

# PASSERINES



*The Dawning of Mankind, Ndotu © K. David Bishop*

## **AFRICAN BROADBILLS Calyptomendiae**

**\$** African Broadbill *Sithornis capensis albigularis* Fabulous views of a single male displaying deep in the dense thicket of low trees within the grounds of the Vuma Hills Lodge, Mikumi NP. A delightfully charming species, which creates a very distinctive sound when displaying.

## **WATTLE-EYES & BATISES Platysteiridae**

Black-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira peltata* The paucity of wattle-eyes was one of the few disappointments of the safari; we heard one in the grounds of the Ngare Sero Lodge and finally saw one in riverine forest in the East Usambaras.

**\$** Short-tailed (Forest) Batis *m. mixta* Superb views of the very distinctive female in the West Usambaras. A second bird was seen briefly the following day along the Magamba Forest track.

Chinspot Batis *Batis molitor puella* Two in dry thorn scrub on the eastern slopes of the Rift Valley and a female at Gibbs Farm.

**\$** Pale Batis *Batis soror* A pair near the Amani field station, east Usambaras, a total of eight in Mikumi NP and three around the Vuma Hills Lodge.

Black-headed Batis *Batis minor suahelicus* A pair in scruffy Commiphora – Acacia thorn scrub on edge of the South Pare Plains.

Pygmy Batis *Batis perkeo* A pair in *Commiphora – Acacia* thorn scrub on the South Pare Plains and a lone female in thorn scrub between Same and Lushoto.



#### **HELEMTSHRIKES & VANGAS Vangidae**

White Helmetshrike *Orionops plumatus vinaceigularis* A flock of six seen frustratingly afar within Tarangire NP, however, a flock of eleven, nicely found by Anthony, were much more confiding and gave us delightful, prolonged views in Mikumi NP.

§ Retz's Helmetshrike *Prionops retzi graculinus* Late one afternoon we enjoyed good views of three of these distinctive birds with a large mixed flock in the forest canopy of Udzungwa NP.

§ Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher *Bias musicus* A pair on the entrance road to Udzungwa NP.

#### **BUSHSHRIKES & ALLIES Malaconotidae**

Brubru *Nilaus afer massaicus* A pair in the central Serengeti and a single bird the following day; similarly small numbers daily in Tarangire NP and Mikumi NP.

Pringle's Puffback *Dryoscopus pringlii* One seen well on two days in *Commiphora – Acacia* thorn scrub on the South Pare Plains and on the foothills near Same.

Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla nairobiensis* Two, Arusha NP; two seen well in dry thorn scrub on the eastern slope of the Rift Valley below Kairatu; one en route to Lake Manyara; one near Amani, East Usambaras and two at the edge of Udzungwa NP.



Black-headed Gonolek © K. David Bishop

**Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus armenus*** A total of six in and around the gardens of Gibbs' Farm; heard in Miombo woodland adjacent to Mikumi NP and small numbers seen daily within Mikumi NP.

**Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis minor*** Fine views of a group of three within the wet forest of Lake Manyara NP; one seen superbly the following day in Tarangire NP and singles, also seen nicely in *Commiphora* – *Acacia* thorn scrub on the South Pare Plains and on the foothills near Same.

**Tropical Boubou *Laniarius aethiopicus major and ambiguus*** This wonderful vocalist was seen and heard commonly in Arusha NP; within montane forest on the upper slopes of Ngorongoro; Tarangire NP; Mikumi NP; Udzungwa NP and in the grounds of the Mediterraneo Hotel, Dar e Salam.



Tropical Boubou © K. David Bishop

**Ph Black-headed Gonolek *Laniarius erythrogaster*** This striking looking and distinctly vocal species was seen well in the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge.

**Ph** Slate-coloured Boubou *Laniarius f. funebris* Widespread and seen and heard daily in modest numbers from Speke Bay on the shores of Lake Victoria eastwards across the Serengeti to Tarangire NP and the South Pare Plains.

Fulleborn's Boubou *Laniarius fuelleborni usambaricus* Eventually seen well within the dense montane forest of the West Usambaras.



Rosy-patched Bushshrike *Rhodophoneus cruentus cathemagmenus* Three of this very striking species seen, including one very well in flight, within 2m tall, dry, thorn scrub on the South Pare Plains.

Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike *Telophorus sulfureopectus similis* Two in Acacia woodland just outside the Sopa Lodge, Serengeti; one in Lake Manyara NP; one in scrubby foothills at the edge of the South Pare Plains. What a gorgeous bird.

Black-fronted Bush-shrike *Telophorus n. nigrifrons* One rather poorly in the canopy of Montane Forest, Arusha NP and then singles seen superbly on two days in the West Usambaras.

### **CUCKOOSHRIKES Campephagidae**

Gray Cuckooshrike *Coracina caesia pura* One, Lake Manyara NP and two in lowland forest at the foot of the East Usambaras.

**\$** Black Cuckooshrike *Campephaga flava* Heard by KDB at Ndutu Lodge and a pair seen in tall lowland forest within Udzungwa NP.



Magpie Shrike © K. David Bishop

**SHRIKES Laniidae**

Gray-backed Fiscal *Lanius excubitorius boehmi* Small numbers throughout the Speke Bay Lodge area but noticeably more common in the Serengeti where it was encountered daily.



Gray-backed Fiscal © K. David Bishop

**Ph** Long-tailed Fiscal *Lanius cabanisi* Widespread and common throughout Tarangire NP and east and south to the South Pare Plains; also in Mikumi NP and at the edge of Udzungwa NP.

Taita Fiscal *Lanius dorsalis* Two of these very neat, dapper birds on the Short-grass Plains of the Ndutu area.

Northern Fiscal *Lanius h. humeralis* Locally common within Arusha NP; Ngorongoro NP and the South Pare Plains.

Southern Fiscal *Lanius collaris marwitzi* Common in the Amani area of the East Usambaras. NOTE: Sometimes treated as a separate species Uhehe Fiscal *Lanius marwitzi*.

**Ph** Magpie Shrike *Corvinella melanoleuca aequitorialis* Widespread and locally common in the Serengeti and Tarangire NP.

**Ph** White-rumped Shrike *Eurocephalus rueppelli* Widespread and in some areas notably common from Speke Bay on Lake Victoria, across the Serengeti (circa 60 on one day) to Tarangire NP.



#### **OLD WORLD ORIOLES Oriolidae**

**\$** Green-headed Oriole *Oriolus chlorocephalus amani* With a bit of persistence we found eight of these very attractive and most distinctive birds in the canopy of tall lowland forest at the foot of the East Usambaras.

African Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus larvatus reichenowi* Two, Arusha NP; one, central Serengeti; one good looking male in the grounds of Gibbs Farm; one, Tarangire NP and three, Miombo woodland adjacent to Mikumi NP.

