

Birding Africa 2014 Ethiopia Tour

Report by Michael Mills

Tour Summary: Our jam-packed 16-day Ethiopia tour successfully located all the Ethiopian and Eritrean endemics and racked up a total of over 500 bird species. Besides enjoying great views of local specialties such as Red-billed Pytilia, Salvadori's Seedeater, Arabian Bustard, Yellow-fronted Parrot, Abyssinian Woodpecker, Rouget's Rail, Moorland Francolin, Ruspoli's Turaco, Liben Lark, White-winged Collared Dove, Juba Weaver, Stresseman's Bushcrow, White-tailed Swallow and Abyssinian Waxbill, we were also treated to some very rare Ethiopian birds. We recorded perhaps the first Bamboo Warbler in Ethiopia for almost 40 years, saw only the fourth Eleonora's Falcon and Amur Falcon for the country, and connected with the sought-after Basra Reed Warbler.

We started off with Brown-rumped Seedeater, Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher, Tacazze Sunbird, Blue-breasted Bee-eater and Brown Parisoma in our Addis hotel garden before heading north to the Solulta Plains. Here Abyssinian Longclaw, Ethiopian Cisticola, Blue-winged Goose and Spot-breasted Lawping were enjoyed at close range, before continuing on to Debre Libanos, with Red-breasted Wheatear and Ethiopian Siskin seen en route. The cliffs around our lodge were home to Little Rock Thrush, Rueppell's Black Chat, White-winged Cliff Chat, White-rumped Babbler and Stout Cisticola. Next on the cards was the Jemma Valley which delivered Harwood's Francolin, Erckel's Francolin, Fox Kestrel, White-billed Starling, Abyssinian Wheatear, Red-billed Pytilia, Black-winged Lovebird and Yellow-rumped Seedeater. En route to Debre Libanos we saw Erlanger's Lark. From here we descended into the lowlands for the first time, where new birds came thick and fast. Highlights at Melka Ghebdu were Half-collared Kingfisher, Yellow-breasted Barbet and Yellow-throated Seedeater, before we climbed back to the highlands to make a short side trip to Gemassa Gedel for excellent views of Ankober Serin. After this we made our way to the Awash area, via Addis Ababa and Debre Zeit with our first Rueppell's Weavers of the trip. The Awash area added a wide variety of grassland and thornbush species, including Arabian Bustard, Chestnut-headed Sparrow-Lark, Hartlaub's Bustard, Abdim's Stork, Grey-headed Batis, Gillet's Lark, Straw-tailed Whydah, Sombre Rock Chat and Red-winged Lark. We then continued south through the rift valley to Bishangari Lodge, with a lunch stop at Lake Ziway including African Pygmy Goose and Lesser Jacana. Bishangari yielded great views of Yellow-fronted Parrot, Three-banded Courser, Scaly Francolin, Narina Trogon and Banded Barbet before we visited Wondo Genet. Here Abyssinian Woodpecker was tracked down and Ethiopian Oriole was seen, and a surprise Bamboo Warbler found. Onwards into the Bale Mountains we paused for Cape Eagle-Owl and Abyssinian Owl before arriving at Dinsho, where a short stint of birding produced Abyssinian Ground Thrush, White-backed Black Tit and Abyssinian Catbird. After dark we saw Montane Nightjar. In the Bale Mountains Ethiopian Wolf stole the show, with more than 10 animals seen, but Brown (Bale) Parisoma, Moorland Francolin, Rouget's Rail and Chestnut-naped Francolin kept us admiring birds too. Returning back to the lowlands, we stopped for Ruspoli's Turaco and Red-throated Wryneck en route to Negelle, where Sidamo/Liben Lark, Three-streaked Tchagra, Somali Short-toed Lark, Eleonora's Falcon, Amur Falcon and Salvadori's Seedeater showed well. Continuing on to Yavello via the Dawa River and Soda plains we enjoyed a day full of good birds, with White-winged Collared Dove, Black-bellied Sunbird, breeding plumage

Juba Weaver, Yellow-vented Eremomela, Pringle's Puffback, Red-naped Bushshrike, Northern Grosbeak-Canary and White-tailed Swallow, with the next day in the same area adding Somali Courser, Stresemann's Bushcrow, Secretarybird, Somali Ostrich and Scaly Chatterer. Finally we turned back north, returning to Addis via Lake Awassa with White-backed Duck, Basra Reed Warbler and Spotted Creeper, Lake Langano with Greyish Eagle Owl, and Gibe Gorge with Egyptian Plover, Clapperton's Francolin, Abyssinian Waxbill and Barka Indigobird.

