

In February 2010, Dr Hugh Buck of Scotland came through Djibouti and Somaliland to bird along with 4 colleagues. Here are his reflections.

BUCKBIRD JOURNEYS Ltd

DJIBOUTI and SOMALILAND

The road less travelled through the real Horn of Africa

Sunday 7 – Sunday 21 February 2010

Participants: Merilyn Browne (MB), Hugh Buck (HB), Pearl Jordan (PJ), Betty Power (EP)

Agent and Organiser: Abdi Jama (AJ), Nature Somaliland, Hargeisa

A significant adventure this, planned for many months and long exchanges by e mail between HB and AJ. As far as we know this was the first ever birding tour to Somaliland and possibly the first of any sort for more than 30 years. Following the Buckbird tour of 2007 to Djibouti we were arguably the second birding tour there as well. Our mission was to track down the 10 recognised birds largely endemic to Somalia which are present in the north as well as a number of other less defined species and subspecies and a few select mammals. Recent information on where to locate these was scant, although AJ had already done a preliminary scouting of the route, and HB had historic and some more modern data (especially from John Miskell) to work on. But for all of us (and our group included some of the world's most dedicated travellers) it was to be a unique glimpse into the nature and life of one of the least visited countries on earth. Since independence in the early 1970's Somaliland has striven, without success, to be a nation recognised as separate from the rest of Somalia and has also striven, with more success, to avoid the ravages and savagery associated with the east and south of the country.

Any initial fears were soon allayed by the organisation work of AJ, the presence throughout of 3 armed soldiers, an excellent driving and support team and the polite curiosity and friendliness of the Somali people themselves, many of whom had perhaps never before encountered pale skinned strangers. Between us we managed a bird list of over 230, 8 out the 10 true endemic bird species (although the views were not always perfect and not all got onto everything), the endangered Djibouti Francolin, many more birds of restricted ranges and two superb and rare antelope species rarely seen by westerners.

My thanks to AJ for his organisation (this was his first ever organised trip as well and he did an excellent job), our outstanding drivers Ahmed and Hassan who took a punishing itinerary in their stride, our dedicated camp crew of Ahmed, Said and Zainam and our three friendly soldiers Adam, Hassani and Ickabohol. Thanks also to Nigel Redman et al for their timely publication of "Birds of the Horn of Africa" (BHA) without which we would have struggled significantly more (especially with the Larks) and to John Miskell for advice on birding and other matters. And finally to the redoubtable 3 "Steel Magnolias" who had the courage to make this inaugural trip and who bore the occasional hardships and frustrations in good humour throughout.

Itinerary

Sunday 7 February

Arrive Djibouti. Overnight La Siesta Hotel

Monday 8 February

Daallo Airlines to Hargeisa. pm Jumfoouri Rock and Plains. Overnight Ambassador Hotel, Hargeisa

Tuesday 9 February

All day Jumfoouri and Waajale Plains. Overnight Ambassador Hotel, Hargeisa

Wednesday 10 February

Airport Escarpment, Old Military Workshop Hargeisa, "Beira" Hills, Adobe, Ga'an Libah. Overnight camping at Ga'an Libah

Thursday 11 February

Around Ga'an Libah camp and escarpments. Overnight camping

Friday 12 February

Ga'an Libah through Golis Range to Burco. Overnight Plaza Hotel, Burco

Saturday 13 February

Burco to north of Inaafmadobe Village then east to Wadamo Go'o. Overnight camping in acacia scrub near Qorilugud

Sunday 14 February

South to Qorilugud Village then north to Banade Plains. Overnight camping in bush dotted desert

Monday 15 February

Northeast to Erigavo and Daallo Forest Reserve. Overnight camping at spectacular Scenic Outlook

Tuesday 16 February

Daallo. Maydh Road 2000 – 700 metres and back. Overnight camping at Scenic Outlook

Wednesday 17 February

Daallo to Erigavo to Burco. Overnight Plaza Hotel, Burco

Thursday 18 February

Burco to Berbera to Hargeisa and shock with Daallo Airlines. Drive on to Loyada on Somaliland / Djibouti border. "Rustic" overnight on Loyada "beach"

Friday 19 February

Cross into Djibouti and via Goubet Kharab to Foret de Day. Overnight at Campenement Touristique at Day Village

Saturday 20 February

Day Village to Loyada (collect passports) then Djibouti City and Port. EP departs. Overnight La Siesta Hotel

Sunday 21 February

MB, HB, PJ depart by Ethiopian Airlines to Addis Ababa and separate ways home

Day by Day

Sunday 7 February

MB and EP have already arrived in Djibouti the previous day and AJ is there to greet HB and PJ and take them to the La Siesta Hotel to be united. Several birds are already on the list from the mudflats and scrub around the hotel and HB and PJ catch up with many of them in the afternoon. They include the Red Sea endemic White-eyed Gull, the near endemic Somali Sparrow and numbers of the lovely little Arabian Golden Sparrow, a bird only entering Africa along this coast and far easier to see here than in Arabia. We are abed early full of anticipation for the days to come.

Monday 8 February

We are early for Daallo Airlines and the short flight but it is not until 1000 that the ancient prop driven Antonov “sweat box” finally leaves to safely land us at a remarkably cool (altitude over 1000 metres), dusty Hargeisa one hour later. We eventually get the visas sorted out, lunch on our first goat shanks at the Ambassador Hotel and have our first meeting with our drivers and soldiers who will be our constant companions over the next 10 days or so. By 1400 we are away northwest to the Jumfoouri Plains close to the Ethiopian border and a good range of east African birds is soon in the bag. They include a fine Lanner in the scope at Jumfoouri Rock, our first Somali Coursers, the pale *elliotti* form of Thekla Lark, the ubiquitous Dwarf Raven and Somali Fiscal, Shining Sunbird, Swainson’s Sparrow and the lovely Golden-breasted Starling. But overshadowing all else are a trio of male Little Brown Bustards, interacting and puffing out their black gular feathers. Endemic to Somalia and a small part of largely inaccessible Ethiopia they are high on our want list and happily we will see many more – daily in any semi desert habitat. The Somalis have no tradition of eating fish, birds or eggs (even chickens are something of a rarity) and the five species of Bustard we will encounter today and in coming days show little fear and allow delightfully close approach. Cape Hare, Golden Jackal and the rusty limbed (and very common) Salt’s Dik-Dik get the mammal list moving. A partially decomposed raptor picked up from the road is tentatively identified as an immature Archer’s or perhaps Augur Buzzard - little do we know at this stage how we will struggle to find another.

It has been a good opening day and we sleep well in our comfortable hotel.

