



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Gabon, Sao Tome & Principe Trip Report

7th August to 2nd September 2016 (27 days)



Bates's Nightjar by David Hoddinott

Trip Report compiled by Tour Leaders: David Hoddinott & Glen Valentine

Some of the top birds and mammals seen on this Gabon tour:

Black Guinea fowl, Latham's and Finsch's Francolins, White-crested Tiger Heron, White-backed Night Heron, Congo Serpent Eagle, Bat Hawk, Long-tailed Hawk, African Finfoot, Black-rumped Buttonquail, Grey Pratincole, African Skimmer, Blue-headed Wood Dove, Yellow-throated, Thick-billed and Olive Long-tailed Cuckoos, Fraser's Eagle-Owl, Pel's and Vermiculated Fishing Owls, Red-chested Owlet, Brown and Bates's Nightjars, Black Spinetail, Bates's Swift, Bare-cheeked Trogon, White-bellied Kingfisher, Black-headed, Black and Rosy Bee-eaters, Black-casqued Hornbill, Spotted Honeyguide, Rufous-sided Broadbill, Angolan Batis, White-spotted and Yellow-bellied Wattle-eyes, Rufous-bellied Helmetshrike, Fiery-breasted Bushshrike, Lowland Sooty Boubou, Souza's Shrike, Bates's Paradise Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Nicator, Sjöstedt's Greenbul, Black-collared Bulbul, Red-throated Cliff Swallow, Ja River Scrub Warbler, Gosling's Apalis, Salvadori's Eremomela, Congo Moor Chat, Violet-tailed Sunbird, Black-chinned and Loango Weavers, Rachel's and Red-bellied Malimbres, Woodhouse's Antpecker, Short-tailed Pipit and Black-faced Canary.

Chimpanzee, Red River Hog, Forest Elephant, Forest Buffalo and Side-striped Jackal.

Some of the top birds of the islands of Sao Tome & Principe:

28 out of a currently recognised 29 endemics that included Sao Tome Grosbeak, Sao Tome Fiscal, Sao Tome Ibis, Sao Tome Shorttail, Sao Tome Olive Pigeon, Dohrn's Thrush Babbler and Principe White-eye.

Tour Summary

Sao Tome and Principe pre-tour extension:

Sao Tome Fiscal by Glen Valentine

Our 2016 birding adventure of Gabon and the offshore islands of Sao Tome and Principe kicked off with our pre-tour extension of the islands. Nestled in the Gulf of Guinea, these two tiny islands form the entirety of their own unique country and harbour a staggering 29 endemic bird species. We were thrilled to be part of our most successful tour of these islands ever, racking up an incredible 28 out of the currently recognised 29 endemics during our short time on these tropical and endemic-rich islands this year.

Beginning on the larger island of Sao Tome, the entire group arrived early due to Africa-Aviation's restricted flight schedule and we

found ourselves with around a third of the island's endemics, already in the bag, before the trip had even officially begun. A few short, exploratory walks around the lodge grounds and surrounds gave us our first taste of Sao Tome's wonderful array of endemics, with the likes of Sao Tome Prinia, Black-



capped Speirops, Newton's Sunbird, Principe Seed eater (will probably be split as Sao Tome Seed eater in years to come) and Sao Tome Paradise Flycatcher.

Leaving the grounds of our comfortable Hotel, we ambled up a side road that skirted an area of secondary forest and here we found several Sao Tome Spinetails flitting about at eye-level, offering excellent views of this species, as well as our first of many Sao Tome Weavers. A nearby stream harboured Malachite Kingfisher (sometimes split as Sao Tome Kingfisher), while small tracts of grassland gave us White-winged Widowbird, Black-winged Red Bishop, a single, non-breeding Golden-backed Bishop (unfortunately introduced to Sao Tome), Village and Vitelline Masked Weavers, Blue Waxbill, Bronze Manikin, Pin-tailed Whydah and Little Egret.



Principe Speirops by David Hoddinott

One of the key birding sites that we visited on the tour was a highland forest patch, where we spent a full day and enjoyed a wonderful array of Sao Tome's endemics. The secondary forest and forest edge produced Sao Tome Green Pigeon, Sao Tome White-eye, Giant Sunbird and in the late afternoon, a small group of Island Bronze-naped Pigeons. The forest interior yielded a number of Sao Tome Weavers, Sao Tome Paradise Flycatcher - that included several impressive, blackish-blue males, as well as Sao Tome Oriole, Sao Tome Thrush, Sao Tome Scops Owl and a singleton of the rare and easily missed Sao Tome Olive (Maroon) Pigeon. It was an excellent day's birding and we were delighted with our results as a number of the endemics seen today are very tricky species that were not encountered again during the tour!



Sao Tome Prinia by David Hoddinott

With so many of Sao Tome's endemics already seen, we departed Sao Tome for the tiny island of Principe, which lies just to the north. Our base here was the delightful Bom Bom Island Resort, which offers excellent accommodation and food and some very good birding in and around the lodge grounds. Here we added target species like White-bellied Kingfisher (often split as Principe Kingfisher), Principe Weaver, Dohrn's Thrush-Babbler, Principe and Splendid Starlings, Principe Speirops and Principe Sunbird. It was therefore with much difficulty that we dragged ourselves away from this wonderful spot for a night's rough camping on a remote beach

called Playa de Sao Tome, an hour's boat ride to the north with the distant hope of finding a newly discovered Scops Owl that has only very recently been found by a very keen, knowledgeable and intrepid birder and researcher by the name of Filip Verbelen. Filip very kindly shared his knowledge of



the bird and its whereabouts on the island with us but despite our best efforts, we were not able to see this mythical little owl.

We did, however, hear the species on one occasion in the early morning and I'm certain that we would have found it if we'd had a bit more time in the area. This Scops Owl is visually and vocally distinct from Sao Tome Scops Owl and almost certainly represents a new species to science. No doubt that Filip will be writing this up very soon! Alas, it was time to bid farewell to our campsite and return to the luxuries of Bom Bom Island Resort. We did, however, encounter some good quality endemics during our owl search, such as Dohrn's Thrush-Babbler, Principe Speirops and Principe Sunbird, while our return trip gave us notable pelagic species like Black and Brown Noddies, Brown Booby and a Sooty Tern. Several Humpbacked Whales were also enjoyed and admired as they performed several full breaches not too far offshore.



Black-capped Speirops by David Hoddinott

The next morning we ventured out early on a boat to a remote beach and almost immediately after landing, we were greeted by one of our two target endemics here, the rare and seldom-seen Principe White-eye. Thereafter, we embarked on the strenuous climb up a nearby mountain in the hope of finding the extremely rare and recently described Principe Thrush but sadly to no avail. We did find another flock of white-eyes moving quickly through the canopy and also achieved good views of Principe Seed eater.

We left Principe on a high after scoring all but one of the island's currently recognised endemics and were keen to get stuck into the final five of Sao Tome's prized endemic birds that were waiting for us in the extreme south of the island.



Blue-breasted Kingfisher by David Hoddinott

With our camping gear, chef, local guides and porters in tow, we made our way down to the remote south of Sao Tome for the final leg of this islands extension, our camping trip on Monte Carmo. Three extremely rare and only recently rediscovered endemics are restricted to the primary forests that cloak the mountains in the south of the island and these are the Sao Tome Grosbeak, Sao Tome Fiscal and Sao Tome Ibis. These three species, along with the unique and bizarre Sao Tome Shorttail and Giant Weaver were very high on our wish list. Fortunately, these highly sought-after and rarely seen species all performed unusually well as we managed to find and obtain



excellent views of all five of these prized endemics within our first day and a half in the area. First up was a female Giant Weaver that popped up at the forest edge while waiting for our porters to finalise the gear. Later in the morning, after entering the primary forest higher up the mountain about half way to our camp, we struck gold with the very rare Sao Tome Grosbeak, while a singing pair of Sao Tome Shorttails were also watched in the undergrowth in the same area. Later that afternoon, we bumped into Filip, who was continuing his research in this seldom-birded area and pointed us in the direction of a Sao Tome (Dwarf Olive) Ibis.

We immediately walked back to the area where he'd seen the ibis a few minutes earlier and there it was, hopping from branch to branch in the forest canopy. Excellent views ensued and what a fine way it was to end an incredible day in the field. Four out of our five target species on our first day in the forest! Amazing! The next morning saw us up early to begin our quest for the rare Sao Tome Fiscal, which was found soon after entering its range higher up the mountain. A great-looking and strange shrike indeed and with all of our target endemics under the belt, we packed up camp and made our way out of the forest and back to the comforts of the Omali Hotel - one night ahead of schedule. This evening, we achieved excellent views of the endemic race of Western Barn Owl that may very well be split as an endemic species during the course of the next few years.



Sao Tome Scops Owl by Glen Valentine

After an almost impossibly successful tour of Sao Tome and Principe, it was time to bid the islands farewell and begin our exciting birding tour of Gabon.

The main Gabon tour:



Congo Moor Chat by David Hoddinott

Our arrival in Gabon was rather eventful and traumatic to say the least as Jean-Marc was denied entry into the country and sent back on the next flight to Paris! We were all devastated by this incident and the way that the immigration police dealt with the situation. What a crushing blow to the start of the main tour but things improved markedly from then on. Fortunately, everyone else had their visas in order and were granted entrance into the country. The next morning we kicked off our Gabon main tour with a flight to the city of Franceville that straddles the south-eastern corner of the country near the Congolese border.



Upon arrival, we boarded a battered out old minibus and with JP (Mr Fixer) and the luggage piled into a pick-up truck, we struck out for Bongoville and the tiny town of Léconi, our destination for the next four nights. Our scheduled afternoon birding stop was a patch of forest en route and here we spent the final hours of the day enjoying a variety of exciting central and West African lowland forest species. Highlights were plentiful and included the large, attractive and localised Black-headed Bee-eater, Blue-throated Roller, African Pied and Piping Hornbills, Willcock's Honeyguide, Gabon Woodpecker, Purple-headed Starling, Sooty Flycatcher, Grey-chinned, Little Green, Blue-throated Brown and Superb Sunbirds, Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher and a distant Red-necked Buzzard.



Black-headed Bee-eater by David Hoddinott

Over the course of the next three days, we concentrated our efforts on finding Leconi's many prized birds. Ambling through the stunted Miombo woodland that dominates much of the area, we were delighted to find Black-chinned and Black-necked Weavers, Black-collared Bulbul, Coqui Francolin, Black Scimitarbill, White-throated Bee-eater, Red-throated Wryneck, Golden-tailed Woodpecker (a very rare bird here at the north-western limit of its range), sought after Souza's Shrike, White-winged Black Tit, Red-throated Cliff Swallow, the minuscule Red-capped Crombec, White-chinned Prinia, Salvadori's and Green-capped Eremomelas, Yellow-bellied Hyliota, Copper, Amethyst, Green-headed and Western Violet-backed Sunbirds and Fawn-breasted Waxbill, while areas of extensive grasslands yielded White-bellied Bustard, Rufous-naped (often split as Malbrandt's) and Flappet Larks, Sooty and Congo Moor Chats, the rarely seen Black-rumped Buttonquail and Short-tailed Pipit (even on the deck, which is almost unheard of!) the scarce and range-restricted Finsch's Francolin, flight views of (Black-chinned) Quailfinch and a large flock of Black-throated Canaries. A Side-striped Jackal was a lovely bonus mammal that was seen cantering across the grasslands one afternoon.



