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FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF LAKE OL' BOLOSSAT ECOSYSTEM

NYANDARUA COUNTY

A Guide to Common, Migratory, Threatened and Endemic Bird Species

Annotated in Gikũyũ names of most birds

Lake and Shoreline | River | Marshes | Grassland | Shrubland | Forest |Farmland

July 2026



Front page cover photo: Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum* © Wanyoike Wamiti

Back page cover photos: Sharpe's Longclaw *Macronyx sharpei* (EN, E) © George Muigai; Lilac-breasted Roller *Coracias caudatus* © Wanyoike Wamiti; Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* (EN) © Raphaël Jordan; Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* (NT) © Wanyoike Wamiti; Secretarybird *Saggitarius serpentarius* (EN) © Wanyoike Wamiti; Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa* (EN) © SergioMaria Bianchi; Kikuyu White-eye *Zosterops kikuyuensis* (E) © Alex Tait

Field Guide to the Birds of Lake Ol' Bolossat Ecosystem

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DISCLAIMER

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Nancy Ogonje
Executive Director,
East African Wild Life Society

OBJECTIVES AND TARGET AUDIENCES OF THE FIELD GUIDE

This field guide is dedicated to the documentation of the rich avifauna diversity and heritage of Lake Ol' Bolossat as a valuable resource that will create awareness and inspire conservation attitude among local communities, researchers, citizen scientists, bird enthusiasts, students, local and international amateur and professional bird watchers/tourists and conservation practitioners. In addition, this field guide will be a useful marketing tool by agencies or institutional stakeholders who may have the intention of developing ecotourism activities for local community's livelihood support from the lake ecosystem. These institutions include but are not limited to the County Government of Nyandarua, State Department for Wildlife, Kenya Tourism Board, Tourism Research Institute, Kenya Wildlife Service, National Environment Management Authority, and Kenyan organizations related to water and wetlands.

The concept of developing this field guide was driven by the worrying conservation trend that Lake Ol' Bolossat ecosystem and the connected landscape are taking. Lake Ol' Bolossat is an ecosystem of international significance in protecting globally important bird species and biodiversity, some of which Kenya has signed international conventions that place an obligation on the county's "shoulders" to protect. However, Lake Ol' Bolossat ecosystem is rapidly changing, and by virtue of its location in an agriculturally-rich landscape, the lake is likely to further degenerate should immediate action not be taken to save it. It is anticipated that this valuable resource will stimulate appreciation of the rich natural heritage that Lake Ol' Bolossat Ecosystem is, and contribute to its conservation and appreciation now and for posterity. The field guide will promote sensitization, create environmental awareness and motivate local communities to appreciate nature and "own" the lake and its resources, hence encourage heritage protection.

To the best of current knowledge, this will be the first field guide (not just a checklist) ever developed in a local language (Kikuyu), understood by majority of local communities who largely have limited level of education.

HOW THE FIELD GUIDE WAS DEVELOPED

i) Development of the checklist of birds of Lake Ol' Bolossat

To develop this field guide, a comprehensive checklist of the birds of Lake Ol' Bolossat was first carried out. The checklist was developed using the following methods

a) Use of the checklist of the birds of Lake Ol' Bolossat, consisting of 162 bird species, developed during the survey conducted by the ornithologists from the National

Museums of Kenya (NMK) in November 2023 that was supported by the JRS Biodiversity Foundation through the East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS), the University of Nairobi, Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies (WMI), and Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI).

b) A literature review conducted to establish what other previous bird surveys/studies that had developed checklists, which were included in the checklist.
c) Acquired lists of bird records from all waterbird census ever carried out over the years in the lake through the African Waterfowl Census (AfWC) programme coordinated in Kenya by the Ornithology Section of NMK. Although the AfWC has not been consistently carried out in Lake Ol' Bolossat, the AfWC formed a critical and reliable source of information for a comprehensive checklist of the waterbirds of the lake
d) Utilization of the work of citizen scientists, particularly eBird and the Kenya Bird Map, which over time have carried out bird mapping of Lake Ol' Bolossat.
e) Consulted members of the Cranes Conservation Volunteers and members of the Nyahururu Bird Club for a list of bird species they have ever recorded in the lake. These two are Community-based Organizations. Chief among the group members consulted included Dr. Wanyoike Wamiti, who conducted a long-term study in the lake during his Masters and Ph.D. studies and other ornithological research work (e.g., KBA/IBA designation survey), Mr. George Muigai, who has extensive working knowledge of the lake's avifauna, Ms Amina Njoki, Ms Mirriam Mwangi, Mr. David Warui and Mr. Peter Karani who has participated in several field surveys in and around Lake Ol' Bolossat.

ii) Stakeholders' involvement in the validation of the checklist

After the development of a draft, the checklist of the birds of Lake Ol' Bolossat was subjected to stakeholder involvement for content validation and endorsement. This was carried out through virtual meetings and email correspondences. Institutions and individuals involved in the development and validation of the checklist included i) staff of Cranes Conservation Volunteers: Mr. George Muigai, Mr. David Warui and Ms. Mirriam Mwangi, ii) members of Nyahururu Bird Club: Mr. Peter Karani Gikonyo and Amina Njoki, iii) the International Crane Foundation's Dr. Wanyoike Wamiti, and iv) the East African Wild Life Society: Ms. Ann Mukaindo and Mr. Jabes Okumu. The above same team together with Prof. Thenya, from WMI, also validated the field guide after a draft was prepared.

iii) Consolidation and collection of bird images for the field guide

This field guide consolidated and collected images of the birds of Lake Ol' Bolossat from three main sources, i) mainly from the African Bird Club (ABC) Image Database https://afbid.africanbirdclub.org/search/browse, ii) images from Dr. Wanyoike Wamiti, and iii) author's own source (Henry Ndithia). All images used in this guide have recognized the sources and provided the necessary credit to owners. This range of image sources provided a wide range of images to select from for each species, including different demographic structure (age, sex).

HOW TO USE THIS FIELD GUIDE

The use of this field guide has been made simple as much as possible. The authors made all efforts to ensure that image(s) of each species are as close to the text as possible to make it easy for readers to find relevant information and relate it to the image(s). In addition, whenever possible, information and images of difficult species to tell apart are placed next to each other for ease of comparison. Moreover, species that exhibit sexual dimorphism (where male and female of the same species have distinct physical or external appearances), and where non--adult birds of a species (e.g., juveniles, immature) may be confused for another different species, authors have made available distinctive images of male, female and the non-adult bird side by side.

Abbreviations have been used in order to shorten the length of text under each species; a legend to these abbreviations have been provided below. Furthermore, information has been summarized while giving attention to ease of understanding and completeness of information. Because this field guide is meant foremost to be usable by local community members, authors have used very basic English language and explanation in brackets of the meaning of difficult technical terms. In an attempt for readers to have a feeling of the explanation of colors on the plumage and parts of a bird, description of such color has been pronounced to elicit such a feel. For instance, if a part of a bird is described as white, this implies that that part of a bird is whiter than a part described as whitish (in which case it would be a dull white). Color descriptions such as blueish, purplish, greyish etc, have been used to imply that such parts of a bird are not the exact shade of that color but a pale/dull version of it. Finally, authors have included figures with explanations of the different parts of the body (Figure 1 and 2), so that it is easier to understand descriptive texts that explain different parts of a bird's body.

i) Legend to abbreviations

Ad/ad:	Adult
Br/br:	Breeding
Non-br/non-br:	Non-breeding

Imm:	Immature (broader term for any bird that is not yet an adult, regardless of its exact age or plumage stage)
M:	Male (in relation to sex or gender of a bird)
F:	Female (in relation to sex or gender of a bird)
Juv:	Juvenile (a young bird wearing its very first coat of true feathers)
AM:	Afrotropical migrant birds
am:	Afrotropical migrant birds that may occur alongside residents, non-migratory individuals
PM:	Migrant birds from the Palaearctic region (Europe and parts of Asia)
pm:	Migrant birds from the Palaearctic region that may occur alongside residents, non-migratory individuals
EN:	Endangered globally according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species published by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). These are birds with high level of risk of extinction
VU:	Vulnerable globally according to IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. These are birds with moderate risk of extinction
NT:	Near Threatened globally according to IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. These are birds likely to join the classification of risk of extinction
LC:	Least Concern globally according to IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. This are birds with low risk of extinction
E:	Endemic birds that occur only in Kenya, or part of Kenya (e.g., Lake Ol' Bolossat)
*E:	Most likely this race of a bird species may occur in Lake Ol' Bolossat; further research is required to establish their occurrence at Lake Ol' Bolossat
IBA:	Important Bird and Biodiversity Area
KBA:	Key Biodiversity Area
L:	Left (indicating the location of an image of a bird relative to another)
C:	Centre (indicating the location of an image of a bird relative to another)
R:	Right (indicating the location of an image of a bird relative to another)

ii) Summary of information: numbers of different categories of birds in the guide

Bird families:	62
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Birds listed as Endangered:	5
Birds listed as Vulnerable:	2
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INTRODUCTION

Like many Kenya's habitats, Lake Ol' Bolossat is under severe threats, mainly of anthropogenic nature. It is imperative to urgently design proactive and innovative initiatives that are geared towards protecting Kenya's habitats in order to save the biodiversity and the natural heritage in the lake for posterity.

i) The site

Lake Ol' Bolossat, located in the northern side of Nyandarua County, Kenya, is an ecosystem of several significances. It is the only natural lake in Central Kenya highlands, is a critical wintering ground for Palaearctic migrant bird species from Europe and Asia, and also hosts Afrotropical migrant bird species. In addition, Lake Ol' Bolossat is a designated Important Bird Area (IBA) as well as a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) for its role in protecting biodiversity, particularly threatened avifauna. The lake supports local community livelihoods, and has significant ecotourism potential that can be harnessed for the benefit of community income with positive consequences on habitat and biodiversity conservation. However, despite being declared a protected wetland under the Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA) in February 2018, as a result of advocacy by the EAWLS among other stakeholders, the lake continues to face enormous threats that can negatively affect its biodiversity conservation potential. The main threats to Lake Ol' Bolossat and its associated terrestrial habitats include habitat degradation from agricultural expansion, human encroachment, declining water quality and quantity (also periodic drying), conversion of catchment areas from grassland and forest-thicket ecosystems to crop agriculture, illegal harvesting of vegetation, overgrazing, unregulated water abstraction, nutrient enrichment from soil erosion of the catchment, planting of exotic trees (mainly Eucalyptus) which shrink the wetland, and the presence of invasive plant and animal species. These threats are exacerbated by adverse effects of climate change.

While all organisms are important in the ecosystem, birds are particularly critical to ecosystem health. Birds are key pollinators, dispersers of seeds, are natural pest controllers, maintain ecological balance through their consumption of insects and other taxa, prevent disease spread by scavenging on carcasses, and fertilize the soil through nutrient cycling. Birds also have great significance in many Kenyan cultures. Moreover, birds are vital environmental indicators; they are sensitive to environmental changes hence they are a suitable way of monitoring the overall ecosystem health.