#### **DRONGOS Dicruridae**

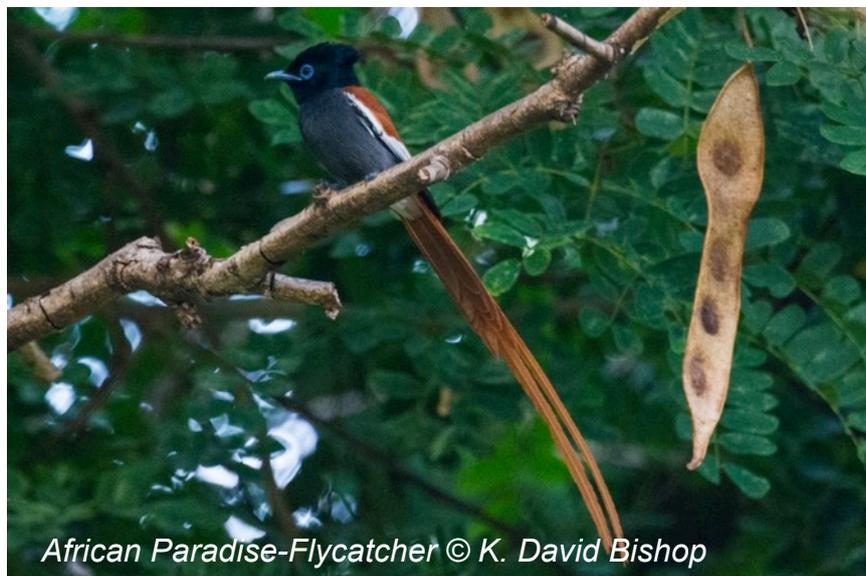
**\$** Square-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus ludwigii muenzneri* Common in the West and East Usambaras.

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis fugax* Widespread and common in open, sparsely vegetated country. Thus not recorded in or around Arusha, Ngorongoro and the Usambaras.

### **MONARCH FLYCATCHERS Monarchidae**

African (Blue-mantled) Crested-Flycatcher *Trochocercus cyanomelas vivax*  
One male seen well with a mixed flock in the canopy of Montane Forest, Arusha NP. A shy and relatively infrequently recorded species.

**Ph** African Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis suehelica* Several pairs put on a great show in the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge; heard in thorn scrub on the slopes of eastern Rift Valley wall; also seen in Lake Manyara NP and Amani in the Eastern Usambaras.



### **CROWS, JAYS & MAGPIES Corvidae**

**\$** House Crow *Corvus splendens* Four near Kedoro at the foot of the Eastern Usambaras and daily from thereon except in the forests of the East Usambaras.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* Notably uncommon around Arusha and Lake Victoria, but seemingly absent from the Serengeti. However, we observed this species most days from Ngorongoro onwards to the end of the tour.

**Ph** White-necked Raven *Corvus albicollis* Three joined us for lunch, high on Mt Meru, Arusha NP; a pair in the Ngoronogoro Crater; two in thorn scrub below Kairatu; a flock of circa 30 as we drove along the highway at the base of the East Usambaras. A very impressive scavenger.



### **LARKS Alaudidae**

White-tailed Lark *Mirafra albicauda* A total of six observed in song-flight in the central Serengeti and on the short-grass plains near Ndotu.

Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafra africana transvaalensis* Very common throughout the Serengeti, with as many as 100 recorded in one day.

Flappet Lark *Mirafra rufocinnamomea torrida* Regularly observed and heard in Tarangire NP.

Pink-breasted Lark *Calendulauda poecilosterna* Small numbers in the dry thorny scrub of the South Pare Plains.

Foxy Lark *Calendulauda alopex intercedens* One as we drove across the Serengeti towards the southern gate.

Fischer's Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix leucopareia* Small numbers in the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge whereas notably common throughout the Serengeti; small numbers in Lake Manyara NP and Tarangire NP. Also recorded in Mikumi NP.

**Ph** Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea saturator* Six of this very smart looking subspecies seen superbly in the Serengeti and within the Ngorongoro Crater.



**BVD** Short-tailed Lark *Pseudalaemon fremantlii delamerei* One in the short-grass plains near Ndutu – we were distracted by the Cheetah to really appreciate this very local species.

#### **SWALLOWS Hirundinidae**

Plain (Brown-throated) Martin *Riparia paludicola ducis* Widespread but nowhere common: Arusha NP; central Serengeti NP; Ngorongoro; over dry thorn scrub on the east slope of the east wall of the Rift Valley; Lake Manyara and Tarangire NP.



**Ph** Banded Martin *Riparia cincta* A flock of circa 40 over Lake Victoria at Speke Bay Lodge; 12 in the Ngorongoro Crater and two over the Mkata Plains, Mikumi NP.

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne (Hirundo) fuligula* Small numbers daily: Ngorongoro crater; over dry thorn scrub on the east slope of the east wall of the Rift Valley; Tarangire NP and West Usambaras.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo r. rustica* Just a few of these Palearctic migrants had still to move north: six, Arusha NP and four, Ngorongoro Crater.

Angola Swallow *Hirundo angolensis* Two pairs nesting under the eaves of Speke Bay Lodge.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo s. smithii* Widespread but only observed in very small numbers: two, Arusha NP; one, grounds of Speke Bay Lodge; four, central Serengeti; several Ndotu area; two, Ngorongoro Crater; two on the South Pare Plains; four daily within Mikumi NP.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis (Hirundo) daurica emini* Widespread in small to modest numbers: two seen very nicely in the central Serengeti; one, Ndotu area; ten, Ngorongoro Crater; ten, Gibbs Farm; two, Tarangire NP; one over the Mombo wetlands;

Lesser Striped-Swallow *Cecropis (Hirundo) abyssinica unitatis* Widespread and recorded in small numbers on most days. Notably common in Arusha NP where a total of circa 20 counted. A truly charming bird.

Mosque Swallow *Cecropis senegalensis monteiri* Notably very scarce throughout this safari; one seen well at Ndotu Lodge and two in the Ngorongoro crater.



Black Sawwing *Psaldoprocne pristopectera* Common in Arusha NP where circa 30 counted; six in the Ngorongoro Crater; two at Gibbs Farm; several, Lake

Manyara; moderately common over the South Pare Plains and West Usambaras; thereafter daily – East Usambaras, Mikumi NP and Udzungwa NP.

Grey-rumped Swallow *Pseudohirundo g. griseopyga* A flock of these rather dapper-looking hirundines fed over moist grasslands at the edge of the lake within the Ngorongoro crater.

#### **FLYCATCHERS Stenostiridae**

**Ph** White-tailed Blue-Flycatcher *Elminia albicauda* Three of these rather lovely birds graced us with prolonged views in the margins of the Gibbs Farm gardens.

#### **CHICKADEES & TITS Paridae**

**\$** Rufous-bellied Tit *Melaniparus rufiventris pallidiventris* Fine views of four with a mixed flock within Miombo woodland, adjacent to Mikumi NP.

Red-throated Tit *Melaniparus fringillinus* Fine views of a pair foraging low in Acacia woodland with a mixed flock at the foot of the escarpment hosting our Sopa Lodge located in the heart of the Serengeti.

#### **PENDULINE TITS Remizidae**

Mouse-coloured Penduline-Tit *Anthoscopus musculus* One in 2m tall thorn bush circa 5km from Nyumba ya Mungu Dam.

**\$** African Penduline-Tit *Anthoscopus caroli sharpie* Two with a mixed flock in Miombo woodland adjacent to Mikumi NP.



Eastern Mountain Greenbuls © K. David Bishop

#### **BULBULS Pycnonotidae**

Somber Greenbul *Andropadus importunus insularis* Two in the South Pare Plains; one seen very well in the grounds of the Vuma Hills Lodge, Mikumi NP and one on our last day in the Mediterraneo Hotel, Dar e Salaam.

