



Wildwings

WILDWINGS ETHIOPIA TOUR

MAMMALS AND BIRDS

28TH FEBRUARY – 12TH MARCH 2016

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Serval (Mick O'Dell)

INTRODUCTION

This was the second Wildwings' tour to Ethiopia following on from Nigel Goodgame's highly successful tour in 2014. This year's group was less bird-oriented than the 2014 group and consequently we spent less time looking for LBJs and more time looking for mammals and photogenic birds. The trip was run a month earlier than the 2014 tour and there were some interesting differences in the species seen, particularly the birds.

Last minute changes to the itinerary were forced upon us by security issues in the Oromia region and we could not visit Senkelle to look for Sudan Oribo, Swayne's Hartebeest and Ethiopian Hare. Very hot and extremely dry conditions in the east (Awash National Park, Bilen and Ali Dege) also probably cost us a couple of species but conversely heavy storms, the short rains had arrived, in the Negele and Yabello regions, probably helped as we saw several groups of Burchell's Zebra which had not been seen in 2014. Overall we still managed a highly respectable 44 species excluding leader-only species and roadside casualties.

What was also interesting was the differences between the two tours, e.g. in 2016 we saw two Ethiopian Wolves compared to eight in 2014. Canine distemper continues to threaten the long-term future of the species! Conversely we saw at least 16 jackals compared to three in 2014. In 2016 we saw three fabulous Servals and three Striped Hyaenas, in 2014 we saw Leopard, African Wildcat and bits of a Caracal. The combined lists demonstrate the true richness of the mammal fauna in Ethiopia.

On the bird front we saw roughly 50 species less than in 2014 but surprisingly still saw over 40 species not seen in 2014. Highlights included two unexpected Wattled Cranes on the drive from Yabello to Awasa, a fabulous flock of over 110 Spot-breasted Plovers in Gaysay Grasslands, three species of owl (Abyssinian, Cape Eagle and African Wood) seen well at Dinsho, and good views of five species of bustard (Kori, Arabian, Northern White-bellied, Hartlaub's and Buff-crested).

In the vote for the mammal of the trip Serval just beat Ethiopian Wolf to the title this year.

Richard Webb
15th March 2016.

MAMMALS

Nomenclature largely follows the six-volume **Mammals of Africa** except for bovids where it follows the recently published **Bovids of the World** which in turn follows the taxonomy of the **Handbook of Mammals of the World**.

1	Yellow-spotted (Bush) Hyrax	<i>Heterohyrax brucei</i>	Four seen by Merid crossing the road in Harrena Forest and then most of the group saw at least one well, albeit briefly.
2	Ethiopian Rock Hyrax	<i>Procavia habessinica</i>	Ten Bilen and another four on an escarpment on the drive between Negele and Wachile.
3	Northern Lesser Galago	<i>Galago senegalensis</i>	Two south-east of Negele while spotlighting pre-dawn.
4	Grivet Monkey	<i>Chlorocebus aethiops</i>	Four Awash NP, one Bishangari, six at the turaco site north of Negele and four presumed Grivets at the turaco site east of Negele.
5	Bale Monkey	<i>Chlorocebus djamdjamensis</i>	20+ showed well in Harrena Forest.
6	Vervet	<i>Chlorocebus pygerythrus</i>	A group of about 10 including young unexpectedly seen in the United African Hotel grounds at Awasa. A group of five between Negele and Wachile may also have been Vervets but were not seen well enough to be certain.
7	Guereza Colobus	<i>Colobus guereza</i>	10+ Bishangari, 3+ Dinsho, 7+ Harrena Forest and c.10 in the grounds of the United African Hotel at Awasa.



Bale Monkey (Mick O'Dell)



Guereza Colobus (Caroline Simpson)

8 **Olive Baboon** *Papio anubis*

Small numbers between Nazret and Awash, Awash, Bishangari, between Dodola & Dinsho, Gaysay Grasslands, Harrena Forest and at Awasa.

9 **Hamadryas (Sacred) Baboon** *Papio hamadryas*

Fantastic encounters with upwards of 100 near and around Filowha Hot Springs in Awash NP, five along the roadside east of Awash Town on route to Bilen, up to 20 on two days at Bilen and 100+ along the road either side of Awash Town while heading back south although a lot of these looked rather dark and some may actually be hybrids with Olive Baboons.