We kicked off our tour of Ethiopia with a short stint of introductory birding around the Ghion Hotel grounds. Here **Brown-rumped Seedeater** fed alongside **Streaky Seedeater**, **Tacazze Sunbird** and **Montane White-eye** fed on the numerous flowering plants, **Dusky Turtle Dove** and **Baglafaecht Weaver** were conspicuous, **Abyssinian Thrush** hopped on the lawn, **Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher** sat quietly in the mid-storey with **Blue-breasted Bee-eater**, and **Brown Parisoma** crept around the canopy of a flat-topped *Acacia* tree. However, soon we were headed north to the Solulta Plains where we quickly found a couple of smart **Abyssinian Longclaw** that showed very well. During our stroll across the open plains we had our first encounters with many of the typical highland birds: **Blue-winged Goose**, **Ethiopian Cisticola**, **Red-throated Pipit**, **White-collared Pigeon**, **Moorland Chat**, **Thekla Lark**, **Wattled Ibis** and **Black-winged Lapwing**. Best of all, however, was the loose flock of about 50 **Spot-breasted Lapwing** scattered across the wet meadows, some allowing us to make a close approach. Continuing north towards Debre Libanos we made a few roadside stops for new birds such as **Red-breasted Wheatear** and **Ethiopian Siskin**. At Debre Libanos itself we settled into our accommodation with a view and then birded the surrounding cliffs and scrubland, where highlights included **Little Rock Thrush**, several dumpy **Rueppell's Black Chat**, **Fan-tailed Raven**, **White-winged Cliff Chat**, **Singing Cisticola**, **Stout Cisticola** and **White-rumped Babbler**.

Very early the next morning we departed for the Jemma Valley, arriving just after the sun had climbed over the horizon. **Erckel's Francolin** was quickly found from our vantage point and after a few minutes a couple of **Harwood's Francolin** were spotted, but unfortunately they scuttled off before everyone could see them. We chased them for a while, spotting **Black-winged Lovebird** as we went, and eventually re-found them where everyone could watch them. Whew! Continuing down into the valley we paused for roadside views of **White-billed Starling**, **Hemprich's Hornbill**, **Abyssinian Wheatear**, **Speckle-fronted Weaver**, **Nyanza Swift** and brief views of **Yellow-rumped Seedeater**. At the bottom of the valley a stroll along a small river was very productive and turned up some excellent sightings of our main target, **Red-billed Pytilia**, along with some flighty **Crimson-rumped Waxbill**, **Abyssinian White-eye**, **Black-billed Barbet**, **Cut-throat Finch**, **African Silverbill** and **Foxy Cisticola**. All too soon time had come to depart for Debre Birhan, but as we wound our way back out of the valley we came across quite an incredible birding spectacle. There was an eruption of termites next to the road and the raptors were honing in on the easy food source. Most obvious when we arrived were **Tawny Eagle**, **Yellow-billed Kite**, **Dark Chanting Goshawk** and **Augur Buzzard**, but then the falcons were noticed. Two **Lanner Falcons**, four **Fox Kestrels**, two **Common Kestrels** and a single **Eurasian Hobby**, all swooping past us at close range and giving excellent views. We soaked up the experience for nearly an hour, during which time an **Egyptian Vulture** came to see what was going on, bringing our raptor count to nine species! Eventually we had to tear ourselves

away, so we climbed out the valley to enjoy a picnic lunch on its rim, where **Ankober Serin** put in an all too brief appearance. Back on the open plains we spotted our first **Lesser Kestrels** and (very surprising) the only **Erlanger's Lark** of the trip, as we slowly made our way to Debre Birhan for the night.