Shelley's Greenbul *Arizelocichla (Andropadus) masukuensis roehli*

Moderately common in the West Usambaras with a maxima of six counted one morning along a track within degraded montane forest and two along the Magamba track that afternoon.

**Ph** Eastern Mountain-Greenbul *Arizelocichla (Andropadus) n. nigriceps* Fine views of six of these quite striking greenbuls in montane forest within the grounds of the Sopa Lodge, Ngorongoro crater; two at the margins of the Gibbs Farm gardens and as many as circa 15 of the subspecies *usumbarae* in the grounds of Muellers' Lodge and nearby tracks in the West Usambaras.

**Ph** Stripe-cheeked Greenbul *Arizelocichla (Andropadus) milanjensis striifacies* A total of circa 15 observed in the grounds of Muellers' Lodge and nearby tracks in the West Usambaras and at least four around the Amani Field Station, East Usambaras.



Stripe-cheeked Greenbul © K. David Bishop

Yellow-bellied Greenbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris centralis* Two in tall thorn scrub on the eastern slope of the eastern wall of the Rift Valley and two at the margins of Gibbs Farm gardens.

**\$** Little Greenbul *Eurillas (Andropadus) virens marwitzi* Common and noisy around the Amani Field Station, East Usambaras. Typically difficult to see, however, with a bit of luck and some persistence we managed to see several of these rather drab birds.

**BVD** Terrestrial Brownbul *Phylastrephus terrestris suahelicus* A flock of six flitted across a lovely forest lined stream in the Usambaras, sadly not providing particularly 'elevating' views.

**\$** Fischer's Greenbul *Phylastrephus fischeri* Fine views of a single bird within the forest immediately adjacent to the Amani Field Station. And then the rain came down.

**Ph** Common (Dark-capped) Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus layardi* Widespread, common and seen daily except for one day in the Ndutu area.



**AFRICAN WARBLERS Macrospenidae**

Northern Crombec *Sylvietta brachyura leucopsis* At least six of these diminutive birds seen well in 2m tall, dry, thorn bush circa 5km from Nyumba ya Mungu Dam and on the South Pare Plains.



Red-faced Crombec *Sylvietta whytii loringi*  
Just one seen but very nicely in the central Serengeti.

**Ph** (African) Moustached Grass-Warbler *Melocichla mentalis amaurora* One in a tall thicket adjacent to the Momela Lakes, Arusha NP

### **LEAF-WARBLERS Phylloscopidae**

Yellow-throated Woodland-Warbler *Phylloscopus ruficapilla minullus* A total of six of these relatively attractive Phylloscopus warblers in degraded montane forest, West Usambaras.

### **REED-WARBLERS & ALLIES Acrocephalidae**

African Yellow-Warbler *Iduna (Chloroptera) natalensis massaica*  
Just one in rank grasses at the swampy edge of the Momela Lakes, Arusha NP. NOTE: This population is sometimes split as Dark-capped Yellow-Warbler

Mountain Yellow-Warbler *Iduna (Chloroptera) similis* One in montane forest at the edge of our lovely hotel located on the rim of the Ngorongoro crater.

African Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus baeticatus cinnamomeus* Two in tall marsh grasses at the Hippo Pool within the Ngorongoro crater.



### **GRASS-WARBLERS Locustellidae**

**\$ H** Evergreen Forest Warbler *Bradypterus lopezi usambarae* Heard regularly singing its clear, strident refrain from within incredibly dense thickets of bracken within montane forest in the West Usambaras.

**\$ H** Cinnamon Bracken Warbler *Bradypterus c. cinnamomeus* Heard within degraded montane forest in the West Usambaras.

**\$ H** Little Rush Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala tongensis* Heard one singing at a small marsh within montane forest just below the Amani field station in the East Usambaras.

## **CISTICOLAS & ALLIES Cisticolidae**

Bar-throated Apalis *Apalis thoracica parensis* Small numbers well seen in montane forest in the West Usambaras.

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida golzi* Two very smart looking birds seen nicely in the central Serengeti; one at the Lake Manyara overlook; one in Mikumi NP.

§ Black-headed Apalis *Apalis melanocephala moschi* Three very grey-crowned birds in Montane Forest along the Magamba Track, West Usambaras. Heard in Udzungwa NP.

Brown-headed Apalis *Apalis a. alticola* One with a mixed flock in Montane Forest on the slopes of Mt Merua, Arusha NP and one immature in Montane Forest on the Ngorongoro Crater rim.

Karamoja Apalis *Apalis karamojae stronachi* Thanks to Anthony's intimate knowledge of Tanzanian birds we enjoyed superlative views of one of these little known birds within tall Acacia woodland in the western corridor of the Serengeti. Karamoja is a region of eastern Uganda where this species was largely known from until the recent discovery of this isolated population.

Green-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brachyura griseigula* One in the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge; one in the Ndotu area; two in dry thorn scrub below Kairatu; two, Tarangire NP; one, East Usambaras and one in Miombo woodland adjacent to Mikumi NP.

Red-fronted Warbler *Urorhipis rufifrons smithii* Moderately common in dry, 2m tall thorn scrub above the Nyumba ya Mungu Dam and on the South Pare Plains. The descriptor 'Red-fronted' in this taxon is rather misleading.



'Red-fronted' Warbler © K. David Bishop

§ Miombo Wren-Warbler *Calamonastes undosus stierlingi* One with a mixed flock in Miombo woodland adjacent to Mikumi NP.

Grey Wren-Warbler *Calamonastes simplex*

Common in 2m tall dry, thorn scrub above Nyumba ya Mungu Dam with smaller numbers near Same at the foot of the Pare Mountains.



**Ph** African Tailorbird *Artisornis m. metopias* Superb and repeated views of this very restricted range species within the midstorey of degraded and primary Montane Forest, West Usambaras.

**\$** Long-billed Tailorbird *Artisornis m. moreaui* Named after the great Africa ornithologist Reg Moreau. Birdlife International classifies this species as Critically Endangered. "While this species can now be found reliably in parts of the East Usambara plateau, Tanzania, virtually nothing is known about its recent status in northern Mozambique. Its low population density and the small area of suitable habitat indicate that its total population is extremely small. Given that much of its habitat is being altered rapidly and is becoming increasingly fragmented, the species is likely to be undergoing a continuing decline, at least in some parts of its global range. Over 90% of its very small global population has been suspected to be confined to one subpopulation (Amani Nature Reserve), and on this basis it is considered Critically Endangered, however recent research suggests that total numbers, while still small, are larger than previously thought, and that Mt Nilo (Mozambique) holds a significant proportion of the population. If this is confirmed the species is likely to warrant down-listing." Birdlife International. Our observation of the riverine forest habitat at the one site we visited in the East Usambaras suggests that habitat degradation is ongoing as sadly we noted a considerable amount of very recent cutting of trees and shrubs right in the midst of a pair of this species breeding territory.

**\$ H** Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops nyasa* Just one individual heard in the East Usambaras.

Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans pictipennis* One near Momela Lake, Arusha NP.

Trilling Cisticola *Cisticola woosnami* Seen well several times in Arusha NP



**Hunter's Cisticola** *Cisticola hunter* Noisy; heard then seen a total of eight in the scrubby edge of Montane Forest on the slopes of Ngorongoro Crater and within the grounds of our lodge on the crater rim.