Short-tailed Pipit by David Hoddinott

The long "fingers" of gallery forest that meander their way through the extensive woodlands were also productive and gave us excellent scope views of the usually difficult-to-see and incredibly shy Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, as well as good looks at Gorgeous (Perrin's) and Bocage's Bushshrikes, Western Black-headed and Angolan Batises, Black-backed and Double-toothed Barbets and Brown-throated Wattle-eye. An African Broadbill called tantalisingly close on a few

occasions but was only seen briefly through the dense, vine-covered vegetation.

We also stayed out late most nights and these nocturnal outings produced several species of nightjar, such as Fiery-necked, Swamp and Long-tailed, as well as a roosting Red-necked Spurfowl and several hyperactive galagos.

We visited the productive forest patch nearby on two more occasions during our time in the area and these visits gave us many of the species seen on the first afternoon as well as other notable specialities, such as a pair of Congo Serpent Eagle, the rare Yellow-throated Cuckoo, scarce, shy and seldom-recorded Fiery-breasted Bushshrike, Western Bronze-naped and Afep Pigeons, Pale-fronted, White-breasted and Grey-headed Nigritas, Cassin's Malimbe, Bare-cheeked Trogon, the vociferous Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill, Green-backed and Elliot's Woodpeckers, Red-eyed Puffback, Lowland Sooty Boubou, Purple-throated and Blue Cuckooshrikes, Black-winged and Western Orioles, Yellow-throated and Western Nicators, an array of Greenbuls, including the rare and range-restricted Sjöstedt's Greenbul, the noisy, tit-like Fraser's Forest Flycatcher and an incredible suite of forest barbets that included Grey-throated, Bristle-nosed, Naked-faced, Yellow-billed, Yellow-spotted and Hairy-breasted, as well as Speckled, Red-rumped and Yellow-throated Tinkerbirds.



Finsch's Francolin by David Hoddinott

Leaving behind the bird-rich Leconi area, we continued the trip by way of a surprisingly comfortable overnight train ride from Franceville to the tiny village of Lope, situated at the northern edge of the beautiful Lope National Park. Not only was the train extremely comfortable, it was also most surprisingly punctual and we departed and arrived almost exactly at the scheduled times! At 01h30am, we were met at a very sleepy Lope Station by our hosts that transferred us the short distance to the nearby Lope Hotel, a wonderful place situated on the banks of the Ogooué River and our very comfortable base for the next five nights.



Latham's Francolin by David Hoddinott

We enjoyed a splendid four full days in the Lope National Park and this leg of the trip yielded many of the trip's biggest highlights, both bird and mammal-wise. Lope is a very interesting and unique park and its rolling hills of lush forest are punctuated by natural clearings of grassland, small marshes and dry savanna, at least in the north of the park (the section that is open to the public). The grassland and savanna mosaic is, however, amazingly sterile for the most part with the occasional Short-winged and Croaking Cisticolas, Yellow-throated Longclaw, Quailfinch and Senegal Lapwing on show. The



extensive tracts of gallery forest are, however, in stark contrast to the savanna and harbour a wealth of awesome species!

We concentrated our efforts mostly on these forest pockets and in doing so, turned up a superb list of Gabonese specialities that included three amazingly confiding and showy Latham's Francolins, the impressive Crowned Eagle, handsome and scarce Long-tailed Hawk (surely one of the world's best-looking raptors!), Guinea Turaco, Red-chested Owlet, Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, the magnificent Black-casqued and White-crested Hornbills, Spotted Honeyguide, Shining Drongo, African Yellow White-eye (often split as Forest White-eye), the gorgeous Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher, a flock of very smart Rufous-bellied Helmetshrikes, the furtive Red-tailed Ant Thrush, pairs and family groups of attractive and friendly Chestnut-capped Flycatchers, Blue-billed and usually-elusive Red-bellied Malimbos, Ansorge's, Icterine and Red-tailed Greenbuls, Banded Prinia and Buff-throated Apalis.



Congo Serpent Eagle by David Hoddinott

Other highlights during our time in Lope included a hunting Bat Hawk at dusk one evening, point-blank, walk-away views of the mega Bates's Nightjar, a pair of African Finfoot, the brilliant Shining-blue Kingfisher, Cassin's Flycatcher, African Wood Owl, the very rare and extremely localised Ja River Scrub Warbler, Compact Weaver and regular sightings of the superb Black-bellied Seedcracker.

We also explored the Lope Hotel grounds on two occasions and these short forays yielded the scarce and localised Black-faced Canary, the rare and habitat-specific Violet-tailed Sunbird, superb Reichenbach's Sunbird, Long-legged Pipits, Blue-breasted Bee-eaters, Orange-cheeked Waxbills, Orange Weaver, Bates's Swift, South African Cliff Swallow, a Rufous-crowned Eremomela, Grey and Red-fronted Parrots, the ubiquitous Palm-nut Vulture and African Harrier-Hawk. On the exposed rocks and sandbars in the river, we had our first of many African Skimmers, Rock Pratincoles and White-crowned Lapwings.



Forest Buffalo by David Hoddinott

On the mammal front, we were entertained by regular herds of African (Forest) Buffalo – with Yellow-billed Oxpeckers in tow - as well as the occasional Forest Elephant, Blue and Ogilby's Duikers, Bushbuck, Sitatunga and a family group of Red River Hogs. Primates are also very well represented in Lope and we encountered regular troops of Grey-cheeked Mangabey, Moustached and Putty-nosed Monkeys and the rare Black Colobus that showed particularly well. Even more fortunate were our fairly regular encounters with Chimpanzees, seen on a few occasions right from the deck of the Lope Hotel at breakfast



time. The minuscule Demidoff's Dwarf Galago was also encountered while waiting and watching for Bates's Nightjar to appear and our only Dwarf Crocodile was spotted in a small stream, just after leaving the national park on one evening at the end of a night drive.

After a great time in Lope National Park, we departed on the long, bumpy and windy drive to Lambarene. Our journey took us through seemingly endless expanses of lush lowland rainforest and it was especially difficult not to stop and bird along the road for a short while. A troop of Chimpanzees crossed the road soon after leaving the Lope Hotel and we did make one short birding stop along the road that yielded the scarce Pale-fronted Nigrita, as well as a few other more common, but nevertheless admirable, species like Chestnut Wattle-eye, Western Oriole, Western Nicator and Chestnut-winged Starling.

After four hours of bouncing and dust, we finally reached the main tar road and drove the short distance to the small town of Ndjole, situated along the banks of the Ogooué River. A few chairs at the river's edge, adjacent to a small restaurant and bar, made for a good lunch stop and here we added the handsome Grey Pratincole to the ever-growing list, as well as two soaring Ayres's Hawk-Eagles. A bonus in the form of a Hartlaub's Duck was seen in flight overhead just before it was time to continue the journey to Lambarene. We crossed several large rivers en route and a cursory look along the bridges produced several noteworthy species, such as the rare Black Spinetail, gorgeous White-bibbed Swallow, Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatcher and African Finfoot. After a fairly long travel day, we arrived at our comfortable hotel in Lambarene where we settled in for the night.



Hartlaub's Duck by Glen Valentine



Vermiculated Fishing Owl by Glen Valentine

We woke up to another glorious morning in Gabon and enjoyed some early morning birding alongside the small river in front of the hotel before breakfast. This turned up a surprising number of quality birds that included Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher, a pair of African Pygmy Goose, Orange Weaver, Black-and-white and Magpie Mannikins, Yellow-throated Leaflove and Swamp Palm Bulbul. Our boat that would take us along the Ogooué River and on to Tsam Tsam finally arrived in the mid-morning and so we departed on our next journey. The trip out was reasonably birdy and punctuated with regular stops for species like White-faced Whistling Duck, nesting Pink-backed Pelicans, Caspian,

Little and Common Terns, more African Skimmers and Grey and Rock Pratincoles, White-fronted Plover, hundreds of Rosy Bee-eaters, a few singing Winding Cisticolas and Slender-billed Weaver.



We spent a wonderful two nights at Tsam Tsam, a rustic but comfortable camp at the edge of the Oguemoue Lake in the Gabon Lakes region. Vermiculated and Pel's Fishing Owls and the scarce White-backed Night Heron were all seen right around the camp at night, while boat trips on the lake and the trails leading into the surrounding forest turned up notable species like the scarce and habitat-specific White-browed Forest Flycatcher, Black Bee-eater, Cassin's, Sabine's and Black Spinetails, White-bellied and Shining-blue Kingfishers, plenty of Hartlaub's Duck and African Finfoot, Buff-spotted and Brown-eared Woodpecker, Fraser's and Carmelite Sunbirds, Icterine Greenbul and Cassin's Malimbe.



White-bellied Kingfisher by David Hoddinott

Leaving Tsam Tsam and the Gabon Lakes behind, we boated back west and then south to the town of Omboue, in the heart of Gabon's oil region. The trip was a long one but we did see a staggering number of usually scarce birds, such as African Skimmer, Grey Pratincole and Rosy Bee-eater. We also passed by large colonies of Orange, Slender-billed, Vieillot's Black and Village Weavers before arriving at Omboue in the late afternoon where Carmelite and Reichenbach's Sunbirds fed in the flowering trees right around our accommodation.

Excitement built as we prepared for our early morning boat trip down the legendary Mphive Channel. Our trip was full of expectations and it did not disappoint as we managed to find two White-crested Tiger Herons after some careful searching, as well as staggering numbers of usually rare and seriously quality species like African Finfoot, Shining-blue Kingfisher, White-bibbed Swallow, Cassin's Flycatcher and Hartlaub's Duck. A single White-bellied Kingfisher also showed well, while another Thick-billed Cuckoo was a wonderful but unexpected bonus. After another excellent morning's birding, we journeyed back to Omboue and struck out north for Port Gentil, Gabon's economic hub, situated on the coast just south of Libreville. Other than large numbers of Rosy Bee-eaters and a few other odds and ends, the boat trip there was fairly uneventful bird-wise but we were very fortunate to



African Finfoot by David Hoddinott

encounter a Red-thighed Sparrowhawk that came out of nowhere and flew across the river, right in front of us. What a bonus!

We arrived at Port Gentil in the mid-afternoon and with an hour to spare before we were scheduled to check into our flight to Libreville, we were able to search an area of scattered trees and bushes near the port for the extremely localised and uncommon Loango Weaver. After searching up and down the road with no results, other than a few Slender-billed and Black-necked Weavers, we decided to call it quits and call for the taxis to take us over to the airport. Suddenly, as the taxis were pulling



up, we managed to locate a male Loango Weaver that was soon joined by a female and the pair ended up affording us amazing views of this Gabonese speciality. Talk about an eleventh-hour bird! Our flight ended up being delayed by a few hours but with the help of JP, we managed to arrange some dinner in the form of pizza and cool-drinks that we managed to bring into the airport terminal. Eventually, our plane arrived and we able to depart back to Libreville where we arrived rather late and settled into our now-familiar hotel near the airport for a single night's stay before heading out on our post-tour extension to Ivindo National Park.