A slightly later start the next morning saw us heading down another gravel road, this time past Ankober and on to Melka Ghebdu, with **Bare-faced Go-away-bird** seen immediately on arrival. Bird activity was high and we quickly located our first **Yellow-throated Seedeater** next to the road, although it played hard to get and some of the group battled to see it well. While we waited for the seedeater to re-appear we entertained ourselves with a variety of other birds – lovely **Yellow-breasted Barbet** showed well, a flock of **White-crested Helmetshrike** passed by, **Half-collared Kingfisher** was found at the river, **Ethiopian Boubou** sat out nicely, some breeding plumage **Northern Red Bishops** buzzed around, **Reichenow's Seedeater** put in its first appearance and eventually **Yellow-throated Seedeater** was relocated for better views. From Melka Ghebdu we swiftly climbed back out the valley to Debre Birhan, where we grabbed a quick lunch before heading north to Gemessa Gedel. Almost as soon as we stepped off the bus a large flock of **Ankober Serin** flew in and landed nearby. At first the views were a bit distant but over the course of 20 minutes we managed to approach them within five metres for some excellent views. Happily we headed back to Debre Birhan, pausing for some good flight views of **Bearded Vulture**, and on to Addis Ababa for the night.

The next morning we continued our journey south, first fighting our way out of Addis through the slow traffic before arriving at Lake Chelekeke at Debre Zeyit. **Rueppell's Weavers** were active in a thorn tree as we headed down to the lake shore and an African Yellow Warbler showed nicely before we started scanning with the scopes to pick out **Lesser Flamingo**, **Garganey**, **Spotted Redshank** and a variety of other waterbirds. A second stop along the lakeshore produced **Western Black-headed Batis** in some acacia trees and a large flock of **African Citril** with a few streaky, grey-faced males among them, supposedly **Southern Citril**. At the water's edge there were lots of **Hottentot Teal** and a few other new waterbirds. But time was marching on so we continued into the Rift Valley and on to Awash town for lunch, along with some lovely **Bristle-crowned Starlings**.

The area had clearly received some recent rain, and as we continued our journey after lunch our first stop for some roadside **White-throated Bee-eater** turned out to be an exceptionally good one. An **Arabian Bustard** was spotted striding away, but it headed for the nearest shade and paused there to give us some great views. There were also several pairs of **Chestnut-headed Sparrow-Lark** which showed nicely, **Black-chested Snake Eagle** sat nearby and we lured in our first **Rosy-patched Bushshrikes** for a close-up encounter. Later, along the entrance road to Bilen Lodge we stopped for **Pygmy Falcon**, **Nile Valley Sunbird**, **Abyssinian Scimitarbill** and our first **White-headed Buffalo Weavers** before birding around the lodge for the late afternoon and early morning. There were plenty of birds around, including **Red-fronted Warbler**, **Grey Wren-Warbler**, more **Yellow-breasted Barbets**, **Mouse-coloured Penduline Tit**, flocks of **European Turtle Dove**, a couple of overflying **African Collared Doves**, **Superb Starling**, **Yellow-necked Spurfowl**, **Somali Bulbul**, **Grey-headed Batis**, **Shining Sunbird**, **Northern Crombec**, **Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse** and **Blue-cheeked Bee-eater**. Carefully scanning for **Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse** almost worked, but instead we nearly trod on them and so had to make do with reasonably good flight views. A surprise find here was a single **Red-chested Swallow** perched on the wires along with some other swallow, and **Ethiopian Swallow**

put in its first appearance here too. At night we enjoyed excellent views of **Slender-tailed Nightjar** and a roaring male lion came right past camp.

Heading for Awash National Park now we made a short detour to the Ali Dege plains where a large group of **Abdim's Stork** was admired, the first of many hundreds seen during the trip. A second stop produced the hoped-for **Straw-tailed Whydah** along with non-breeding **Chestnut Weaver**, **Gillet's Lark**, breeding-plumage **Lesser Masked Weaver** and **Yellow-spotted Petronia**. Once in the national park we focussed our attention on the open grasslands of the Ilala Sala plains. Here bustards were the highlight: a couple of bulky **Kori Bustard**, another **Arabian Bustard**, two male **Hartlaub's Bustard** and a **White-bellied Bustard** (or at least its head) were spotted in a few hours. Other birds that will be remembered were **Somali Fiscal**, **Abyssinian Roller**, **Helmeted Guineafowl**, displaying **Zitting Cisticola**, **Montagu's Harrier**, **Ashy Cisticola**, **Abyssinian Ground Hornbill**, **Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark**, **Red-winged Lark** and **Singing Bush Lark**, and in the more bushy areas **Crested Francolin**, **Buff-crested Bustard**, **White-bellied Go-away-bird**, **Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill**, **Nubian Woodpecker**, **Somali Bunting**, **Northern White-crowned Shrike** and **African Grey Flycatcher**. Our last stop in the Awash area was at the Beseka lava flow, where we located **Sombre Rock Chat** very quickly and found a **Blackstart** for comparison not long after. A flock of perched **Olive Bee-eater** was a nice find too.