Tuesday 9 February

Away early for all day on the Jumfoouri and Wajaaale Plains and a further injection to the list. Somewhere out here the almost mythical endemic Archer's Lark was described in the 1930's but has not been reliably recorded since. But the landscape is dry and overgrazed and, although we see numerous other Larks out, rather amateurish, search is never likely to succeed. Those we do see include many Somali Short-toed, Singing Bush, the *daroodensis* form of Blanford's and both Black-crowned and Chestnut-backed Sparrow Larks. A variety of others include 4 species of Wheatear, a male *rubescens* Menetrie's Warbler, several difficult out of plumage Whydahs (but one semi plumaged male Eastern Paradise) and, outstandingly, half a dozen Pale Rockfinch coming to drink at a village waterhole. As far as we can see this is a bird unrecorded in Somalia but our scope views are long and conclusive and voucher photographs obtained.

At nearby Waajale Village, right on the Ethiopian border, the town reservoir is crowded with water birds including a trio of Red-knobbed Coot – according to Birds of Somalia a species unrecorded in the northwest of the country.

Fish for dinner we will again find unusual before another early night.

Wednesday 10 February

We are loaded into our two Land Cruisers by 0730 and a short look at the rocky escarpment near the airport produces the *assabensis* form of Desert Lark, a male of the range restricted and handsome Somali Wheatear (we will see many more today and in coming days), our only Brown-tailed Rock Chats of the trip and the our first people loving White-Crowned Starlings. On through the Old Military Workshop (Somali Bee Eaters but no sign of the hoped for Archer's Buzzard), some repairs to the tripod and we are away east along the tarmac Hargeisa – Berbera road and a trio of dry rocky hills. Here AJ has "staked" out the rarely encountered little Beira antelope and, with the help of his local man on the spot, we enjoy a walk up the base and long scope views of a small herd of 5 of these lovely creatures. Our first of many Gundi like Speke's Pectinators keep the mammal list growing.

It continues as we leave the tarmac through the scrub desert to the village of Adobe (where AJ went to school) with Gerenuk, the Pelzeln's "form" of Dorcas Gazelle and Desert Warthog all obliging. The term "desert" becomes questionable as we encounter totally unexpected heavy rain which will test our drivers for the rest of the day. Lunch at Adobe is again excellent goat and at the other end of the scale HB at least gets a glimpse of the strange little Naked Mole Rat creating mini volcanoes as it excavates its sandy burrow. The long afternoon drive up to the gentle and over-cultivated slopes of Ga'an Libah is wet and difficult but we arrive safely at "sunset" to find our camp crew waiting and our "luxury" camp (stand up tents, real beds and attached "toilets") set up and ready. In a light "Scotch mist" we enjoy the first of many excellent vegetarian meals and sleep through some heavy rain in the night.

Thursday 11 February

The mist is clinging around us as we breakfast but lifts enough to get us on our feet for a rather sloshy morning walk to the edge of the southern escarpment. Crested Francolins are noisy around the camp, a flock of White-rumped Babblers comes right through it, the musical duets of Ethiopian Boubous ring out constantly and we soon locate our first Somali Thrush, one of several today including one investigating our cooking area. A taxonomic mess this Blackbird which is solidly endemic to the few remaining patches of Juniper forest found in North Somaliland. It has (for some unfathomable reason) long been lumped with the totally dissimilar Olive Thrush but is now thankfully increasingly recognised as a threatened species in its own right.

Both the southern and, in the afternoon, northern escarpments, are blighted by heavy blowing cloud although flocks of the pale *archeri* form of Alpine Swift, the smaller Nyanza Swift and the long tailed Somali Starling are easily seen. A pair of heraldic Klipspringer atop a rock are scoped before the mist cuts off anything further. Nothing to do but return to camp for spiced tea and dinner.

Friday 12 February

It is clearer in the morning but the northern escarpment soon clouds over again and we cut our losses and start the long drive to Burco, leaving our faithful camp crew to do the hard work. The roads are best described as confusing but, with a little local help, we eventually find the right one and are at a sunny Burco by mid afternoon. Even in the wilds of Somaliland some instincts persist and we soon find ourselves at the odiferous pile of Burco's solid waste dump (we are sad to see the huge amount of litter, especially plastic bags, disfiguring the landscape around every town and village in Somaliland) for Marabou Stork, Steppe (little recorded in Somaliland but undoubtedly overlooked) and Tawny Eagles, Egyptian Vulture and a couple of neat little Pygmy Falcons. The Plaza Hotel is clean, air conditioned and comfortable and we are happy to arrive there by early evening.

Saturday 13 February

Away predawn, along the tarmac Burco – Erigavo road, to arrive at rocky desert scrub north of Inaafmadobe at first light. A superb male Heughlin's Bustard is manoeuvred around for photographs, one of three of this rarely encountered species we will see in the next three days. He compares nicely with several of the commoner Buff-crested and other birds we find here include Short-tailed Lark, Banded Parisoma, Red-fronted Warbler, Hunter's Sunbird and several little Philippa's Crombec. Notoriously difficult to find in Ethiopia we will see up to 10 today and more tomorrow although we never do locate its larger, long-billed cousin as we are probably too far east. Back on the main road our lunch spot turns up a fine Red-naped Bush-Shrike (we will see another 2 later in the day) and at our camp in acacia bush near the red sands of Qorlilugud a few more things including a flock of Scaly Chatterers (seen and photographed by MB but seemingly by-passed by the rest of us), a vocal African Scrub-Robin, Eastern

Violet-backed Sunbird and a pair of Green-winged Pytilias. Our bush camp is slightly disturbed in the night by lorries loaded with contraband, taking the nearby rough road to Ethiopia.

Sunday 14 February

Larks are a major priority of our trip and, one, the rarely seen Collared, only penetrates Somaliland in the striking red desert country which we have now reached. In the early light we drive south for several miles to the village of Qorlilugud itself which is as far as we dare go. We pass through plenty of good looking habitat but have no real time to do it full justice and not a sign of our quarry do we have. Back towards the main road we do locate a pair of the pale *arorihensis* form of Gillett's Lark but then it is many a mile of dusty, flat, largely birdless plain north of the main road. By mid afternoon we reach the better vegetated Banabe Plains and soon see the first of many Speke's Gazelles. Endemic to the arid littoral of Somalia these little Gazelles are mostly notable for the inflatable nose of the male. We will see more tomorrow and between Erigavo and Burco in a few days time.

And now suddenly there are Larks again including many Desert (the paler *akeleyi* now), Short-tailed, Somali Short-toed and Thekla. And equally suddenly we start to encounter the larger, slimmer, almost Pipit like Lesser Hoopoe Lark, including one bird doing its parachuting song flight. Totally endemic to Somaliland this is a key bird which proves relatively common (more than a dozen seen this evening) in a small belt of habitat today and tomorrow morning. Amongst the many Somali Coursers we also encounter an occasional Three-banded and a pair of Spotted Sandgrouse are almost run over as they nonchalantly move off the track..

We eventually locate our camp set up in glorious isolation and enjoy dinner under a star studded sky before retiring.