White-crested Tiger Heron by David Fisher

Ivindo National Park (Ipassa) post-tour extension:

The final leg of our epic Gabon birding adventure beckoned and with another two passengers joining the team, we struck out on the long drive to Makokou. Unfortunately, what would have been an hour's flight, as originally planned, turned into a fifteen-hour drive due to all flights from Libreville to Makokou being cancelled! The journey did, however, take us through almost continuous lowland forest – so wonderful to see – and a few short birding stops along the way gave us many now-familiar species, such as Orange-cheeked Waxbill, White-bibbed Swallow, Chattering Cisticola, Grey Pratincole, Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatcher, Green Crombec, Grey-throated Barbet and Black-casqued Hornbill, as well as a few new ones like Red-headed Quelea and Narrow-tailed Starling. We eventually arrived at the camp at Ipassa in northern Ivindo National Park in the late evening and, exhausted after a seriously long travel day, we settled into our rooms for a good night's rest ahead of some excellent birding that lay ahead of us.

We spent the next two and a half days exploring the bird-rich forests around Ipassa and our efforts here



Grey Pratincole by David Fisher

were duly rewarded with some of the best birds of the entire trip! The tracks through the forest afforded us easy access to the otherwise dense and nearly impenetrable lowland forest that blankets the area and helped us achieve views of some of Ivindo's most prized avian specialities. Mixed flocks turned up the brilliant Yellow-bellied and rare White-spotted Wattle-eyes, the minuscule and scarce Woodhouse's Antpecker, Blue Malkoha, Red-eyed Puffback, usually unobtrusive Yellow and Grey Longbills, Bates's Paradise Flycatcher (normally a rare species but is pleasantly common here!), Slender-billed, Little Grey, Plain, Yellow-whiskered, Little, Golden, Spotted, Icterine, Xavier's, Eastern



Bearded, Red-tailed and White-bearded Greenbuls, Red-tailed Bristlebill and Swamp Palm Bulbul, Green Hylia, Brown Illadopsis, stunning Rachel's, Cassin's, Crested and Blue-billed Malimbos, Maxwell's Black Weaver, White-breasted and Chestnut-breasted Nigritas, Fraser's and Tiny Sunbirds, Red-tailed Ant Thrush, Fraser's Rufous Thrush and Grey-throated Tit-flycatcher.

One of the absolute highlights of our time at Ivindo was a covey of Black Guinea fowl that crossed the track right in front of us late one morning. We also managed to obtain phenomenal views of Chocolate-backed Kingfisher and the brilliant and tiny African Dwarf Kingfisher, as well as the richly-coloured Blue-headed Wood Dove, the gorgeous Black Bee-eater, regal Great Blue, Yellow-billed and Guinea Turacos, the generally rare and local Yellow-throated Cuckoo, Green-backed, Gabon, Brown-eared and Elliot's Woodpeckers, the vociferous but rather furtive Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher, Yellow-browed and Olive-green Camaropteras, Western Bluebill, the dainty Yellow-footed Flycatcher, a nesting pair of Rufous-sided Broadbill and the secretive and often elusive Lowland Sooty Boubou.



Rufous-sided Broadbill by David Hoddinott

Also of note were two Scaly Francolins that fed unperturbed at the edge of the camp one afternoon. A female African Shrike-flycatcher was also seen around the camp as was a resident pair of African Pygmy Kingfisher, a vocal male Fernando Po Batis, a family group of Rufous-crowned Eremomelas, Simple Greenbul and a noisy flock of five Fraser's Forest Flycatchers. Another highly memorable moment was when a lovely adult Fraser's Eagle-Owl was found perched up at the edge of the camp on our final night. We watched this magnificent owl at length while its partner called close by. Magical!



Violet-tailed Sunbird by David Hoddinott

A late afternoon and evening boat trip produced the main quarry in the form of a very responsive and showy Gosling's Apalis, another Violet-tailed Sunbird and close views of hundreds of Rock Pratincoles and a single Grey Pratincole, as well as a hunting Bat Hawk at dusk.

It was with an impressive list of mouth-watering rarities and a huge number of Africa's rarest and most desired species that we bid farewell to Ipassa and began the drive to Boue, from where we caught another extremely comfortable and timely overnight train back to Libreville where our epic, bird-filled journey through Gabon concluded.



Thank you to everyone for your support, good company and humour, patience and understanding, especially during some challenging logistical situations. You all helped make this another extremely successful and enjoyable Rockjumper birding tour of Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe!



Rock Pratincoles by Glen Valentine

Annotated List of Bird Species recorded in Gabon, Sao Tome & Principe. 407 (390 seen 17 heard)

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows International Ornithological Congress *Birds of the World: A Checklist* (2016) version 6.3 Princeton University Press, with current updates and notes on Clements list.

Ducks, Geese & Swans Anatidae

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*

We observed two during the boat trip from Lamberene to Tsam-Tsam.

Hartlaub's Duck *Pteronetta hartlaubii*

We enjoyed numerous sightings of up to 20 daily in the Tsam-Tsam area. A further one was seen flying overhead at Ndjole.

African Pygmy Goose *Nettapus auritus*

Three birds were seen very well at Lamberene

Guineafowl Numididae

Black Guineafowl *Agelastes niger*

A fabulous flock of six strutted nonchalantly across an open track giving splendid views for all and a further one was seen as it flew off from the undergrowth of a forest track.

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*

Some of us had good views of a flock of ten at Leconi

Plumed Guineafowl *Guttera plumifera*

We heard one calling at Ipassa.

Pheasants & Allies Phasianidae

Latham's (Forest) Francolin *Peliperdix lathamii*

We had amazing views of three birds feeding in open understorey in Lope NP and heard one calling at Ipassa.

Coqui Francolin *Peliperdix coqui*

We had flight views of a pair at Leconi and several more were heard calling in the area

Finsch's Francolin*Scleroptila finschi*

This rare species was seen superbly well at Leconi where we had two sightings of birds near the roadside including a pair with chicks. (A special find and a highlight of the tour). A further pair was flushed during one of our grassland forays.

Scaly Francolin*Pternistis squamatus*

One was seen perched up in a tree at Leconi where we only had brief views and later we enjoy magnificent views of a pair dust bathing at Ipassa.

Red-necked Spurfowl*Pternistis afer*

We heard this species on several occasions at Leconi and finally enjoyed superb views of one in the spotlight at night.

Storks Ciconidae**Woolly-necked Stork***Ciconia episcopus*

Small numbers were seen near Omboue and during the boat trip from Omboue to Port Gentil.

Ibises, Spoonbills Threskiornithidae**Olive Ibis***Bostrychia olivacea*

We heard one calling near our lodge at Tsam-Tsam

Hadada Ibis*Bostrychia hagedash*

Up to 7 were seen daily in Lope NP.

Hérons, Bitterns Ardeidae**White-crested Tiger Heron***Tigriornis leucolopha*

This spectacular and highly elusive bird was seen superbly well on a boat trip in Loango NP.

White-backed Night Heron*Gorsachius leuconotus*

We had stunning views of an adult on our night boat cruise at Tsam-Tsam

Striated Heron*Butorides striata*

We had good views of two at Tsam-Tsam

[Western] Cattle Egret*Bubulcus ibis*

Small numbers were seen around the capital, Libreville with scattered sightings elsewhere including several at Lamberene

NOTE: This group may be split into 2 species, the nominate Common Cattle Egret and the Asian/Australasian Eastern Cattle Egret *E. coromanda*. This split is as yet not recognized by Clements.

Grey Heron*Ardea cinerea*

A well-known, widespread heron, however only one sighting during the boat trip from Lamberene to Tsam-Tsam

Purple Heron*Ardea purpurea*

UP to 10 were seen daily in the Tsam-Tsam area.

NOTE: The Cape Verde Islands *A. p. bournei* is sometimes split off as Cape Verde Purple Heron or Bourne's Heron.

Great (White) Egret*Ardea alba*

Small numbers were seen daily in the Tsam-Tsam area

NOTE: The nominate Old World Great Egret is sometimes split from the New World *A. a. egretta* which would become American Egret. This split is as yet not recognized by Clements or IOC

Intermediate (Yellow-billed) Egret*Egretta intermedia*

One was seen very well at Tsam-Tsam

Little Egret*Egretta garzetta*

Small numbers seen daily at Tsam-Tsam

Hamerkop Scopidae**Hamerkop***Scopus umbretta*

This unique species was seen in small numbers in Lope NP and at Tsam-Tsam.



Pelicans Pelecanidae**Pink-backed Pelican***Pelecanus rufescens*

Up to 60 were first seen during the boat trip from Lamberen to Tsam-Tsam, where also encountered nesting. Further sightings were had in the Omboue area.

Cormorants Phalacrocoracidae**Reed Cormorant***Microcarbo africanus*

We had great sightings of up to 15 daily in the Tsam-Tsam area

Anhingas, Darters Anhingidae**(African) Darter***Anhinga rufa*

Up to ten were seen daily in the Tsam-Tsam area

NOTE: The resident African form *P. rufa* is sometimes lumped with the Asian *P. melanogaster* and the enlarged species called Darter. Clements uses the latter treatment of lumping these forms.

Ospreys Pandionidae**[Western] Osprey***Pandion haliaetus*

One was seen during the boat trip from Lamberene to Tsam-Tsam

Kites, Hawks & Eagles Accipitridae**Black-winged Kite***Elanus caeruleus*

Two were seen very well in the Leconi area.

African Harrier Hawk (Gymnogene)*Polyboroides typus*

A very common species in Gabon, this distinctive raptor was recorded regularly throughout the trip.

Palm-nut Vulture*Gypohierax angolensis*

The commonest raptor in Gabon with virtually daily sightings, including peak numbers of fifty in the Omboue area.

Congo Serpent Eagle*Circaetus spectabilis*

We had stunning views of a pair in forest near Leconi.

Bat Hawk*Macheiramphus alcinus*

We had superb views of one catching bats in Lope NP and another over Ipassa.

Crowned Eagle*Stephanoaetus coronatus*

We had stunning scope views of an adult in Lope NP.

Ayres's Hawk-Eagle*Hieraaetus ayresii*

We enjoyed superb views of two during the drive from Lope NP to Lamberene.

Lizard Buzzard*Kaupifalco monogrammicus*

We initially heard one calling and then was briefly seen at Omboue

Dark Chanting Goshawk*Melierax metabates*

An adult was seen very well at Leconi.

Long-tailed Hawk*Urotriorchis macrourus*

We had great views of an adult flying over a forest clearing in Lope NP.

Red-thighed Sparrowhawk*Accipiter erythropus*

We had good views of one flying over the Ogooue River whilst on the boat trip from Omboue to Port Gentil

African Fish Eagle*Haliaeetus vocifer*

Up to four were seen daily in the Tsam-Tsam area

Red-necked Buzzard*Butea auguralis*

We had distant views of several near Leconi

Bustards Otididae**White-bellied Bustard***Eupodotis senegalensis*

A total of three of these striking birds were seen at Leconi.



Flufftails Sarothruridae

White-spotted Flufftail

Sarothrura pulchra

This elusive rallid was heard at Ipassa

Finfoots Heliornithidae

African Finfoot

Podica senegalensis

This fabulous species was seen on 8 days of the trip with some superb sightings. Our first encounter was of one roosting in Lope NP and later we enjoyed good close encounters in Loango NP.

Rails, Crakes & Coots Rallidae

Nkulengu Rail

Himantornis haematopus

We heard two pairs calling at Ipassa.

Black Crake

Amaurornis flavirostra

We had superb views of 7 at Lamberene

Buttonquail Turnicidae

Black-rumped Buttonquail

Turnix nanus

One was seen well in flight at Leconi.

Stone-curlews, Thick-knees Burhinidae

Water Thick-knee

Burhinus vermiculatus

A few were seen very well in Lope NP.