Hamadryas Baboons (Mick O'Dell)



Gelada Baboons (Tony Mundell)

10	Gelada Baboon	<i>Theropithecus gelada</i>	Good views of a group of at least 60 animals at Debre Libanos.
*	Crested Porcupine	<i>Hystrix cristata</i>	Two dead on the roadside south of Meki had been killed by farmers and dumped on the side of the road.
11	Abyssinian Hare	<i>Lepus habessinicus</i>	In Awash NP one on the 29th and 8+ on the 1st. At Bilen eight on the 2nd and three on the 3rd, two at Bishangari and one south-east of Negele. According to Mammals of Africa , this is the species occurring east of the Rift Valley with Ethiopian Hare <i>L.fagini</i> occurring to the west. Mammals of Africa treats this as a good species but the latest version of the Kingdon field guide lumps both forms back in with Cape Hare <i>L. capensis</i> .
12	Blick's Grass Rat	<i>Arvicanthis blicki</i>	Abundant Sanetti Plateau.
13	Yellow-spotted Brush-furred Rat	<i>Lophuromys flavopunctatus</i>	Two seen on Sanetti Plateau.
14	Black-clawed Brush-furred Rat	<i>Lophuromys melanonyx</i>	Common Sanetti Plateau.
15	Giant Mole Rat	<i>Tachyoryctes macrocephalus</i>	At least 10 of these on our first morning on the Sanetti Plateau.
16	Gambian Sun Squirrel	<i>Heliosciurus gambianus</i>	Singles at Bishangari and Awasa.
17	Striped Ground Squirrel	<i>Xerus erythropus</i>	Two north of Negele, two between Negele and Wachile and one south of Yabello.
18	Unstriped Ground Squirrel	<i>Xerus rutilus</i>	Seen twice around Animalia Lodge at Bilen and two south of Yabello.



Blick's Grass Rat (Mick O'Dell)



Giant Mole Rat (Mick O'Dell)

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| 19 | Serval | <i>Leptailurus serval</i> | One seen well for a couple of minutes on the first afternoon at Dinsho and fabulous views of probably two individuals on and off for upwards of 30 minutes on the second afternoon in Gaysay Grasslands. A further individual was seen distantly at Gaysay Grasslands by Merid the same afternoon and Merid also saw one late at night near the entrance to the hotel in Goba! Gaysay Grasslands and Dinsho are undoubtedly one of the best places to see Serval in Africa. |
| 20 | Common Dwarf Mongoose | <i>Helogale parvula</i> | A group of six briefly between Wachile and Arero. Somali Dwarf Mongoose was reported from the same area by the 2014 tour but this is outside the range of that species and Common Dwarfs in this area have greyer heads and a slightly paler appearance than others elsewhere in Africa and Merid agrees that it is likely that the 2014 animals were also Common Dwarf Mongooses. |
| 21 | Slender Mongoose | <i>Herpestes sanguineus</i> | One seen independently by Robin and Michael in Harrena Forest. The altitude of the sighting is outside the published altitudinal range of the species but there was a further record of the species in the same area in May 2015. |
| 22 | White-tailed Mongoose | <i>Ichneumia albicauda</i> | One at Bilen on the second night drive and two singles while spotlighting south-east of Negele. Also seen in the compound at Animalia Lodge on the first night by Merid and the second night by myself. |
| 23 | Spotted Hyaena | <i>Crocuta crocuta</i> | Heard nightly near the camp in Awash NP. Singles seen on the first night drive at Bilen and again the following morning with at least one and possibly two while spotlighting on foot at Bishangari. |

24	Striped Hyaena	<i>Hyaena hyaena</i>	One seen at relatively close range for about a minute on the first night drive at Bilen, the first two vehicles also seeing eyeshine from a second individual briefly. A large male seen distantly at Ali Dege the following morning having apparently been feeding on a carcass moments before. An unexpected bonus as not seen very often on Ethiopian tours.
*	Aardwolf	<i>Proteles cristata</i>	One ran across the road between the second and third vehicles while spotlighting south-east of Negele but was only seen by Merid and his driver Mesfin, and sadly missed by the clients.
25	African Golden Wolf	<i>Canis anthus</i>	Five Ali Dege and one along the lakeshore at Bishangari. This species was previously considered to be a Golden Jackal <i>C. aureus</i> which is common in Asia and west to eastern Europe and across North Africa. However it has now been split off as a separate species as DNA studies have shown it to be closer to wolves than jackals.
26	Black-backed Jackal	<i>Canis mesomelas</i>	Two pairs Awash NP, Bilen two on the 2nd and another two on the third, one south-east of Negele and one south of Yabello.