**Rattling Cisticola** *Cisticola chiniana* Widespread, seen and heard regularly in open grassy plains: Serengeti, Tarangire and Mikumi national parks.

**Winding (Luapula) Cisticola** *Cisticola galactotes* Seen well in Serengeti NP, Lake Manyara NP and Tarangire NP.

**Coastal Cisticola** *Cisticola galactotes haematocephalus* Seen well at the Mombo marsh.

**Croaking Cisticola** *Cisticola natalensis* Several in the central Serengeti and Mikumi NP.

**§ Piping Cisticola** *Cisticola fulvicappilla muelleri* One seen well in low scrub at the edge of Miombo Woodland adjacent to Mikumi NP.

**§ Siffling (Short-winged) Cisticola** *Cisticola brachypterus reichenowi* Small numbers seen in lightly wooded grassland, Mikumi NP.

**Desert Cisticola** *Cisticola aridulus Tanganyika* Notably common and frequently seen; usually in flight over shortish grasslands in Serengeti and Tarangire NPs. NOTE: Despite its common name this species is widespread away from desert habitat.

**Pectoral-patch Cisticola** *Cisticola brunnescens hindii* Very good views of this reasonably striking-looking, small, strongly streaked, grassland Cisticola within the Ngorongoro Crater. NOTE: Much more striking than illustrated.

**Gray-capped Warbler** *Eminia lepida* Superb, close views as a bird foraged at dawn under the shrubbery between Speke Bay Lodge and the shores of Lake

Victoria.

Buff-bellied Warbler *Phyllolais pulchella* Several seen well in the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge.

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava subsp?* Scattered records of single birds: Arusha NP; Gibbs Farm; Tarangire NP; 3, East Usambaras.

Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis polioxantha* Four in 2m high, dry thorn scrub above Nyumba ya Mungu Dam.

\$ Greencap Eremomela *Eremomela s. scotops* Two with a mixed flock within tall forest in Udzungwa NP.



### **SYLVIIDS Sylviidae**

Banded Warbler (Parisoma) *Sylvia b. boehmi* Good views of a pair on a small, lightly wooded hillock within the Serengeti.

### **WHITE-EYES & ALLIES Zosteropidae**

Broad-ringed (Montane) White-eye *Zosterops poliogastrus eurycricotus* At least six on the slopes of Mt Meru, Arusha NP; one or two on the rim of Ngorongoro crater; at Gibbs Farm and in the West Usambaras.

White-breasted (Abyssinian) White-eye *Zosterops abyssinicus flavilateralis* At least six in dry, thorn scrub on the east slope of the eastern wall of the Rift Valley below Kairatu and similar numbers on the South Pare Plains.

### **LAUGHINGTHRUSHES & ALLIES Leiothrichidae**

Scaly-throated Chatterer *Turdoides aylmeri mentalis* A total of ten within 2m tall, dry, thorn scrub above Nyumba ya Mungu Dam Dam.

Rufous Chatterer *Turdoides rubiginosa heuglini* A flock of six within the ground-water forest of Lake Manyara NP.

Black-lored Babbler *Turdoides s. sharpie* Single birds on two days in the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge and moderately common in the central Serengeti.

Northern Pied-Babbler *Turdoides hypoleuca rufuensis* Small numbers daily within Tarangire NP and three in Mikumi NP.

**Ph** Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardineii kirkii* Moderately common in the central Serengeti; common at Gibbs Farm and two in Lake Manyara NP.



### **SUGAR-BIRDS Promeropidae**

Spot-throat *Modulatrix s. stictigula* Heard commonly and at least three individuals, of this most skulking and very interesting species in the West Usambaras. We encountered several singing birds (males?) in tall wet, stream-bottom forest on the ground beneath a very dense understory. Similarly it was heard commonly in degraded and primary montane forest also in the West Usambaras. This species has previously been considered to belong with the bulbuls (Pycnonotidae), thrushes (Turdidae) and Babblers (Timalidae sic), but recent molecular studies suggest that it is closest to the sugarbirds (Promeropidae). I have strong reservations about the latter assignment and suggest that further research is needed.

## OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS Muscicapidae



**Ph** Silverbird *Empidonax semipartitus* This rather special and most distinctive flycatcher was seen on a number of occasions including in the grounds of the Speke Bay Lodge; central Serengeti and Tarangire NP.

Pale Flycatcher *Bradornis pallidus griseus* Two in Montane Forest on the slopes of Mt Meru, Arusha NP and two in upland forest at Amani, East Usambaras.

Grayish (African Gray) Flycatcher *Bradornis m. microrhynchus* A pair with an immature in the southern Serengeti and common in the South Pare Plains.

**Ph** White-eyed Slaty-Flycatcher *Melaenornis f. fischeri* Six in Montane Forest on the slopes of Mt Meru, Arusha NP; common in Montane Forest on the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater including many recently fledged young.

**\$** Southern Black-Flycatcher *Melaenornis pammelaina poliogyna* Seen daily in small numbers throughout the Mikumi park area.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata neumanni* Just one late migrant in dry thorn scrub on the east slope of eastern flanks of the Rift Valley.



**Ph** Swamp Flycatcher *Muscicapa aquatic infulata* Locally common at the edge of Papyrus beds along the periphery of Speke Bay Lodge, Lake Victoria.



**Ph** Dusky-brown (African Dusky) Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta murina* Three, Arusha NP; one in Montane Forest on the rim of Ngorongoro Crater; two in dry thorn scrub on the east slope of eastern flanks of the Rift Valley; two, Gibbs Farm; three, West Usambaras; and a maxima of three at Amani in the East Usambaras.

**Ashy Flycatcher** *Muscicapa caerulescens cinereola* One, Gibbs Farm.

**H** Eastern Bearded Robin *Cercotrichas q. quadrivirgata* Heard in Tarangire NP

**Red-backed (White-browed) Scrub-Robin** *Cercotrichas leucophrys sclateri* Two in Acacia woodland at the base of the escarpment below our attractive Sopa Lodge, Serengeti and daily in small numbers, Tarangire NP.



Cape Robin-Chat *Cossypha caffra iolaema* Two of this very smart-looking species seen well at the edge of the Sopa Lodge gardens in Montane Forest on the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater and two in the West Usambaras.



**Ph** Rueppell's Robin-Chat *Cossypha semirufa intercedens* A very territorial male put on a great show along with at least two others in the Gibbs Farm garden. One in the grounds of the Mediterraneo Hotel, Dar e Salaam.

White-browed Robin-Chat *Cossypha h. heuglini* One in the grounds of the Speke Bay Lodge and one in Udzungwa NP.

**Ph** Spotted Morning-Thrush *Cichladusa guttata intercalans* Wow! What a bird. As many as 12 of these wonderfully confiding and most songful birds in the grounds of the Speke Bay Lodge and at least six in the grounds of the Country Lodge; daily in modest numbers in Tarangire NP east to the South Pare Plains.



**\$** White-starred Robin *Pogonocichla stellate helleri* Three lovely males seen in wet riverine forest within the West West Usambaras and another along the Magamba Track.

**\$** White-chested Alethe *Pseudalethe fuelleborni* Three of these very skulking birds showed well whilst foraging deep within tall, wet forest just below the Amani Field Station, East Usambaras.

African Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus axillaris* Moderately common in lightly bushed grassland within Arusha NP and similar country with the Ndotu area. NOTE: European (*rubicola*) and Siberian (*maurus*) are treated as separate species from African resident taxa.

Northern Anteater-Chat *Myrmecocichla aethiops cryptoleuca* Singles in the short-grass plains of southern Serengeti; the Ndotu area and very common within the Ngorongoro crater.

**\$** White-headed (Arnot's) Black-Chat *Myrmecocichla a. arnotti* A pair in Miombo woodland adjacent to Mikumi NP.

Mocking Cliff-Chat *Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris subrufipennis* A pair seen well hopping around on boulders within forest atop a short escarpment within dry thorn scrub on the east slope of the eastern wall of the Rift Valley.

Abyssinian (Mourning, Schalow's) Wheatear *Oenanthe lugubris schalowi* Two among roadside rocks adjacent to the township of Karatu on the outer slopes of Ngorongoro Crater.



Capped Wheatear © K. David Bishop

**Ph** Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata livingstoni* Common in the short grass plains of the southern Serengeti and Ndotu area. Two in the Ngorongoro Crater.

#### **THRUSHES & ALLIES Turdidae**

**\$** Red-tailed Anthrush *Neocossyphus rufus* Seen rather briefly and heard the following day near the Amani field station, East Usamabaras.

Abyssinian Thrush *Turdus abyssinicus oldeani* One at the edge of Montane Forest adjacent to the Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge and a second seen well at Gibbs Farm. NOTE: Abyssinian Thrush is now split from Olive Thrush.

**\$** Usambara Thrush *Turdus roehli* Thanks to the rain two birds were seen amazingly well in tall, riverine forest within the West Usambaras.

#### **STARLINGS Sturnidae**

**Ph** Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea*

This peculiar species is typically most often encountered in non-breeding dress that it was nothing short of astonishing to see so many and so well, especially the males, in their full breeding attire. Notably common to patchily abundant in the southern Serengeti, especially the Ndotu area where large flocks congregated as small pools within Acacia woodland. Smaller number observed in the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge and Tarangire NP

Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus l. leucogaster* Ten in dry thorn scrub above Lake Manyara.

Red-winged Starling *Onychognathus m. morio* Common and widespread throughout Tarangire NP and in the gardens of the Negare Sero Lodge.



**W** Waller's Starling *Onychognathus w. walleri* Three seen poorly in degraded forest within the West Usambaras and a total of six seen well in the east Usambaras.

**\$** Kenrick's Starling *Poeoptera k. kenricki* A total of ten along the Magamba Forest Track, West Usambaras



**Ph** Hildebrandt's Starling *Lamprotornis hildebrandti* Moderately common in the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge; very common in the central Serengeti (40 in one day) and Tarangire NP.

Rueppell's (Glossy) Starling *Lamprotornis p. purpuroptera* Common in the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge and in the central Serengeti.



**Ph** Ashy Starling *Lamprotornis (Spreo) unicolor* Notably abundant from the moment we entered Tarangire and thereafter throughout the national park.



**Ph** Superb Starling *Lamprotornis superbus* This gorgeous and so quintessentially East African bird was common to abundant except in montane areas such as around Arusha, Ngorongoro Crater rim and the West and East Usambaras.

**\$ Ph** Lesser Blue-eared Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis chloropterus Elisabeth* Small numbers daily within Mikumi NP. NOTE: Regarded by some authorities as a separate species Southern or Blue-eared Glossy Starling.



Greater Blue-eared Glossy-Starling *Lamprotornis chalybaeus sycobius* Just two, in Tarangire NP.

### **OXPECKERS Buphagidae**

**Ph** Red-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhynchus* These fascinating birds ranged from scarce, such as in the grounds of the Speke Bay Lodge to notably common wherever there were large ungulates, especially in the Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater. Also Tarangire and Mikumi NPs.

Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus a. africanus* These fascinating birds were clearly less common than Red-billed Oxpeckers but nevertheless widespread from the grounds of the Speke Bay Lodge, throughout the Serengeti, notably wherever there were large ungulates, especially in the Ngorongoro Crater and Tarangire NP.



### **SUNBIRDS Nectarinidae**

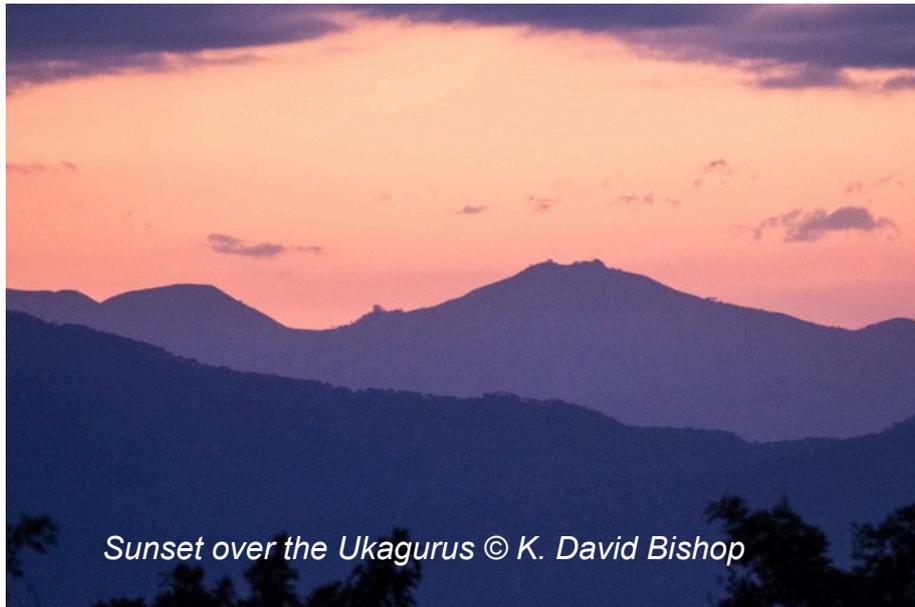
Kenya Violet-backed Sunbird *Anthreptes orientalis* Three, including a very striking male, foraging low within dry thorn scrub circa 5km above Nyumba ya Mungu Dam.

§ Uluguru Violet-backed Sunbird *Anthreptes neglectus*

Good looks at single males on two days in the Amani area, East Usambaras.

Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris zambesiana* One in Montane Forest edge on the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater rim; two around Gibbs Farm; small numbers daily around Amani in the East Usambaras and Udzungwa NP.

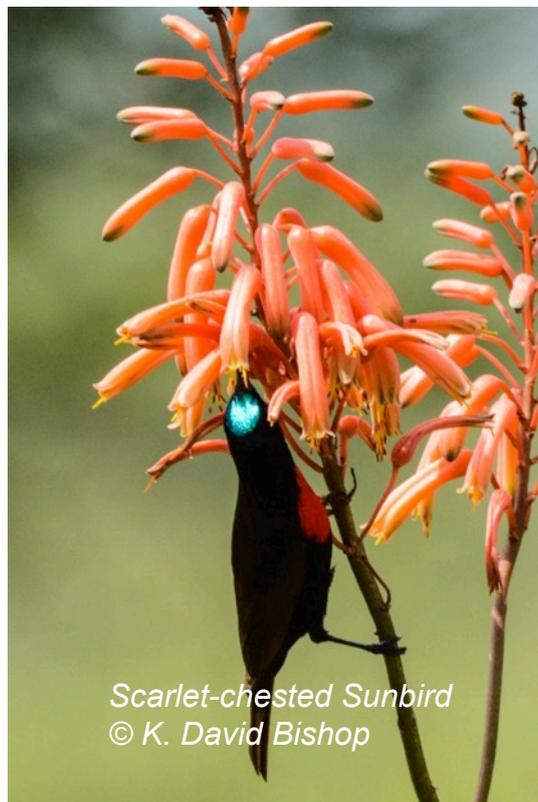
§ Amani Sunbird *Hedydipna pallidigaster* A single male seen near the Amani field station, East Usambaras.