Plovers Charadriidae

White-crowned Lapwing (Plover)

Vanellus albiceps

Our first sighting was of one at the Ogooue River en route to Lope NP and later we saw up to 20 daily at Tsam-Tsam

Senegal Lapwing

Vanellus lugubris

Small numbers were seen in Lope NP.

Kittlitz's Plover

Charadrius pecuarius

One was seen at the Libreville airport

White-fronted Plover

Charadrius marginatus

We had great views of six during the boat trip from Lamberene to Tsam-Tsam

Jacanas Jacanidae

African Jacana

Actophilornis africanus

A widespread and characteristic wader, conspicuous in wetlands. Small numbers were seen at Lamberene and up to 23 daily at Tsam-Tsam

Sandpipers, Snipes Scolopacidae

Whimbrel

Numenius phaeopus

One was seen during the boat trip from Tsam-Tsam to Omboue

Common Greenshank

Tringa nebularia

We had good views of 7 during the boat trip from Tsam-Tsam to Omboue

Wood Sandpiper

Tringa glareola

One was seen during the boat trip from Lamberene to Tsam-Tsam

Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

Small numbers were seen daily in the Tsam-Tsam area



Coursers, Pratincoles Glareolidae**Rock Pratincole***Glareola nuchalis*

A total of six were seen near Lope Hotel and several hundred at Ipassa where we enjoyed remarkably close sightings.

Grey Pratincole*Glareola cinerea*

A pair of these beautiful pratincoles were scoped on a sandbar on the Ogooue River and up to 60 were seen during the boat trip from Tsam-Tsam to Omboue

Gulls, Terns & Skimmers Laridae**African Skimmer***Rynchops flavirostris*

A pair was seen near the Lope Hotel, and several hundred during the boat trip from Tsam-Tsam to Omboue

Caspian Tern*Hydroprogne caspia*

Up to five were seen during the boat trip from Tsam-Tsam to Omboue

Royal Tern*Thalasseus maximus*

At least 10 were seen during the boat trip near Port Gentil

Little Tern*Sternula albifrons*

Peak numbers of 100 were seen during the boat trip from Lamberene to Tsam-Tsam

Common Tern*Sterna hirundo*

Up to 25 were seen during the boat trip from Tsam-Tsam to Omboue

Pigeons, Doves Columbidae**Rock Dove***Columba livia*

Seen in large towns during the tour

Afep Pigeon*Columba unicincta*

We had wonderful views of a flock of 18 in the forest near Leconi and later enjoyed great views of two at Ipassa.

Western Bronze-naped Pigeon*Columba iriditorques*

We had splendid scope views of a male in the forest near Leconi, a real bonus.

Red-eyed Dove*Streptopelia semitorquata*

A fairly common widespread species, especially notable in more wooded areas and around towns

Blue-spotted Wood Dove*Turtur afer*

Not uncommon in secondary growth throughout.

Tambourine Dove*Turtur tympanistris*

A forest equivalent of the wood-doves, seen once at forest near Leconi and another seen at Lope NP

Blue-headed Wood Dove*Turtur brehmeri*

An interior primary forest species restricted to West Africa. Two were seen briefly in forest near Leconi and later we enjoyed stunning views of two feeding on a forest track at Ipassa

African Green Pigeon*Treron calvus*

Common, good numbers noted throughout.

Turacos Musophagidae**Great Blue Turaco***Corythaeola cristata*

Arguably one of Africa's most spectacular birds, this huge frugivore was seen well on several occasions. Two were seen during the drive from Lope NP to Lamberene and several more daily whilst at Ipassa

Guinea (Green) Turaco*Tauraco persa*

Two were seen in Lope NP and a further two at Ipassa

Note: This species used to be lumped under the Green Turaco (T. persa), now split into four full species the others being Knysna Turaco T. corythaix, Livingstone's Turaco (T. livingstonii) and Schalow's Turaco (T. schalowi).

Yellow-billed (Verreaux's) Turaco*Tauraco macrorhynchus*

A commonly heard turaco of the interior forests. We had brief views of one in the forest near Leconi and great views of two at Ipassa. This subspecies has a wonderful red-tipped crest.



Cuckoos Cuculidae

Gabon Coucal*Centropus anselli*

This species was heard on many occasions and Steve saw one in Lope NP

Senegal Coucal*Centropus senegalensis*

Several were seen daily at Leconi.

Blue-headed Coucal*Centropus monachus*

Two were seen in Lope NP

Blue Malkoha (Yellowbill)*Ceuthmochares aereus*

This peculiar, malkoha-like cuckoo was seen at several forest sites with good sightings at Ipassa

Note: Some authorities split this species into Green Malkoha, C. australis that occurs in East and Southern Africa and Blue Malkoha, C. aereus that we saw and occurs in West and Central Africa. Clements does not as yet accept this split.

Levaillant's Cuckoo*Clamator levaillantii*

We had superb scope views of one in the forest near Leconi.

Thick-billed Cuckoo*Pachycoccyx audeberti*

We had awesome views of two displaying overhead in the forest near Leconi and another in Loango NP.

Diederik Cuckoo*Chrysococcyx caprius*

Small numbers were seen at Leconi and in the Omboue area

Klaas's Cuckoo*Chrysococcyx klaas*

This brood parasite, favouring the cup nests of woodland birds, was heard at several locations and seen well at Leconi.

Yellow-throated Cuckoo*Chrysococcyx flavigularis*

A stunning male was seen in forest near Leconi and later we enjoyed further great sightings at Ipassa

African Emerald Cuckoo*Chrysococcyx cupreus*

Generally shy and less common than its congeners, we heard several and saw a male in forest near Leconi and a further male at Ipassa

Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo*Cercococcyx mechowi*

We heard one calling at Ipassa.

Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo*Cercococcyx olivinus*

We heard several at Leconi where we were also delighted to enjoy scope views of an adult. A very shy and elusive species.

Black Cuckoo*Cuculus clamosus*

This species was heard at several forest sites and seen in forest near Leconi and flying overhead in Loango NP

Red-chested Cuckoo*Cuculus solitarius*

We heard it on several occasions at Tsam-Tsam and again at Ipassa

African Cuckoo*Cuculus gularis*

We had good views of two at Leconi.

Owls Strigidae

Spotted Eagle-Owl*Bubo africanus*

One was seen briefly at Leconi by some of the group

Fraser's Eagle-Owl*Bubo poensis*

We had fantastic views of one at Ipassa

Pel's Fishing Owl*Scotopelia peli*

Three of these most impressive owls were seen during a boat trip at Tsam-Tsam

Vermiculated Fishing Owl*Scotopelia bowieri*

One of these elusive owls was seen particularly well at Tsam-Tsam, allowing magnificent views for everyone (see photo above).

African Wood-Owl*Strix woodfordii*

One was seen very well in Lope NP.

Red-chested Owlet*Glaucidium tephronotum*

We had good scope views of one in Lope NP.



Sjöstedt's Barred Owl

Glaucidium sjostedti

One was heard calling at Tsam-Tsam and another at Ipassa.

Nightjars Caprimulgidae

Brown Nightjar

Veles binotatus

For those that got up early one morning in Ivindo NP, they enjoyed stunning views of this elusive species.

Fiery-necked Nightjar

Caprimulgus pectoralis

Four were seen well at Leconi.

Swamp Nightjar

Caprimulgus natalensis

We enjoyed wonderful views of several at Leconi.

Bates's Nightjar

Caprimulgus batesi

We had simply amazing views of this rare species in Lope NP.

Freckled Nightjar

Caprimulgus tristigma

We heard one calling in Lope NP.

Long-tailed Nightjar

Caprimulgus climacurus

We had good views of several at Leconi.

Square-tailed Nightjar

Caprimulgus fossii

We had great views of two-day roosting birds in Libreville

Swifts Apodidae

Mottled Spinetail

Telacanthura ussheri

Three were seen during the drive from Ndjole to Makokou.

Black Spinetail

Telacanthura melanopygia

We had wonderful views of two during the drive from Libreville to Ndjole and several more at Tsam-Tsam

Sabine's Spinetail

Rhaphidura sabini

We had great views of small numbers daily in the Tsam-Tsam area and at Ipassa.

Cassin's Spinetail

Neafrapus cassini

Small numbers were seen almost daily in Lope NP, and later we enjoyed up to 40 daily in the Tsam-Tsam area and several more at Ipassa.

African Palm Swift

Cypsiurus parvus

Plentiful throughout the tour, especially near palms

Common Swift

Apus apus

We had good views of several flocks in the Leconi area and again at Ipassa.

Little Swift

Apus affinis

The common urban swift throughout the country

White-rumped Swift

Apus caffer

We had good but brief views of one at a forest clearing near Leconi.

Bates's Swift

Apus batesi

A single bird was seen in Lope NP and several small flocks during the drive from Lope to Ndjole.

Mousebirds Coliidae

Speckled Mousebird

Colius striatus

Not as common as elsewhere in Africa but nonetheless encountered in open and secondary habitat.

Trogon Trogonidae

Narina Trogon

Apaloderma narina

Heard on one occasion whilst en route from Lope NP to Ndjole

Bare-cheeked Trogon

Apaloderma aequatoriale

A spectacular male was seen in a forest near Leconi and another very briefly in Loango NP.



Rollers Coraciidae**Blue-throated Roller***Eurystomus gularis*

One was seen in forest near Leconi with further superb views during the drive from Makokou to Booue

Broad-billed Roller*Eurystomus glaucurus*

One was seen flying over the woodland at Leconi.

Kingfishers Alcedinidae**Chocolate-backed Kingfisher***Halcyon badia*

We had superb scope views of one in Lope NP and another at Ipassa

Brown-hooded Kingfisher*Halcyon albiventris*

Up to 6 were seen daily in the Leconi area.

Striped Kingfisher*Halcyon chelicuti*

We found several at Leconi.

Blue-breasted Kingfisher*Halcyon malimbica*

After hearing this species on several occasions we were treated to superb scope views of one in the forest near Leconi and several in the Tsam-Tsam area

Woodland Kingfisher*Halcyon senegalensis*

Fairly common in open habitat throughout the tour

African Dwarf Kingfisher*Ispidina lecontei*

We had stunning views of one at Ipassa

African Pygmy Kingfisher*Ispidina (Ceyx) picta*

This beautiful little bird was seen first at Leconi with further sightings at Lope NP and Ipassa.

White-bellied Kingfisher*Corythornis leucogaster*

Our first sighting was brief views of one at Tsam-Tsam and later we enjoyed great views of one during a boat trip in the same area and finally another was seen in Loango NP.

Malachite Kingfisher*Corythornis cristatus*

We recorded two in Lope NP and several more in the Tsam-Tsam area

Shining-blue Kingfisher*Alcedo quadribrachys*

First seen in Lope NP with many further sightings in the Tsam-Tsam area

Giant Kingfisher*Megaceryle maxima*

The Goliath of the kingfisher world. Seen at Lope NP however up to six seen daily in the Tsam-Tsam area

Pied Kingfisher*Ceryle rudis*

The world's commonest kingfisher was seen in small numbers at several sites on the tour, including daily sightings in the Tsam-Tsam area

Bee-eaters Meropidae**Black-headed Bee-eater***Merops breweri*

The toughest of the African bee-eaters and we were treated to great scope views of several in forest near Leconi with further sightings in the Tsam-Tsam area

Black Bee-eater*Merops gularis*

We enjoyed fantastic views at several sites including superb scope views in Lope NP.

