Green-throated Sunbirds, Western Black-headed Oriole, Pink-footed Puffback, Luder's and Grey-green (Bocage's) Bush-Shrikes, Square-tailed Drongo, Stuhlmann's Starling, Black-necked, Dark-backed (Forest) and Black-billed Weavers, Vieillot's Black-weaver, Red-headed Malimbe and the dazzling Red-headed Bluebill. Mammals found on the day were, Eastern Black-and-white Colobus, Red-tailed and Blue (Gentle) Monkeys and Red-legged Sun Squirrel. An Elliot's Chameleon was also found creeping around in the vegetation near the dining hall.

Day 11: We spent the morning in the forest trying to track down species that had eluded us on the previous day. Then after lunch we drove further west to Mumias District to try our luck with some of the western scrub species. Just a few of the many species added to our list on the day included, Rock Pratincole (extraordinary views of this extremely localized species), Senegal Coucal, Bar-tailed Trogon, Striped Kingfisher, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Yellow-throated Leaflove, White-tailed Ant-thrush, Siffling Cisticola, African Moustached Warbler, Buff-throated Apalis, Green Crombec, Green Hylia, Chestnut and Yellow-bellied Wattle-eyes, Scaly-breasted and Pale-breasted Illadopsis, Orange-tufted, Olive-bellied and Copper Sunbirds, Yellow-backed and Compact Weavers, Yellow-shouldered Widowbird, Parasitic Weaver, Fawn-breasted Waxbill, and the local Bar-breasted Firefinch.

Day 12: We departed very early for the papyrus swamps of Lake Victoria. The large city of Kisumu and neighbouring areas is where birded for most of the morning. Almost all of our targets were found before we departed for the Masai Mara Game Reserve in southwestern Kenya. The Masai Mara is certainly one of the most exciting parks on the African continent. Wildlife can be seen in nearly every direction. Birding highlights on the day were, African Openbill, Abdim's Stork, African (Water) Rail, Schalow's Turaco, Eastern Grey Plantain-eater, Blue-headed Coucal, Narina Trogon, Southern Ground-hornbill, Black-billed Barbet, Grey and Little Spotted Woodpeckers, Greater Swamp-warbler, Green-capped Eremomela, Swamp Flycatcher, Familiar Chat, Red-chested Sunbird, Slender-billed and Northern Brown-throated Weavers and Papyrus Canary.

Day 13: All day was spent in the northwestern section of the Masai Mara Game Reserve. Most of our time was spent birding the picturesque Sabarigo Valley and Musiara Swamp. Specialties encountered included, Saddle-billed Stork, Lappet-faced and White-backed Vultures, Coqui Francolin, Red-necked Spurfowl, Temminck's Courser, Wood Sandpiper, Usambiro Barbet, Long-billed and Plain-backed Pipits, Stout, Croaking, Trilling and Rock-loving Cisticolas, Sooty Chat, Red-throated Tit, Mariqua Sunbird, Violet-backed Starling, Yellow-billed Oxpecker and Brimstone Canary. Some of the many mammals sited in the Masai Mara were, Black-backed Jackal, Bat-eared Fox, Banded Mongoose, Spotted Hyena, Lion, Bush Hyrax, African Savannah Elephant, Common Zebra, Hippopotamus, Common Warthog, Masai Giraffe, African Buffalo, Eland, Kirk's Dikdik, Defassa Waterbuck, Thomson's and Grant's Gazelles, Impala, Topi and White-bearded Gnu (Wildebeest).

Day 14: All day was spent exploring the wonders of the Masai Mara Game Reserve. While crossing the heart of the reserve, we encountered several interesting sites. Some of the highlights were, Marabou Stork, Rüppell's Griffon and White-headed Vultures, Denham's Bustard (extremely local in Kenya), Ring-necked and Red-eyed Doves, White-browed Coucal, Horus Swift, White-tailed Lark, Rufous-chested Swallow, African (Grassland) Pipit, Red-backed Scrub-Robin, Hildebrandt's Starling, Swahili Sparrow, Grey-headed Social-weaver, Yellow-mantled Widowbird and the diminutive African Quail-finch. Nearly all of the mammals from the previous day were seen as well.

Day 15: We left early for the Siana Springs area, just outside the reserve. We birded the acacia scrub in the morning and then departed for Lake Naivasha with a couple of short stops en route. New birds added to the our already impressive list included, Hooded Vulture, Montagu's Harrier, Yellow-throated Sandgrouse, Emerald-spotted Wood-dove, Bare-faced Go-away-bird, Flappet Lark, Grey-rumped Swallow, Long-tailed (Tabora) Cisticola, Pale Wren-warbler (Miombo Camaroptera), Schalow's and

Capped Wheatears, Chin-spot Batis, African (Buff-bellied) Penduline-tit, Magpie Shrike and the local Southern Grosbeak-canary.

Day 16: In the morning we took a boat ride on Lake Naivasha. After leaving the lovely hotel grounds, we visited the Kinnangop Plateau, Gatamaiyu Forest and Limuru Pond before arriving back in Nairobi. Maccoa Duck, Southern Pochard, Garganey (possibly the first ever July record in Kenya), Mountain Buzzard, (African) Purple Swamphen, Common Moorhen, Black-winged Stilt, Pied Avocet, Kittlitz's Plover, Common Greenshank, Curlew Sandpiper, African Snipe, (Common) Black-headed and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, White-winged Tern, Scarce Swift, Fine-banded (Tullberg's) Woodpecker, Sharpe's Longclaw (an extremely local endemic), Lyne's and Wing-snapping Cisticolas, Black-throated and Grey Apalis, Evergreen Forest Warbler (Cameroon Scrub-warbler), Brown Woodland-warbler, White-tailed Crested-flycatcher and the musical Eastern Olive Sunbird were just a few of the many highlights. Our 600th species turned out to be a pair of White-backed Ducks, the last new bird seen on the day!

Day 17: All day was devoted to the spectacular wildlife in Nairobi National Park, located on the outskirts of the busy capitol. Just a few of the species seen were, Hadada Ibis, Black-crowned Night-heron, African Cuckoo-hawk, Yellow-billed (Black) Kite, Shelley's Francolin, Hartlaub's Bustard, Fischer's Lovebird, Violet Wood-hoopoe, Short-tailed Lark, Banded Martin, Pangani Longclaw, Nairobi Pipit (a recently discovered species), Northern Pied-babbler, Long-tailed Fiscal, White-winged Widowbird, Red-billed Firefinch and the gorgeous Zebra Waxbill. Mammals seen on the day included, Olive Baboon, Black-faced Vervet Monkey, Blue Syke's Monkey, Common Zebra, Black Rhino, Masai Giraffe, African Buffalo, Eland, Common Waterbuck, Impala, Coke's Hartebeest (Kongoni) and White-bearded Gnu (Wildebeest). After finishing our birding late in the afternoon we transferred back to our hotel to freshen up for the evening flight back home.

We finished with a total of **612** species of birds seen! We were also able to see **57** species of mammals, some of which were absolutely unforgettable! In short, Kenya is certainly one of the best nature experiences in this world. So if you have never been, then you consider joining us on our next tour.