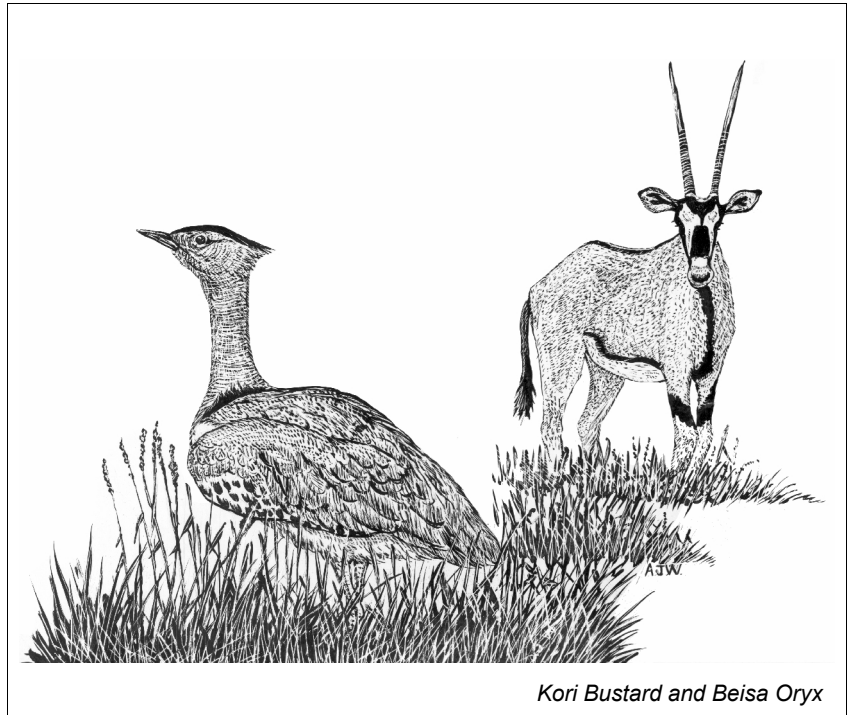
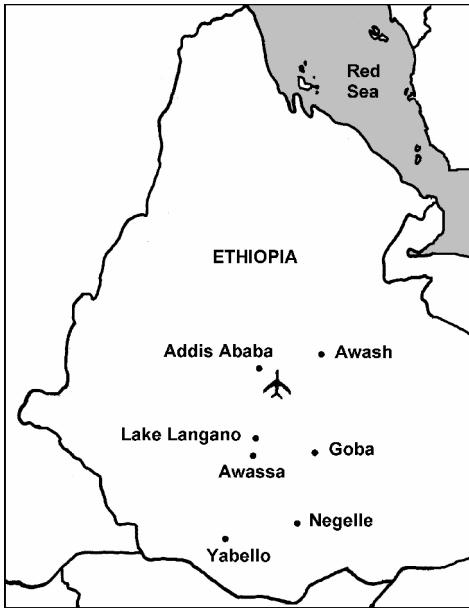


# ETHIOPIA

## *birds and mammals in Ethiopia's highlands*



*Kori Bustard and Beisa Oryx*

Ethiopia is unique among African countries in that it is the only one never to be colonised. The physical barriers that helped protect it also isolated the wildlife, resulting in a level of endemism unparalleled in mainland Africa. There are over fifty endemic or near-endemic birds and many more local races. The Ethiopian Wolf is, of course, the most famous mammal here and we have excellent chances of seeing it.

We will visit at the height of the dry season. Just as temperatures are dropping to their coldest in Europe, Ethiopia is enjoying glorious sunshine with very little chance of rain, whilst the altitude keeps temperatures at a comfortable level. At this time many northern migrants join the resident birds of Ethiopia. Lakes and rivers become magnets for birds and other wildlife.

If your image of Ethiopia is of a dry, barren country with poor accommodation, think again. We will visit dry areas but we will also visit many wetlands and lakes, lush montane woodlands and high mountains. Hotels and lodges have improved beyond recognition in recent years.

We begin in the Awash National Park which is savannah and scrubland with a very impressive gorge. Next we visit the lush northern section of the Ethiopian Rift Valley and sample some of its lakes and woodlands. From here we will travel to the Bale Mountains for Ethiopian Wolf and many endemic birds. We then head over the Sanetti Plateau and into the rich Harrena Forest coming out into the deserts and grasslands of southern Ethiopia. We return through the Rift Valley, passing coffee plantations and woodland, to Lake Awassa and then on to Addis Ababa. We also have a full day north of Addis looking for Gelada Baboons and more endemics.

### **ITINERARY**

#### **SOUTHERN AWASH NATIONAL PARK**

After our daytime flight we arrive in the evening and spend our first night at a hotel close to the airport. Driving out of Addis we will stop at a large wetland where we should find Lesser Flamingos, Common Cranes, White Pelicans and Marabou Storks. We will stay within the park at the brand new Kereyou Lodge, at Awash Gorge. From here we will drive across the plains looking for Kori and Arabian Bustards. Buff-crested Bustard may be seen doing their spectacular rocketing display flight. Antelope here include the beautiful Beisa Oryx which is restricted to the Horn of Africa. Other large animals include Soemmering's Gazelle, Salt's Dik-dik, Olive Baboon, Warthog, Vervet Monkey and Nile Crocodile. One of the spectacular birds here is the Secretarybird. Other

species include Black-winged Lovebird, Rosy-patched Shrike and Martial Eagle. On the second evening we plan to visit a cave where dozens of Spotted Hyenas may emerge before dispersing across the park.

#### **THE RIFT VALLEY LAKES**

After two nights at Awash we drive south to the lakes of the Great Rift Valley. Birds may include Bruce's Green Pigeon, Senegal Thick-knee, Black-crowned Crane, African Pygmy Goose, and African and Lesser Jacanas. After several birding stops we will arrive at Bishangari Lodge, Lake Langano. This is an excellent lodge and we spend two nights here, birding the grounds and surrounding area. Narina Trogon, Yellow-fronted Parrot, Tambourine Dove, Abyssinian Ground-thrush and Sharp's Starling are just a few of the birds to be seen.

On day six we visit Abiata-Shalla Reserve which is great for raptors and we should get some new antelope species too, such as Grant's Gazelle. It is also a good site for Abyssinian Wheatear. We then spend two nights at Simbo Beach Hotel which is also on the shores of Lake Langano and has excellent extensive, bird rich grounds.

### THE BALE MOUNTAINS

On day eight we will drive from the Rift Valley into the Bale Mountains. On the way we will be looking out for the endemic Spot-breasted Lapwing, Abyssinian Longclaw and Erlanger's Lark. At some small crags we have a good chance of seeing Cape Eagle-owl. We will drive to Goba which makes an excellent base for our three night stay. On the first full day we visit the Sanetti Plateau. As we ascend the plateau slopes we should find Abyssinian Woodpecker, White-cheeked Turaco and the Bale Parisoma. The Ethiopian Wolf tends to emerge once the day has warmed up. The plateau is dramatic with a unique flora including Giant Lobelias. Small pools provide a home for Blue-winged Goose and Wattled Ibis. Rouget's Rail can often be seen by the road. We will also look out for Moorland Francolin and Verreaux's, Tawny and Golden Eagles.

On the second full day in the Bale Mountains we head to Dinsho Lodge, the park headquarters. The woodland around the lodge is home to the endemic Mountain Nyala, a beautiful antelope. Bohor Reedbuck, Menelik's Bushbuck, Klipspringer and Salt's Dik-dik are also regularly seen. This is probably the best place to see Abyssinian Catbird, White-backed Tit and Brown Woodland Warbler. The park guide may well know the location of roosting Abyssinian and African Wood Owls.

### HARRENA FOREST AND NEGELLE

After three nights at Goba we cross the plateau to reach the Harrena Forest where there is some excellent birding. As the forest opens up we will see an attractive landscape of scrub and isolated fig trees which is the prime habitat of one of Ethiopia's most sought after birds, the very attractive Prince Ruspoli's Turaco. It has a tiny world range and is, of course, another Ethiopian endemic.

Driving on, we reach the hot southern plains. We are well off the tourist route here but a new hotel in Negelle provides clean, comfortable accommodation. A full day in the Negelle area will be spent looking for specialists of this dry habitat. A target bird is the Sidamo Lark, one of the most threatened birds in Africa. It is confined to the Liben Plain where its habitat is suffering from over-grazing and other agricultural pressures. In the early morning it sings as it hovers just a few metres above the ground. The rest of the time it is more likely to remain firmly on the ground, scuttling mouse-like from one tussock to the next.

### THE SOUTH AND YABELLO

We drive through camel country as we continue on our circuit round south-east Ethiopia. The highly localised White-tailed Swallow can be found here along with many other interesting species. We then head north looking for Vulturine Guineafowl and Streseman's Bush-crow. The bush-crow is quite common within its range. A few kilometres before Yabello town we arrive at Borana Lodge for a two night stay. The accommodation is in very well appointed chalets. The extensive grounds hold a large number of species including Streseman's Bush-crow, nesting Tawny Eagle, Bearded and Nubian Woodpeckers, African Scops Owl, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Crested Francolin and Orange-bellied Parrot. Various doves and small birds such as the Purple Grenadier can be seen around the restaurant.

### AWASSA AND BEYOND

We cross the mountainous coffee-growing area and descend into the lower Rift Valley, arriving in Awassa in the afternoon. We will birdwatch in a local park, looking for waterbirds such as White-backed Duck, African Pygmy Goose and Hottentot Teal. The next morning we will birdwatch around Lake Awassa and also in the hotel grounds, which are excellent for birds. In the afternoon we drive back to the capital where we will stay overnight. We then have a full day birding the area north of Addis. We will drive through the plains up to the Jemma Gorge where we will look for Gelada Baboons, Ruppell's Black Chat, Lammergeier, Spot-breasted Lapwing and many more species. We then drive back to Addis for our late evening flight back to the UK.

### CLIMATE AND PACE

We can expect warm or hot weather every day, with very little chance of rain. In the mountains it is cold first thing in the morning. Breakfast will usually be around 7am. Basic fitness is all that is required. Full days will be spent in the field and short walks will be undertaken regularly. There is some uphill walking but at a sensible pace.

### ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD

Full board accommodation is provided with one night at the Tazeze Hotel, Addis Ababa, two nights at Kereyou Lodge (a brand new lodge, not to be confused with the infamous Kereyou caravans of the same name), two nights at Bishangari Lodge, two nights at Simbo Beach, Lake Langano, three nights at Goba Wabe Shebelle Hotel, two nights at Turaco Hotel, Negelle, two nights at Borana Lodge, Yabello, one night at the United Africa Hotel, Awassa, and the last night back at the Tazeze Hotel, Addis Ababa (where we also have use of day rooms before our flight on the last day). Hotels are of a good standard and all rooms have en-suite facilities. There will be a couple of breakfasts in the field.

### PRICE INCLUDES .....

All birdwatching excursions with expert leader and local guide (starting with breakfast on 7<sup>th</sup>, ending with dinner on 22<sup>nd</sup>), soft drinks at meal times, bottled water throughout, local transport by mini coach and Nissan Patrol 4x4's, reserve entrance fees, park fees and international flights.

### WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED

Travel insurance. Cost of a tourist visa (US\$50). Personal items, alcoholic drinks, laundry.

### INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

Return flights from both Manchester and London Heathrow to Addis Ababa (via Frankfurt) using the scheduled services of Lufthansa. Outbound flight departs early morning; return flight arrives back mid-morning.

<b>17 nights</b> including one overnight flight:	<b>6<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018</b>
<b>Principal leader:</b>	<b>Andrew Woodall</b>
<b>Local guide:</b>	<b>Negussie Teye</b>
<b>Maximum group size:</b>	<b>10 clients with one leader and a local guide</b>
<b>Cost with discount (if you book before 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2017):</b>	<b>£4180 per person sharing (£380 single supplement)</b>
<b>Full Cost:</b>	<b>£4330 per person sharing</b>
<b>Deposit:</b>	<b>£600 per person</b>