Little Bee-eater*Merops pusillus*

Up to six seen daily at Leconi

Blue-breasted Bee-eater*Merops variegatus*

This beauty was seen commonly in Lope NP.

White-fronted Bee-eater*Merops bullockoides*

Up to twenty seen daily at Leconi

White-throated Bee-eater*Merops albicollis*

We had good views of two in the Leconi area



Rosy Bee-eater

Merops malimbicus

We enjoyed good views of this magnificent bird in the Leconi area with numerous sightings daily in the Tsam-Tsam area.

Hoopoes Upupidae

African Hoopoe

Upupa africana

One of these unusual birds was seen in the Leconi area

Woodhoopoes Phoeniculidae

Black Scimitarbill (Woodhoopoe)

Rhinopomastus aterrimus

We found four in the woodland at Leconi.

Hornbills Bucerotidae

African Pied Hornbill

Lophoceros fasciatus

Common throughout forested areas in Gabon

Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill

Lophoceros camurus

This normally scarce species was sighted in forest near Leconi, in Lope NP and again at Ipassa

Piping Hornbill

Bycanistes fistulator

The commonest hornbill in Gabon with daily sightings in forested habitat

White-thighed Hornbill

Bycanistes albotibialis

Small numbers were seen at Ipassa

Black-casqued Wattled Hornbill

Ceratogymna atrata

We enjoyed many sightings throughout the tour with peak numbers of 10 seen during the drive from Libreville to Makokou.

White-crested Hornbill

Horizoceros albocristatus

We enjoyed good sightings of two pairs in Lope NP and another at Ipassa.

African Barbets Lybiidae

Grey-throated Barbet

Gymnobucco bonapartei

We enjoyed good sightings of up to six daily in forest near Leconi and several more at Ipassa

Bristle-nosed Barbet

Gymnobucco peli

We had good views of several in forest near Leconi

Naked-faced Barbet

Gymnobucco calvus

Small numbers were seen in a forest near Leconi.

Speckled Tinkerbird

Pogoniulus scolopaceus

A scruffy, bird in forests and forest edge. We found several in Lope NP and at Ipassa.

Red-rumped Tinkerbird

Pogoniulus atroflavus

We enjoyed great views of two in forest near Leconi

Yellow-throated Tinkerbird

Pogoniulus subsulphureus

Commonly heard and few seen in a forest near Leconi.

Yellow (Golden) -rumped Tinkerbird

Pogoniulus bilineatus

A common forest-edge species. Small numbers were seen daily at Leconi.

Yellow-spotted Barbet

Buccanodon duchaillui

A rather beautiful Barbet, heard at many forested sites and seen well in forest near Leconi and again at Ipassa

Hairy-breasted Barbet

Tricholaema hirsuta

This forest barbet was seen well in forest near Leconi

Black-backed Barbet

Lybius minor

We had superb scope views of a pair at Leconi.

Double-toothed Barbet

Lybius bidentatus

Four birds were seen very well at Leconi.



Yellow-billed Barbet

Trachyphonus purpuratus

This elusive and stunning forest barbet was seen very well at forest near Leconi and again at Ipassa

Honeyguides Indicatoridae

Willcock's Honeyguide

Indicator willcocksi

We had fair views of one in forest near Leconi

Thick-billed Honeyguide

Indicator conirostris

We heard one calling in Lope NP.

Spotted Honeyguide

Indicator maculatus

We had awesome scope views of one in Lope NP.

Greater Honeyguide

Indicator indicator

We heard one calling at Leconi

Lyre-tailed Honeyguide

Melichneutes robustus

We heard several of this elusive species in Lope NP and again during the drive from Lope to Ndjole.

Woodpeckers & Allies Picidae

Red-throated Wryneck

Jynx ruficollis

We enjoyed great views of two at Leconi.

Golden-tailed Woodpecker

Campethera abingoni

One was seen very well at Leconi. This is a very rare species in Gabon.

Green-backed Woodpecker

Campethera cailliautii

Two were seen well at Leconi and several at Ipassa

Buff-spotted Woodpecker

Camperthera nivosa

We had good views of two at Tsam-Tsam

Brown-eared Woodpecker

Campethera caroli

Our first sighting was of two at Tsam-Tsam followed by good views of two at Ipassa

Cardinal Woodpecker

Dendropicos fuscescens

We had several sightings in Leconi and another at Lope NP

Gabon Woodpecker

Dendropicos gabonensis

We had good views of several in forest near Leconi and again at Ipassa

NOTE: This species is sometimes split from the Upper Guinea form - Melancholy Woodpecker *D.lugubris*.

Elliot's Woodpecker

Dendropicos elliotii

We had good views of one in forest near Leconi and a pair at Ipassa

Falcons and Caracaras Falconidae

African Hobby

Falco cuvierii

One was seen briefly over the forest near Leconi, a leader only sighting.

African and New World Parrots Psittacidae

(African) Grey Parrot

Psittacus erithacus

So much better to see them in the wild than as the usual cage bird! Small groups were seen at several forested sights including good numbers at Tsam-Tsam and Ipassa

Red-fronted Parrot

Poicephalus gulielmi

At least 10 birds were seen in Lope NP.

Broadbills Eurylaimidae

African Broadbill

Smithornis capensis

We had brief views of one male at Leconi.

Rufous-sided Broadbill

Smithornis rufolateralis

We had superb views of a pair at Ipassa which were nest building, one of the many highlights of the trip.



Wattle-eyes, Batises Platysteiridae**African Shrike-flycatcher***Megabias flammulatus*

We had great views of a female at Ipassa.

Black-and-white (Shrike-) flycatcher*Bias musicus*

This characterful, hammer-headed flycatcher was observed in Libreville, Lope NP and Leconi.

Chinspot Batis*Batis molitor*

We had good views of a pair at Leconi.

Western Black-headed Batis*Batis erlangeri*

We had good views of a male at Leconi.

Angola Batis*Batis minulla*

We enjoyed good views of one at Leconi.

Fernando Po Batis*Batis poensis*

We had good views of one at Ipassa

Chestnut Wattle-eye*Platysteira castanea*

Our first sighting was at Tsam-Tsam and later small numbers were seen daily during our stay at Ipassa.

White-spotted Wattle-eye*Platysteira tonsa*

A pair was seen at Ipassa.

Brown-throated (Common) Wattle-eye*Platysteira cyanea*

We had good views of several at Leconi and another in Lope NP

Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye*Platysteira concreta*

We enjoyed great views of a pair at Ipassa.

Helmetshrikes Prionopidae**Rufous-bellied Helmetshrike***Prionops rufiventris*

We had fabulous views of a flock of six in Lope NP.

Bushshrikes Malaconotidae**Fiery-breasted Bushshrike***Malaconotus cruentus*

This is another very scarce and seldom recorded species. We had good views of one in the forest near Leconi.

Bocage's (Grey-green) Bushshrike*Chlorophoneus bocagei*

We had good views of one in gallery forest at Leconi.

Gorgeous (Four-coloured) Bushshrike*Telophorus viridis*

One of these shy forest birds was seen exceptionally well in gallery forest at Leconi.

*NOTE: This species is sometimes split from Four-colored Bushshrike T.quadricolor and is known as Perrin's Bushshrike T.v.viridis, which we observed. Clements does not as yet accept this split.***Brown-crowned Tchagra***Tchagra australis*

We heard one calling at Leconi

Black-crowned Tchagra*Tchagra senegalus*

The most widely distributed tchagra was seen well at Leconi.

Red-eyed Puffback*Dryoscopus senegalensis*

This bird was seen very well in forest near Leconi and again at Ipassa

Northern Puffback*Dryoscopus gambensis*

We had good views of a couple at Leconi

Lowland Sooty Boubou*Laniarius leucorhynchus*

We had amazing views of one in forest near Leconi and another at Ipassa

Luehder's Bush Shrike*Laniarius luehderi*

This species was heard on several occasions at Leconi.

Swamp Boubou*Laniarius bicolor*

We heard this species in Lope NP.



Cuckooshrikes Campephagidae**Blue Cuckooshrike***Coracina azurea*

We had wonderful views of two in forest near Leconi and another was seen at Ipassa

Purple-throated Cuckooshrike*Campephaga quiscalina*

We had a good sighting of several in the forest near Leconi with a further sighting during the drive from Libreville to Makokou

Shrikes Laniidae**Souza's Shrike***Lanius souzae*

We had good but brief views of one at Leconi

Northern (Common) Fiscal*Lanius humeralis*

A widespread species but not encountered often on our tour, we encountered small numbers daily at Leconi.

Figbirds, Orioles Oriolidae**Western Oriole***Oriolus brachyrynchus*

Several were seen in forest near Leconi, one was seen in Lope NP and small numbers were seen daily at Ipassa

Black-winged Oriole*Oriolus nigripennis*

One was seen in forest near Leconi

Drongos Dicruridae**Square-tailed Drongo***Dicrurus ludwigii*

We located three in gallery forest at Leconi.

Shining Drongo*Dicrurus atripennis*

This forest interior drongo was seen in Lope NP

Fork-tailed Drongo*Dicrurus adsimilis*

A familiar, ubiquitous bird. Small numbers were seen at Leconi.

Velvet-mantled Drongo*Dicrurus modestus*

This recently split forest equivalent of the Fork-tailed Drongo was found in a forest near Leconi, Lope NP and Ipassa.

NOTE: Older versions of Clements lump this species within Fork-tailed Drongo *D. adsimilis* but the split has been recognized in recent Clements updates.

Monarchs Monarchidae**Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher (Monarch)***Trochocercus nitens*

This species was seen at Ipassa.

Rufous-vented Paradise Flycatcher*Terpsiphone rufocinerea*

One was seen very well during the drive from Lope to Lamberene.

Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher*Terpsiphone rufiventer*

We had superb views of several in Lope NP.

Bates's Paradise Flycatcher*Terpsiphone batesi*

Up to four were seen daily at Ipassa.

African Paradise Flycatcher*Terpsiphone viridis*

We enjoyed good views of several in Lope NP and again at Ipassa.

Crows, Jays Corvidae**Pied Crow***Corvus albus*

A common and familiar crow, recorded in small numbers in the Leconi area.



Tits, Chickadees Paridae**White-winged Black Tit***Melaniparus leucomelas*

We found up to four daily in the woodland at Leconi.

NOTE: Most authorities split this complex into 2 full species. The nominate dark-eyed *M. l. leucomelas* remains White-winged Black-Tit and the more northern and western yellow-eyed *M. l. guineensis* becomes White-shouldered Black-Tit. Clements has recently recognized this split.

Nicators Nicatoridae**Western Nicator***Nicator chloris*

We enjoyed great views of one in forest near Leconi and several at Ipassa

Yellow-throated Nicator*Nicator vireo*

We had great views of one in the forest near Leconi.

Larks Alaudidae**Rufous-naped Lark***Mirafra africana*

Small numbers were seen daily in the Leconi area.

NOTE: This species is sometimes split as Malbrandt's Lark. *M. malbranti*. IOC and Clements do not as yet accept this split.

Flappet Lark*Mirafra rufocinnamomea*

We found several daily in the Leconi area including several displaying.

Bulbuls Pycnonotidae**Common Bulbul***Pycnonotus barbatus*

A ubiquitous species and recorded on many days of the trip.

NOTE: Another very confusing polytypic species complex. Several Asian and African forms have already been recognized as distinct species within the super-species.