Monday 15 February

A 0600 start sees us continue to concentrate on Larks. With many miles to go we try simply to ignore the many commoner ones in an eye popping search from the vehicles for something different. We soon locate a pair and then a single of the *alopez* form of Foxy Lark which present more, now familiar identification, problems. And then a pair and again a single of a bigger, markedly rufous species with a long thin bill. They are tame and reluctant to fly and we manoeuvre them into at least some kind of photographic range. In every way they are perfect for Somali Lark but are much less bright or scalloped than the picture in Birds of the Horn of Africa. Happily reference to Birds of Africa and (later) Birds of Somalia shows illustrations significantly closer to what we saw and the size, colour and, above all, beak leave little doubt as to our identification.

A party of Hamadryas Baboons, a Greater Kestrel atop an acacia tree and we are through dusty Erigavo and up into the junipers of the Daallo Forest Reserve by late afternoon. Our campsite is at the edge of the Scenic Outlook, a staggering vista over a sheer drop way down to the dry coastal hills below. Here we have our only real (albeit small by any standard) problem with rather greedy villagers and here a small chain of wells are frequented by Somali Thrushes and Brown-rumped Seedeaters. These wells are famous for drinking Warsangli Linnets, the prime endemic of this area, but there is a lot of other surface water around and none oblige now or tomorrow morning. We

do flush a pair of “chestnut-winged” Francolins which are presumably Archer’s and hear their call the following morning.

In the evening Egyptian Vultures and Fan-tailed Ravens use the up-draughts, a Barbary Falcon beats to and fro and for a few moments an adult Archer’s Buzzard hangs above the void before dropping away. Sadly MB is elsewhere and this is to prove our only sighting of a bird which I had naively thought would be common. EP goes along the escarpment to search for it and dares to look over the drop to be rewarded with an adult Verreaux’s Eagle moving past below her. Our soldiers chew ghat in the evening and this makes them and the villagers rather talkative during the night.

Tuesday 16 February

A brilliant dawn and, after a check on the wells (no Linnets) we are off down the spectacular but rocky road towards Maydh on the coast. We have three endemics to search for here and at our first stop, where there are several Pectinators by the roadside, a small white Finch flies twittering off over our heads. The Warsangli Linnet is so unmistakable in its limited range that there is no doubt of the identification but the views are brief and way down the list of acceptability. We walk several bends down the bush covered slopes but cannot locate it again. More frustration than pleasure really.

Rock Martins flicker overhead and a distant Verreaux’s Eagle lands on the cliff as we descend down to 700 metres. And in the end it is a bridge too far – we can see the lower bare hills below us, home to the endemic Somali Pigeon, but with the road to ascend once more we are out of time. At our lunch spot an immature Somali Grosbeak flies in close, its “ghost” black cap indicating it as a male, but only HB and PJ are on hand and it flies off down the valley and cannot be relocated. A couple of Blackstarts, a Northern Crombec and a tail wagging Upcher’s Warbler are scant compensation. We grind back to the top, find a nice pair of Abyssinian Black Wheatears, but the raptor “spectacle” of the previous evening fails to repeat.

Wednesday 17 February

The sting in the tail now and we wish we had another day at Daallo to do it more justice. Anyway away down to Erigavo, a meeting with the Chief and the Forest Officer, and then the long grind back to Burco and the Plaza Hotel. Time for stops is limited, the birds now familiar and only a Yellow-winged Bat is new for our tally.

Thursday 18 February

Early again, down the escarpment to Berbera, for breakfast at a “seaside” café. Somali Sparrows are at last common, Crested Larks replace Theklas but, although we seem to go close to suitable habitat, no Pigeon again obliges. Hargeisa is reached by midday and the news that Daallo Airlines has gone technical on us. Information on what to expect is typically non-existent so the decision is taken to drive on to the Djibouti border at Loyada some 10 hours away. We fuel up on a huge Ethiopian lunch, reassemble our soldiers and eventually arrive close to 0100 when we “crash” on beds laid out for us on the sand.

Friday 19 February

The predawn call to prayer wakes us, the Somali immigration proves no problem but it is Friday and the visa issuing officer on the Djibouti side is non-existent. With some trepidation we leave our passports with the authorities, find our new vehicle and head straight out of Djibouti to the Forêt de Day. This is well-remembered territory for HB as we ascend the stark southern plateau overlooking the blue Golf de Tadjourah and pass the glistening blue and white expanse of Lac Assal – third largest soda lake in the world. There are no seabirds at Goubet Kharab this time and we reach our destination in time for a late lunch. Then, with local guide Mohamed, it is off to the ruined Governor's Mansion and the huge escarpment beloved by the endemic, and severely threatened Djibouti Francolin. It takes a bit of walking but we end up with superb and prolonged views of a single bird. A great one this for PJ who missed it in 2007. There are Hemprich's Hornbills around the village and our simple rondavels are comfortable enough.

Saturday 20 February

Dawn again finds us at the escarpment and a noisy pair, then a group of 5 Francolins again provide close views and some photographic opportunities. We are concerned to see a new building (a Conference Centre no less) being constructed beside the old mansion – as if the Francolins did not have enough to contend with as the forest dies around them. A few more birds are added around our camp then it is a long fast drive back down to the border before the authorities go off for their prolonged prayer and siesta break. We get there in time, regain our passports to general relief and lunch in style off curried crab with cold beer and complimentary calvados at the Le Francolin restaurant. At the next table are seated a delegation from the World Pheasant Association, in town for a conference on Francolin preservation, and we get to meet Clive Beeley who gave me valuable advice on how to seek out the bird in 2007.

We conclude with Flamingos and a series of other shorebirds around Djibouti City and harbour then dine one last time, with wine, at the La Siesta. EP departs on Air France direct to Paris in the late evening. It has been hard going at times but what an adventure and we have safely done what few if any have done before us.

Sunday 21 February

The anticlimax of real life sets in as MB, HB and PJ take the morning Ethiopian Airlines flight to Addis where, after several hours in transit, we part company. Addis airport sits on a grassy plain outside of the city and a few more birds – Steppe Buzzard, Western Marsh Harrier, Common Fiscal and, outstandingly, the endemic White-collared Pigeon are final birds, the last named a final lifer for MB!

I am thinking of offering this trip again in November 2011. If interested please contact

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Annotated Checklists

Bold Species endemic or near endemic to Djibouti and Somaliland

***** Species of limited range in sub-Saharan Africa

Birds

1. Little Grebe (*Podiceps ruficollis*)
Several on the reservoir at Waajale town on 8/2/10
2. Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)
3. Black-headed Heron (*Ardea melanocephala*)
A large roost at Waajale town (at least 30 birds) on 8/2/10
4. Western Reef Egret (*Egretta gularis*)
Numbers at Djibouti City 7/2 and 20/2, 1 at Berbera on 18/2 and 5 at Loyada 19/2/10
5. Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)
6. Abdim's Stork (*Ciconia abdimii*)
6 at Djibouti dump on 19/2, 12 there on 20/2/10
7. Marabou Stork (*Leptoptilus crumeniferus*)
2 at Burco dump 12/2, 1 at Loyada 19/2/10
8. Eurasian Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*)
5 at Djibouti City 20/2/10. Probably the resident spp *archeri*
9. African Sacred Ibis (*Threskiornis aethopicus*)
10. Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*)
At least 300 around Djibouti City 20/2/10
11. Egyptian Goose (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*)
Around 40 at Waajale reservoir on 8/2/10
12. Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)
Around 25 Waajale resevoir on 8/2/10
13. Yellow-billed (Black) Kite (*Milvus (migrans) aegyptius*)
All birds seen seemed to be of this form
14. Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron pernopterus*)
15. Hooded Vulture (*Necrosyrtes monachus*)
16. Lappet-faced Vulture (*Torgos tracheliotus*)
Only one Hargeisa 9/2/10 (HB)

17. Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)
There is talk of a 4 way split for this bird. It is impossible to know whether birds seen at Loyada and Djibouti City on 19/2 and 20/2/10 were the resident form or migrants from the north
18. Black-chested Snake-Eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*)
Only one, an adult near Qorlilugul on 14/2/10. The scarcity of big raptors in Somaliland was noticeable
19. Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrorous*)
Occasional birds in Somaliland. Mostly males
20. Western Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*)
2 birds seen from the airport at Addis Ababa on 22/2/10
21. Eastern Chanting Goshawk (*Melierax poliopterus*)
The common raptor in Somaliland. Seen almost daily in numbers
22. **Archer's Buzzard (*Buteo archeri*)**
An adult appeared briefly at the scenic outlook at Daallo Escarpment on 15/2/10. A dead bird on the road at the Jumfoouri Plains on 8/2/10 may have been an immature or a wandering Augur. The scarcity of this bird was both a surprise and a disappointment. Now considered a Somali endemic distinct from *B. augur*
23. Steppe Buzzard (*Buteo buteo vulpinus*)
One at Addis Ababa Airport on 22/2/10
24. Tawny Eagle (*Aquila rapax*)
Seen almost daily in Somaliland
25. Steppe Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*)
6 at the Burco City Dump on 12/2/10. Under recorded in Somaliland
26. Verreaux's Eagle (*Aquila verreauxii*)
An adult from the scenic outlook at Daallo on 15/2 (EP) and distantly on 16/2/10 (HB)
27. African Hawk-Eagle (*Hieraaetus spilogaster*)
A bedraggled adult close to Ga'an Libah on 10/2. One on 11/2/10
28. Eurasian Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)
29. Greater Kestrel
Seen on 16/2, 17/2 and 18/2/10 near Erigavo and on the Myadh road. The endemic spp *fieldi*
30. Lanner Falcon (*Falco biarmicus*)
A pair resident on Jumfoouri Rock gave scope views on 8/2/10
31. Barbary Falcon (*Falco pelegrinoides*)
An adult granted several fly pasts at the Daallo scenic outlook on 15/2 and 16/2/10
32. Pygmy Falcon (*Polihierax semitorquatus*)
Seen on three consecutive days 12/2, 13/2 and 14/2/10
33. Crested Francolin (*Dendroperdix sephaena*)
Notably common and noisy at Ga'an Libah
34. Yellow-necked Spurfowl (*Pternistis leucoscepus*)
Regularly encountered including around the Governor's Mansion at Daallo above their stated altitude range
35. **Djibouti Francolin (*Pternistis ochropectus*)**

Sensational views of one bird 19/2/10 and then 5 the following morning at the escarpment at Foret de Day. Endemic to Djibouti and a flagship endangered species.

- 36* Archer's (Orange River) Francolin (*Francolin (levillantoides) lorti*)
Two chestnut winged Francolins flushed out of scrub near the Daallo scenic outlook on 15/2/10 would seem to fit this species although the presence nearby of Yellow-necked Spurfowl well above their supposed altitude range robs something of the certainty. Often lumped with the southern Orange-winged but with a huge range gap, this bird is endemic to Ethiopia and northern Somaliland and occurs in several forms
37. Red-knobbed Coot (*Fulica cristata*)
3 birds at Waajale Twon reservoir on 9/2/10 had been seen by AJ some days previously. Not mentioned for the north of Somalia in "Birds of Somalia"
- 38* Heuglin's Bustard (*Neotis heuglinii*)
Two individual males and a female seen beautifully on 3 days around Inaafmadobe, Qorlilugud and on the Banade Plains 13/2, 14/2 and 15/2/10. Ranging from north Kenya into Ethiopia and Somaliland it is rarely seen although HB had previously seen it in Kenya in 1972!
39. Kori Bustard (*Ardeola kori*)
Common in the northwest and very confiding. One bird in partial display on 9/2/10
40. Buff-crested Bustard (*Lophotis gindiana*)
Common around Inaafmadobe and Qorlilugud on 13/2 and 14/2/10
41. White-bellied Bustard (*Eupodotis senegalensis*)
Only one pair, near Qorlilugud on 14/2/10, but we scarcely did them justice in our quest for other things
42. **Little Brown Bustard (*Eupodotis humilis*)**
Refreshingly common in suitable habitat throughout our journey and seen on 7 days, with a maximum of 5 on 15/2/10. The males inflate their black gular feathers. Endemic to Somali and a small part of largely inaccessible Ethiopia
43. Crab Plover (*Dromas ardeola*)
Up to 100 at Djibouti City on 7/2/, 4 at Loyada on 19/2 and 1 at Djibouti City on 20/2/10
44. Pied Avocet (*Recurvisostris recurvirostra*)
3 at the Waajale reservoir on 9/2/10
45. Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*)
10 at Waajale reservoir on 8/2/10
46. European Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)
6 at Djibouti City on 7/2/, 20+ on 20/2/10
47. Spur-winged Plover (*Vanellus spinosus*)
Around 30 at Waajale Town reservoir on 9/2, 1 near the Djibouti city dump on 19/2 and 4 T Djibouti City on 20/2/10
48. Crowned Plover (*Vanellus coronatus*)
49. Black-winged Plover (*Vanellus melanopterus*)
Around 10 on the Wajaale plains on 9/2/10
50. Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)
51. Three-banded Plover (*Charadrius tricollaris*)
A pair at Djibouti City on 20/2/10
52. Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)
53. Kentish Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*)

54. Greater Sand Plover (*Charadrius leschenultii*)
55. Lesser Sand Plover (*Charadrius mongolicus*)
Both Sand Plovers were numerous at Djibouti City and Loyada, some into summer garb
56. Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)
Around 100 at Waajale reservoir on 9/2 and 20+ at Djibouti City on 20/2/10
57. Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)
58. Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)
59. Eurasian Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)
60. Common Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)
61. Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)
62. Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)
Only a single bird at Djibouti City on 20/2/10
63. Terek Sandpiper (*Tringa cinereus*)
Common at Djibouti City and Loyada
64. Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)
65. Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)
66. Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)
67. Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)
68. Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)
69. Somali Courser (*Cursorius somalensis*)
Common in Somaliland and seen daily in suitable habitat
70. Double-banded Courser (*Rhinoptilis africanus*)
4 on the Banade plains on 14/2/10
71. Black-headed Gull (*Larus ribidundus*)
72. Slender-billed Gull (*Larus genei*)
2 at Djibouti City on 7/2/10
73. Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)
74. Heuglin's Gull (*Larus fuscus heuglini*)
75. Caspian Gull (*Larus fuscus cachinnans*)
As usual a bit of a dog's dinner but all three "species" were at Djibouti City and Berbera, many in adult plumage
- 76* White-eyed Gull (*Larus leucophthalmus*)
This Red Sea endemic was seen at Djibouti City on 7/2 and at Berbera on 18/2/10 when up to 20 were present
77. Sooty Gull (*Larus hemprichii*)
Common at Djibouti City and Berbera
78. Gull-billed Tern (*Sterna nilotica*)
The commonest tern at Djibouti City
79. Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*)
One at Djibouti City on 20/2/10
80. Swift Tern (*Sterna bergii*)
Only one, at Djibouti City, on 7/2/10
81. Saunder's Tern (*Sterna saundersi*)
After some debate we finally decided that those photographed by MB at Djibouti City on 7/2 and the one in the scope on 20/2/10 were the resident Saunders and not migrant Little. The fact that they were in full breeding garb strengthens the argument for

