

Day 1

Following our flight from London we arrive in the evening to Accra, the capital of Ghana, where we meet our local guide and transfer to the hotel. Overnight in Accra.

Day 2

After a good night's sleep, we shall be raring to go and our first stop will be Sakomono coastal salt lagoons. This is a wintering site for many Palearctic waders that can be found in good numbers and include species such as the delightful Kittlitz's Plover and Collared Pratincole. We shall also be on the lookout for any rare or unusual species as this site recorded Ghana's third ever record of Pectoral Sandpiper! Other key species that we expect to find include, Black Heron, Western Reef Egret, Pied Kingfisher, White-throated Bee-eater and both Croaking and Black-backed Cisticolas. Later we visit Muni lagoon close to Cape Coast, where Spur-winged Lapwing and White-fronted Plover shall be looked for along with the more common water birds. On the way to Cape Coast we spend a few hours on the Winneba Plains where the grasslands and forest patches hold many interesting species. We will look for, amongst others, the rare Black-bellied Bustard, Lizard Buzzard, African Wattled Lapwing, Green Turaco, Flappet Lark, Plain-backed Pipit, Red-winged and African Moustached Warblers, Siffling Cisticola, Brown-crowned Tchagra, Copper Sunbird, Yellow-mantled Widowbird, Pin-tailed Whydah and Bar breasted Firefinch. In the picturesque lily pond nearby we may be rewarded with close views of African Pygmy Goose, African Jacana and the beautiful Malachite Kingfisher. Later in the afternoon we shall arrive at the very pleasant Hans Cottage Hotel. The hotel has its own lake and we are sure to be continually distracted as we become accustomed to the locally common species. The hotel trees are full of roosting Long-tailed Cormorants, Cattle Egrets and Black-crowned Night-Herons while Pied Kingfishers hover over the ponds. The farms surrounding the hotel are home to commoner birds like African Pied Hornbill, Blue-spotted Wood-Dove, Red-eyed Dove, Western Grey Plantain-eater, Lesser Striped Swallow, Orange-cheeked Waxbill and Blue-billed Firefinch. Overnight at Hans Cottage Hotel for the next 2 nights where we could not be better placed to explore the Kakum National Park, only 12 Km away.

Days 3 – 4

During breakfast at Hans Cottage, we shall be entertained by the busy lives of the colony of Village and Viellot's Black Weavers before heading off to what shall be, without doubt, one of the highlights of the entire trip. We spend the next three days exploring Kakum National Park and the surrounding area. The Park was first established in 1990 and it conserves extremely important primary and secondary Upper Guinea forest. The park is probably most famous for its unique canopy walkway giving incredible eye-level views of some amazingly colorful forest species. The walkway can often be buzzing with birdlife so we shall regularly visit this bird hotspot during the early morning when bird

activity is at its peak. There are many awesome birds to be found here and we shall search for species that may include Brown-necked, Grey and Red-fronted Parrots, Great Blue Turaco, Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, White-headed Wood-Hoopoe, and the awesome Rufous-sided Broadbill. Hornbills are another highlight of the walkway often giving fantastic views with Black-casqued, Yellow-casqued, Black-and-White-casqued, White-crested and Brown-cheeked Hornbills all possible! Other gems include Yellow billed Barbet, Little Green Woodpecker, Forest Robin, White-tailed Ale the, Dusky-crested Flycatcher,

Chestnut-bellied Helmet-shrike, Blue Cuckoo-shrike, Kemp's Long bill, and Western Bluebill. Mammals are also a key feature of Kakum and it is not unusual to enjoy good views of Lesser Spot-nosed Monkey and Ussine Colobus from the canopy walkway. Then there are the raptors! Tree platforms provide a fabulous vista over the forest, ideal for raptor watching: Cassin's and Ayres's Hawk-Eagles, Congo Serpent Eagle, Black and Red-chested Goshawks and African Harrier-hawk are all possible. We shall also visit the many trails on the ground where we hope to find real prizes like the Red-billed Helmet shrike and the beautiful Blue-billed Malimbe. Among the more common forest birds are African Green Pigeon, Tambourine Dove, Levillant's and African Emerald Cuckoo, Yellowbill, Forest Wood-hoopoe, Cassin's Honeyguide, Yellow-spotted, Naked-faced and Hairy-breasted Barbets, Speckled Tinkerbird, Buff spotted and Fire-bellied Woodpeckers, Red-tailed, Plain and Slender-billed Greenbuls, Grey-headed Bristlebill, Western Nicator, Sharpe's Apalis, Yellow-browed Camaroptera, Rufous-crowned Eremomela, Green Hylia, Lemon-bellied Crombec, Chestnut-capped Flycatcher, Chestnut Wattle-eye, Sabine's