Dark-capped Bulbul*Pycnonotus tricolor*

Commonly seen daily in the Leconi area.

NOTE: This species is sometimes split from Common Bulbul. Clements does not as yet accept this split.

Slender-billed Greenbul*Stelgidillas gracilirostris*

The common greenbul of forest canopy, we found small numbers at forest near Leconi and at Ipassa

Little Greenbul*Eurillas virens*

This, the commonest forest edge greenbul was heard and seen at several forest sites.

[Little] Grey Greenbul*Eurillas gracilis*

We had good views of several during our time at Ipassa

Ansorge's Greenbul*Eurillas ansorgei*

We had good views of several in Lope NP

Plain Greenbul*Eurillas curvirostris*

One was seen in the forest near Leconi and another at Ipassa

Yellow-whiskered Greenbul*Eurillas latirostris*

We had good views of many in the Ipassa area

Golden Greenbul*Calyptocichla serinus*

We had good views of several in the forest near Leconi and one at Ipassa

Honeyguide Greenbul*Baeopogon indicator*

We had brief views of two in the forest near Leconi and others heard at Ipassa

Sjostedt's Greenbul*Baeopogon clamans*

We had great scope views of one in the forest near Leconi.

Spotted Greenbul*Ixonotus guttatus*

Seen on many occasions with sightings in the forest near Leconi, Lope, Loango and Ipassa

Simple Greenbul*Chlorocichla simplex*

Several were seen well in the Ipassa area

Yellow-throated Leaflove*Atimastillas flavicollis*

Up to six were seen daily around Leconi and the Lope Hotel with peak sightings at Lamberene



Swamp Palm Bulbul*Thescelocichla leucopleura*

Small numbers were recorded daily in the forest near Leconi, Lope NP and at Ipassa

Icterine Greenbul*Phyllastrephus icterinus*

Small numbers were recorded in Lope NP and at Ipassa.

Xavier's Greenbul*Phyllastrephus xavieri*

Very similar to the previous species but with a different call, we had brief views of two at Ipassa.

Red-tailed Bristlebill*Bleda syndactylus*

Two were seen exceptionally well at Ipassa

Yellow-lored Bristlebill*Bleda notatus*

We enjoyed great views of one in Lope NP.

NOTE: The Green-tailed Bristlebill complex is often split into 2 species, Green-tailed Bristlebill, *B.eximius* which occurs in the Upper Guinea area and Yellow-lored Bristlebill, *B.notatus* which occurs in Central Africa.

Eastern Bearded Greenbul*Criniger chloronotus*

We heard one in the forest near Leconi and enjoyed great views of another at Ipassa

Red-tailed Greenbul*Criniger calurus*

We had good views of one in Lope NP and several at Ipassa.

White-bearded Greenbul*Criniger ndussumensis*

We found small numbers daily at Ipassa

Black-collared Bulbul*Neolestes torquatus*

Up to six were seen daily in the Leconi area.

Swallows, Martins Hirundinidae**Square-tailed Saw-wing***Psalidoprocne nitens*

Small numbers were seen in the forest near Leconi and many daily at Ipassa

Black (Petit's) Saw-wing*Psalidoprocne pristoptera*

Small numbers were seen daily at Leconi and in Lope NP.

Grey-rumped Swallow*Pseudohirundo griseopyga*

Large numbers of 300 were seen nesting on sandbars during the boat trip from Tsam-Tsam to Omboue

Banded Martin*Riparia cincta*

We found small numbers daily in the Leconi area.

Barn Swallow*Hirundo rustica*

Several were seen during the boat trip from Omboue to Port Gentil.

Angolan Swallow*Hirundo angolensis*

Small numbers were seen daily in Lope NP

White-bibbed Swallow*Hirundo nigrita*

Small numbers seen at scattered sites throughout the trip with peak numbers of six daily in the Tsam-Tsam area

Lesser Striped Swallow*Cecropis abyssinica*

A widespread African swallow that is fairly common in Gabon. We found small numbers almost daily throughout the country.

Red-breasted Swallow*Cecropis semirufa*

Small numbers were seen daily in the Leconi area

Red-throated Cliff Swallow*Petrochelidon rufigula*

Up to twenty were seen daily at Leconi.

South African Cliff Swallow*Petrochelidon spilodera*

We had great views of one flying around Lope Hotel.

Crombecs, African Warblers Macrosphenidae**Yellow Longbill***Macrosphenus flavicans*

A real skulker, we heard it many times and finally saw it very well at Ipassa



Grey Longbill*Macrosphenus concolor*

Another secretive species that was heard daily and seen very well at Ipassa

Red-capped Crombec*Sylvietta ruficapilla*

We enjoyed great views of two birds at Leconi.

Green Crombec*Sylvietta virens*

The commonest and most widespread forest crombec, though small and inconspicuous (except by call). We saw it at Leconi and Ipassa

Yellow Flycatchers Erythroceridae**Chestnut-capped Flycatcher***Erythrocerus mccallii*

We had good views of several daily in Lope NP and again at Ipassa

Family Uncertain Incertae Sedis**Green Hylia***Hylia prasina*

Its "HEE-lia!" call was one of the common background sounds at the forest sites and we saw several at Ipassa.

Grassbirds & Allies Locustellidae**Ja River Scrub Warbler***Bradypterus grandis*

We had superb views of one in Lope NP.

Cisticolas & Allies Cisticolidae**Whistling Cisticola***Cisticola lateralis*

Two were seen at Leconi and several more in Lope NP

Chattering Cisticola*Cisticola anonymus*

A secondary growth and scrub species, our first sighting was of one near our hotel at Libreville with further sightings in Lope NP and at Ipassa

Tinkling Cisticola*Cisticola rufilatus*

After much effort, we were fortunate to have good views of one at Leconi.

Winding Cisticola*Cisticola marginatus*

We found a few during the boat trip from Lamberene to Tsam-Tsam

Croaking Cisticola*Cisticola natalensis*

We found several at Leconi and again in Lope NP.

Short-winged Cisticola*Cisticola brachypterus*

We had good views of two in Lope NP.

Zitting Cisticola*Cisticola juncidis*

Several were seen at Leconi and Lamberene

Pectoral-patch Cisticola*Cisticola brunnescens*

One was seen at Leconi

Tawny-flanked Prinia*Prinia subflava*

Another noisy and familiar African warbler, we recorded this species in small numbers in Lope NP.

Banded Prinia*Prinia bairdii*

This snappy looking bird showed fairly well in Lope NP.

White-chinned Prinia*Schistolaia (Prinia) leucopogon*

This confiding, gregarious species was observed very well at Leconi.

Black-throated Apalis*Apalis jacksoni*

One was seen by Steve during the drive from Lope to Ndjole.

Buff-throated Apalis*Apalis rufogularis*

We had a superb sighting of a male in the forest near Leconi, with scattered sightings thereafter.

Gosling's Apalis*Apalis goslingi*

We had great views of one at Ipassa.



Grey-backed (Green-backed) Camaroptera*Camaroptera brevicaudata*

We had good views of several in the Leconi area with further sightings at Ipassa

NOTE: Most authorities now recognize the nominate green-backed forms of this widespread African warbler as distinct from the grey-backed forms *C. brevicaudata*. We encountered the grey-backed form in Cameroon. Clements still lumps these two groups.

Yellow-browed Camaroptera*Camaroptera superciliaris*

This handsome warbler was heard on several occasions and finally seen well at Ipassa.

Olive-green Camaroptera*Camaroptera chloronota*

We heard this species on a number of occasions and finally had great views at Ipassa.

Salvadori's Eremomela*Eremomela salvadorii*

We had superb views of two at Leconi. A rare, localized and seldom seen species.

Green-capped Eremomela*Eremomela scotops*

We had great views of three at Leconi.

Rufous-crowned Eremomela*Eremomela badiceps*

Our first sighting was of one at Lope NP and later we had superb views of up to three daily at Ipassa.

Fulvettas, Ground Babblers Pellorneidae**Blackcap Illadopsis***Illadopsis cleaveri*

We heard this species calling if forest near Leconi.

Pale-breasted Illadopsis*Illadopsis rufipennis*

One was seen by Steve in Lope NP.

Brown Illadopsis*Illadopsis fulvescens*

We had fairly good views of four at Ipassa

White-eyes Zosteropidae**Forest (African Yellow) White-eye***Zosterops stenocricotus*

We had good views of one in Lope NP.

Hyliotas Hyliotidae**Yellow-bellied Hyliota***Hyliota flavigaster*

We had good views of a pair at Leconi.

Violet-backed Hyliota*Hyliota violacea*

We found one of these beautiful birds in the forest near Leconi.

Starlings Sturnidae**Purple-headed Starling***Hylopsar purpureiceps*

Seen virtually daily in small numbers at virtually all forested sites

Splendid Starling*Lamprotornis splendidus*

This spectacular, large starling was seen during the drive from Libreville to Lope NP with scattered sightings elsewhere.

Violet-backed (Plum-coloured) Starling*Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*

This stunning bird was seen very well in small numbers at Leconi.

Chestnut-winged Starling*Onychognathus fulgidus*

One was seen during the drive from Lope to Ndjole.

Narrow-tailed Starling*Poeoptera lugubris*

We had great views of four at a nesting colony whilst driving from Ndjole to Makokou.

Oxpeckers Buphagidae**Yellow-billed Oxpecker***Buphagus africanus*

Up to ten of these smart birds were seen on Forest Buffalo in Lope NP.



Thrushes Turdidae**Red-tailed Ant Thrush***Neocossyphus rufus*

We had great but brief views of two in Lope NP and another was seen at Ipassa.

Fraser's Rufous Thrush*Stizorhina fraseri*

One was seen briefly in the forest near Leconi with several more seen very well at Ipassa

African Thrush*Turdus pelios*

This is a fairly common bird in Gabon. We obtained views at many sites often in anthropogenic habitat.

Chats, Old World Flycatchers Muscicapidae**Fire-crested Alethe***Alethe castanea*

One was seen very briefly at Ipassa

NOTE: The Central & East African form is sometimes split from the nominate White-tailed Alethe of West Africa, becoming *A. castanea*.

White-browed Scrub Robin*Cercotrichas leucophrys*

We heard several and finally saw one very well at Leconi.

Fraser's Forest Flycatcher*Fraseria ocreata*

We had great sightings of several near Leconi and a few more at Ipassa.

White-browed Forest Flycatcher*Fraseria cinerascens*

One was seen very well at Tsam-Tsam

Grey-throated Tit-Flycatcher*Myioparus griseigularis*

One was seen well at Ipassa

Grey Tit-Flycatcher*Myioparus plumbeus*

One was seen in Lope NP and another at Ipassa

Pale Flycatcher*Melaenornis pallidus*

One was seen briefly at Leconi

Cassin's (Grey) Flycatcher*Muscicapa cassini*

A sprightly bird restricted to the vicinity of water, often hawking insects directly above it. We had great sightings of several in Lope NP and again at Tsam-Tsam.

Yellow-footed Flycatcher*Muscicapa sethsmithi*

We had great views of two at Ipassa

Sooty Flycatcher*Muscicapa infuscata*

Up to ten were seen daily in the forest near Leconi.

Snowy-crowned Robin Chat*Cossypha niveicapilla*

One was seen briefly at Lope NP and several were heard calling at Leconi.

African (Common) Stonechat*Saxicola torquatus*

This widespread species was seen just once at Franceville airport.