Kikuyu vernacular names are presented to some of the bird species in this field guide. However, not all bird species in this field guide have Kikuyu names because not all bird species occurred or were common in Kikuyuland

a) Location of Lake Ol' Bolossat

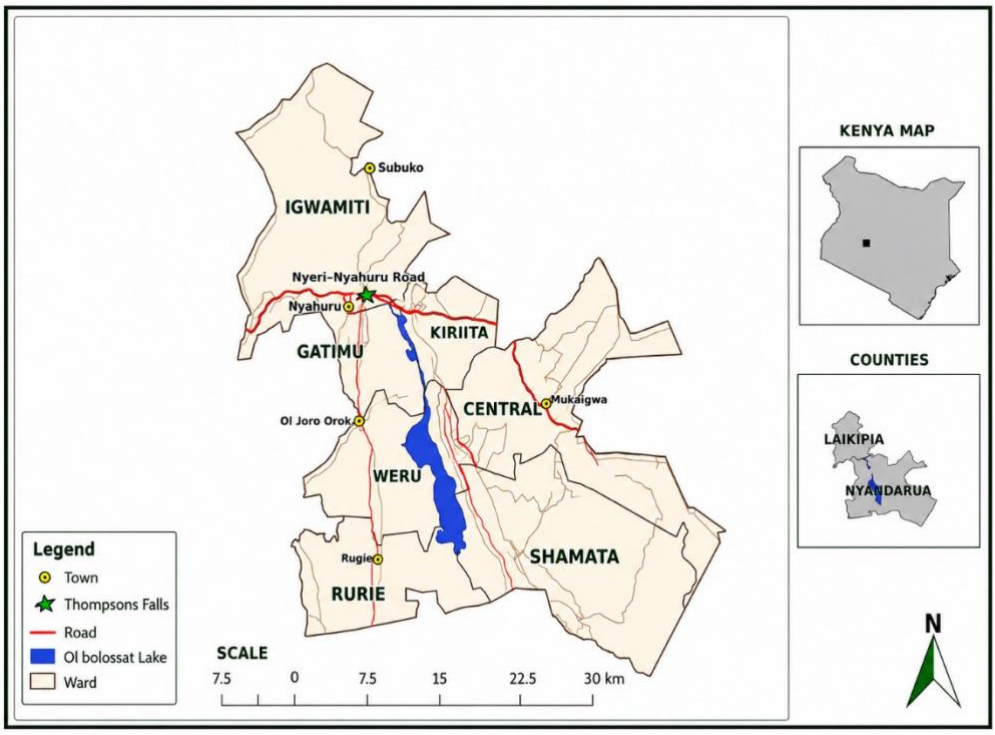


Figure 1: Lake Ol' Bolossat in Nyandarua County. Source: L. Ol' Bolossat Integrated Management Plan 2023-2033

b) Scope of the area of sightings of birds of Lake Ol' Bolossat ecosystem

Lake Ol' Bolossat ecosystem extends beyond the open waters. Birds included in this field guide were recorded in areas within the following boundaries: to the western side of the lake, boundary delineation of the ecosystem is defined by the main road from Ol Kalou to Nyahururu, and that extends the entire length of the lake; to the north, the ecosystem boundary is delineated by the Nyahururu to Nyeri highway, whose delineation ends at Mairũ Inya shopping centre; to the eastern side, the ecosystem boundary is defined by the road from Mairū Inya shopping Centre to

Shamata along the Satima Escarpment that also extends to define the southern boundary of the ecosystem at Kariamu shopping centre, and back to Ol Kalou.

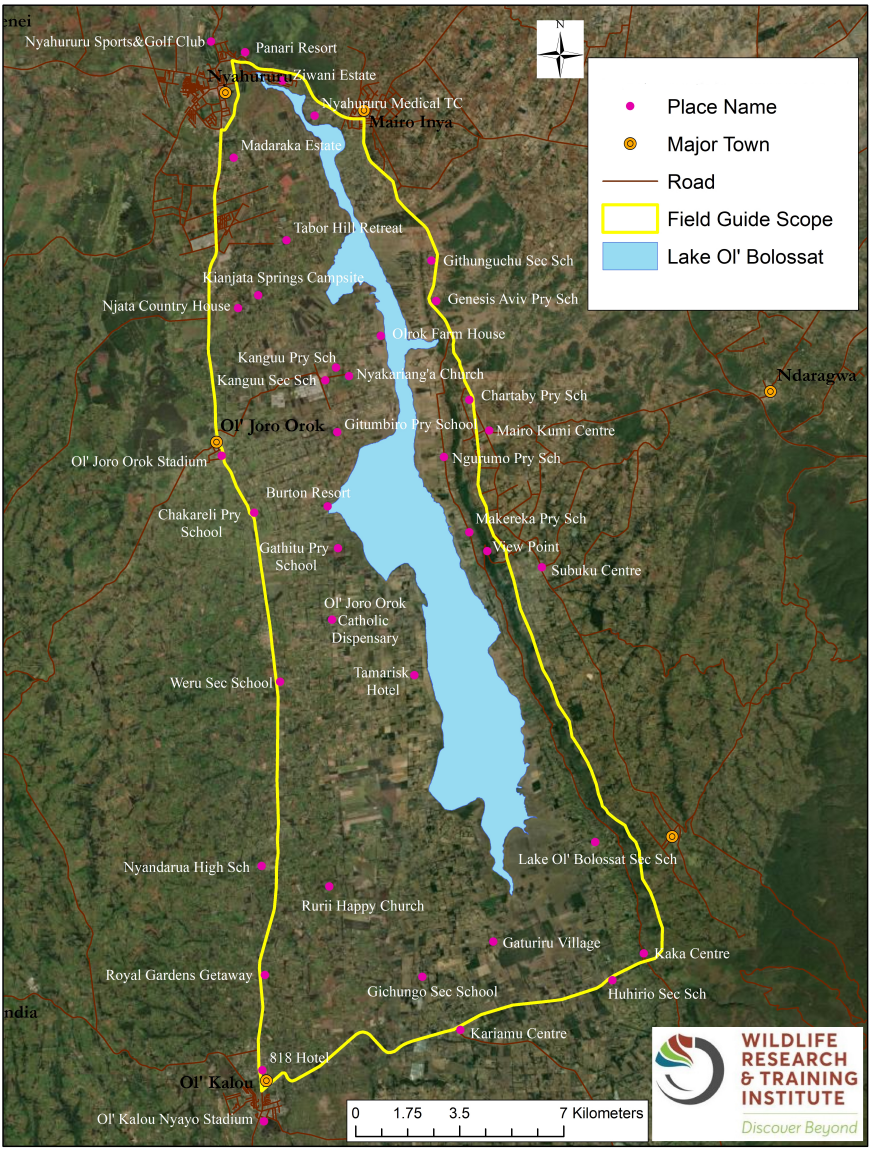


Figure 2: Adopted extent of the Lake Ol' Bolossat ecosystem within which the checklist of the birds was used to develop the field guide. Source: Dr. Judith Nyunja, Wildlife Research and Training Institute

ii) Habitat types

Lake Ol' Bolossat features diverse habitats that surround a shallow fresh water body. These habitats include extensive and permanent marshes and associated vegetation, shallow open water (maximum depth of 4m), riparian grasslands that are seasonally flooded, grasslands, riverine forests and woodlands, adjacent agricultural fields with crops such as maize/wheat, and eucalyptus plantation that has replaced natural grasslands.

iii) Biodiversity

Lake Ol' Bolossat is rich in avifauna, known to host over 300 bird species, potentially up to 375 bird species (Kirika et al 2026). The lake is habitat for five bird species that are listed by IUCN as endangered including the Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum* (BirdLife International. 2024), Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* (BirdLife International. 2021), which is also a Palaearctic migrant, Sharpe's Longclaw *Macronyx sharpei* (BirdLife International. 2025), which is also a Kenyan endemic (Bennun and Njoroge 1999), the Secretarybird *Saggitarius serpentarius* (BirdLife International. 2020), and Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa* (BirdLife International. 2021). Also found in this lake is the vulnerable Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* (BirdLife International. 2021), and the near-threatened Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* which is also an Afrotropical migrant (Bird Committee, 2019). Lake Ol' Bolossat is the habitat stronghold of the Grey Crowned Crane, consisting of over 90% of all cranes in Nyadarua County, and 12% of Kenya's entire population of the species, second only after Uasin Gishu (Mwangi et al. 2024). The lake offers wintering ground for 61 Palearctic migrant bird species and 35 species that are classified as Afrotropical migrants. From a recent biodiversity assessment, the lake provides habitat for 518 plant species, 278 fungi species, 206 invertebrate species, 17 species of reptiles and amphibians, and eight fish species (Kirika et al. 2026).

DIFFERENT PARTS OF A BIRD

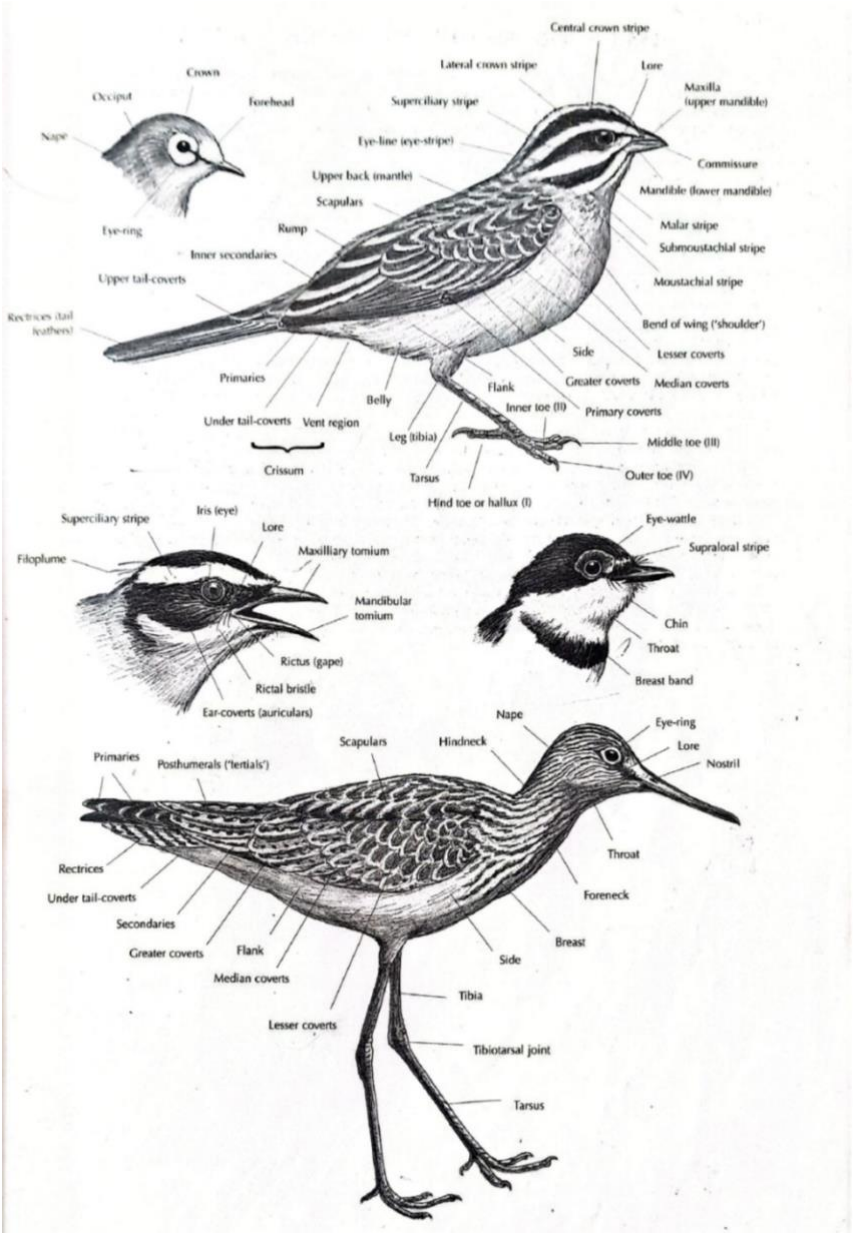


Figure 3: Description of the different parts of the body of a bird. The figure is adopted from Zimmermann et al (1996)

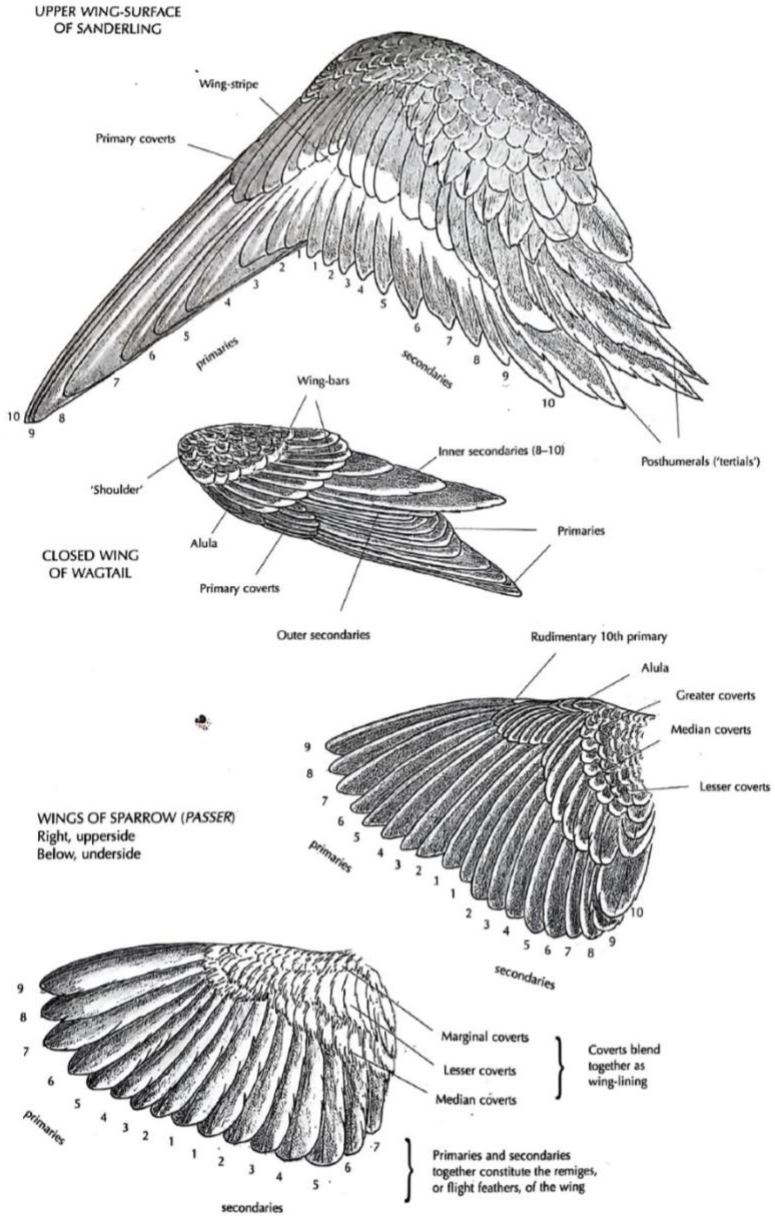


Figure 4: Description of the different parts of the wing of a bird. The figure is adopted from Zimmermann et al (1996)

ANATIDAE: DUCKS AND GEESE

RESIDENT DUCKS AND GEESE

African Black Duck *Anas sparsa* **KARÛMA NDIHÛ** 56cm

Identification: Black duck with white spots on the back and rump, bold white on the side of wing (greater coverts) and white on the edges of secondary feathers. Has blueish patch on secondary feather conspicuous when patched and in flight. Middle of bill with black/blueish-black color sandwiched between pale pinkish base of the bill and the tip of bill. Sexes similar, but male larger and heavier than female. Imm much duller with limited or no spotting above

Habitat: Shallow part of the river and wooded areas

Behavior: Shy, highly territorial, and largely sedentary species

Conservation status: LC, declining population

Interesting fact: It is a strict "river specialist" that fiercely defends exclusive territories



African Black Duck © Jacques de Speville



Cape Teal © John Caddick

Cape Teal *Anas capensis* 48cm

Identification: Pale grey underparts and chequered (mixture of) brownish pattern above, with a pink bill and distinct red eye. In flight, reveals two white bars on the secondaries that surround a broad dark green bar. Sexes similar, imm duller and less clearly spotted

Habitat: Shallow and open part of the lake

Behavior: Opportunistic breeding patterns, with unusual trait of males actively participating in raising ducklings

Conservation status: LC, declining population

Interesting fact: It has "built-in" filters for feeding

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* **KÎHEHE** Male 74cm

Identification: Large brown goose with dark rufous-brown back, distinctive brown patch around eyes. Sexes similar but female slightly smaller. In flight, shows large white wing patches. Imm darkish brown, lacking the brown eye patches

Habitat: Along the river and marshes

Behavior: Highly territorial, monogamous waterbird

Conservation status: LC, declining population

Interesting fact: Holds a sacred status in ancient Egypt, are known for their unique nesting habits, including taking over high-up tree cavities and even nests abandoned by other birds



Egyptian Goose, Ad © Wanyoike Wamiti



Fulvous Whistling-Duck © Yvan Perre

Fulvous Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor* **MBAATA** 51cm
Identification: For its scientific name *Dendrocygna bicolor, bicolor* means two distinctive colors which this duck has: fulvous: reddish-brown or cinnamon-brown found on the head, throat, breast and belly, and dark blackish-brown back and wings, with white stripes on the flanks. Bill bluish-grey. In flight, it reveals a white V-shaped band on the rump
Habitat: Shallow part of the lake and flooded agricultural areas
Behavior: Mostly active at night and at dawn/dusk
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Instead of a traditional quack, this species produces a clear, two-syllable, high-pitched whistle

Hottentot (Blue-billed) Teal *Spatula hottentota* 36cm
Identification: Small duck with black crown, pale buff-colored cheeks and throat. Similar to Red-billed Teal but larger in size. Bill distinctively blue, back has dark blackish-brown patterns, and entire underside pale buff, with heavily irregular patches of blackish-brown spots that become smaller towards the belly. Female duller than male and missing the green, black and white colors on secondary feathers. Imm even much duller
Habitat: Shallow part of the lake
Behavior: Relies on vegetation for camouflage, and leaves incubation and chick-rearing entirely to the female
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: One of the smallest duck species in the world, weighing just 250 grams

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha* 48cm
Identification: For its scientific name *Anas erythrorhyncha, erythrorhyncha* means **red-billed.** Has black crown, pale, whitish-buff cheeks and throat. Largely dark brown above with pale feather edging giving a scaled appearance. Underparts paler brown than the back with brown speckling on the breast and white-laced brown scaling on the belly. Bill distinctive pinkish-red. Sexes similar though males can have brighter red bill, especially during

breeding season. In flight shows striking creamy-white secondaries contrasting with dark upperwing
Habitat: Shallow and the open part of the lake
Behavior: Highly gregarious (in large flock) and nomadic species defined by its social, feeding, and reproductive habits
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Primarily forages at night




Hottentot (Blue-billed) Teal © Thomas Varto Nielsen | Red-billed Teal, pair © Wanyoike Wamiti

Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa* **MBAATA** 51cm
Identification: Br male is an attractive duck with chestnut-colored body, black head, blue bill and black stiff tail. In flight, male displays white underwing feathers. Female and immature dull brown with white line below the eye, broad dark cheek stripe and white throat. In flight, female has greyish-white underwings
Habitat: Shallow part of the lake and in the marshes
Behavior: Highly adapted for diving, often preferring to submerge and swim away from danger rather than fly
Conservation status: EN, declining population
Interesting fact: Male is both polygynous (having multiple female partners) and "nest parasite"

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis* 100cm
Identification: Ad male a massive long-necked goose with white face and red knob above the eye, red bill, rufous-colored spot on the neck and iridescent (feather changing color according to light) black and white plumage, which show green reflections in good light. Female similar to male but smaller in size and lacks the knob on the forecrown. In flight, displays white underwing feathers
Habitat: Open waters, flooded grasslands, and marshes
Behavior: Possess sharp spurs on the bend of each wing, which males use violently to battle rivals and defend territory during the breeding season
Conservation status: LC, stable population
Interesting fact: Africa's largest waterfowl and holds the title of the fastest-flying waterbird, clocking speeds of up to 142 km/h




Maccoa Duck, Ad © SergioMaria Bianchi | **Spur-winged Goose, pair © Wanyoike Wamiti**

White-faced Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna viduata* **MBAATA** 48cm
Identification: White-faced duck with chestnut-colored neck and white spot on the front side of the neck just below the head
Habitat: Shallow part of the lake, in marshes and floodplains
Behavior: Monogamous, share parenting duties, and are known for spending their days resting in large flocks near water
Conservation status: LC, increasing population
Interesting fact: Instead of a traditional duck quack, this species communicates with a high-pitched, three-note whistle, especially when flying in massive, noisy flocks




White-faced Whistling Duck, pair © Wanyoike Wamiti | Yellow-billed Duck, pair © Wanyoike Wamiti

Yellow-billed Duck *Anas undulata* **MBAATA** 59cm
Identification: Large duck with bright yellow bill and blackish stripe running on top of the bill. Body mostly with brown and creamy white speckles above, and with visible patch of dark green outlined with white and black colors on folded wing. In flight, displays dark upperwings with green secondary feathers narrowly edged with black and white
Habitat: Shallow part of the lake including marshes, flooded lands

Behavior: Have complex courtship displays, breeds during the rainy season and builds nest hidden in thick vegetation near freshwater
Conservation status: LC, stable population
Interesting fact: Highly nocturnal foragers that feed almost exclusively at night

MIGRATORY DUCKS AND GEESE

Common (Eurasian) Teal PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Anas crecca* 38cm
Identification: Both sexes are brown with cream-buff spots, uniform dark head with cream-white line above the eye (superciliary), and with bright green-and-black both outlined by white color on secondary feathers in flight. Similar to Garganey but has slightly shorter dark bill with an orange base
Habitat: Shallow water
Behavior: Gather in large flocks in shallow waters, highly vocal with distinctive whistling calls
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Despite its tiny size, it can take off into the air almost completely vertically if frightened or surprised




Common (Eurasian) Teal © Ruben Barone Tosco | Eurasian Wigeon © Ruben Barone Tosco

Eurasian Wigeon PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Mareca Penelope* 51cm
Identification: Non-br of both sexes is mottled brown (mix of brown and cream-white) tinged (having a very slight color) with silver or rufous with plain brown head. Male with more rufous tone
Habitat: Open water, marshes, and wet grasslands
Behavior: Highly gregarious (social), largely vegetarian
Conservation status: LC, increasing population
Interesting fact: Famous for being the "grazer"

Garganey PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Spatula querquedula* 41cm
Identification: Non-br of both sexes all brown with cream-white speckles, white eyebrows and dark eyestripes. Extremely similar to Common (Eurasian) Teal but with slightly longer all grey bill
Habitat: Shallow part of the lake

Behavior: Highly gregarious (social)
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Europe's only strictly summer-migratory duck



Garganey, male (R), female (L) © Nik Borrow

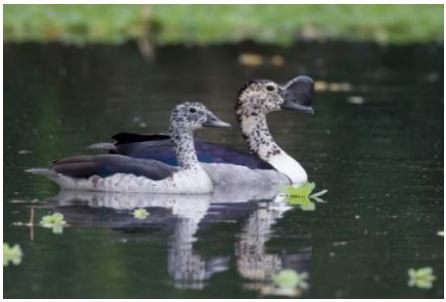

Northern Pintail, male (L) female (R). © SergioMaria Bianchi

Northern Pintail PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Anas acuta* 66cm
Identification: Slender-billed duck with a pointed tail. Non-br male and female all brown mixed with white spots, and pale head. Female has shorter tail than male
Habitat: Marshes
Behavior: Female nests on the ground in open spaces, choosing shortgrass and cropped areas
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Often called the "greyhound of the skies" due to its streamlined body and 3-foot wingspan that allow it to fly at high speed

Northern Shoveler PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Spatula clypeata* 51cm
Identification: Duck with a long spade-like bill. Non-br male and female entirely mottled (mix of grey and brown) and dark brown with a shovel-shaped bill that is orange on the sides. Male darker with more mottled breast and rufous-toned flanks (sides of the body)
Habitat: Shallow waters and marshes
Behavior: Social, non-diving waterbird that frequently forages in groups by swimming in circles to stir up and strain food
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Uses its shovel-shaped bill to filter and strain food from water

Knob-billed Duck am *Surkidiornis melanotos* **MBAATA** 74cm
Identification: Ad male is bulky boldly marked black and white duck with large knob (comb) on top of bill. Knob smaller in non-br birds. In good light, back shows green and purple iridescence (color changing with light intensity). Female much smaller and lacks the knob on the bill, its head more speckled. In flight, all dark wings. Imm similar to female but duller and with dull brown wash.
Habitat: Shallow part of the lake, flooded grasslands, and marshes

Behavior: Possesses distinct black knob which swells and darkens during the breeding season and acts as an indicator of health and dominance; the larger the knob, the more attractive the male is to females
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Male significantly larger than female, can weigh up to twice as much as female

Northern Shoveler M (R), F (L) © SergioMaria Bianchi | Knob-billed Duck, M (R), F (L) © Paul van Giersbergen

Southern Pochard am *Netta erythrophthalma* 51cm
Identification: Large diving duck. Male blackish-brown with pale chestnut-brown flanks (sides of body), red eyes and blue-grey bill. Female more uniform dull brown but with white patch at the base of bill, crescent-shaped (curved) whitish pattern behind the eye, and white vent. Imm similar to female but with less white on face. In flight, both sexes show clear white bar across all flight feathers
Habitat: Deep waters
Behavior: Active diving duck
Conservation status: LC, stable population
Interesting fact: Highly nomadic capable of flying up to 3,000 km in search of suitable water bodies



Southern Pochard, M (R), F (L) © Alan Manson

PHASIANIDAE: FRANCOLIN AND QUAIL

Common Quail pm (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Cortunix coturnix* **KĨMAKIA ARŨME** 19cm
Identification: In resident race, male distinctive with dark chestnut face but female paler overall with heavier streaking on the flanks (side of body). In the Palaearctic race, both sexes similar. Ad male may show a black throat patch.
Habitat: Open wooded grasslands, agricultural fields, and pastures
Behavior: Solitary for most of the year but gather in small flocks before their extensive migrations
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: The only migratory gamebird in its family


Common Quail, M © Dirk Huitzing


Scaly Francolin (Spurfowl) © Guido Keijser

Scaly Francolin (Spurfowl) *Pternistis squamatus* **MŨIKIA THIRŨ** 31cm
Identification: Olive-brown francolin with variable pale buff-brown feather edges giving a scaly effect. Has red bill and red or orange legs. Male may have one or two spurs on the back of legs (tarsi). Individuals from the eastern part of the Great Rift Valley (e.g., Lake Ol' Bolossat) are darker overall than their counterparts in the western part of the Great Rift Valley. Imm has duller bill than ad
Habitat: Forest, forest edges, secondary scrubland and farmland
Behavior: Spends majority of its time foraging on the forest floor, relying on dense, cover to hide from predators
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Unlike other francolins that immediately take flight when in danger, this species relies on camouflage

PODICIPEDIDAE: GREBES

RESIDENT GREBES

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* **GACIBĨKI** 33cm
Identification: Larger than Little Grebe and with slightly upturned bill. Br adult dark, with mottled (mix of colors) rufous flanks (side of body), and with golden tufts behind the red eyes. Non-br birds lack the golden tufts, and are much duller. Imm like non-br ad but head marked with brown and buff

Habitat: Shallow, vegetated part of the lake and in marshes
Behavior: Exceptional diver but poor on land, spending almost its entire live in water
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Plucks and swallows soft flank feathers daily to create a sieve-like plug inside stomach. This "feather filter" traps hard-bodied prey—like insect exoskeletons and fish bones—preventing them from damaging the intestines and giving the stomach more time to extract nutrients


Black-necked Grebe © Rolf Wiesler


Great Crested Grebe, pair © Jacques de Speville

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* **GACIBĨKI** 56cm
Identification: Large, long-necked slender grebe. Br ad has black crest, reddish and black color around the face. Non-br birds similar but crest and the reddish and black color around the face smaller and paler. Juv has black and white stripping on the head and neck
Habitat: Open waters
Behavior: Elaborate courtship rituals and devoted parenting
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Pairs mirror each other's movements, shake their heads, and even "penguin dance" by rising vertically out of the water

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* **GACIBĨKI** 28cm
Identification: Small short-necked grebe with a short bill and rounded head. Br ad has chestnut sides to the face and neck, and a swollen creamy gape (side of bill) spot. Non-br adult has face and neck duller buffy-brown and with smaller gape. Juv has grey-white face and throat and may show some stripping on the neck
Habitat: Calm, heavily vegetated part of the water
Behavior: Dives for 10 to 30 seconds to catch small fish, frogs, tadpoles, mollusks, and aquatic insects
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: It plucks and eats their own feathers



Little Grebe br © Jacques de Speville



Little Grebe non-br © Jacques de Speville

PHOENICOPTERIDAE: FLAMINGO

Greater Flamingo am, pm *Phoenicopterus roseus* 140cm

Identification: Larger than Lesser Flamingo (LF), with big downward-bent bill that is pink with a black tip and a reversed S-shaped long neck. Ad largely pale pink or white with a line of bright dark pink in the folded wing. Sexes similar but female slightly smaller. Imm grey-brown, has pale grey bill with black tip.

Habitat: Shallow shoreline

Behavior: Gathers in colonies of hundreds to thousands of individuals for safety, frequently stand on one leg. While feeding some individuals remain alert for warning in case of danger

Conservation status: LC, increasing population size

Interesting fact: Feeds through specialized filter-feeding. Inside of bill and tongue are lined up with hair-like bristles. As water is pumped out of its mouth, these comb-like bristles trap tiny food particles



Greater Flamingo, pair © Andrea Roper



Lesser Flamingo, Ad © Wanyoike Wamiti

Lesser Flamingo am *Phoeniconaias minor* 90cm

Identification: With blackish-red/maroon bill with distinct, sharply defined black tip, dark red eyes and bright pink plumage overall, but which is paler during non-br. Long slender legs that are distinctively pink. Sexes similar. Imm grey-brown or white.
Habitat: Shallow shoreline of the lake
Behavior: Highly sociable, occurring in large flocks numbering in millions to deter predators and coordinate movement
Conservation status: NT, decreasing population size
Interesting facts: Uniquely adapted to extract microscopic Spirulina and other diatoms from shallow waters using their highly specialized bills that contain up to 10,000 microscopic hairs that trap tiny food particles. They use a loud array of honks, short low sound, and hitting their beaks together to recognize flock members and offspring

COLUMBIDAE: PIGEONS AND DOVES

African Green Pigeon *Treron calvus* **NDITIBŨ** 27cm
Identification: Stout pigeon with a yellowish-green/olive-green head, neck, breast and belly, purple shoulder patch on green wings. Beak whitish with red base. Thighs distinctively bright yellow. Undertail feathers/tail feathers dark blackish at the base and pale grey/whitish at the tip of tail.
Habitat: Well-wooded habitats, riverine forests, savanna woodlands and in dense tree canopies and forest edges. Especially prefer wild fig trees whose fruits they feed on
Behavior: Highly nomadic birds, highly social and exceptional camouflaged
Conservation status: LC
Interesting facts: Recognized by its parrot-like climbing skills and acrobatic feeding style (e.g., hanging upside down on trees), flying upside down to reach food


African Green Pigeon, Ad © Jacques de Speville



Dusky Turtle Dove, Ad © Itai Shani

Dusky Turtle Dove *Streptopelia lugens* **NDUTURA** 30cm
Identification: Very dark grey dove with slightly pale grey face and distinct black patch on the side of neck. Broad rufous (brownish black) on wings. In flight, reveals grey mantle (the lower back area) and black wing tips. Imm paler with more rufous feathers
Habitat: Forest and forest edges, farmlands
Behavior: Sedentary (not much movement, localized)

Conservation status: LC, decreasing population size
Interesting facts: Highly monogamous (having only one mate)

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos* **NDUTURA** 20cm
Identification: Grey-brown above and pale grey below with pinkish breast and iridescent green (emerald) spots on the wings. In flight, shows very rufous panel on wings, two bold black bars over the lower back, and a broad black band near tip of tail.
Habitat: Dry bush, scrubs, woodlands and farmlands
Behavior: Shy bird, mostly walking on the ground foraging for seeds and termites, often moving in a distinct zigzag pattern
Conservation status: LC, decreasing population
Interesting facts: Makes a call of sadness that birders jokingly interpret to mean "My mother is dead" or "Another brother is dead"!


Emerald-spotted Wood Dove © John Caddick


Laughing Dove © Amanda Tanfield

Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis* **NDUTURA** 23cm
Identification: Slender pinkish dove which is rufous grey above and with pink and black mottling (mixture) across the upper breast/throat area. Has steel blue edges of wings. Female slightly paler below. In flight, reveals the steel blue bands across wings and white corners of tail.
Habitat: Dry grassland, scrublands, and open woodlands
Behavior: Highly sociable, ground-foraging dove
Conservation status: LC, decreasing population
Interesting facts: Named from its unique, chuckling (laughing) sound, highly adaptable, monogamous species

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* **NDUTURA** 25cm
Identification: Slender dove with long graduated tail. Ad male black on the face and upper breast, has purplish bill with yellow tip, two black bands across the lower back and dark purplish black spots on the wing. Ad female has pale buff-grey (buff-brown wash) or whitish face and dark grey bill. Imm similar to female but back and wing regions spotted with pale rufous-grey and with black and white. Flight swift and direct, revealing rufous (brownish) wings and slender tail

Habitat: Dry bush and farmlands
Behavior: Nomadic, rapid low flight, foraging for tiny grass seeds on open grounds
Conservation status: LC, increasing population
Interesting facts: Highly prolific (constantly productive), breeds continuously yearround, often raising multiple broods in quick succession



Namaqua Dove © Simon Fletcher


Red-eyed Dove © Wanyoike Wamiti

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata* **NDUTURA** 32cm
Identification: Larger and darker than Ring-necked Dove with red eyes surrounded by a diamond-shaped area of maroon skin. Has pale grey forehead, plain brown above and dark pinkish below. In flight, reveals wide grey band/whitish band across end of tail. Imm has brown eyes and obscure hind collar.
Habitat: Forest and woodlands
Behavior: Occur in pairs or solitary, less in flocks
Conservation status: LC, decreasing population

Ring-necked Dove *Streptopelia capicola* **NDUTURA** 25cm
Identification: Grey dove with small black eyes and is brownish-grey overall. Jas black spot on the side of neck that goes round to the nape region
Habitat: Forest edges, open woodland, dry bush and in cultivation
Behavior: Occur in pairs and in flocks
Conservation status: LC, increasing population
Interesting fact: Birders and locals often humorously describe their rhythmic cooing (low sound) as sounding like "work haaaarder, work haaaarder"

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea* **NDUTURA** 34cm
Identification: Grey and maroon-brown pigeon with conspicuous white spots on closed wings, patch of bare red skin around the eyes, and pink and white striated neck. In flight, reveals a distinct pale grey rump and broad black end of tail. Imm duller grey-brown with greying eye patch
Habitat: Occurs in places with cliffs and in human habitation
Behavior: Highly social and often gathers in large, noisy flocks
Conservation status: LC, stable population

Interesting fact: Native to sub-Saharan Africa



Ring-necked Dove, Ad © Wanyoike Wamiti



Speckled Pigeon © Guido Keijser

OTIDIDAE: BUSTARDS

Black-bellied Bustard *Lissotis melanogaster* 64cm



Black-bellied Bustard © Simon Fletcher



Black-bellied Bustard, in flight © Jacques de Speville

Identification: Male: mediums-sized bustard with striking black underparts, long thin neck with thin black line down the front, and boldly patterned black, white, and buff head. Female: with pale buff (brownish) head and neck, mottled (mixture) dark brown back, and whitish belly. In flight, ad male shows large white patch in primary feathers of wing and black trailing edge on secondary feathers
Habitat: Prefers tall, open grasslands, wooded grasslands, and cultivated farmlands
Behavior: Forages for insects
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: During mating displays, male pulls his head back to his shoulders and emits a loud whistle, pauses, and then abruptly raises his head to produce a sudden "cork-popping" sound followed by a soft gurgle (like the sound of water flowing quickly over rocks in a stream)

Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori* 128cm

Identification: Largest bustard with black crested head, greyish brown above, and with black and white pattering on edges of closed wing. Sexes similar but female smaller and lighter.
Habitat: Open grasslands with long grass
Behavior: Prefers to walk but occasionally flies, omnivores
Conservation status: NT, declining population
Interesting fact: Ad male is Africa's heaviest flying bird



Kori Bustard, Ad (L) © Wanyoike Wamiti, M displaying (R) © Nik Borrow

CUCULIDAE: CUCKOOS AND COUCALS

RESIDENT CUCKOOS AND COUCALS

Black Coucal *Centropus grillii* **GĨTHIMA MBŨRI** 38cm
Identification: Br ad all black with bright chestnut wings. Non-br ad heavily streaked with buff and brown on the head and upper back, with barred rufous and black wings and tail, and with mixture of brown and buff (pale brownish-yellow) below. Imm similar to non-br ad but has more extensive barring on crown and forehead (resembles white-browed Coucal but lacks the white brow (white stripe above the eye))
Habitat: Dense grasslands with tall grasses, reedbeds, and seasonally-flooded marshes
Behavior: Practice polyandry (one female mates with multiple males), female maintaining up to five males. Males assume 100% roles of incubation and chick-rearing
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Completely reversed gender roles. Females are larger and fiercely defend territories to mate with multiple males




Black Coucal, Ad (L) © Thierry Helsens, Juv (R) © Mike Hounsinou

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* **GĨTHIMA MBŨRI** 18cm
Identification: Ad male iridescent (changing color according to light) bright green above, small white bar behind the dark eye, and snow white below with dark green patches on sides of breast. Ad female is bronze-green above with russet barring below, and with pale brown eyes.
Habitat: Forests, forest edges and riverine corridors, woodlands and shrublands
Behavior: Brood parasitic behavior, instead of building nests, female clandestinely lays single eggs in nests of unsuspecting host species, (e.g., sunbirds and batises), leaving them to incubate and raise chicks
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Bird was named by French explorer François Le Vaillant to honor his Khoikhoi guide and assistant, Klaas, who collected the original specimen




Klaas's Cuckoo, Ad M (L) © Stefan Behrens, Ad F (R) © Peter Ginn

MIGRATORY CUCKOOS AND COUCALS (am)

Black Cuckoo am *Cuculus clamosus* **GĨTHIMA MBŨRI** 30cm
Identification: Eastern race (such as L. Ol' Bolossat) entirely blue-black, long tailed that has white tips and white barring on the undertail feathers. Ad rufous-breasted morph has distinct reddish-brown throat and chest, and black-and-white barring on belly. Similar to Red-chested Cuckoo, although Red-chested Cuckoo has a cinnamon patch on breast but not throat.

Habitat: Dense woodlands, forest edges, thick bushland
Behavior: Skulks (small leaps/jumps) in thick, wooded areas
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Black Cuckoo is a master of deception. Female lays her eggs in nests of other unsuspecting birds, manipulating host parents into hatching and raising the cuckoo chicks as their own




Black Cuckoo black morph (L) © Jacques de Speville; rufous-breasted morph of Black Cuckoo (R) © Nik Borrow

Red-chested Cuckoo am *Cuculus solitarius* **MUĨKIA NGŨ** 30cm




Red-chested Cuckoo, M (L) © Jacques de Speville: F (R) © Jacques de Speville

Identification: Ad male dark grey above with black and white bands from upper breast to belly and broad rufous band across breast and grey throat. Ad female similar to male but has whitish-buff throat. Imm charcoal black above with black throat and black and white bars below.
Habitat: Dense woodlands, forest edges, and riverine thickets habitats
Behavior: Highly vocal, solitary Afrotropical migrant
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Female secretly lay their eggs in nests of other species (e.g., Cape Robin-Chat)

Diederik Cuckoo am *Chrysococcyx caprius* 19cm




Diederik Cuckoo, M (L) © Jacques de Speville, F (R) © Thierry Helsens

Identification: Ad male metallic bronze-green above, with bold green and white face pattern, obvious red eye, and white spots on folded wings. White below with barred flanks and outer tail spotted black and white. Ad female mottled with brown and green above with a russet throat and upper breast, and barred with black and white flanks, eyes dull brown
Habitat: Open woodlands/shrublands, riverside bushes and forest edges
Behavior: An Afrotropical migrant, and a brood parasite - lays its eggs in nests of other species, primarily weavers and bishops, forcing unsuspecting foster parents to raise its chicks
Conservation status: LC, stable population
Interesting fact: Its call sounds exactly like its own name, like "deeee-deee-deee-DEE-de-ric,"

MUSOPHAGIDAE: TURACOS

Hartlaub's Turaco *Tauraco hartlaubi* **NGÛÛGÛ** 43cm
Identification: Turaco with green body, blue-black crest/crown, striking white facial markings, and vivid red flight feathers which are visible in flight
Habitat: Upper canopy of the forest
Behavior: Intensely territorial, monogamous, and remarkably agile
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Possesses unique, copper-based pigments that make them appear green and red



Hartlaub's Turaco, pair © Nik Borrow

CAPRIMULGIDAE: NIGHTJARS

Montane Nightjar *Caprimulgus poliocephalus* **GITUTURA** 23cm

Identification: Male with white spots on primary feathers, and white outer-tail feathers. Female has buffy wing spots and less white on outer-tail feathers

Habitat: Open grasslands and woodlands

Behavior: Nocturnal (active at night), insectivorous bird

Conservation status: LC, declining population

Interesting fact: A master of disguise. Nests directly on the ground, female often fake a broken wing or hop around dragging a leg to lure predators away from their eggs and chicks





Montane Nightjar, Ad (L) © Nik Borrow, in flight, (R) © Jacques Erard

APODIDAE: SWIFTS

Little Swift *Apus affinis* **THÜNGÜRÜRÜ** 14cm

Identification: Swift with a rectangular white rump patch, square-ended tail and distinct white patch on throat. In flight shows broad wings

Habitat: Human habitation and rocky cliffs

Behavior: Hunts for insects airborne, drink while skimming the water (while moving over water), and rarely land on the ground

Conservation status: LC

Interesting fact: Catch insects, sleep, drink, and even mate while flying. They glue their nests together using their own sticky saliva




Little Swift © Jacques de Speville **Mottled Swift © Marc Languy**

Mottled Swift *Tachymarptis aequatorialis* **THŨNGŨRŨRŨ** 21cm
Identification: Large dark grey swift with mottled underparts, and small dark white throat. Has long wings with pointed forked tail.
Habitat: Spend majority of its life in the air, hunting, drinking, and sleeping on wings, only landing to nest
Behavior: Hunts for insects on the wing, catching ants, flies, termites, beetles, and occasionally honeybees
Conservation status: LC, stable population
Interesting fact: Foraging trips can take it up to 50 km away from their cliff-side roosts

RALLIDAE: RAILS, CRAKES AND GALLINULES

RESIDENT RAILS, CRAKES AND GALLINULES

Black Crake *Zapornia flavirostra* 20cm
Identification: Black bird with yellowish-green bill and red eyes and legs. Imm browner above and light grey below and whitish throat.
Habitat: Open water with floating plants. Roost, and build bowl-shaped nests just elevated over water
Behavior: Feeds on insects, worms, crustaceans, frogs, small fish, seeds, and aquatic vegetation
Conservation status: LC, stable population
Interesting fact: Older offspring from previous broods often help their parents build nests and feed new chicks



Black Crake, Ad © Simon Fletcher



Common Moorhen, Ad © Simon Fletcher

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chrolopus* 36cm
Identification: Blackish rail with red bill with yellow tip, and rounded red frontal shield, white stripes on flanks (side of body), and white undertail feathers. Legs yellowish-green with red above the knee
Habitat: Open water with floating vegetation. Rely heavily on tall aquatic plants for hiding and building floating nest platforms
Behavior: Reluctant to fly, preferring to walk on dense reeds. When threatened, they dive completely underwater, clinging to submerged plants for surprisingly long periods

Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: When threatened, it flicks its tail to flash a bright white underside alerting predators that the bird is alert and ready to escape, often deterring them from attacking

Purple (African) Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio* **NGOCO** 46cm
Identification: Purplish-blue and green crake with white undertail feathers, red bill and frontal shield, red legs and long toes, sexes alike
Habitat: Open water with floating vegetation, marshes, and swamps
Behavior: Actively shuffles their large, elongated feet in shallow mud and floating vegetation to stir up and detect prey
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Uses its incredibly long, slender toes to walk across floating vegetation


Purple (African) Swamphen © Henry Ndithia

MIGRATORY RAILS, CRAKES AND GALLINULES (AM, am)

Lesser Moorhen AM *Gallinula angulata* 27cm
Identification: Rare bird with yellow bill which is red along the top, and small pointed red frontal shield. Legs greenish-yellow. Imm dull brown above with paler underparts and pale yellowish bill. Afrotropical migrant whose numbers increase from Apr-Aug.
Habitat: marshes and seasonally-flooded grasslands
Behavior: Very shy and seldom venture into the open
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Secretive wetland bird

Red-knobbed Coot am *Fulica cristata* **NDIRŨ** 46cm
Identification: Dark grey bird with distinct white bill and frontal shield which gets reduced and darker in non-br birds. Imm lacks the frontal shield and is more grey brown above and with pale grey underparts
Habitat: Shallow, open waters with fringing reed beds and abundant submerged vegetation
Behavior: Highly territorial and aggressive waterbird

Conservation status: LC, increasing population
Interesting fact: An aggressive waterbird closely related to cranes


Lesser Moorhen, Ad © Roger Fotso


Red-knobbed Coot, Ad © Wanyoike Wamiti

GRUIDAE: CRANES

Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum* **MŨHAU** 112cm
Identification: Largely grey with black and white wings, golden-colored crown, and a bare white cheek with small red wattle on the neck below bill. In flight, looks hunched (bent) and with labored flight, and lowered neck
Habitat: Shallow marshes, floodplains, and damp grassy flats for foraging and nesting
Behavior: Highly social and diurnal
Conservation status: EN, decreasing population
Interesting fact: Famous for its elaborate courtship dances



Grey Crowned Crane, pair (L), in flight (R) © Wanyoike Wamiti

RECURVIROSTRIDAE: STILTS AND AVOCETS

MIGRATORY STILT AND AVOCET (am, pm)

Black-winged Stilt am, pm *Himantopus Himantopus* 38cm
Identification: Black and white shorebird with thin long bill, long pinkish-red legs, and white crown and neck in ad birds. Female has browner back compared to male. Imm is duller.

Habitat: Shallow part of the lake, marshes and mudflats
Behavior: Cooperative breeder with elaborate courtship displays, and intense, dramatic defense mechanisms when their nests are threatened
Conservation status: LC, stable population
Interesting fact: Bird with the second longest legs of any bird relative to its body size, after the flamingo




Black-winged Stilt, Ad & Juv (L) © Wanyoike Wamiti, in flight (R) © Jacques de Speville

Pied Avocet am, pm *Recurvirostra avosetta* 43cm
Identification: Distinct black and white shorebird with slender upward-curved black bill, black cap and on the back of the neck, and long blue-grey legs. Male has longer bill than female. Imm is grey-brown on the back, on the back of the neck and on the wings
Habitat: Shallow waters, marshes, and mudflats
Behavior: Sweeping feeding habits, highly social, communal breeder, and fierce territorial protection of nesting sites
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Uniquely upward-curved beak




Pied Avocet, Ad (L) & Juv (R) © Jacques de Speville

CHARADRIIDAE: PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS

RESIDENT PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS

Blacksmith Plover (Lapwing) *Vanellus armatus* **KIKIRŨI** 31cm

Identification: Strikingly black, white and grey lapwing with white cap, black face and breast and red eye. Imm browner.
Habitat: Shores of the lake, the shallow marshes and along the river
Behavior: Highly vocal (noisy), bold, and adaptable wader
Conservation status: LC, increasing population
Interesting fact: Gets its name from its loud, metallic alarm call (*tink, tink, tink*), which sounds exactly like a blacksmith's hammer striking an anvil (solid surface upon which blacksmiths and metalworkers hammer and shape hot metals)



Blacksmith Plover (Lapwing), Ad (L) © Simon Fletcher, Juv (R) © John Sawyer

Black-winged Plover (Lapwing) *Vanellus melanopterus* **NJIROGA** 27cm
Identification: Shorebird with white forehead, distinct grey head and neck, black breast band and white belly. Similar to Senegal Lapwing (SL) but Black-winged Lapwing (B-WL) has longer legs than SL. SL has smaller but clearer white patch on forehead. Imm B-WL generally brown above, and on the head, neck and breast.
Habitat: Short, well-watered grasslands
Behavior: Frequently employing a "foot-trembling" behavior to disturb and catch insects for food, and use aggressive, highly vocal displays to defend their territories and nests
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Surprisingly active at night

Crowned Plover (Lapwing) *Vanellus coronatus* **NDWAGĨRĨRU** 31cm
Identification: Alert and upright shorebird with a black cap and white ring around the crown, yellow eyes, bright red legs and red bill with black tip. Imm has head pattern less well-defined compared to adult, eyes, bill and legs dull.
Habitat: Dry open grasslands of Lake Ol' Bolossat
Behavior: Highly alert posture, aggressive nest defense, and tends to forage actively during the late afternoon and night
Conservation status: LC, declining population

Interesting fact: Known as the **"**Sentinel (guard) of the Savannah". When danger approaches, it makes a sharp loud and piercing alarm call that warns their own chicks, other bird species and the entire wildlife (e.g., antelopes, zebras)




Black-winged Lapwing © SergioMaria Bianchi Crowned Lapwing, Ad © Wanyoike Wamiti

Long-toed Plover (Lapwing) *Vanellus crassilostris* **NDWAGĨRĨRU** 31cm
Identification: Upright lapwing with white face and foreneck, black nape region and neck, black breast band, pinkish bill with black tip, and red long legs. Imm similar to ad but duller with brown upperparts.
Habitat: Marshes and at the edges of Lake Ol' Bolossat
Behavior: Fierce territorial defense of its aquatic habitats
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Unique among plovers because it behaves exactly like a jacana: uses exceptionally long toes to evenly distribute its body weight, allowing it to walk and forage for aquatic insects on floating vegetation and lily pads without sinking




Long-toed Lapwing, Ad © Wanyoike Wamiti Spur-winged Lapwing, Ad © Wanyoike Wamiti

Spur-winged Plover (Lapwing) *Vanellus spinosus* **NDWAGĨRĨRU** 28cm
Identification: Name derived from curved carpal spur (a sharp, bony, horn-covered projection on the wing) that is difficult to see. Black, white and brown lapwing with a white cheek and sides of neck, black crown, throat and breast, and red eyes. In flight, shows white bar across upper side of wing.

Habitat: Open habitats with short vegetation near the waters of the lake
Behavior: To protect nest, this lapwing will dive-bomb (drop from a steep angle through the air) at intruders and use the spurs to attack, though actual strikes are rare but a bluff (deception) **Conservation status:** LC, increasing population
Interesting fact: When hunting for prey, this lapwing will rapidly vibrate their skinny legs and feet on shallow water or mud to trick hidden insects into fleeing so it can see and catch them

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris* 18cm
Identification: Plover with two black breast bands separated by a third white band, a broad white forehead and white line around the head below a greyish-brown crown. Side of face grey, with red eye-ring surrounding pale-yellowish eyes. Legs orange-red, bill red with black tip. Sexes similar. Imm weakly marked with dull legs
Habitat: Along the exposed shores of Lake Ol' Bolossat and the shores of river Ewaso Ng'iro
Behavior: Distinct "stop-run-peck" foraging behavior and unique foot-trembling technique, monogamous and territorial
Conservation status: LC, increasing population
Interesting fact: Uses a unique hunting technique where it repeatedly taps its feet on the mud or shallow water



Three-banded Plover, Ad (L) © Wanyoike Wamiti, immature (R) © John Caddick

MIGRATORY PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS (PM, am)

Common Ringed Plover PM (in Kenya: Sept – Mar) *Charadrius hiaticula* 20cm
Identification: A migrant plover that is all brown above and white below. Br ad has black breast band, bright white forehead, bright orange bill with black tip, and orange legs. Non-br ad has dull white forehead, dark bill and dull orange legs. Imm similar to non-br ad
Habitat: along the exposed shores of Lake Ol' Bolossat and the shores of river Ewaso Ng'iro
Behavior: distinctive stop-start foraging style, elaborate courtship and highly effective predator-distraction displays
Conservation status: LC, stable population
Interesting fact: To protect its hidden nests from predators, parent bird will drag a wing across the sand, deceiving it being injured to lure danger far away from its chicks




Common Ringed Plover, Br (L) © SergioMaria Bianchi, non-br (R) © Paul van Giersbergen

Kentish Plover PM (in Kenya: Sept – Mar) *Charadrius alexandrines* 16cm
Identification: Small migrant plover with dark bands on the sides of breast, and with black legs. Br male has black patch above the white on the forehead, black eye-stripe, black on the side of breast and a rufous wash on the nape. Non-br ad similar to White-fronted Plover but Kentish Plover is whiter (than White-fronted Plover) behind the neck and on the underparts, and its wings slightly extend beyond the tip of tail. Br female similar to non-br ad, while Imm is slightly buffier/pale yellow-brown
Habitat: along shorelines of the lake
Behavior: Extreme Survivor, thrives well in harsh, highly contrasting climates
Conservation status: LC, decreasing population
Interesting fact: To protect chicks in nest, a parent will run away from its nest while wildly flapping its wings and calling out. This dramatic distraction display tricks predators into chasing the adult so the chicks can remain safely hidden




Kentish Plover, br M (L), ad F (R) © SergioMaria Bianchi

Kittlitz's Plover am *Charadrius pecuarius* 15cm
Identification: Br ad has slightly long legs, buff-breasted, with a black patch across the forecrown through the eyes extending to the hind neck. Non-br ad lacks the black on forecrown and on the eyes. Imm as in non-br adult and buffier.

Habitat: Sparsely vegetated areas near water
Behavior: "run-stop-search" foraging strategy
Conservation status: LC, decreasing population
Interesting fact: Intentionally buries/covers its eggs to conceal them from predators



Kittlitz's Plover, br ad M (L) © Peter Ginn, non-br ad (R) © Bas Haasnoot

Lesser Sandplover/Tibetan Sandplover PM (in Kenya: Sept – Mar) *Charadrius. Atrifrons*



Lesser Sandplover/Tibetan Sandplover © Henry Ndithia

Identification: This species was split into two species in 2023 into Siberian Sandplover *Charadrius mongolus* and Tibetan Sandplover *Charadrius. Atrifrons*. Tibetan Sandplover is the species that migrates to Kenya/Lake Ol' Bolossat. Br ad has black forecrown and eye-patch, and a broad chestnut breast band. Non-br ad very similar to Greater Sandplover but smaller, slender, with a more rounded head, shorter bill and shorter blacker legs.
Habitat: Along water shoreline
Behavior: Highly migratory shorebird with distinct "run-and-pause" foraging strategy
Conservation status: The race/species Tibetan Sandplover is LC with declining population

Interesting fact: Flies up to 10,000 km from its high-altitude breeding grounds in the Himalayas and northern Asia to spend winters along coastlines in Africa

Little Ringed Plover PM (in Kenya: Sept – Mar) *Charadrius dubius* 17cm



Little Ringed Plover, br M (L) © SergioMaria Bianchi; non-br Ad (R) © Bram Piot

Identification: Very similar to Common Ringed Plover but smaller, slimmer with dark bill, yellow eye-ring and pale pinkish or yellowish legs. Br ad has black forecrown above the white forehead, black stripe across the eyes separated from the brown crown by a narrow white band. Non-br ad without the black patch on the forecrown.
Habitat: Along water shoreline
Behavior: Aggressive territorial defense of its nests. it hunts on dry mud or sand by standing perfectly still to spot prey and running forward quickly to snatch it
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Its nest aren't traditional woven structures; its simply shallow scrapes dug directly into gravel or sand

JACANIDAE: JACANAS

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus* 31cm
Identification: A strikingly chestnut and white waterbird with blue bill and blue frontal shield (distinct plate used for mate attraction, territorial defense, and as a visual status symbol during aggressive encounters), black hind neck and dark chestnut from the lower breast to the vent. Sexes similar but female slightly larger than male
Habitat: Floating vegetation in the waters
Behavior: Has a "lily-trotting" ability, using their oversized feet and long toes to walk on floating vegetation
Conservation status: LC, stable population
Interesting fact: Fondly referred to as the "Jesus Bird" because its disproportionately long toes distribute its weight so well that it appears to walk over water

Lesser Jacana *Microparra capensis* 17cm
Identification: Small jacana that is brown pale above and white below, with rufous crown, white superciliary stripe (distinct stripe of a color running from the base of a bird's bill and

passing just above its eye), narrow rufous eye-stripe and a patch with a mixture of golden-yellow and rufous on the side of breast. Sexes alike. In flight, reveals some white on the edges of wings and rufous rump and tail.
Habitat: Prefers habitats with sparser vegetation and shorter sedges/grasses rather than dense water lilies
Behavior: Monogamous, both males and females share parental and territorial duties, known for walking on floating vegetation
Conservation status: LC, stable population
Interesting fact: The smallest jacana in the world, weighing c. 40g.


African Jacana, Ad © Wanyoike Wamiti


Lesser Jacana © Paul van Giersbergen

SCOLOPACIDAE: SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES

MIGRATORY SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES (PM, am)

African Snipe am *Gallinago nigripennis* 30cm
Identification: Similar to Common Snipe but with a longer bill and much darker above, with more contrast between the dark breast and the white belly, and more heavily barred flanks. In flight, it flies close to the ground revealing white in the outer-tail feathers
Habitat: Swampy edges of Lake Ol' Bolossat
Behavior: Forage by pushing their long, sensitive bill deep into soft mud and marsh soil
Conservation status: LC, stable population
Interesting fact: Famous for the military term "sniper" because of its incredibly erratic (unpredictable), zigzagging flight path and secretive camouflage that makes it nearly impossible to hunt

Common Snipe PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) Gallinago gallinago 27cm
Identification: With buff-yellow and black-brown striped head and back, brown and buff-striped breast, dark-barred flanks, a long bill (shorter than in African Snipe), and white belly. In flight, reveals broad rufous tips of tail feathers with white tips, and lacks the white on the outer-tail feathers present in African Snipe
Habitat: Swampy edges of Lake Ol' Bolossat
Behavior: Relies on specialized physical adaptations like nearly 360-degree vision, vibration-sensitive bills, and unique tail-feather displays to survive in wetland habitats

Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Unpredictable, zigzagging flight pattern when flushed from cover is the literal origin of the word "sniper"



African Snipe © Werner Suter



Common Snipe © Simon Fletcher

Black-tailed Godwit PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Limosa limosa* 40cm
Identification: Tall shorebird with distinct long straight bill with wide pink base, and very long legs. Br male is rust-red from side of face to the breast, black and white bars on lower breast and white on belly. Br female is less rufous. Non-br ad has uniformly grey-brown back, head, neck and breast and white belly.
Habitat: Wet medium-to-tall-grassed vegetation
Behavior: Has rapid probing feeding strategy
Conservation status: NT, declining population
Interesting fact: Couples often spend the winter thousands of miles apart in different countries, yet reunite at their exact breeding grounds within days of each other



Black-tailed Godwit © Ruben Barone Tosco



Spotted Redshank © SergioMaria Bianchi

Spotted Redshank PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Tringa erythropus* 32cm
Identification: Tall wader with long red legs and long straight bill with red base. Br ad black with white spotting above showing white bars below. Non-br ad grey with white

streaks above and whitish below with prominent supercilium. In flight, reveals white in lower back and rump, and black and white barred tail
Habitat: Marshes of the lake, flooded grasslands, and wet agricultural fields.
Behavior: During non-br, it gathers either in single-species groups or mixed with other sandpipers
Conservation status: NT, declining population
Interesting fact: While foraging for invertebrates in deep water, it frequently submerges its head and even swims briefly.

Common Redshank PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Tringa tetanus* 28cm
Identification: Sandpiper that is brown above, with long bill that is red at the base, and distinctive orange-red legs. Br ad has an extensive mixture of streaks and bars. Non-br ad has short white supercilium (region above the eye) and grey-brown head and breast. In flight shows a white wedge up the back
Habitat: Shallow waters of Lake Ol' Bolossat
Behavior: Acts as the "sentinel (guard) of the marsh," frequently bobbing its head and immediately alerting all nearby wildlife with shrill alarm calls at the first sign of danger
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Its chicks are "precocial"— leaving the nest immediately, and are able to walk and find their own food within hours of hatching


Common Redshank, non-br © Lionel Sineux


Curlew Sandpiper © Jacques de Speville

Curlew Sandpiper PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Calidris ferruginea* 22cm
Identification: Medium-sized sandpiper with a long downward curved bill. Br ad has chestnut (rusty brown) on the head and underparts. Non-br ad has distinctive supercilium (white line above eyes), is grey-brown above that extends to the upper breast and white underpart. In flight shows a white rump and wing bars
Habitat: Shores of Lake Ol' Bolossat and edges of river Ewaso Ng'iro
Behavior: Socially monogamous and pair up during northbound/spring migration
Conservation status: VU, declining population
Interesting fact: Undertakes a 15,000 km migration from its breeding grounds in the Siberian Arctic to the coastal wetlands of Africa and Australia

Common Sandpiper PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Actitis hypoleucos* 20cm
Identification: Short-legged brown and white sandpiper with white underparts, has a white wedge at the shoulder and tail that is obviously longer than wing tips. Br ad has black streaking above and a fuller breast band. Non-br ad has whitish throat and centre of breast and legs olive-greenish. In flight reveals white bars on the wings.
Habitat: Shores of Lake Ol' Bolossat and edges of river Ewaso Ng'iro
Behavior: Continuously bobbing (quick, repetitive up-and-down motion) its tail up and down and nodding their head, particularly after landing or when alert.
Conservation status: VU, declining population
Interesting fact: Swims and even dives underwater to evade danger or catch prey


Common Sandpiper © Wanyoike Wamiti


Ruff © Wanyoike Wamiti

Ruff PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Calidris pugnax* male=30cm, female=23cm
Identification: Small-headed short-billed, scaly-backed shorebird with bright orange legs. Non-br brown or grey-brown above with mixture of grey and white on the head and breast. Some males are extensively white on the head, back and underparts. In flight, reveals narrow white wing bars, and white patches on the sides of tail
Habitat: Shallow, muddy part of the lake, flooded plains, and grasslands
Behavior: Male violently defends small territories in a communal display area called "lek" to impress female
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Male Ruff literally mimic the appearance of females to sneak mating

Marsh Sandpiper PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Tringa stagnatilis* 25cm
Identification: Smaller, slimmer than Common Greenshank (CG) with a straight bill and longer legs than CG. Br ad has black streaking on the head and neck, and black spotting on the back and flanks, legs bright yellow. Non-br ad grey-brown above, with light streaking from crown to the breast and face, has a supercilium (white above eyes) and underparts white, legs yellowish-green
Habitat: Shallow part of the lake and its mudflats, including river Ewaso Ng'iro
Behavior: Feed by wading in shallow water, walks briskly (lively pace) through mud or shallow water, pecking at the surface or sweeping their bills side-to-side to scout for prey
Conservation status: LC, declining population

Interesting fact: Its striking "needle-thin" bill and disproportionately long, yellowish-green legs makes its silhouette (dark outline or shape of a bird) unmistakable




Marsh Sandpiper © SergioMaria Bianchi | **Common Greenshank © Jarle Fjortoft**

Common Greenshank PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Tringa nebularia* 32cm
Identification: Large sandpiper that is grey-brown above and with white underparts, with long bill that is slightly upturned, long greenish or grey-greenish legs. Br ad is more heavily streaked on the head, neck and breast. Non-br ad has crown and sides of neck with pale grey streaking, and with white underparts.
Habitat: Shallow edges of Lake Ol' Bolossat
Behavior: Hyperactive foraging tactics. Rapidly pace, sweep their bills through the water, or run erratically with lightning strikes to capture prey
Conservation status: LC, stable population
Interesting fact: The long-legged sandpiper flies thousands of kilometers between its subarctic breeding grounds in northern Eurasia and its wintering sites in Africa

Wood Sandpiper PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Tringa glareola* 20cm
Identification: Similar to Green Sandpiper but browner above with long white supercilium (white above eyes), with greatly spotted back, slightly longer greenish legs and black bill with slightly greenish base, Br ad with a mixture of brown and white above, with a streaked neck and sides of breast and white underparts. Imm browner above with buff speckles. Flying bird reveal a white rump and pale underwings, wings extend well beyond the tip of tail
Habitat: Shallow waters, marshes, flooded grasslands
Behavior: Probes the mud, pick particles from the surface, can even sweep their bills from side to side underwater to catch prey. It occasionally swims to catch prey
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: An impressive long-distance flyer that breeds in Northern European and Siberian bogs and winters in Africa.



Wood Sandpiper © Simon Fletcher



Green Sandpiper © Simon Fletcher

Green Sandpiper PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Tringa ochropus* 23cm
Identification: Much darker that Wood Sandpiper with finer spotting above, supercilium only on the front part of the eyes, has an obvious eye-ring, dark on breast, white underparts and grey-greenish legs. Br ad has head and breast with more streaking. In flight shows blackish wings and with a brilliant white rump.
Habitat: Shallow waters, marshes, flooded grasslands
Behavior: Rarely uses its bill to probe deep into mud but picks aquatic invertebrates—such as beetles, dragonflies, worms, and small crustaceans—directly from the water's surface
Conservation status: LC, stable population
Interesting fact: Breaks all the rules of shorebird behavior by nesting high up in trees rather than on the ground

Little Stint PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Calidris minuta* 15cm



Little Stint © Simon Fletcher

Identification: Br ad is rufous on the head and upperparts that gives a scaly effect, with white throat. Non-br ad is grey-brown above, white below with greyish white breast, and

black bill and legs/ In flight reveals narrow white wing bar, white sides to the rump and grey outer-tail.
Habitat: Shores of the lakes, and grass marshes
Behavior: Highly gregarious (highly sociable) and forages in mixed-species flocks with other waders by rapidly probing and pecking the mud for insects, mollusks, and crustaceans.
Conservation status: LC, increasing population
Interesting fact: Barely 24g, this species travels thousands of kilometres between its high-arctic breeding grounds in Siberia and winter habitats in Africa

GLAREOLIDAE: COURSERS AND PRATINCOLES

Collared Pratincole am *Glareola pratincole* 26cm




Collared Pratincole, br (L) © Mike Hounsinou, non-br (R) © Gordon Holtshausen

Identification: Also called Red-winged Pratincole. Br ad has pale buff throat surrounded by a narrow black line. While perched, wing tips and tail are approximately the same length. In non-br, the pale buff throat surrounded by the narrow black line is replaced by a creamy wash with black streaks. In flight, shows a white rump, deeply forked tail, and dark underwings with chestnut-red covert feathers
Habitat: Shallow parts of the lake and in reed marshes
Behavior: Spends much of its time catching aerial insects on wings, resting in ground colonies, and vigorously defending its nests through vocal displays and distraction tactics
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Famous for hunting its insect prey mid-air, sweeping, twisting, and catching insects with its mouth wide open exactly like a swallow or a swift

LARIDAE: GULLS, TERNS AND SKIMMERS

RESIDENT GULLS, TERNS AND SKIMMERS

African Skimmer *Rynchops flavirostris* 41cm
Identification: Long-winged short-tailed tern-like waterbird with compressed red bill with a pale tip. Lower mandible of bill longer than the upper. Br ad all black above and white

below. Non-br ad duller with a greyish-brown collar across the hindneck. Imm pale brown above with shorter blackish bill and dull yellow legs
Habitat: The expanse waterbody of Lake Ol' Bolossat, the dry sandy banks for roosting and breeding
Behavior: Because it hunts purely by touch rather than sight, they are highly active at dawn, dusk, and even during the night
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: The only bird on earth that forages by dragging their elongated lower mandible through the water's surface as they fly



African Skimmer © Lionel Sineux (L) and © Werner Suter (R)

Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus* 41cm
Identification: Br ad has grey head with pale yellow eyes surrounded by a pink-red eye-ring, a thick dark-red bill and red legs. Non-br ad has whitish head with a blurry mark behind the eye. In flight, upperwings of ad shows black outer primaries (flight feathers) with two white spots, and grey underwing
Habitat: Congregates near the lake waterbody, in the marshes, and agricultural fields
Behavior: Consume small fish, aquatic invertebrates, and insects. Also known to scavenge scraps from humans, shopping malls, and compost sites.
Conservation status: LC stable population
Interesting fact: Highly adaptable, nests in huge colonies in reed beds or directly on floating vegetation




Grey-headed Gull © Wanyoike Wamiti (L), in flight © Jacques de Speville (R)

MIGRATORY GULLS AND TERNS (PM, pm)

Black-headed Gull PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* 38cm
Identification: Slightly slender and smaller that Grey-headed Gull, with dark brown eyes at all ages. Br ad has dark-brown hood and a partial white eye-ring, dark red bill, and red legs. Non-br ad has white head with a conspicuous black spot behind the eye and an orange bill with black tip.
Habitat: Nests in marshes and in the open waters
Behavior: It plucks items from the surface of the water while swimming, dip their heads while flying, or walks on fields/mudflats to probe for invertebrates
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: In non-br, head turns stark white with dark spots near the eyes that makes it look like its wearing tiny headphones. Known for its acrobatic flight, kleptoparasitism (stealing food from other birds).




Black-headed Gull © Paul van Giersbergen **Caspian Tern © Lionel Sineux**

Caspian Tern PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Hydroprogne caspia* 54cm
Identification: Largest tern with a massive black-tipped red bill. Br ad has short crested black cap, pale grey back and wings and short forked tail. Non-br ad has black crown with white streaks. Flight shows distinct blackish ends of wings.
Habitat: Feeds over shallow waters of the lake
Behavior: Highly social but fiercely territorial birds, practicing monogamous mating
Conservation status: LC, stable population

Interesting fact: Exhibit incredibly long adolescent dependencies where young rely on parents for food even after migrating

Gull-billed Tern PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Gelochelidon nilotica* 38cm
Identification: Has short heavy gull-like black bill, pale grey above, short forked tail and dark legs. Br ad with glossy black cap and no crest. Non-br ad with black spot just behind the eye.
Habitat: Primarily terrestrial and marsh hunter
Behavior: Frequently "hawk" for flying insects and ants in mid-air, even foraging over fields for lizards, frogs, and grasshoppers
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: As its name implies, it has unusually thick, stout, and black bill that closely resembles a gull's rather than the sharp, pointed beaks of other terns


Gull-billed Tern © Tadeusz Rosinski


Lesser Black-backed Gull © Ruben Barone Tosco

Lesser Black-backed Gull PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Larus fusca* 56cm
Identification: Smaller and slimmer than other black-backed gulls. Br and non-br ad have black back, white head, yellow bill with a red spot and yellowish legs.
Habitat: Open waters, farmland, grasslands and open fields
Behavior: Monogamous, often maintain pair bonds for multiple breeding seasons
Conservation status: LC, increasing population
Interesting fact: Incredible, non-stop trans-Saharan migration capability. Can fly up to 500 km across the Western Sahara in concentrated, direct migratory flights assisted by tailwinds

Little Tern PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Sternula albifrons* 23cm
Identification: Similar to Saunder's Tern but br ad has white forehead patch that extend just behind the eye, has two to three black outer primaries, and has bright orange-yellow legs
Habitat: Sandy shoreline and river mouth of Ewaso Ng'iro
Behavior: Acrobatic foraging, elaborate aerial courtship displays, and aggressive nest defense
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Despite its size, it complete 5,000 km migration from Africa annually




Little Tern © Bruno Boedts **Slender-billed Gull © Robin Walker**

Slender-billed Gull PM (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Chroicocephalus genei* 40cm
Identification: Similar to Black-headed Gull but has long neck with a gently sloping forehead and a long bill. Br ad has white head, pale grey above and white underparts with a pinkish wash. Non-br ad has light grey spot behind the eye
Habitat: Sandy shoreline and river mouth of Ewaso Ng'iro
Behavior: strongly gregarious/social
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: During breeding, ad develops a delicate, rosy-pink blush on their breast and belly.

Whiskered Tern pm (in Kenya Sept - Mar) *Chlidonias hybrid* 35cm




Whiskered Tern, non-br (L), and in breeding plumage (R) © SergioMaria Bianchi

Identification: Br ad is dark grey above with black cap and conspicuous white spot on the cheek, wings and the forked tail are uniformly dark grey. Non-br ad has a white forehead and underparts, and grey rump and tail.
Habitat: Shallow part of the lake, the marshes and river mouth of Ewaso Ng'iro
Behavior: Flies low and skims the surface to catch prey from the water or emergent plants.
Conservation status: LC

Interesting fact: When threatened, entire colonies of Whiskered Tern will coordinate to mob or attack intruders

CICONIDAE: STORKS

RESIDENT STORKS

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumenifer* **MŨNG'ATHIA** 152cm

Identification: Huge stork with grey back and wings, and white underparts, naked head and pink/reddish neck with black spots, massive bill that is horn-colored, dark-grey legs and a white neck-ruff (specialized, thick, or elongated collar of feathers encircling the neck). The bird has two inflatable air sacs: a red one at the base of hindneck that occurs during breeding, and a pinkish pendulous balloon that hangs below the neck. Sexes alike but female slightly smaller. Br ad has pale greyish wings and white-edged wing coverts. Non-br ad is darker grey

Habitat: On lake shores, in the grassland part of the lake, swampy areas and on the Ewaso Ng'iro riverbanks

Behavior: Highly reliant on dead animals. Its bill designed for tearing and snatching rather than dismembering thick hide, it often trails vultures to carcasses or wait for them to open a body before stealing scraps

Conservation status: LC, declining population

Interesting fact: Often nicknamed the "Undertaker Bird", this scavenger bird uses a rather gruesome, yet ingenious method to survive the hot African sun: it regularly defecates on its own legs to cool down



Marabou Stork © Savithri Sing



Saddle-billed Stork, Ad © Wanyoike Wamiti

Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis* 142cm

Identification: Large black and white stork with long tri-colored bill: red and black with a yellow saddle and two small pendulous yellow or red wattles. Has very long grey legs with pink knees and feet. Male slightly smaller and has dark eyes, female has yellow eyes

Habitat: Shallow part of the lake, in the floodplains/marshes and along Ewaso Ng'iro river

Behavior: Solitary bird that forages in shallow waters, primarily on fish, amphibians, and small reptiles
Conservation status: NT, declining population
Interesting fact: Tallest of all African storks, reaching nearly 5 ft. high and a wingspan of 2.7m

MIGRATORY STORKS (PM, AM, am)

Abdim's Stork am *Ciconia abdimii* **NJÜÜ** 81cm
Identification: Medium-sized stork that is black which is glossed with purple-green. It is white from the lower back to rump and lower breast to the vent. Has small greenish-grey bill with blue facial skin at the base of bill, red lores and eye-ring and greenish-grey legs with a reddish knee joint. Sexes similar but female slightly smaller. Imm blackish-brown lacking the gloss, with a reddish bill and darker legs.
Habitat: Areas with short grass, which makes it easy for it to spot and forage for insects
Behavior: Specialized insectivores, feeding heavily on locusts, caterpillars, grasshoppers, and beetles
Conservation status: NT, declining population
Interesting fact: The "Firefighter" Instinct: Has a habit of chasing after fast-moving grassfires, scooping up fleeing insects and locusts as the flames advances

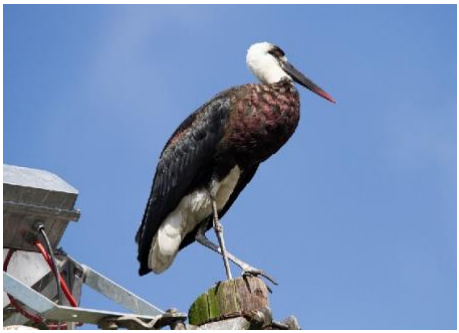


Abdim's Stork © