

Uganda and Rwanda

Shoebill, Green-breasted Pitta, Grauer's Broadbill, Red-collared Babbler and the Albertine Rift

July/August 2015

Tour summary by trip leader Michael Mills

Our 2015 Uganda and Rwanda Tour was once again a resounding success, with great views obtained of the four main target birds. A single **Shoebill** at Mabamba Swamp and three at Murchison Falls, fantastic views of a pair of **Green-breasted Pitta** foraging on the ground at Kibale, **Grauer's (African Green) Broadbill** at and around the nest at Mabwindi Swamp in Bwindi, and two groups of **Red-collared [Mountain] Babbler** at Nyungwe were among everyone's favourite birds.

Besides these four specials, we focussed our attention on the mountainous Albertine Rift forests and their endemics, and took in various other habitats en route. During the three weeks we visited wetlands at Mabamba Swamp, Lake Bunyoni, Murchison Falls and Nyabarongo in Rwanda, mid-altitude forests at Kibale and "The Neck" of Bwindi, grasslands and savannas at Queen Elizabeth and Murchison, lowland forest at Budongo and montane forests at Nyungwe and the Ruhiza sector of Bwindi. Most participants also opted to spend a day tracking *Eastern Gorillas*.

Top ten birds of the trip were: in tenth, the striking **Ruwenzori Turaco**; ninth, brilliant views of **Nahan's Partridge**; eight, the crisp little **Jameson's Wattle-eye**; seventh, super views of the secretive **White-backed Night Heron**; sixth, **White-headed Wood Hoopoe** for their entertaining displays; fifth colourful **Red-throated Bee-eater**; fourth, **Doherty's Bushshrike** right out in the open; third, beauty in the form of **Black Bee-eater**; second, the peerless **Shoebill**; and in first place, brilliant views of a pair of **Green-breasted Pitta** foraging on the ground!

However, more than 550 species were recorded and many other species are worthy of special mention. These include **Papyrus Gonolek**, **Little [Central] Rush Warbler**, **Papyrus Canary**, **Dwarf Bittern**, **Rufous-bellied Heron** and **Carruther's Cisticola** at Nyabarongo Wetlands, **Ruaha Chat** en route Nyungwe, **Red-throated Alethe**, **White-bellied Robin-Chat**, **Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo**, **Kivu (Abyssinian) Ground Thrush**, **Bar-tailed Trogon**, **Equatorial Akalat**, **Kungwe Apalis**, **Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye**, **Willard's Sooty Boubou**, **African Broadbill**, **Ruwenzori Nightjar**, **Neumann's Warbler**, **Purple-breasted Sunbird**, **Grauer's Warbler**, **Regal Sunbird**, **Grauer's Rush Warbler** and **Dusky Crimsonwing** at Nyungwe, **White-winged Swamp Warbler**, **Papyrus Canary**, **Papyrus Yellow Warbler** and **Carruther's Cisticola** at Lake Bunyoni, **Lagden's Bushshrike**, **Red-chested Owlet** and **Dusky Twinspot** at Ruhiza, **Chapin's Flycatcher** and **Toro Olive Greenbul** at "The Neck", **Red-winged Francolin**, **Senegal Lapwing**, **Stout Cisticola**, **Black Bishop** and **Swamp Nightjar** near Kihikihi, **Joyful Greenbul**, **Red-headed Bluebill** and **Orange-tufted Sunbird** at Kibale, **Lesser Jacana**, **Long-toed Lapwing**, **Weyns's Weaver** and **Orange Weaver** at Mabamba Swamp, **Papyrus Gonolek** nearby, **Ituri Batis** and **Chocolate-backed Kingfisher** at Budongo and **African Finfoot**, **Dusky Babbler**, **White-crested Turaco**, **Red-winged Pytilia** and **Northern Carmine Bee-eater** at Murchison. Mammal highlights

were *Chimpanzee*, *Central African Red Colobus* and *Grey-cheeked Mangabey* at Kibale, *African Elephant* and *Leopard* in Queen Elizabeth, *l'Hoest's Monkey* at Nyungwe and *Eastern Gorilla* at Bwindi.

Other good birds seen included **Saddle-billed Stork, Goliath Heron, Western Banded Snake Eagle, Mountain Buzzard, Cassin's Hawk-Eagle, Ayres's Hawk-Eagle, Crowned Eagle, Bat Hawk, Red-necked Falcon, African Hobby, Black-bellied Bustard, White-spotted Flufftail, African Rail**, many **Grey Crowned Crane, Black-headed Lapwing, Rock Pratincole, Red-headed Lovebird, Grey Parrot, Great Blue Turaco, Black-billed Turaco, Ross's Turaco, Pennant-winged Nightjar, Narina Trogon, Blue-throated Roller, Shining-blue Kingfisher, White-headed Wood Hoopoe, Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill, Abyssinian Ground Hornbill, Western Tinkerbird, White-headed Barbet, Black-billed Barbet, Double-toothed Barbet, Cassin's Honeybird, Marsh Tchagra, Petit's Cuckooshrike, Piapiac, Stripe-breasted Tit, Grey [African] Penduline Tit, Red-faced Woodland Warbler, Uganda Woodland Warbler, Foxy Cisticola, Black-faced Prinia, Ruwenzori Apalis, Red-winged Grey Warbler, Lowland Masked Apalis, Mountain Masked Apalis, Grey-capped Warbler, Black-faced Rufous Warbler, Green-backed Eremomela, Scaly-breasted Illadopsis, Brown Illadopsis, Mountain Illadopsis, Grey-chested Babbler (a new family for everyone!), Violet-backed Hyliota, Fire-crested Alethe, Blue-headed Sunbird, Ruwenzori Double-collared Sunbird, Red-chested Sunbird, Shelley's Sparrow, Strange Weaver, Black-billed Weaver, Northern Brown-throated Weaver, Yellow-mantled Weaver, Brown-capped Weaver, Cardinal Quelea, Red-headed Quelea, Yellow-mantled Widowbird, Yellow-shouldered Widowbird, Marsh Widowbird, Red-faced Crimsonwing, Red-headed Bluebill, Kandt's Waxbill, Black-chinned Quailfinch, Magpie Mannikin and Brown-rumped Bunting.**