Green-headed Sunbird *Cyanomitra verticalis viridisplendens* The sub-specific name says it all; we enjoyed fine views of a simply gorgeous male in the Gibbs Farm gardens.

§ Eastern Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra olivacea changamwensis* Very common in the Usambaras with as many as 50 recorded on one morning near Amani in the East Usambaras.

Amethyst Sunbird *Chalcomitra amethystine kirkii* One male in thorn scrub at the edge of the South Pare Plains and fine views of another male in Mikumi NP.



**Ph** Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis lamperti* Single males of this stunning species in the grounds of the Speke Bay Lodge; Serengeti NP and Mikumi NP.

Tacazze Sunbird *Nectarinia tacazze jacksoni* Four of these dazzling birds in Montane Forest on the upper slopes of the Ngorongoro Crater.

Bronze Sunbird *Nectarinia k. kilimensis* At least four in the grounds of Gibbs Farm.

Golden-winged Sunbird *Drepanorhynchus r. reichenowi* Four in Montane Forest on the upper slopes of the Ngorongoro Crater.

Eastern Double-collared Sunbird *Cinnyris mediocris fuelleborni* Common (12+ males) in the hotel gardens and adjacent Montane Forest edge on the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater.

Usambara Double-collared Sunbird *Cinnyris mediocris usambaricus* One or two daily in the gardens of Muellers' Lodge and around the Amani filed station, West and East Usambaras. NOTE: Several authorities treat this taxon as a separate, full species.

**Ph** Beautiful Sunbird *Cinnyris pulchellus melanogastrus* Small numbers seen well in the Ndotu area and throughout Tarangire NP. Just one pair in scrubby grassland within Mikumi NP.

Marico (Mariqua) Sunbird *Cinnyris mariquensis suahelicus* One male in the grounds of the Serengeti visitor centre.



*Red-chested Sunbird* © K. David Bishop

**Ph** Red-chested Sunbird *Cinnyris erythrocerus* Common around the city of Mwanza and in the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge, Lake Victoria.

Purple-banded Sunbird *Cinnyris bifasciatus microrhynchus* A single male seen nicely in the grounds of Muellers' Lodge, West Usambaras; two in the grounds of the Mediterraneo Resort, Dar e Salaam.

Tsavo Sunbird *Cinnyris tsavoensis* At least two males in dry, thorn-scrub circa 5km about Nyumba ya Mungu Dam. NOTE: Split from Purple-banded Sunbird.

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus falkensteini* Widespread in low numbers; Arusha NP; Serengeti; Ndutu; Gibbs Farm; Lake Manyara; Tarangire NP; Vuma Hills Lodge.

### **WAGTAILS & PIPITS Motacillidae**

Gray Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* One in Arusha NP.

**Ph** Mountain Wagtail *Motacilla clara torrentium* A pair appeared to be resident on the small, forested pool at Negare Sero Lodge. Singles observed in the East Usambaras and Udzungwa NP.



Mountain Wagtail © K. David Bishop

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp vidua* Widespread and seen on many days. A pair observed with young at Speke Bay Lodge and as many as 20 seen congregating on the lodge roof at dusk. Not recorded beyond Same.

African (Grassland) Pipit *Anthus cinnamomeus lacuum* Just four seen in the southern Serengeti and one in Mikumi NP.

Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis hararensis* A single bird seen in the Short-grass Plains en route to Ndutu.

Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys bohndorfii* Small numbers seen in the Serengeti.

**Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus*** This lovely grassland specialist so reminiscent of Eastern and Western Meadowlarks was seen in small numbers in Arusha NP, the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge, fairly commonly in the Serengeti and Ndotu area; just one in Tarangire but regularly in modest numbers in Mikumi NP.

**Rosy-throated Longclaw *Macronyx ameliae wintoni*** Six of these lovely grassland specialists seen beautifully in the Ngorongoro Crater.

### **BUNTINGS & NEW WORLD SPARROWS Emberizidae**

**Somali Golden-breasted Bunting *Emberiza poliopleura*** Four of these handsome birds seen well in dry, thorn scrub at the hill foot of the Pare Mountains.

**§ Cabanis's Bunting *Emberiza cabanisi orinetalis*** Fine views of a total of three in and around Mikumi NP.

### **SISKINS, CROSSBILLS & ALLIES Fringillidae**

**Ph Oriole Finch *Linuragus olivaceus kilimensis*** What a great way to start our birding in the West Usambaras; a group of five of these very striking and quite scarce birds were quietly feeding in the low canopy within degraded forest above Mueller's Lodge. The following day we saw a rather confusing immature along the Magamba Forest track.

**Yellow-crowned Canary *Serinus f. flavivertex*** Two males spotted by Anthony in Miombo woodland adjacent to Tarangire NP.

**Yellow-fronted Canary *Serinus mozambicus barbatus*** A single male seen nicely in the central Serengeti; one in dry thorn scrub below Kairatu and two in Tarangire NP.

**Ph Southern Citril *Serinus h. hypostictus*** Fine views of a singing male within Arusha NP and a total of six in the grounds of Gibbs Farm.



**Reichenow's (Yellow-rumped) Seedeater *Serinus reichenowi*** Common in dry thorn scrub throughout the South Pare Plains and Mikumi NP.

**Ph** White-bellied Canary *Serinus d. dorsostratus* Common in the grounds of the Speke Bay Lodge and throughout the Serengeti and Ndotu area. A single male of the subspecies *taruensis* observed in the South Pare Plains.

Southern Grosbeak-Canary *Serinus buchanani* As many as ten foraging on or near the ground in dry thorn scrub above Nyumba ya Mungu Dam.

**Ph** Streaky Seedeater *Serinus s. striolatus* Very common in the Ngorongoro Crater and in the grounds of Gibbs Farm; singles noted in the West Usambaras.



**BVD** Thick-billed Seedeater *Serinus burtoni kilimensis* Just one with a mixed flock in the grounds of Gibbs Farm.

**\$** Black-cheeked Seedeater *Serinus mennelli* Sure wish I had been able to grab an image of this bird. During our morning in the Miombo Woodland, adjacent to Mikumi NP Anthony picked out a very distinctive bird that to all intents and purposes looked exactly like the Black-eared Seedeater illustrated in the field-guide. However, this would be a major extension of this species' currently known range.

#### **OLD WORLD SPARROWS Passeridae**

**Ph** House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* Around the city of Mwanza; along the road through Kairatu; the edges of Mikumi and Udzungwa NPs and Dar e Salaam.

**Ph** Kenya Rufous Sparrow *Passer rufocinctus* Fine views in the Ndotu area and at Gibbs Farm.

Northern Gray-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus ugandae* Surprisingly scarce with just one seen in Arusha NP and a total of six in the grounds of the Country Lodge.