Sooty Chat*Myrmecocichla nigra*

A common species in the Leconi area where up to ten observed daily

Congo Moor Chat*Myrmecocichla tholloni*

A striking bird and we found up to a dozen daily in the Leconi area.

Sunbirds Nectariniidae**Fraser's Sunbird***Deleornis (Anthreptes) fraseri*

A confusing species that often looks more like a greenbul than a sunbird. We saw up to six daily at Ipassa

NOTE: The species is sometimes lumped with the East African Grey-headed Sunbird *D. axillaris*.

Western Violet-backed Sunbird*Anthreptes longuemarei*

Two superb males were seen at Leconi

Violet-tailed Sunbird*Anthreptes aurantius*

We enjoyed great sightings of a pair at Lope NP, another pair at Tsam-Tsam and one at Ipassa. A rare and localised species

Little Green Sunbird*Anthreptes seimundi*

Several were seen at Leconi and again at Ipassa



Grey-chinned Sunbird

Anthreptes rectirostris

This species was seen at forest near Leconi and in Lope NP and at Ipassa

NOTE: This species is sometimes split into two forms, the Eastern Grey-chinned Sunbird *A. tephrolaemus* and the nominate Western Yellow-chinned Sunbird.

Collared Sunbird

Hedydipna (Anthreptes) collaris

This is a very widespread species on the continent. Small numbers seen daily in Lope NP and at Ipassa

Reichenbach's Sunbird

Anabathmis reichenbachii

We observed this species at many sites including great views at our hotel in Libreville.

Green-headed Sunbird

Cyanomitra (Nectarinia) verticalis

We had good sightings of several at in Lope NP.

Blue-throated Brown Sunbird

Cyanomitra (Nectarinia) cyanolaema

This forest sunbird was seen in the forest near Leconi, in Lope NP and at Ipassa.

Olive Sunbird

Cyanomitra (Nectarinia) olivacea

Seen daily in small numbers in Lope NP and at Ipassa

NOTE: The Olive-Sunbird species complex has been split into two full species by Clements and other authorities, namely the nominate Eastern Olive-Sunbird *C. olivacea* and the form which we recorded in Cameroon, Western Olive-Sunbird. There has been a review of this split and several authorities are in doubt of the validity, which is based upon the presence, or lack thereof, of pectoral tufts in the females of the various subspecies within the complex.

Carmelite Sunbird

Chalcomitra fuliginosa

This rather striking sunbird, restricted to coastal areas, was first seen at our hotel in Libreville with further sightings at Lamberene

Green-throated Sunbird

Chalcomitra rubescens

This species was seen in small numbers at Leconi, Lope NP and at Ipassa

Amethyst Sunbird

Chalcomitra amethystina

A couple were seen daily at Leconi.

Olive-bellied Sunbird

Cinnyris (Nectarinia) chloropygius

This is a typical forest edge species, seen at Leconi, Lope NP and Ipassa

Tiny Sunbird

Cinnyris minullus

One male was seen briefly at Ipassa

Superb Sunbird

Cinnyris (Nectarinia) superbus

Small numbers were seen in Lope NP and at Ipassa

Copper Sunbird

Cinnyris (Nectarinia) cupreus

Small numbers were seen daily in the Leconi area and at Lope NP.

Old World Sparrows Passeridae

House Sparrow

Passer domesticus

At least two birds were seen feeding on garbage in Franceville

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow

Passer griseus

Fairly commonly seen in Libreville and the Leconi area

NOTE: The Grey-headed Sparrow complex *P. griseus* has been split into five full species with the Cameroonian form being retaining in the nominate grouping with the same nomenclature.

Yellow-throated Petronia

Gymnoris superciliaris

One was seen in the woodland at Leconi.

Weavers, Widowbirds Ploceidae

Black-chinned Weaver

Ploceus nigritentus

We enjoyed two separate sightings of this rare species at Leconi.

Slender-billed Weaver

Ploceus pelzelni

We had good views of up to forty birds nesting in the Tsam-Tsam area.

Loango Weaver

Ploceus subpersonatus

We had great views of a pair at Port Gentil.

Black-necked Weaver

Ploceus nigricollis

This snappy-looking weaver of the forest edge was seen at Leconi and in Lope NP



Orange Weaver

Ploceus aurantius

Up to ten were seen daily around the Lope Hotel and a nesting colony of thirty near Tsam-Tsam

Village Weaver

Ploceus cucullatus

This is one of Gabon's most conspicuous birds, with large colonies found in many towns.

NOTE: This widespread African complex is also a candidate for multi-species splitting and the nominate subspecies which we recorded in Cameroon will remain within the nominate Village Weaver *P. cucullatus* group. These splits are not as yet recognized by Clements.

Vieillot's (Black) Weaver

Ploceus nigerrimus

Flocks of this beautiful species were noted at several localities with peak numbers of sixty at Makokou.

Maxwell's Black Weaver

Ploceus albinucha

One was seen foraging with a mixed species flock at Ipassa

Compact Weaver

Ploceus superciliosus

We enjoyed good views of six in Lope NP.

Dark-backed Weaver

Ploceus bicolor

We enjoyed great views of two in Lope NP.

Cassin's Malimbe

Malimbus cassini

We had wonderful views of a male in the forest near Leconi and several at Ipassa

Rachel's Malimbe

Malimbus racheliae

A rare and seldom-recorded species of lowland forest, we were fortunate to find a superb male at Ipassa

Blue-billed Malimbe

Malimbus nitens

A secretive species that forages in thick tangles, we found a few in Lope NP and one at Ipassa, an uncommon interior species.

Red-bellied Malimbe

Malimbus erythrogaster

We had good views of a pair and juvenile in Lope NP.

Crested Malimbe

Malimbus malimbicus

This is a fairly common species and was seen in small numbers at Ipassa

Red-headed Quelea

Quelea erythrops

A small flock was seen at the roadside whilst en route from Libreville to Ndjole

Yellow-mantled Widowbird

Euplectes macroura

We had good views of several at Leconi and again in Lope NP.

Waxbills & Allies Estrildidae

Woodhouse's Antpecker

Parmoptila woodhousei

We had great views of a family group of four at Ipassa

White-breasted Nigrita

Nigrita fusconotus

Two were seen well in forest near Leconi and several more at Ipassa

Chestnut-breasted Nigrita

Nigrita bicolor

We had good views of several at Ipassa

Pale-fronted Nigrita

Nigrita luteifrons

We had great scope views of one at forest near Leconi and another during the drive from Lope to Ndjole

Grey-headed (-crowned) Nigrita

Nigrita canicapillus

Two were seen at forest near Leconi

Black-bellied Seedcracker

Pyrenestes ostrinus

We enjoyed spectacular views of several in the forest near Leconi and again in Lope NP.

Western Bluebill

Spermophaga haematina

A remarkably beautiful bird. We had good views of a juvenile at Ipassa.

Fawn-breasted Waxbill

Estrilda paludicola

Up to forty were seen daily in the Leconi area.

Orange-cheeked Waxbill

Estrilda melpoda

Small numbers were seen daily in Lope and Ipassa.

Common Waxbill

Estrilda astrild

Africa's most widespread waxbill was observed daily at Ipassa



Quailfinch*Ortygospiza atricollis*

Small numbers were seen near Leconi and we had further sightings in Lope NP

Bronze Mannikin*Lonchura cucullata*

We found this to be a ubiquitous species in scrub in most areas.

Black-and-white Mannikin*Lonchura bicolor*

We had great views of a flock at Lamberene and daily sightings at Ipassa

NOTE: This complex may be split two-ways, the southern and eastern Brown-backed Mannikin *L. nigriceps* and the northern and western nominate group, which would remain as Black-and-white Mannikin. The latter is the form we recorded in Cameroon. Clements does not as yet recognize this split.

Magpie Mannikin*Lonchura fringilloides*

Small numbers were seen in Libreville, at forest near Leconi and at Lamberene

Indigobirds, Whydahs Viduidae**Pin-tailed Whydah***Vidua macroura*

This familiar bird, which parasitizes small seedeaters, was seen in Lope NP and at Ipassa.

Wagtails, Pipits Motacillidae**Mountain Wagtail***Motacilla clara*

One was seen along a forest stream in Lope NP

African Pied Wagtail*Motacilla aguimp*

A common and familiar African bird, we saw small numbers daily in Lope NP and at Ipassa.

Yellow-throated Longclaw*Macronyx croceus*

We found several in grassland at Leconi and again in Lope NP.

Wood Pipit*Anthus nyassae*

Two birds were seen briefly at Leconi.

Plain-backed Pipit*Anthus leucophrys*

Up to ten were seen daily in the Leconi area.

Long-legged Pipit*Anthus pallidiventris*

Our first sightings were around Leconi with further sightings in Lope NP.

Short-tailed Pipit*Anthus brachyurus*

We had simply amazing views of two on the ground, at Leconi.

Finches Fringillidae**Black-faced Canary***Crithagra capistrata*

Our first sighting was of a male at forest edge near Leconi and later we enjoyed good views of a female at Lope Hotel.

Black-throated Canary*Crithagra atrogularis*

We had good views of a large flock of 80 in scrubby grassland at Leconi

Yellow-fronted Canary*Crithagra mozambica*

This species was commonly seen in the Leconi area.

Buntings Emberizidae**Cabanis's Bunting***Emberiza cabanisi*

Four of these beautiful broad-leaved woodland birds were seen at Leconi.



Annotated List of Mammal Species recorded in Gabon

Taxonomy and nomenclature follows that of 'The Kingdon Field Guide to African Mammals' by Jonathan Kingdon, Academic Press, 1997.

Apes Hominidae

Chimpanzee

Pan troglodytes

We had an amazing four separate sightings in Lope NP. Our first sighting was of a troop feeding in a large flowering tree where we enjoyed scope views, however, the highlight was magnificent views of a troop crossing the road just ahead of us as we drove from Lope to Ndjole.

Cheek-Pouch Monkeys Cercopithecidae

Red-capped Mangabey

Cercocebus torquatus

We had two good sightings, our first at Tsam-Tsam and another sighting in Loango NP.

Grey-cheeked Mangabey

Cercocebus albigena

Fairly commonly seen in Lope NP

Greater Putty-nosed Monkey

Cercopithecus nictitans

We had great views of up to ten daily in Lope NP.

Moustached Monkey

Cercopithecus cephus

We had great views of several in Lope NP with further sightings near Ipassa

Crowned Guenon

Cercopithecus pogonias

We heard this species calling in Lope NP

Black Colobus

Colobus satanas

We had a magnificent sighting of two in Lope NP, a lucky find indeed!

Galagos Galagidae

Demidoff's Dwarf Galago

Galagoides demidovii

One was seen in Lope NP during our night drive.

Lorises, Potto Lorisidae

Golden Angwantibo

Arctocebus aureus

Some lucky folks saw one on our night walk at Ipassa.

Squirrels Sciuridae

Forest Giant Squirrel

Protoxerus stangeri

One was seen briefly at Ipassa

Green Bush Squirrel

Paraxenus poensis

A few were seen in Lope NP.

Lady Burton's Rope Squirrel

Funisciurus isabella

One was seen by some at Ipassa

Red-legged Sun Squirrel

Heliosciurus rufobrachium

One was seen at Ipassa.

Dogs & Allies Canidae

Side-striped Jackal

Canis adustus

We had good views of two at Leconi.



