

# GHANA

## BIRDS OF WEST AFRICA



Blue-headed Bee-eater  
(Alan Hayden)

Friday November 30th – Friday December 14th 2012

Leader: Mark Finn and a guide from Ashanti Tours

Group size: 6

Birds: 300-350

Ghana is situated in West Africa, is virtually unknown to birdwatchers and holds numerous rare and sought after regional specialties. Interesting species we expect to see include African Finfoot, Pel's Fishing Owl, Rosy and Black Bee-eaters, Western Banded Snake Eagle and a wide selection of Africa's forest species. The infrastructure of Ghana is probably the best in West Africa, with Accra being its modern capital. Our tour takes us from coastal forest regions of Kakum National Park and its incredible canopy walkway in the south, to the guinea savanna of Mole National Park in the northern region. We also visit reserves and inland lakes around the regional capital of Kumasi, home to the Ashanti people.

Birdwatching Breaks pioneered Ghana in 2000 and have organised tours to the country on a regular basis.

The following itinerary covers most of the important bird areas within Ghana.

**Day 1:** Fly to Accra, the capital of Ghana, where we stay the night.

**Day 2:** After an early breakfast, we make our way to the Shai Hills, a reserve of savanna, grassland and woodland. The birds of Shai Hills give you an excellent introduction to species associated with West Africa. We should see Violet and Green Turacos, White-crowned Cliff Chat, Northern Puffback, Rosy and Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters, Blue-bellied Roller, Senegal Parrot and Red-headed Lovebirds. Return to our hotel and check out, followed by a visit to Sakumono Lagoon a large wetland adjacent to the North Atlantic Ocean. Sakumono holds a wide range of wetland birds, gulls, terns and waders. Later in the day, we transfer to Cape Coast birding en route. A grassland reserve may produce Lizard Buzzard, Black-bellied Bustard, Siffling and Short-winged Cisticolas, Splendid and Copper Sunbirds and Red-winged Warbler. Arrive at Rainforest Lodge near Kakum, our base for three nights.

**Day 3:** This morning we make our way to the world-famous canopy walkway in Kakum National Park. The walkway is 40m above the forest floor and allows a unique insight into birds occurring within the canopy. Previous visits have

produced sightings of Sabine's Puffback, Sharpe's Apalis, Red-headed and Red-vented Malimbos, Buff-throated, Tiny and Little Green Sunbirds, Green Hylia, Violet-backed Hylia, Usher's Flycatcher, Chestnut-breasted Negrofinch, White-headed and Forest Woodhoopoes, Blue Cuckooshrike, Naked-faced, Yellow-spotted and Hairy-breasted Barbets, Red-fronted and African Grey Parrots and rarer species; Black-collared Lovebird and Yellow-footed Honeyguide. Raptors may include the impressive Long-tailed Hawk and Congo Serpent Eagle. Later in the day, a return to the walkway for birds which are more active towards dusk: Brown-cheeked and Black-and-Yellow Casqued Hornbills, Brown Nightjar and Fraser's Eagle Owl.

**Day 4:** A morning visit to the Antwkwaa area of Kakum. Our main aim is to locate Black Goshawk, White-throated and Black Bee-eaters, Blue-throated Roller, White-crested Hornbill, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Kemp's and Grey Longbills, White-spotted Flufftail, Cassin's and Sabine's Spinetails and Bioko Batis. We make a short diversion for the beautiful White-throated Blue Swallow, Rock Pratincole and White-headed Lapwing. In the late afternoon we walk one of the many trails searching for White-tailed Alethe,

Red-tailed and Grey-headed Bristlebills, Fire-bellied Woodpecker, Black Dwarf and Red-billed Dwarf Hornbills, Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher, Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, Forest Robin and more elusive species; Forest Francolin and Spotted Honeyguide.

**Day 5:** A visit to another section of Kakum where we hope to find Purple-throated Cuckooshrike, Red-billed Helmetshrike, Rufous-sided Broadbill, Western Bluebill, Black-bellied Seedcracker, Forest Penduline Tit and a range of cuckoos including African Emerald, Thick-billed and Black. Later in the morning, we head off to Ankasa in Western Ghana, a wet evergreen forest holding several Upper Guinea endemics. In the evening, we try for the rarely seen Akun Eagle Owl and African Wood Owl. Two nights at Ankasa.