Puffback, Velvet-mantled Drongo, Chestnut-winged and Narrow-tailed Starlings, Fraser's, Buff-throated, Western Olive and Little Green Sunbirds, Grey Longbill, Maxwell's Black and Yellow-mantled Weavers, Crested and Red-headed Malimbos, Chestnut-breasted and White-breasted Negrofinsches. We will also visit the cocoa and palm nut plantations and forests of nearby Antwikwa where the star bird is without doubt the beautiful Black Bee-eater. Many other species can be found along the forest edge here and include Palm-nut Vulture, African Cuckoo-Hawk, Long-crested Eagle, African Harrier-hawk, Red-thighed Sparrow hawk, Red-necked Buzzard, African Hobby, Blue-spotted Wood-Dove, Yellowbilled Turaco, Klaas's Cuckoo, Cassin's, Sabine's and Black Spinetails, Rosy and White-throated Beeeaters, Blue-throated Roller, Piping Hornbill, Bristle-nosed Barbet, Red-rumped and Yellow-throated Tinkerbirds, Rufous-chested Swallow, Fanti Sawwing, numerous Greenbuls including Yellow-whiskered, Little, Honeyguide, Simple and Swamp Palm. Assuming your head doesn't hurt by now (!) other species we shall look for include Whistling Cisticola, Ussher's Flycatcher, Red-bellied Paradise-Flycatcher, African Yellow White-eye, Northern Puffback, Violet-backed Starling, Green, Olive-bellied and Superb

Sunbirds, Black-winged Oriole, Preuss' Weaver, Grey-headed Negrofinch, Bronze and Black-and-white Mannikins.

A visit to the nearby coastal grasslands and woodlands along the Brenu Beach Road should give us a great spectacle of thousands of Preuss's Cliff Swallows flying to their roost site. Here we shall also look for Grey Kestrel, Green Turaco, Senegal Coucal, Mottled Spinetail, Vieillot's and Double-toothed Barbets, Ethiopian and Mosque Swallows, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Common Gonolek, Tropical Boubou, Common Fiscal, Singing, Red-faced and Winding Cisticolas, Marsh and Brown-crowned Tchagras, Slender-billed Weaver and others. Finally we shall explore the Cape Coast Lagoon for another chance to see water birds.

Day 5

After our final morning birding in the Kakum NP area, focusing on any key species that we are missing, we shall drive to Assin Fosu to what will surely be one of the highlights of the trip as we head to the site of the enigmatic Yellow-headed Picathartes. We shall arrive in the afternoon and take a walk into the hilly rainforest where we shall wait quietly taking in the sights and sounds of the jungle around us. These unique cave nesting birds return to their nests to roost before dark and it is here that we shall be on high alert searching the vines and forest floor for these truly awesome birds to return. Overnight in Assin Fosu.

Day 6

In the morning we shall visit the Aboabo section of Kakum, an open forest with some remnant large trees. The forest road is a superb birding area due to the more open areas and easier viewing. It is a good place to see the unmistakable Long-tailed Hawk with its outrageously long tail and stunning chestnut chest. Other key species in the area are Blue-headed Wood-Dove, pre-historic looking Black and Red-billed Dwarf Hornbills, Tit-Hylia and the strange Preuss's Weaver that creeps along branches in a nuthatch like fashion. Commoner species to look for include Yellow-billed Turaco, Levillant's, Klaas's and African Emerald Cuckoo, Yellowbill, Yellow-spotted, Naked-faced and Hairy-breasted Barbets, Speckled Tinkerbird, Buff-spotted and Fire-bellied Woodpeckers, Red-tailed, Ansorge's, Honeyguide and Icterine Greenbuls, Grey-headed Bristlebill, Western Nicator, Finsch's Flycatcher-thrush, Rufous-crowned Eremomela, Green Hylia, African Shrike-Flycatcher, Fraser's Forest-Flycatcher, Dusky-blue, Little Grey, Tessmann's and Lead-coloured Flycatchers, Velvet-mantled Drongo, Copper-tailed Glossy-Starling, Green, Buff-throated, Olive-bellied, Blue-throated Brown and Little Green Sunbirds, Maxwell's Black and Yellow-mantled Weavers, Crested, Red-vented and Red-headed Malimbres, Grey-headed Negrofinch. We then drive north to the city of Kumasi.

Day 7

Today we leave the rainforest behind and travel far north to Mole National Park situated in the Guinea Savannah Belt. The scenery changes dramatically and the broad-leaved woodland zone is much less humid. En route we stop to search for Grasshopper Buzzard, and the stunning Abyssinian, Blue bellied and Rufous-crowned Rollers that often perch on top of roadside trees. As we approach Mole we might encounter savannah species such as Gabar and Dark-chanting Goshawk, the cracking Bearded Barbet, Vinaceous and Namaqua Dove, African Grey Hornbill, Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark, Longtailed and Bronze-tailed Glossy-Starlings, Bush Petronia and Yellow-fronted Canary. By the evening we reach our fantastic hotel that sits on top of an escarpment overlooking a waterhole inside the National Park. Overnight in the Mole Hotel for the next 3 nights.

Days 8 – 10

We spend the next 2 full days in the beautiful Mole National Park. Of all the legendary places in Africa, few can equal Mole, perched high up on a ridge overlooking the surrounding wooded savannah a stunning panorama awaits us as we watch the many mammals down at the waterholes below our hotel. Bushbucks, Waterbucks, Kob Antelopes and Warthogs graze, Olive Baboons, Green and Patas Monkeys troop by and Elephants bathe in the shallow water. The escarpment is a great place to see raptors including White-backed and White-headed Vulture, Martial and Wahlberg's Eagles, Beaudouin's and Brown Snake-Eagles, Bateleur and Lanner Falcon as well as birds such as Vieillot's Barbet, Familiar Chat, Senegal Eremomela, Northern Crombec, Lead-coloured Flycatcher, Whites houldered Tit, Pygmy, Beautiful and Scarlet-chested Sunbirds, Bush Petronia, Little Weaver, Chestnut crowned Sparrow-Weaver, Lavender Waxbill, Red-cheeked Cordonbleu, Yellow-fronted Canary and Streaky-headed Seedeater.

During the mornings and afternoons we shall explore several areas of the park. The Samole Floodplains are below our hotel and provide a good variety of habitats and excellent birding. Here, we expect to find Black-headed Heron, Woolly-necked and Saddle-billed Storks, Hadada Ibis, Hamerkop, Spur-winged Goose, Palm-nut Vulture, Double-spurred Francolin, Stone Partridge, Helmeted Guineafowl, Senegal Thick-knee, Wattled Lapwing, Black-billed Wood-Dove, Ring-necked Parakeet, Violet Turaco, Greyish Eagle-Owl, Grey-headed and Blue-breasted Kingfisher, Red-throated Bee-eater, Red-billed Hornbill, Northern Black and Swamp Flycatcher, Long-tailed and Bronze-tailed Glossy-Starlings, African Golden Oriole, Village Indigobird, Togo Paradise-Whydah, Red-winged Pytilia and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting. We will also spend time visiting the savannah woodlands and riparian forests around Brugbani and Kananto. If we are lucky we might even find the rare White-throated Francolin, Black-bellied Bustard, Abyssinian Ground-Hornbill or Dorst's Cisticola. Pel's Fishing Owl is also in the