Mongoose Herpestidae**Marsh Mongoose***Atilax paludinosus*

We had great views of two during our night boat trip at Tsam-Tsam

Genets & Civets Viverridae**Servaline Genet***Genetta servalina*

Some of us saw one during the night walk at Ipassa

Hyraxes Procavidae**Western Tree Hyrax***Dendrohyrax dorsalis*

We heard several calling at Ipassa

Hippopotamuses Hippopotamidae**Hippopotamus***Hippopotamus amphibius*

We had good sightings of six during our boat trip from Lamberene to Tsam-Tsam

Pigs Suidae**Red River Hog***Potamochoerus porcus*

We enjoyed a sighting of nine Red River Hogs in Lope NP. This was certainly another trip highlight!

Bovids & Horned Ungulates Bovidae**Ogilby's Duiker***Cephalophus ogilbyi*

We had great views of one in Lope NP.

Blue Duiker*Cephalophus monticola*

One was seen very well in Lope NP.

Bushbuck*Tragelaphus scriptus*

We enjoyed good views of eight in Lope NP.

Sitatunga*Tragelaphus scriptus*

We were fortunate to have superb views of a female and young in Lope NP, a lucky find.

African (Forest) Buffalo*Syncerus caffer*

Up to fifty were seen daily in Lope NP where we enjoyed outstanding views.

Elephants Elephantidae**Forest Elephant***Loxodonta cyclotis*

Up to 7 were seen daily in Lope NP. We enjoyed several fabulous sightings.

Reptile Species recorded in Gabon**Slender-snouted Crocodile***Crocodylus cataphractus*

We had good views of one in Loango NP.

Dwarf Crocodile*Osteolaemus tetraspis*

We had great views of this rarely seen species in Lope NP.

Nile Monitor*Varanus niloticus*

We had good views of one at Tsam-Tsam and another at Ipassa

African Rock Python*Python sebae*

We had wonderful views of an impressive individual during our boat trip at Ipassa



Annotated List of Bird Species recorded on the islands of Sao Tome & Principe

Harlequin Quail*Coturnix delegorguei*

One was seen briefly on Sao Tome.

White-tailed Tropicbird*Phaethon lepturus*

We enjoyed good sightings of several individuals near our lodge on Sao Tome and again during our boat trip to the south of the island of Principe.

Sao Tome Ibis*Bostrychia bocagei*

We had great views of one perched in a tree on Sao Tome

Striated Heron*Butorides striata*

Small numbers were seen on Sao Tome.

Western Cattle Egret*Bubulcus ibis*

Several were recorded on both Sao Tome and Principe.

Little Egret*Egretta garzetta*

We had a good sighting of two on Sao Tome

Western Reef Heron*Egretta gularis*

Commonly encountered on both Sao Tome and Principe

Brown Booby*Sula leucogaster*

We found up to fifteen during the boat trip to the south part of Principe.

Reed (Long-tailed) Cormorant*Phalacrocorax africanus*

Several were seen on Sao Tome.

Yellow-billed Kite*Milvus aegyptius*

We had great views of up to 8 daily on Sao Tome and small numbers on Principe.

*NOTE: Many authorities treat the resident African subspecies of this raptor, which we observed as a separate species. Black Kite M. migrans, is a palearctic migrant. Clements does not as yet accept this split.***Whimbrel***Numenius phaeopus*

One was seen on Sao Tome and another on Principe.

Common Sandpiper*Actitis hypoleucos*

Small numbers were seen on Sao Tome and Principe.

Brown Noddy*Anous stolidus*

We had great views of two on a rocky islet off Principe

Black Noddy*Anous minutus*

We had superb views of one on a rocky islet off Principe

Sooty Tern*Onychoprion fuscatus*

One was seen briefly during the boat trip from Playa de Sao Tome to Bom Bom on Principe.

Rock Dove*Columba livia*

Small numbers were seen on Sao Tome.

Sao Tome Olive Pigeon*Columba thomensis*

We had good scope views of one near Lagoa Amelia, Sao Tome

Island (Sao Tome) Bronze-naped Pigeon*Columba malherbii*

We enjoyed good views of two at Lagoa Amelia, Sao Tome

Lemon (Forest) Dove*Columba larvata*

We had good sightings of up to six daily on Sao Tome and several daily on Principe.

*NOTE: This species is sometimes lumped with Lemon Dove C.larvata. Clements does accept this split.***Laughing Dove***Spilopelia senegalensis*

Up to twenty were seen daily near our hotel on Sao Tome and a few on Principe.

Sao Tome Green Pigeon*Treron sanctithomae*

Several were seen very well at Lagoa Amelia and a few more at Mt. Carmo, Sao Tome.

African Green Pigeon*Treron calva*

Small numbers were seen daily on Principe.



African Emerald Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx cupreus</i>
We heard one calling at Mt Carmo, Sao Tome.	
Western Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>
We had great views of one during the day on Sao Tome	
<i>NOTE: The species on Sao Tome is distinctively more rufous than those on the mainland and may warrant full species status.</i>	
Sao Tome Scops Owl	<i>Otus hartlaubi</i>
We had superb views of one at a day roost at Lagoa Amelia, Sao Tome.	
Sao Tome Spinetail	<i>Zoonavena thomensis</i>
Small numbers were seen very well near our hotel on Sao Tome and several more on Principe.	
African Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>
Up to ten seen daily on Sao Tome and Principe	
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
Small numbers were seen on Sao Tome and Principe	
White-bellied (Principe) Kingfisher	<i>Corythornis leucogaster</i>
We had wonderful views of three on Principe.	
<i>NOTE: Some authorities treat this form as a separate species Principe Kingfisher. Clements & IOC do not as yet accept this split.</i>	
Malachite (Sao Tome) Kingfisher	<i>Corythornis cristatus</i>
An adult and juvenile were seen near our hotel on Sao Tome.	
<i>NOTE: Some authorities treat this form as a separate species Sao Tome Kingfisher. Clements & IOC do not as yet accept this split.</i>	
Blue-breasted Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon malimbica</i>
We had superb views of at least six on Principe.	
Tinnah (Grey) Parrot	<i>Psittacus tinneh</i>
We had great views of up to eight daily on Principe.	
<i>NOTE: Some authorities treat this form as a separate species from Grey Parrot P. erithacus. Clements does not as yet accept this split.</i>	
Red-headed Lovebird	<i>Agapornis pullarius</i>
One was seen very well near our lodge on Sao Tome.	
Sao Tome Fiscal	<i>Lanius newtoni</i>
We had wonderful views of one on Sao Tome	
Sao Tome Thrush	<i>Turdus olivaceofuscus</i>
Up to thirty seen daily on Sao Tome, more commonly seen at Mt Carmo, Sao Tome	
Principe Thrush	<i>Turdus xanthorhynchus</i>
We heard one on Principe. This is a rare and localized species.	
Sao Tome Prinia	<i>Prinia melleri</i>
This unusual prinia with a bizarre display flight was seen commonly on Sao Tome.	
Sao Tome Shorttail (Bocage's Longbill)	<i>Amaurocichla bocagii</i>
Two were seen and heard at Mt. Carmo, Sao Tome.	
Dohrn's Thrush-Babbler	<i>Horizorhinus dohrni</i>
This striking species was seen very well on several occasions on Principe.	
Sao Tome Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone atrochalybeia</i>
This stunning species was seen in small numbers daily on Sao Tome.	
Principe Sunbird	<i>Anabathmis hartlaubii</i>
We had superb views of several of this smart endemic on Principe.	
Newton's Sunbird	<i>Anabathmis newtonii</i>
Up to six seen daily on Sao Tome, one of the commoner endemics around town	
Giant (Sao Tome) Sunbird	<i>Dreptes thomensis</i>
We enjoyed good views of two at Lagoa Amelia and several on Mt Carmo, Sao Tome.	
Olive Sunbird	<i>Cyanomitra obscura</i>
We saw two on Principe.	
Principe Speirops	<i>Speirops leucophoeus</i>
We enjoyed great views of several flocks on Principe.	
Black-capped Speirops	<i>Speirops lugubris</i>
This striking species was seen commonly in small flocks daily on Sao Tome.	



Principe White-eye

Only two flocks of four birds each was seen in the remote south part of Principe.

Zosterops ficedulinus

Sao Tome White-eye

We had good views of several at Lagoa Amelia.

Zosterops feae

Sao Tome Oriole

Up to ten were seen daily on Mt Carmo, Sao Tome.

Oriolus crassirostris

Velvet-mantled Drongo

We heard one calling on Principe.

Dicrurus modestus

NOTE: Some authorities treat this form as a separate species Principe Drongo *D.m.modestus*. Clements does not as yet accept this split.

Splendid Starling

At least twenty were seen daily on Principe.

Lamprotornis splendidus

Principe Starling

Several were seen daily on Principe.

Lamprotornis ornatus

Chestnut-winged Starling

Small numbers were seen at Lagoa Amelia and Mt. Carmo, Sao Tome.

Onychognathus fulgidus

NOTE: Some authorities treat this form as a separate species Sao Tome Chestnut-winged Starling *O.f.fulgidus* Clements does not as yet accept this split.

Principe (Golden) Weaver

Up to thirty of this stunning endemic was seen daily around our hotel on Principe.

Ploceus princeps

Vitelline Masked Weaver

Several were seen near the airport on Sao Tome.

Ploceus vitellinus

Village Weaver

Small numbers were seen on Sao Tome.

Ploceus cucullatus

Giant Weaver

Up to four of these impressive birds were seen at Mt. Carmo, Sao Tome.

Ploceus grandis

Sao Tome Weaver

Up to thirty were seen daily at Lagoa Amelia and Mt. Carmo, Sao Tome.

Ploceus sanctithomae

Black-winged Bishop

Several were seen near our hotel on Sao Tome.

Euplectes hordeaceus

White-winged Widowbird

We had good views of several near the airport on Sao Tome.

Euplectes albonotatus

Blue Waxbill (Blue-breasted Cordonblue)

We found several at the airport on Sao Tome.

Uraeginthus angolensis

Common Waxbill

Up to twenty were seen daily around our hotel on Sao Tome and small numbers were also seen on Principe.

Estrilda astrild

Bronze Mannikin

Up to fifteen were seen at the airport on Sao Tome and a flock of a dozen near our hotel on Principe.

Spermestes cucullatus

Pin-tailed Whydah

We had good views of two at the airport on Sao Tome.

Vidua macroura

Sao Tome Grosbeak

We had great views of two of these very rare and seldom seen birds at Mt Carmo, Sao Tome.

Neospiza concolor

Yellow-fronted Canary

Twenty were seen at the airport on Sao Tome.

Serinus mozambicus

Principe Seed eater

Small numbers were seen daily on Sao Tome and a further five were seen in the remote southern part of Principe.

Serinus rufobrunneus



Annotated List of Mammal Species recorded on the islands of Sao Tome & Principe

Cheek-Pouch Monkeys Cercopithecidae

Mona Monkey

Cercopithecus mona

We had good views of several on the island of Principe.

Whales Balaenopteridae

Hump-backed Whale

Megaptera novaeangliae

We had several good sightings around the island of Principe

Annotated List of Reptile Species recorded on the islands of Sao Tome & Principe

Green Turtle

Chelonia mydas

We had a wonderful sighting of two mating off the island of Principe

Rockjumper Birding Ltd

Labourdonnais Village

Mapou

Mauritius

Tel (USA & Canada) toll free: 1-888-990-5552

Email: info@rockjumperbirding.com

Alternative email: rockjumperbirding@yahoo.com

Website: www.rockjumperbirding.com