From Awash we continued our journey south through the rift valley, stopping for lunch along the way and then birding at Koka and Lake Ziway for a while. Highlights among the many hundreds of birds at these wetlands were a couple of **Lesser Jacana** and **African Pygmy Goose**. Our destination for the evening was Bishangari Lodge, set on the shores of Lake Langano with its private patch of forest. On the drive in we spotted our first **Yellow-fronted Parrots** in flight, but we had to wait until just after sunrise the next morning for excellent views of this, one of the trickiest endemics. The open *Acacia* woodland on the shore edge was alive with birds and while we waited for the parrots to show we saw **Little Weaver**, **Buff-bellied Warbler**, **Blue-spotted Wood Dove**, **Red-faced Crombec** and **Grey-backed Fiscal**. Once the parrots had come and gone we turned our attention to the forest, where **Banded Barbet**, **White-cheeked Turaco**, **Tambourine Dove**, **Western Banded Snake Eagle**, **Rueppell's Robin-Chat**, **Red-chested Cuckoo**, **Lemon Dove**, **Scaly Francolin** and **Double-toothed Barbet** were seen. Overhead we were surprised to hear **Scarce Swift** calling and quickly pin-pointed a couple of birds flying above us, a rarity in Ethiopia. After a relaxed breakfast a little more birding produced **Three-banded Courser** before it was time to leave for Wondo Genet, fortunately only a short drive away. On the way out **Black Scimitarbill** showed nicely and in Sheshemene town we saw our first **Thick-billed Ravens**.

Our short stay at Wondo Genet produced the most important bird we hoped to see, the scarce and unobtrusive **Abyssinian Woodpecker** which allowed us to study her through the scope as long as we wished. A good list of other forest species also clung to the last remaining forest patches, and we enjoyed some good looks at **Black Sawwing**, **Brown Woodland Warbler**, **Scaly Francolin**, **Ethiopian Oriole**, **Sharpe's Starling**, brief views of **Scaly-throated Honeyguide**, **Silvery-cheeked Hornbill** and the biggest surprise of the trip, **Bamboo Warbler**, which we heard calling and managed to see too.

From Wondo Genet we climbed back into the highlands, this time visiting the Bale Mountains in the south-eastern highlands. A lunch stop along the road produced our first **Chestnut-naped Francolin** but we pressed on to the known stake-out for **Cape Eagle-Owl**. The bird was pointed out to us

where it sat well concealed on the cliff face and we studied it for a while before heading to a nearby tree where **Abyssinian Owl** was roosting. A short shower of icy rain drove us back the bus so we continued on the Dinsho, pausing only to admire **African Snipe** and our first **Rouget's Rail** along the way. A short walk around Dinsho was very productive as we enjoyed excellent views of **Abyssinian Ground Thrush**, **Abyssinian Catbird** and **White-backed Black Tit** in short succession. After dark we were treated to excellent views of **Montane Nightjar**.

The rest of our time in the Bale Mountains was focussed on the Sanetti Plateau and Hareenna Forest. Driving up to the Sanetti Plateau we paused to find **Brown (Bale) Parisoma** and **Cinnamon Bracken Warbler** on the ascent. Further up numerous **Chestnut-naped Francolin** and **Rouget's Rail** scurried from the roadside, and we spotted two coveys of **Moorland Francolin** near the road for excellent views. Our drives across the Sanetti Plateau turned up more than 10 Ethiopian Wolves which we spent some time admiring, and with their prey, Giant Root Rat and Blick's Grass Rat. Many of the small wetlands held **Ruddy Shelduck** and a couple held groups of **Spot-breasted Lapwing**. A pair of **Red-billed Chough** was also seen. Dropping down the other side of the plateau into Hareenna Forest was very productive with roadside **Yellow-bellied Waxbill**, **Yellow-crowned Canary** and **African Olive Pigeon**. **African Emerald Cuckoo** was scoped. **Abyssinian Crimsonwing** skulked in the undergrowth, but did emerge to give some good perched views. An **African Hill Babbler** was coaxed from a thicket. And a second **Abyssinian Woodpecker**, this time a male, was found. And a lovely **Black Sparrowhawk** was admired at length.

From Hareenna we continued to the southern lowlands at Negelle. A few short roadside stops kept adding to our list with **Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike**, **Black-headed Oriole**, **Red-throated Wryneck**, **Eastern Chanting Goshawk** and **Boran Cisticola**. However, all these species paled in comparison with the fantastic quartet of **Ruspoli's Turaco** that sat up nicely for the scope. And as we neared Negelle our second major termite eruption of the trip drew at least 50 individual falcons, among them one male and several female **Amur Falcon** and at least two pale phase **Eleonora's Falcons** which gave excellent and repeated fly-by views.

At sunrise the next morning we found ourselves out on the open Liben plains, the song of Somali Short-toed Lark filling the air. We fanned out to walk across the plains and it wasn't long before we heard our first **Sidamo/Liben Lark** singing. A short search ensued but soon we were admiring this rare and delicately-marked bird at close range, watching as it scurried rodent-like between the grass tufts. After about 15 minutes a pair of **Somali Short-toed Lark** caught our attention nearby, so we watched them for a while. Slowly we started noticing other birds too: **Ethiopian Swallow** flitted right past us, **Somali Crow** was conspicuous, lots of **Plain-backed Pipits** were around and a large flock of **White-crowned Starling** was a welcome sight. Towards the edges of the plains we found **Pectoral-patch Cisticola**, **Grey-capped Social Weaver** and **Shelley's Sparrow**.

The rest of our time in the Negelle area was focussed on some well-bushed areas and turned up a pair of singing **Salvadori's Seedeater**, excellent views of **Three-streaked Tchagra**, another **Eleonora's Falcon** (this time a dark phase bird) and lots of other more widespread bush birds: **Buff-crested Bustard**, **Red-fronted Barbet**, **Purple Roller**, **Slate-colored Boubou**, **Von der Decken's Hornbill**, **Red-and-yellow Barbet**, **Black-throated Barbet**, **Dodson's Bulbul**, **Magpie Starling**, **Black Cuckoo** and another **Pygmy Falcon**.

Time had come for the “biggest” day of the trip, the long and very birdy drive to Yavello via the Dawa River. We made an early start and shortly after sunrise arrived at our first destination. The bush was alive with **Red-backed Shrike** and **Lesser Grey Shrike** on passage, and **Thrush Nightingale/Nightingale** sang from almost every thicket. During a short walk here we quite quickly found the scarce **Black-bellied Sunbird** singing from the top of a tree. Unfortunately you had to line it up with the right gap in the canopy to enjoy good views and it flew before everyone could do this. A little while later we could hear the calls of **White-winged Collared Dove**, and soon we were watching a pair with squab. Other birds seen here were **Grey Kestrel**, **Golden-breasted Starling** and **Thrush Nightingale**, but soon we were on our way to the Dawa River itself, with our first **Vulturine Guineafowl** en route and good looks at drinking **Black-faced Sandgrouse** on arrival. It was beginning to warm up so we wasted no time in striking out along the river in search of a certain weaver. **Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird** and **Pygmy Batis** kept us entertained, but we remained quite focussed until we found a large loose flock of rare **Juba Weaver** feeding in riverside thornbushes, including several lovely full-plumage males. After that we could turn our attention to other birds in the surrounding thickets, which included **Pale Prinia**, **Yellow-vented Eremomela**, **Red-tailed Shrike**, **Bare-eyed Thrush** and a lovely, duetting pair of **Red-naped Bushshrike**.

With a long drive still ahead of us we needed to keep on the move and made only a few short stops on our way to Yavello. At lunch new birds included **Pringle’s Puffback** and **Banded Parisoma**, **Somali Crombec** and **Black-capped Social Weaver**. More **Vulturine Guineafowl** were spotted near the road and later **Northern Grosbeak-Canary** and **Shelley’s Starling** were seen well. A heavy rain storm on the Soda Plains meant that we saved this for the next day, with the final new bird of the drive being several lovely **White-tailed Swallow** around one of the roadside villagers. The final new bird of the day was a great encounter with **Sombre/Dusky Nightjar**, which circled around our heads in the spotlight beam.