82. White-winged Tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*)
4 at Djibouti City on 20/2/10
83. Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse (*Pterocles exustus*)
Common in suitable areas in Somaliland. ssp *elliotti*
84. Spotted Sandgrouse (*Pterocles senegallus*)
A pair at close quarters on the Banade Plains on 14/2 and a male in flight there on 15/2/10.
85. Speckled Pigeon (*Columba guinea*)
- 86* White-collared Pigeon (*Columba albitorques*)
3 birds at close quarters at Addis airport on 21/2/10. This Ethiopian endemic was a final lifer for MB
87. Ring-necked Dove (*Streptopelia capicola*)
88. Red-eyed Dove (*Streptopelia semitorquata*)
89. African Mourning Dove (*Streptopelia decipiens*)
90. Laughing Dove (*Streptopelia senegalensis*)
These four *Streptopelias* were common in Somaliland and gave good comparative studies
91. Namaqua Dove (*Oena capensis*)
Common
92. Orange-bellied Parrot (*Poicephalus rufiventris*)
4 north of Inaafmadobe on 13/2 and 2 near Qorilugud on 14/2/10
93. Rose-ringed Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*)
Only in and around Djibouti City
94. White-bellied Go-Away Bird (*Corythaixoides leucogaster*)
Common, conspicuous and noisy in Somaliland
95. White-browed Coucal (*Centropus superciliosus*)
One near the Jumfoouri plains on 9/2/10
96. Little Owl (*Athene noctua*)
3 near Qorilugud on 14/2 and one on the Banade plains on 15/2/10. The endemic spp *somaliensis*. Apart from these the total lack of nightbirds, especially Nightjars, was notable despite several night drives. AJ confirmed that he had hardly ever seen a Nightjar in Somaliland!
97. Little Swift (*Apus affinis*)
Around Jumfoouri Rock on 9/2 and the Daallo escarpment on 16/2/10
98. Nyanza Swift (*Apus niansae*)
Abundant around the escarpments at Ga'an Libah on 11/2 and 12/2/10. The endemic spp *somalius*
99. Alpine Swift (*Tachymarptis melba*)
Also present in numbers around Ga'an Libah 11/2 and 12/2 and also around the Daallo escarpment on 16/2/10. The noticeably pale ssp *archeri*
101. Blue-naped Mousebird (*Urocolius macrourus*)
Occasional encounters in Somaliland
101. Eurasian Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)
Regularly encountered. Both nominate and the paler *senegalensis* were noted
102. Black-billed Wood-Hoopoe (*Phoeniculus somaliensis*)
Only one, north of Inaafmadobe on 11/2/10
103. Abyssinian Scimitarbill (*Rhinopomastus minor*)
3 at Ga'an Libah on 11/2 and 3 near Qorilugud on 13/2/10
104. Rufous-crowned Roller (*Coracias naevius*)

- Only one at Ga'an Libah on 11/2/10
105. Lilac-breasted Roller (*Coracias caudatus*)
2 at Qorilugud Village on 14/2/10
 106. Somali Bee-Eater (*Merops revoilli*)
Regularly encountered in Somaliland
 107. Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill (*Tockus flavirostris*)
 108. Northern Red-billed Hornbill (*Tockus erythrorhynchus*)
Both these Hornbills were commonly recorded in the north, often around villages
 109. Hemprich's Hornbill (*Tockus hemprichii*)
A feature bird around Day Village in Djibouti with up to 6 seen on 18/2 and 19/2/10
 110. Red-fronted Tinkerbird (*Pogoniulus pusillus*)
Regularly encountered in acacia and juniper woodland, mostly by voice
 111. Red-and-Yellow Barbet (*Tachyphonus erythrocephalus*)
2 north of Inaafmadobe on 13/2 and one near Qorilugud on 14/2/10
 112. Yellow-breasted Barbet (*Tachyphonus margaritatus*)
Heard on the Maydh Road on 16/2 and a pair seen duetting at Loyada on 19/2/10
 113. Nubian Woodpecker (*Campethera nubica*)
A male at the Campenement Touristique at Day Village on 20/2/10
 114. Cardinal Woodpecker (*Dendropicos fuscescens*)
Seen at Ga'an Libah, near Qorilugud and at Day Village
- Larks** These would demand a huge amount of our time and effort in Somaliland where up to 19 species have been recorded. With huge amounts of potential habitat to work and significant problems of identification to overcome we were happy enough to claim 14 species including the two key endemics, although we never did connect with the possibly endemic Sharpe's (Rufous-naped) or, as expected, the almost unknown Archer's
115. Singing Bush-Lark (*Mirafra cantillans*)
2 birds in typical aerial song flight the the Waajale plains on 9/2/10
 116. Foxy Lark (*Mirafra alopex*)
3 of the nominate *alopex* seen on the Banade plains on 15/2/10 were just one of many confusing Larks in Somaliland
 - 117* Gillett's Lark (*Mirafra gilletti*)
2 of the pale spp *arorihensis* were closely watched near Qorilugud on 14/2/10. They showed more chestnut on the crown and ear covets than shown in BHA
 - 118. Somali Lark (*Mirafra somalica*)**
And these! 3 birds were watched closely and photographed on the Banade plains on 15/2/10. In size, rufous colour and on bill shape and length they were classic Somali but were much duller and less scalloped than illustrated in BHA. Happily they much more approximated the illustrations in the Birds of Africa and, particular, Birds of Somalia. They were very tame and could be shepherded around, reluctant to fly. Birds in aerial display seen from the speeding vehicles by HB and PJ were probably this species. Endemic to Somalia
 119. Short-tailed Lark (*Pseudalaemon fremantlii*)
2 at the Wajaale plains 9/2 (AJ/EP), 4 north of Iaaafmadobe on 13/2 and many on the Banade plains 14/2 and 15/2/10. The brown nominate spp

- 120. Lesser Hoopoe Lark (*Alaemon hamertoni*)**
 In a fairly short stretch of bush dotted desert on the Banade plains on 14/2 and 15/2/10 these large, rather Pipit like, Larks were numerous (up to 15 sighted on 14/2/10) and one was seen doing its characteristic song flight. A good Somalia endemic nicely “staked out” by AJ from his visit some weeks earlier
121. Greater Hoopoe Lark (*Alaemon alaudipes*)
 Confined to coastal areas in Djibouti and Somalia. Only one from the vehicle (HB) between Loyada and Djibouti City on 19/2/10
122. Desert Lark (*Ammomanes deserti*)
 Common in suitable habitat in Djibouti and western Somaliland. Both *assabensis* and the paler *akeleyi* were identified
123. Crested Lark (*Galerida cristata*)
 Appears to replace the Thekla in coastal areas but we did them little justice
124. Thekla Lark (*Galerida theklae*)
 The very Crested like spp *elliotti* was the most widespread Lark we encountered in Somaliland
- 125* Blanford’s Lark (*Calandrella blanfordi*)
 The distinctive spp *daroodensis* was seen on the Waajale plains on 9/2 and the Banade plains on 14/2/10
- 126* Somali Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella somalica*)
 Common on the Waajale plains 9/2 and the Banade plains on 17/2/10. Endemic to Somaliland and northeast Ethiopia with a disjunct population (often split as Athi Short-toed Lark) in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania
127. Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark (*Eremopterix leucotis*)
 6 seen on the Waajale plains on 9/2/10
128. Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark (*Eremopterix nigriceps*)
 Common on the Waajale and Banade plains and around Erigavo
129. Rock Martin (*Ptyonoprogne fuligula*)
 At the Daallo escarpment on 20/2 and the Foret de Day escarpment on 19/2/10. Also at Addis airport on 21/2/10
130. Common House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*)
 2 at Hargeisa Airport on 8/2/10 (HB)
131. Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)
 Regularly encountered
132. Ethiopian Swallow (*Hirundo aethopica*)
 The common Swallow over much of Somaliland
133. White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*)
134. Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)
 One at Ga’an libah on 10/2/10
135. Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)
 Singles at Djibouti City 7/2 and Waajale 9/2/10
136. Grassland Pipit (*Anthus cinnamomeus*)
 One of the spp *annae* on the Waajale plains 9/2/10
137. Long-billed Pipit (*Anthus similis*)
 Seen at Ga’an Libah, Banade plains, Daallo Scenic Outlook and near Day Village. These were spp *nivescens* in a possible multi-split of this species
138. Plain-backed Pipit (*Anthus leucophrys*)

- Common on the Waajale plains on 15/2/10. ssp *saphiroi*
139. Fork-tailed Drongo (*Dicrurus adsimilis*)
140. Cape Rook (*Corvus capensis*)
Common at Jumfoouri Rock and around Waajale on 9/2/10
141. House Crow (*Corvus splendens*)
Nothing splendid about this introduced pest, abundant at Berbera and Djibouti City
142. Pied Crow (*Corvus alba*)
Surprisingly uncommon and replaced by 144 in most areas. Also at Addis airport on 21/2/10
143. Dwarf Raven (*Corvus edithae*)
Common throughout Somaliland
144. Fan-tailed Raven (*Corvus rhipidurus*)
Common, especially at Daallo and Day
145. Northern Grey Tit (*Parus thruppi*)
Only one, at our camp near Qorilugud on 13/2/10
146. White-rumped Babbler (*Turdoides leucopygia*)
Common at Ga'an Libah including a flock frequenting our camp site. ssp *smithii*
147. Scaly Chatterer (*Turdoides aylmeri*)
A group of 6 seen and photographed by MB near Qorilugud on 13/2/10 could not be relocated by the rest of us
148. Dodson's (Common) Bulbul (*Pycnonotus (barbatus) dodsoni*)
Seemed to replace 150 east of Burco
- 149* Somali (Common) Bulbul (*Pycnonotus (barbatus) somaliensis*)
The common Bulbul in the nw of Somaliland and in Djibouti. Both this and 148 are usually regarded as races of Common Bulbul
150. Little Rock Thrush (*Monticola rufocinereus*)
Fairly numerous in Somaliland
151. Common Rock-Thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*)
Only one female bird near Day Village on 20/2/10
152. Blue Rock-Thrush (*Monticola solitarius*)
One at our hotel in Hargeisa on 10/2 and one near Day Village on 19/2/10
- 153. Somali (Olive) Thrush (*Turdus (olivaceus) ludoviciae*)**
For some unintelligible reason this endemic Blackbird has long been lumped in the widespread but totally dissimilar, both in appearance and habitat, Olive Thrush of East Africa. It is now increasingly recognised as a Somali endemic tied to the few patches of highland Juniper forest in the north of Somaliland. Several at Ga'an Libah 11/2 and 12/2/10 including a male investigating our camp kitchen and the commonest bird at the upper Daallo escarpment 15/2, 16/2 and 17/2 with up to 20 being seen on 16/2/10
- 154* White-throated Robin (*Irania gutturalis*)
A female seen by HB from the vehicle on the road to Loyada 18/2/10. An Asian breeder only occurring in Africa in the NE
155. Common Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)
Two at Ga'an Libah on 11/2 and a pair at Day Village on 20/2/10. The nominate spp
156. Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*)

One of the wintering ssp *phoenicuroides* near the Day escarpment on 129/2/10 (MB)

157. African (Rufous) Scrub-Robin (*Cercotricas (galactotes) minor*)
2 individuals near Qorlilugud on 13/2 and 14/2/10, one in full song. Now generally considered split from the migrant, and darker plumaged, Rufous Scrub-Robin
158. White-browed Scrub-Robin (*Cercotricas leucophrys*)
Singles at Jumfoouiri Rock on 9/2 and north of Inaafmadobe on 13/2/10 but not everyone got onto them
159. Black Scrub-Robin (*Cercomela podobe*)
2 birds, including one vocalising from atop a bush, at Loyada on 19/2/10
160. Brown-tailed Rock-Chat (*Cercomela scotocerca*)
A pair on the Airport escarpment Hargeisa on 10/2/10
161. Blackstart (*Cercomela melanura*)
2 on the Daallo escarpment on 16/2 , 1 near Burco on 18/2 and 3 at Day Village on 20/2/10
162. Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)
This and 163 were abundant in Somaliland and after our initial comparative diagnoses we spent little time on them
163. Isabelline Wheatear (*Oenanthe isabellina*)
164. Desert Wheatear (*Oenanthe deserti*)
Common in Somaliland
165. Pied Wheatear (*Oenanthe pleschanka*)
Common on the flat plains of Somaliland. Many males in full plumage
166. White-crowned Black Wheatear (*Oenanthe leucopygia*)
Only on the black lava fields at Goubet Kharab 19/2 and 20/2/10
- 167* Abyssinian Black Wheatear (*Oenanthe lugubris*)
A nice pair of the white bellied ssp *vauriei* at Daallo Village on 16/2/10. Sometimes considered conspecific with either Mourning or Schalow's Wheatears but probably best treated as an Eritrean / Ethiopian / Somali endemic in its own right
- 168. Somali Wheatear (*Oenanthe phillipsi*)**
The attractive species was happily common in all rocky habitat in Somaliland and numbers were seen on 9 days – most of them males in full finery. Endemic to Somalia but just creeping into southern Ethiopia, this was the last of the world's Wheatears for HB
169. Upcher's Warbler (*Hippolais languida*)
This tail wagger was seen on the Daallo escarpment on 16/2 and at Day Village on 19/2/10
170. Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)
Most of the *Phylloscopus* seen turned out to be Chiffchaffs but we had two of these at Ga'an Libah 12/2/10
171. Common Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)
172. Brown Woodland Warbler (*Phylloscopus umbrovirens*)
Common and vocal around Daallo
173. Menetrie's Warbler (*Sylvia mystacea*)
A male of the ssp *rubescens* near Waajale on 9/2 (HB / EP) and a female north of Inaafmadobe on 13/2/10

174. Banded Parisoma (*Parisoma boehmi*)
3 vocal birds north of Inaafmadobe on 13/2 and 1 near Qorilugud on 14/2/10.
The endemic spp *somalicum*
175. Pale Prinia (*Prinia somalica*)
2 of the nominate spp at Djibouti City on 7/2 and a single north of
Inaafmadobe on 13/2/10
176. Graceful Prinia (*Prinia gracilis*)
Up to 10 birds at Djibouti City on 7/2/10
177. Yellow-breasted Apalis (*Apalis flavida*)
2 north of Inaafmadobe on 13/2/10. This spp *viridiceps* is sometimes
considered a separate species, Brown-tailed Apalis
178. Red-fronted Warbler (*Urorhipis rufifrons*)
Relatively common in acacia bush in Somaliland
179. Yellow-bellied Eremomela (*Eremomela icteropygialis*)
As for 178
180. Northern Crombec (*Sylvietta brachyura*)
One at the lower part of the Daallo escarpment 16/2/10
- 181* Philippa's Crombec (*Sylvietta philippae*)
In the acacia bush north of Inaafmadobe and near Qorilugud on 12/2/10 they
were suddenly common with up to 10 seen. Endemic to Somaliland and
southern Ethiopia, they can be hard to find in the latter
182. Grey-backed Carmaroptera (*Carmaroptera brachyura*)
Common
183. African Grey Flycatcher (*Bradornis microhynchus*)
Common
184. Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)
One at Ga'an Libah on 11/2/10
185. Grey-headed Batis (*Batis perkeo*)
Common
186. White-breasted White-Eye (*Zosterops abyssinicus*)
A common and a highly variable species perhaps destined for a split. Ours
were the spp *socotrana* endemic to north Somaliland and Socotra, those at
Day Village in Djibouti probably something else
187. Southern Grey Shrike (*Lanius meridionalis*)
Only seen between Loyada and Djibouti City on 20/2/10 including one (along
with 204) feeding on a road kill!
188. Somali Fiscal (*Lanius somalicus*)
Conspicuous and abundant in Somaliland
189. Common Fiscal (*Lanius collaris*)
One seen at Addis airport 21/2/10
190. Brubru (*Nilaus afer*)
Several encounters in Somaliland
191. Northern White-crowned Shrike (*Eurocephalus rueppelli*)
A few seen in Somaliland
192. Black-crowned Tchagra (*Tchagra senegalensis*)
One at Day Village 20/2/10
193. Red-naped Bush-Shrike (*Laniarius ruficeps*)

- One near Wadama Go'o and 2 near Qorlilugud on 13/2/10. A hard to find species confined the Ethiopia and Somaliland which sneaks into northern Kenya. Nominate spp
194. Rosy-patched Bush-Shrike (*Rhodophoneus cruentus*)
The nominate form was regularly encountered in both Somaliland and Djibouti
 195. Ethiopian Boubou (*Laniarius aethiopicus*)
Common and noisy at Ga'an Libah on 11/2 and 12/2. Also seen and common by voice at the Day escarpment 19/2 and 20/2/10. Part of recent 4 way split of the Tropical Boubou complex
 196. Red-billed Oxpecker (*Buphagus erythrorhynchus*)
A single at Banabe riding on a Warthog on 15/2 and several around Day Village on 19/2/and 20/2/10
 197. Golden-breasted Starling (*Lamprotornis regius*)
This superb creature was happily common over much of Somaliland and Djibouti
 198. Greater Blue-eared Glossy Starling (*Lamprotornis chalybaeus*)
Common throughout
 - (198a) Lesser Blue-eared Glossy Starling (*Lamprotornis chloropterus*)
As pointed out by AJ there appeared to be two sizes of "blue" Glossy Starlings at our stop near the start of the Jumfoouri plains on 9/2/10 and we recorded Lesser Blue-eared on our list. However reference to the books indicate this would be a large range extension and in honesty we did not check them carefully enough. Something for AJ and others to check out in future)
 199. Superb Starling (*Lamprotornis superbus*)
Common throughout
 - 200* White-crowned Starling (*Spreo albicapillus*)
Abundant, especially around human habitation. Endemic to Somalia and Ethiopia just creeping into far north Kenya
 - 201* Somali Starling (*Onychognathus blythii*)
Common at Ga'an Libah, Daallo and Day escarpment. Endemic to Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somaliland and Socotra island
 202. Wattled Starling (*Creatophora cinerea*)
Common, often alongside 210
 203. Hunter's Sunbird (*Chalcomitra pulchellus*)
Several seen north of Inaafmadobe and near Qorilugud on 13/2/10
 204. Nile Valley Sunbird (*Hedydipna metallica*)
2 at Djibouti City (La Siesta grounds) on 7/2 and around 6 north of Inaafmadobe and near Qorlilugud on 13/2/10
 205. Variable Sunbird (*Cinnyris venustus*)
Common in Somaliland
 206. Shining Sunbird (*Cinnyris habessinicus*)
The commonest Sunbird encountered in Somaliland
 207. Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird (*Anthreptes orientalis*)
6 or so around our camp near Qorlilugud on 13/2/10
 - 208* Somali Sparrow (*Passer castanopterus*)
Common in coastal areas but, in contrast to what the books say, seems to be replaced by 220 inland. Endemic to Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somaliland with a small disjunct population in Kenya, it is much easier to find here than anywhere else.

209. Shelley's Rufous Sparrow (*Passer shelleyi*)
A pair on the Waajale Plains on 9/2/10
210. Swainson's Sparrow (*Passer swainsonii*)
Common on the higher plateau of Somaliland
- 211* Arabian Golden Sparrow (*Passer euchlorus*)
The disgusting railway embankment close to the La Siesta Hotel in Djibouti City has to be the world hotspot for this species which is very local in Africa and often difficult to track down in Yemen. Around 60 there, including many full plumaged males, on 7/2 and a further flock of 30+ north of the main city on 20/2/10
212. Yellow-spotted Petronia (*Petronia pyrgita*)
Common in Somaliland especially around villages
- 213* Pale Rockfinch (*Carpospiza brachydactyla*)
A major surprise was 6 of these enigmatic finches drinking at the watering hole near Wajaale town on 9/2/10. They were watched closely in the scope, all the so called "diagnostic" features noted and some variable quality voucher photographs taken. A Middle East breeder, it is recorded from Djibouti and Ethiopia but not, as far as we know, from Somaliland
214. Cut-throat (*Amadina fasciata*)
A pair at the Waajale watering hole on 9/2/10
215. Red-billed Buffalo Weaver (*Bubalornis niger*)
A commensal of man in Somaliland most numerous around Burco town
216. White-headed Buffalo Weaver
Abundant and conspicuous was the "tomato bum"
217. Ruppell's Weaver (*Ploceus galbula*)
Common and often in mixed colonies with 219 and 220
218. Lesser masked Weaver (*Ploceus intermedius*)
219. Vitelline Masked Weaver (*Ploceus vitellinus*)
220. Red-billed Quelea (*Quelea quelea*)
Only common on the Jumfoouri plains on 8/2 and 9/2/10
221. Northern Red Bishop (*Euplectes franciscianus*)
One male amongst a flock at the Old Military Workshop Hargeisa on 10/2/10 (HB)
222. Green-winged Pytilia (*Pytilia melba*)
A pair at our campsite near Qorlilugus Village on 13/2 and 14/2/10
223. Red-billed Firefinch (*Laganostica senegala*)
Only around our hotels at Djibouti City and Hargeisa 7/2 and 8/2/10
224. African Silverbill (*Eudice cantan*)
Djibouti City 7/2, Jumfoouri plains 9/2 and Hargeisa 10/2/10
225. Purple Grenadier (*Uraeginthus lanthinogaster*)
A pair at Jumfoouri Rock on 9/2/10
226. Eastern Paradise Whydah (*Vidua paradisaea*)
Out of plumage Whydahs are notoriously difficult to identify but a partially plumaged male in a flock at the Waajale watering hole at least made this one easy
227. Pin-tailed Whydah (*Vidua macroura*)
And the red bills of this flock also made life easier. Also at the Waajale watering hole

228. Steel-blue Whydah (*Vidua hypocherina*)
And this was of course the most wanted and the most difficult although one flock at Jumfoouri Rock on 9/2/10 seemed to fit the plates in BHO. But really a bird only to be ticked in full plumage!
229. Reichenow's Seedeater (*Serinus reichenowi*)
Around a dozen with Queleas on the Jumfoouri Plains on 8/2/10
230. Brown-rumped Seedeater (*Serinus tristriatus*)
Seen at Ga'an Libah on 11/2 and Daallo on 15/2 and 16/2/10
231. White-bellied Canary (*Serinus dorsostriatus*)
Fairly common
- 232. Somali Golden-winged Grosbeak (*Rhynchostruthus louisae*)**
A young male came in close at 700m on the Maydh Road on 16/2/10 but only HB and PJ were present and it frustratingly flew and could not be relocated. Did PJ and HB however achieve some kind of birding fame as perhaps the only people to have ever seen all three forms (and we were together each time) – Arabian, Socotran and Somali?
- 233. Warsangli Linnet (*Carduelis johannis*)**
Absent from its drinking wells (where over 100 have been seen at one time) at the Daallo Scenic Outlook and only on our list by the skin of its beak (so to speak). At our first stop on the Daallo – Maydh road at about 1800 metres a small white finch flew twittering over our heads and disappeared off downhill. Attempts to relocate it failed. Although this bird is so unmistakable in its range and everyone saw something of it the views were brief, poor and more frustrating than satisfactory. Solidly endemic to the mountains of north Somaliland, Daallo is at the far west end of its range but further east is still unsafe for visitors
234. Somali Bunting (*Emberiza poliopleura*)
1 near Waajale on 9/2/10 and 1 north of Inaafmadobe on 13/2/10

Mammals

1. Yellow-winged Bat (*Lavia frons*)
One of these striking creatures was seen in the evening of 17/2/10 north of Inaafmadobe
2. Unstriped Ground Squirrel (*Xerus rutilus*)
Common. HB once had a pet one of these in Kenya whose party trick was to attempt to stuff peanuts down unsuspecting visitors' ears!
3. Cape Hare (*Lepus capensis*)
Frequently encountered
- 4. Speke's Pectinator (*Pectinator spekei*)**
We encountered several of this Gundi relative at the Beira Hills, Daallo and near Day Village. Endemic to Djibouti and Somaliland
5. Spotted Hyaena (*Crocuta crocuta*)
One near its lair on Jumfoouri Rock on 9/2/10 was seen by some. Calling around our camp at Ga'an Libah on 12/2/10
6. Golden Jackal (*Canis aureus*)
7. Black-backed Jackal (*Canis mesomelas*)
Both species were regularly encountered on the plains of Somaliland
- 8. Naked Mole Rat (*Heterocephalus glaber*)**

This foetal like Blesmol, endemic to the Horn of Africa as far south as Kenya, is colonial and goes by its alternate name of “Sand Puppy”. It betrays its presence by the mini volcanic eruptions it creates when it digs. These seen both at Adobe on 10/2 and near Qorilugud on 13/2/10. HB “crept” up on one at Adobe for at least a glimpse of it in its tiny burrow

- 9* Hamadryas Baboon (*Papio hamadryas*)
This handsome social animal was seen several times on the plains east of Daallo, on the Maydh road and at the Day escarpment
- 10* Desert Warthog (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*)
We encountered several from around Adabe to west of Erigavo on several days. A Horn of Africa endemic, smaller and paler than the African Warthog and with different dentition. A disjunct population in South Africa is now considered extinct
- 11* Pelzeln’s (Dorcas) Gazelle (*Gazella (dorcasp) pelzelni*)
Fairly common in the north west of Somaliland. Generally considered an endemic race of the widespread Dorcas Gazelle
12. **Speke’s Gazelle (*Gazella spekei*)**
Endemic to the arid littoral of northern and eastern Somalia and common on the Banabe plains with up to 30 in a day on 14/2, 15/2 and 17/2/10. Very like the Thomson’s Gazelle of further south, the male is distinguished by its dished and inflatable nose
13. Gerenuk (*Litocranius walleri*)
Common around Adobe Village and also seen between Ga’an Libah and Burco
- 14* Salt’s Dik-Dik (*Madoqua saltiana*)
Delightfully common throughout Somaliland with up to 50 in a day. Largely endemic to Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somaliland. The ssp *phillipsi*
15. Klipspringer (*Oreotragus oreotragus*)
2 at Ga’an Libah on 11/2 and one at the Day escarpment on 19/2/10
16. **Beira (*Dorcatragus megalotis*)**
One of the highlights of the trip was when AJ’s “man on the spot” led us to long scope views of a group of 5 of these beautiful antelopes in hills east of Hargeisa where AJ had been alerted to their presence some months previously. Endemic to Somalia with a small remnant population in Djibouti this species is rarely observed and can be assumed to be threatened by human pressure and collection of wood for charcoal in its dwindling range
17. Ethiopian Rock Hyrax (*Procavia habessinica*)
Seen at Daallo and at the Day escarpment