area and with luck and perseverance, we may find a bird roosting amongst the densely leaf covered trees beside a waterhole. More common birds that we will be looking for include Black Crake, Bruce's Green Pigeon, Red-headed Lovebird, Violet Turaco, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Green Wood-Hoopoe, Black Scimitarbill, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Striped, Shining-blue and African Pygmy Kingfishers, Swallow-tailed, Red-throated and Northern Carmine Bee-eaters, Greater and Lesser Honeyguide, Bearded Barbet, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Grey, Cardinal and Brown-backed Woodpecker, Ethiopian, Pied-winged, Mosque and Wiretailed Swallows, White-crowned and Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, White-fronted Black Chat, Yellowbreasted Apalis, Oriole Warbler, Red-winged Warbler, Moustached Grass-Warbler, Singing, Whistling, Winding and Rufous Cisticola, African Blue, Swamp, Ashy, Northern Black and African Paradise-Flycatchers, Senegal Batis, Spotted Creeper, Brubru, Yellow-billed Shrike, Tropical Boubou, White Helmet-shrike, Grey-headed and Sulphur-breasted Bush-Shrike, White-breasted Cuckoo-Shrike, For-tailed Drongo, Brown and Blackcap Babblers, Western Violet-backed and Splendid Sunbirds, Red-headed and Black-headed Weavers, Northern Red and Black-winged Bishop, Black-faced, Black-bellied and Red-billed Firefinches, Cabanis's and Brown-rumped Buntings. The so called bovals, areas with stony outcrops and short grass might hold Forbes's Plover, Sun and Flappet Larks. In the evenings we will spend some time searching the hotel grounds and nearby areas for a number of night birds that include Freckled Nightjar, Northern White-faced Owl and the incredible Standard-winged Nightjar!

Day 10

We depart Mole after a final early morning birding and head south to Kumasi. We stop enroute to look for any savannah birds that we may have missed so far and pay a short visit to the scenic Kintampo Waterfall en route to our return visit to Kumasi. Overnight Kumasi.

Days 11 & 12

Just East of Kumasi lies the Bobiri Forest Reserve famous for its abundance of butterflies and birds. We spend a morning birding along the forest paths of Bobiri, looking for specialities including Red-thighed Sparrowhawk, Red-chested Goshawk, Narina Trogon, Blue-headed Wood-Dove, Red-billed Dwarf-Hornbill and the Shining Drongo. The list of birds that occur here is similar to that of Kakum, but surprises are always possible! Rare birds recorded previously in this area include Bat Hawk and Afep Pigeon. In the afternoon we drive to the Atewa mountain range, which is among the few places in Ghana to find the fantastic Blue-headed Bee-eater.

Atewa holds a similar range of forest birds to that of Kakum but there are some species that we are easier to encounter here. These include Western Bronze-naped Pigeon, the

unique Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, Black-capped Apalis, Olivaceous and Dusky Crested-Flycatchers, West African Batis, Red-cheeked Wattle-eye, Brown and Rufous-winged Illadopsis, Many-coloured Bushshrike and the cracking Green-backed Twinspot. We will have the rest of today and the next full day to explore this wonderful area. Two nights in Tafo.

Day 13

We spend the morning in the Atewa Mountains where we search for the specialities of the forest. Blue-headed Wood-Dove, Yellow-billed Turaco, Yellowbill, Yellow-spotted and Hairy-breasted Barbet, Red-tailed, Icterine and Spotted Greenbills, Yellow-browed Camaroptera, Yellow-bellied Crombec, Black-and-white Shrike-Flycatcher, Grey Longbill, Western Black-headed Oriole, Maxwell's Black, Yellow-mantled and Grosbeak Weavers, Crested, Red-vented and Red-headed Malimbres, Greyheaded and White-breasted Negrofinsches. In the afternoon we return to Accra, visiting Aburi Botanical Gardens en route where we may find Mottled Spinetail, Purple Glossy-Starling, Chestnut-winged Starling and Heuglin's Masked Weaver. Night at Shai hills or Tema

Day 14

We make a half day trip to the dry open savannah of the Shai Hills Reserve. We should find Rufous-crowned and Blue-bellied Roller, Senegal Parrot, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Vieillot's Barbet and Red-shouldered Cuckoo shrike, Rock Martin, Piapiac and with luck, the very shy Mocking Cliff-Chat. In the afternoon we explore Sakumono Lagoon for a nice array of water birds such as Black Heron, African Spoonbill, Kittlitz's Plover, Marsh Sandpiper and Water Thick-knee. Terns fly in to roost in large flocks containing Royal and Roseate Terns whilst Yellow-throated Long claws can be found in the accompanying grasslands. The surrounding bush holds Little Bee-eater, African Grey Hornbill, Double toothed Barbet, Common Gonolek, and Yellow-billed Shrike. Birds of prey include Black-winged Kite, Western Marsh Harrier, and African Hobby. We drive back to our hotel for lunch having time to shower and pack before an evening flight back home.