**Ph** Swahili Sparrow *Passer suahelicus* Common in the Serengeti, Ndutu area and Tarangire NP.



Chestnut Sparrow *Passer eminibey* Ten in the Ndutu area and several in Tarangire NP.

Yellow-spotted Petronia *Petronia p. pyrgita* Modest numbers in the central Serengeti.

**\$** Yellow-throated Petronia *Petronia superciliaris bororensis* Several thousands in Mikumi NP.

#### **WEAVERS & ALLIES Ploceidae**

Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver *Bubalornis niger intermedius* Common in the Serengeti, Ndutu area and Tarangire NP. A flock of 30 in Mikumi NP.



**Ph** White-headed Buffalo-Weaver *Dinemellia dinemelli boehmi* This superbly marked bird was wonderfully common in the Acacia woodland of the Serengeti, Ndotu area and Tarangire NP.



**Ph** Speckle-fronted Weaver *Sporopipes frontalis emini* This lovely little weaver was common and breeding in the Serengeti, including some very approachable 'scroungers' at the visitor centre. Also recorded in the Ndotu area and Taarangire NP.

White-browed Sparrow-Weaver *Plocepasser mahali pectoralis* Small numbers (2-4) in Tarangire NP whilst a little more common in Mikumi NP.

**Ph** Rufous-tailed Weaver *Histurgops ruficauda* This Tanzanian endemic was common (circa 60 counted in one day) in the Serengeti typically inhabiting thornveld and grassland, especially on black cotton soils and at an altitude range of 1100–2000m. We noted several nesting colonies and enjoyed very close encounters with cheeky, confiding birds as we ate our lunch within the Ngorongoro Crater where this subtle species was also common (circa 30 counted in one day). Also recorded in Tarangire NP.



**Ph** Gray-headed Social-Weaver *Pseudonigrita a. amaudi* Common in the grounds of the Speke Bay Lodge (circa 20 counted in one day) and throughout the Serengeti (circa 70 counted in one day) including some very approachable 'scroungers' at the visitor centre. We also noted several active nesting colonies in the Serengeti.

Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps leuconotus* Notably uncommon with just lone males observed in the Serengeti and in Tarangire NP.

**Ph** Baglafaecht Weaver *Ploceus baglafaecht reichenowi* Four, Arusha NP; ten in the Ngorongoro Crater and circa 20 in and around Gibbs Farm.



**Ph** Slender-billed Weaver *Ploceus p. pelzelni* Abundant and very confiding in the grounds of the Speke Bay Lodge especially around the dining room.



**Ph** Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis melanoxanthus* Fine views of a nesting male in the Kopje woodlands above the Serengeti visitor centre and four in Tarangire NP.



Black-necked Weaver © K. David Bishop

**\$** Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis suahelicus* Good looks at a pair in Mikumi NP and another pair nesting in the grounds of the Mediterraneo Resort, Dar e Salaam.

**\$ Ph** African Golden Weaver *Ploceus subaureus aureoflavus* A fabulous congregation of 20+ males all in breeding dress inhabiting patches of reed-beds at the edge of the Mombo wetlands.

**\$** Ruvu Weaver *Ploceus* ?????? En route to Mikumi NP we observed 1-2 males of a distinct populations known as Ruvu Weaver.

Holub's Golden-Weaver *Ploceus xanthops* Great looks at a very handsome male in tall Acacia woodland at the margins of the Ngorongoro Crater and two more in the grounds of Gibbs Farm.



Taveta Golden-Weaver © K. David Bishop

**Ph** Taveta Golden-Weaver *Ploceus castaneiceps* Fine views of this very localized and very handsome species attending nests located in Papyrus around the small forest-lined pool at the Negare Lodge and on the stream that descends from the pool. Also noted in Arusha NP.



**Ph** Lesser Masked-Weaver *Ploceus i. intermedius* As many as 30 recorded on one day in the central Serengeti including one or two nesting colonies. Common southwards into the Ndutu area and Tarangire NP.

Vitelline Masked-Weaver *Ploceus vitellinus uluensis* As many as 20 recorded on one day in the central Serengeti including one or two nesting colonies. Common southwards into the Ndutu area; dry thron scrub below Kairatu and Tarangire NP.

Speke's Weaver *Ploceus spekei* At least 25 attending a nesting colony located at the margins of a Papyrus lined pool; two in the Ngorongoro Crater and in the gardens of the Country Lodge.

Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus nigriceps*  
Abundant with many birds nesting together with Golden-backed and Black-headed weavers where swampy woodland met Papyrus at the margins of Lake Victoria, Speke Bay Lodge.

Black-headed (Yellow-backed) Weaver *Ploceus melanocephalus dimidiatus* A few pairs nesting together with Village and Golden-backed weavers where swampy woodland met Papyrus at the margins of Lake Victoria, Speke Bay Lodge. NOTE: Village Weaver is sometimes also assigned the common name Black-headed Weaver.

(Jackson's) Golden-backed Weaver *Ploceus jacksoni* Ten gorgeous males observed nesting together with Village and Black-headed weavers where

swampy woodland met Papyrus at the margins of Lake Victoria, Speke Bay Lodge. Also recorded in dry thorn scrub below Kairatu and within Tarangire NP.



**Chestnut Weaver *Ploceus r. rubiginosus*** Small numbers in the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge (2) and the western corridor of the Serengeti (3); modest numbers in dry thorn scrub below Kairatu and within Tarangire NP.

**\$ Dark-backed Weaver *Ploceus bicolor*** A pair seen very nicely in secondary forest at the foot of the Udzungwas.

**Cardinal Quelea *Quelea cardinalis*** Diagnostic views of a superb male in the Ndotu area. Likely we saw many others but none as definitive as this.

***It was a real treat to enjoy such fine views of all three species of Quelea in full breeding plumage especially against the backdrop of such lush, green vegetation.***

**Red-headed Quelea *Quelea erthrops*** Fabulous views of a male in the western corridor of the Serengeti and another ten males in the Ndotu area.

**Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea aethiopica*** Widespread and common including some truly spectacular males: Arusha NP; Speke Bay Lodge; Serengeti – large numbers; Ngorongoro Crater – circa 100; circa 40 Lake Manyara; common throughout Tarangire NP and South Pare Plains.

**Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix*** Six gorgeous males in the southern Serengeti. Also recorded in the Ndotu area; en route to Tarangire NP; between the East Usambaras and Mikumi NP and within Mikumi NP. Seemingly a bird of farmland and most often seen along the roadside.

**Ph Zanzibar Red Bishop *Euplectes nigroventris*** This lovely species was in open country especially where there were farms with crops such as maize as we drove across the South pare Plains; similarly between Lushoto and the East Usambaras. Small numbers in and around Mikumi NP.

Black-winged Bishop *Euplectes hordaceus* Modest numbers (4) morning and afternoon in the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge; western corridor of the Serengeti (10) fine views of a superb male in the Ndotu area and in Mikumi NP.

**Ph** Black Bishop *Euplectes g. gierowii* Common in farmland near Kairatu; en route to Tarangire NP and with Tarangire NP.

**\$** Yellow-crowned Bishop *Euplectes afar taha* For me one of the highlights of our safari was seeing two gorgeous males of this species in full breeding plumage at the Mombo wetlands.

Yellow Bishop *Euplectes capensis crassirostris* Yet another wonderful species seen in full breeding plumage: six, Arusha NP; one male, Ndotu area; four, Ngorongoro Crater; two below Kairatu; two in the grounds of Gibbs Farm and single males in Mikumi NP.

White-winged Widowbird *Euplectes albonotatus* Moderately common in the Serengeti especially in the western corridor; common in farmland en route to Tarangire NP; throughout Tarangire NP and the South Pare Plains.

Red-collared Widowbird *Euplectes ardens suahelicus* Six males in full breeding plumage flirting over the grasslands on the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater. Four males of the nominate subspecies *ardens* seen nicely as we drove from the East Usambaras to Mikumi NP.



**Ph** Fan-tailed Widowbird *Euplectes axillaris phoeniceus* Widespread but rather scattered in low numbers: Arusha NP (one female); six, western corridor Serengeti NP; circa 15 including displaying males within the Ngorongoro Crater; locally common in Tarangire NP and 10 at Mombo wetland.

**Ph** Jackson's Widowbird *Euplectes jacksoni* A total of circa 20 males congregating and displaying at exploded leks within the grasslands of the Ngorongoro Crater.



**Ph** Grosbeak (Thick-billed) Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons Montana* Several pairs attending nests around the forest-lined pool at Negare Sero Lodge; four in the Ngorongoro Crater and two nesting in Lake Manyara NP.



### **WAXBILLS & ALLIES Estrildidae**

Gray-headed Negrita *Nigrita canicapillus diabolicus* Just when you think he's switched there he is again picking something out of the blue. Anthony was amazing! As result we all enjoyed fine views of this dapper omnivore here at the very eastern edge of its range on the periphery of the Gibbs Farm gardens.

Yellow-bellied Waxbill *Coccygia quartinia stuartirwini* Two in the gardens of Gibbs Farm.

**\$ Ph** Black-tailed Waxbill *Estrilda p. perreini* Fabulous views of an adult foraging quietly in dense roadside lantana close to our lodgings at the edge of

Udzungwa NP. A truly lovely, subtle bird. NOTE: Widely regarded as a separate species from Lavender Waxbill of western Africa.



*Black-tailed Waxbill* © K. David Bishop

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild minor* One seen well in the West Usambaras.



*Black-faced Waxbill* © K. David Bishop

Black-faced Waxbill *Estrilda erythronotos delamerei* This species' common name belies what a truly lovely, subtle looking bird this is. We saw four in scrub under Acacia woodland near Ndutu and one there the following day and one in dry thorn scrub below Kairatu.

**\$ Ph** Southern Cordonbleu *Uraeginthus angolensis niassensis* Common, widespread and seen daily in modest numbers throughout the Mikumi area and the edge of Udzungwa NP.

Red-cheeked Cordonbleu *Uraeginthus bengalus ugogoensis* Superb views of a very striking species: central Serengeti; Ndutu area; Tarangire NP and South Pare Plains.



Male Red-cheeked Cordonbleu © K. David Bishop



Male Blue-capped Cordon-Bleu © K. David Bishop

Blue-capped Cordonbleu *Uraeginthus cyanocephalus* Widespread, common to very common and seen daily from Speke Bay Lodge on the shores of Lake Victoria east throughout the Serengeti and Ndutu area to Tarangire NP and the South Pare Plains. Also observed nesting in the gardens of the Mediterraneo Resort, Dar e Salaam.

Purple Grenadier *Granatina ianthinogaster* One of my most favourite small African birds. We first saw a pair of these exquisite birds on the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater followed by a fabulous male at point-blank range the following day in the grounds of our lodge. Small numbers were also seen in Tarangire NP and in the South Pare Plains.

**\$ Ph** Peter's Twinspot *Hypargos niveoguttatus macrospilatus* Although KDB saw a pair in the gardens of the Negare Sero Lodge but it was not right until the end of the tour when a fabulous male finally revealed himself along the entrance track to Udzungwa NP.



Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba soudanensis* Fine views of a pair in dry, thorn scrub above Nyumba ya Mungu Dam and another male in the scrubby grasslands of Mikumi NP.

Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala ruberrima* Scattered individuals and very small numbers: Arusha NP, grounds of Speke Bay Lodge and Gibbs Farm.

Jameson's Firefinch *Lagonosticta rhodopareia jamesoni* One in dry, thorn scrub at the foot of the South Pare Mountains.

**Ph** Cut-throat *Amadina fasciata alexandri* Three in the central Serengeti and as many as ten at the entrance to Mikumi NP.

**BVD** African Quail-finch *Ortygospiza fuscocrissa muelleri* Always a very difficult species to see well; one flushed from right under the feet of KDB as we birded the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge. A further four were flushed as we worked our way across the central Serengeti.

Gray-headed Silverbill *Odontospiza griseicapilla* Fine views of two of these very striking looking birds as they came to drink at a dripping tap near adjacent to the Serengeti Visitor Centre and a third was seen rather well in dry, thorn scrub at the foot of the South Pare Mountains.

Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullatus scutata* Six including several birds nesting in the grounds of the Speke Bay Lodge; ones and twos in the grounds of Vuma Hills Lodge; Udzungwa NP and the Mediterraneo Resort, Dar e Salaam.

Black-and-white Mannikin *Spermestes bicolor nigriceps* Two in the Gibbs Farm garden; six, including at least three immatures in the grounds of

Mueller's Lodge, West Usambaras; four regularly around the Amani Field Station, East Usambaras.

#### WHYDAHS & INDIGOBIRDS Viduidae



**Ph** Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura* Six males in fine breeding plumage within Arusha NP; another in the grounds of the Speke Bay Lodge; two more in the southern Serengeti; one male at the Mombo wetland and several in Mikumi NP. This handsome species is widespread across Sub-Saharan Africa.



**\$** Broad-tailed Paradise-Whydah *Vidua obtuse* Wonderfully common in Mikumi NP.

**Ph** Eastern Paradise-Whydah *Vidua paradisaea* Common from the grounds of Speke Bay Lodge on the shores of Lake Victoria where observed in display flight, then seemingly absent in the Serengeti (hmm???) to dry, thorn scrub below Kairatu and Tarangire NP where common and seen daily.

**Ph** Steel-blued Whydah *Vidua hypocherina* A fine male seen well but just the once in degraded thorn scrub below Kairatu. This species appears to be uncommon throughout its extensive range and is declining where the intensity of cattle grazes the habitat to a point where this species cannot survive.



**Ph** Straw-tailed Whydah *Vidua fischeri* Fabulous views of a single male in the central Serengeti; Tarangire NP and between Same and Lushoto.



**Ph** Village Indigobird *Vidua chalybeata centralis* Scattered ones and twos: a female at Speke Bay Lodge; a single male at Gibbs Farm and one in the grounds of the Mediterraneo Resort, Dar e Salaam.



Female Village Indigobird © K. David Bishop

Variable Indigobird *Vidua funereal nigerimma* One male sitting up for a good 'scope view at the edge of farmland just north of Same.

\$ Purple Indigobird *Vidua purpurescens* Two males in scrubby woodland edge within Mikumi NP.

\$ Twinspace Indigobird *Vidua codringtoni* Two males in scrubby woodland edge within Mikumi NP.