Black-backed Jackal (Mick O'Dell)



African Golden Wolf (Mick O'Dell)

27	Ethiopian Wolf	<i>Canis simensis</i>	Good views of two on the first morning on Sanetti Plateau. Sadly it remains a declining species.
28	Bat-eared Fox	<i>Otocyon megalotis</i>	One seen briefly by the first two vehicles on the first afternoon in Awash NP.



Ethiopian Wolf (Mick O'Dell)

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| 29 | Burchell's (Plains) Zebra | <i>Equus quagga</i> | Groups of 3, 16, 4 and 10 south of Yabello. Surprisingly common given the absence of the species in 2014. Conversely the dry conditions at Ali Dege meant that we missed Grevy's Zebra this year. |
| 30 | Common Warthog | <i>Phacochoerus africanus</i> | c.20 Awash NP, common Bilen, 10+ Ali Dege, 10+ Bishangari, common Gaysay Grasslands and Dinsho and six between Negele and Wachile. The latter could sadly not be turned into Desert Warthogs. |
| 31 | Hippopotamus | <i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i> | A solitary individual Lake Awasa. |



Burchell's Zebra (Caroline Simpson)

32	Northern Gerenuk	<i>Litocranius sclateri</i>	Bilen 4+ on the 2nd and two on the 3rd. 8+ Ali Dege. Split from Southern in the Bovids guide.
33	Southern Gerenuk	<i>Litocranius walleri</i>	Two groups of four and a single animal south of Yabello near Soda.
34	Guenther's Dik-dik	<i>Madoqua guentheri</i>	At least 14 between Negele and Wachile the first being seen about two hours south of Negele. One between Wachile and Arero and six south of Yabello.
35	Harar Dik-dik	<i>Madoqua hararensis</i>	c.20 Awash NP, six, three and three on the three days at Bilen including a pair on two days within the compound at Animalia Lodge. Four Ali Dege. Split from Salt's Dik-dik in the Bovid guide.



Harar Dik-dik (Mick O'Dell)



Gunther's Dik-dik (Mick O'Dell)

36	Bright's Gazelle	<i>Nanger notatus</i>	A group of three and another single south of Yabello. Split from Grant's Gazelle in the new Bovids guide.
37	Soemmerring's Gazelle	<i>Nanger soemmerringii</i>	5+ Awash NP and 100+ Ali Dege.
38	Ethiopian Klipspringer	<i>Oreotragus saltatrixoides</i>	Two pairs on Sanetti Plateau one of which was seen on both mornings on the plateau. Treated as a separate species in the new Bovids guide.
39	Beisa Oryx	<i>Oryx beisa</i>	Seen daily in Awash NP in small numbers but surprisingly absent from Ali Dege this year.
40	Bohor Reedbuck	<i>Redunca redunca</i>	Common Gaysay Grasslands.
41	Common Duiker	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>	Singles at Bishangari and along the approach road to Sanetti Plateau. Two Gaysay Grasslands.



Beisa Oryx (Mick O'Dell)



Soemmerring's Gazelle (Tony Mundell)



Bohor Reedbuck (Tony Mundell)



Mountain Nyala (Mick O'Dell)



Mountain Nyala (Tony Mundell)

42	Mountain Nyala (Gedesma)	<i>Tragelaphus buxtoni</i>	Common at Gaysay Grasslands and Dinsho where they were very approachable.
43	Northern Lesser Kudu	<i>Ammelaphus imberbis</i>	10+ in Kudu Valley in the northern section of Awash NP and a single animal at Bilen.
*	Southern Lesser Kudu	<i>Ammelaphus australis</i>	This form which is split from Northern Lesser Kudu in the new Bovids book was seen twice in Yabello Wildlife Sanctuary but only by Merid (one) and myself (two).
44	Menelik's Bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus meneliki</i>	Seen in small numbers, up to 10, at Dinsho and Gaysay Grasslands preferring the forest edge at the latter.

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