**Days 6-7:** Early starts on both mornings are necessary as we seek out some of West Africa's special birds. We hope to find Dwarf Bittern, Hartlaub's Duck, African Finfoot, Crowned Eagle, Great Blue and Yellow-billed Turacos and a wide range of hornbills. We are also on the lookout for White-bellied, Shining Blue and Chocolate-backed Kingfishers, several species of illadopsis and greenbills, Red-fronted Antpecker and, if

we are extremely fortunate, the loud and noisy but nonetheless elusive Nkulengu Rail. On Day 7 we return to the Cape Coast via Brenu Beach with its Viellot's Barbet, Preuss's Cliff Swallow and Marsh Tchagra. Night at Kakum.

**Day 8:** Today we visit Aboabo on the north-east border of Kakum. Several species occur here which are uncommon elsewhere in the park. We hope to locate African Piculet, Blackcap Apalis, Black-throated Coucal, Crested Malimbe, Bristle-nosed and Spotted Barbets and Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher. In the afternoon we travel to a remote village and walk along forest trails to visit a site for Yellow-headed Picathartes, a remarkable species which nests on rock outcrops within the forest. Transfer to Kumasi, the chaotic capital of the Ashanti region, for the night.

**Day 9:** Leave Kumasi and head to Mole National Park and a new set of birds residing in broad leaved Guinea woodland and the extensive savanna of Northern Ghana. In the evening we visit Mole Airstrip for Standard-winged Nightjar, Greyish Eagle and Northern White-faced Owls. We have three nights at Mole where our lodge looks down into a waterhole and adjacent forest and scrub.

**Days 10-11:** Birding in and around Mole is excellent for birds inhabiting dry savanna, acacia and grassland habitats. Most of our walks take place in early morning and late afternoon, the most productive times of the day for birds. Highlights should include Stone Partridge, White-throated Francolin, Pel's Fishing Owl, Red-throated Bee-eater and Bar-breasted



Yellow-headed Picathartes (Chris Farman)

Firefinch whilst the various waterholes attract; Saddle-billed and Woolly-necked Storks, Greater Painted Snipe, Blue-breasted, Great and Grey-headed Kingfishers and Exclamatory Paradise Whydah. Raptors can be numerous within Mole and we should observe; vultures, African Hawk Eagle, Short-toed, Brown and perhaps Beaudouin's Snake Eagles and Lanner Falcon. Scrub and woodland attracts Spotted Creeper, Oriole Warbler, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Bearded Barbet, Blackcap and Brown Babblers and Snowy-crowned Robin Chat. On one evening, another visit for owls and nightjars which may include Long-tailed and Freckled Nightjars.

**Day 12:** Return to Kumasi birding along the route. Night in Kumasi.

**Day 13:** Bobiri is our destination a forest reserve close to Kumasi. Walking through the forest we hope to locate Afep Pigeon,

Little Green Woodpecker, Narina Trogon, Swamp Palm Bulbul, Western Nicator, Tit Hylia and Green-headed Sunbird. Bobiri also attracts African Cuckoo Hawk and Red-thighed Sparrowhawks. After lunch we set off for Atewa and bird the lower ranges of this impressive reserve. Species found at lower elevations may include Blue-headed Coucal, Black-bellied Seedcracker, Compact and Grosbeak Weavers and Chestnut Wattle-eye. Transfer to Atewa for the night.

**Day 14:** Our final morning birding at the higher elevations of Atewa which holds the impressive Blue-headed Bee-eater. Other specialties include the rare Rufous-winged Illadopsis, Nimba Flycatcher and Lowland Akalat. Sunbirds are well represented with Fraser's, Joanna's and Tiny being present. Transfer to Accra for a farewell meal and on to the airport for connections to the UK. Arrival is early on the following morning.

Ground Price: £2675

\*Air Fare: £620

Total Tour Price: £3295

Tour Price Accra/Accra: £2675

Single Room: £200

Deposit: £350

\*please refer to our terms and conditions relating to flights on pages 5 and 71

This holiday is fully inclusive of flights, accommodation and meals, transport and permit fees, guidance, tips and taxes.

**Not included:** fuel surcharges, visa to enter Ghana, insurance, drinks and items of a personal nature.

Good accommodation at Accra, Kakum and Kumasi with en-suite facilities and air-conditioning. Mole Park Lodge and Atewa are more basic with en-suite facilities and ceiling fans. Evening meals are based on European cuisine, although in remote areas this is typically West African.

Transport is by 12-seater air-conditioned minibus. Walking is over flat ground through forest and savanna habitats with parts of Atewa and Kakum having moderate slopes. The Kakum Canopy walkway is elevated above the forest and is completely enclosed with viewing platforms around several large trees.