A more relaxed start the next day saw us enjoy some early morning birding around our accommodation. The highlight of course was several parties of **Stresemann’s Bushcrow** attending their nests, but other new birds included **D’Arnaud’s Barbet**, **Spotted Palm Thrush**, **Vitelline Masked Weaver**, **Red-bellied Parrot** and **African Cuckoo**, before we struck out south towards Soda. Our first stop was in some *Commiphora* bush where we located **Great Spotted Cuckoo**, **White-bellied Canary**, more **Northern Grosbeak-Canaries**, **Tiny Cisticola**, **Purple Granadier**, **Chestnut Sparrow**, another pair of **Magpie Starling**, **Black-cheeked Waxbill** and, eventually, a thicket-hugging group of **Scaly Chatterer**. The rainy weather had kept birds active and the Soda plains were still very productive when we arrived just before midday. In the first 30 minutes we enjoyed excellent sightings of **Somali Courser**, more **Shelley’s Sparrow**, **Secretarybird**, **Chestnut Sparrow**, **Taita Fiscal**, **Foxy Lark**, **Desert Cisticola** (one of five species of cisticola that could be heard from one place) and **Wattled Starling**. Lunch was enjoyed under a large, shady *Acacia* tree and after lunch we enjoyed good views of **Somali Ostrich** and **Coqui Francolin** nearby. Returning to Yavello we had just a couple of birds to look for: a group of **Short-tailed Lark** were quickly found and watched as they used their stout beaks as chisels, **Hunter’s Sunbird** seen superbly and a last-minute attempt at **Brown-tailed Rock Chat** ended with success. After dinner a nearby stroll resulted in great views of **African Scops Owl**.

The next day was one of the least birdy days of the trip, although the long drive to Awassa got off to a good start with a colony of **Speke’s Weaver** admired on our way through town. The journey produced little of interest although we did register our only **Woolly-necked Storks** and **European**

Honey Buzzard of the trip. On arrival in Awassa we wasted no time in dropping our bags and heading out along the lakeshore, seeing **White-browed Robin-Chat** in the gardens. Lots of **White-baked Duck** and **African Pygmy Goose** were spotted from the lake shore, but it was what frequented the thickets behind that was of real interest: **Little Rush Warbler** and **Lesser Swamp Warbler** were coaxed into view and then the tuneless croaks and chucks of a reed warbler drew our attention to a loose group of four **Basra Reed Warbler**, which I was secretly hoping to see as we were there during the four peak days of their northward passage through the Ethiopian Rift Valley. The next morning more exploration of shore-side habitats resulted in excellent views of **Spotted Creeper**, **Black Heron**, **African Swamphen**, **Allen's Gallinule**, **Eastern Olivaceous Warbler** and **Red-faced Cisticola**.

Our next and final destination was Welliso/Gibe Gorge, but we broke up another long drive with stops near Sheshemene for **Mottled Swift**, at Lake Langano for **Greyish Eagle-Owl**, **Slender-tailed Nightjar** and our last lovely **Black-winged Lovebirds**, and Lake Ziway with **Fulvous Whistling Duck** and **Knob-billed Duck** as new birds.

Our final day was focussed on Gibe Gorge, with one last early start getting us there soon after sunrise. Our first stop here produced **African Moustached Warbler**, **Gambaga Flycatcher**, **Pale Flycatcher**, good looks at **Yellow-rumped Seedeater** and then some excellent views of at least 10 **Clapperton's Francolin** crossing the road and then feeding in the fallow fields. Down at the river itself we found **Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat** in the denser thickets, **Bar-breasted Firefinch**, **Lappet-faced Vulture** circling overhead, an uncooperative male **Black-faced Firefinch**, **Short-winged Cisticola**, a surprise **Barka Indigobird** not yet in breeding plumage but singing and mimicking Black-faced Firefinch, at least 200 lovely **Abyssinian Waxbill** as the last specialty of the trip and, best of all, a single **Egyptian Plover** which allowed close approach. A grand finale to a great trip.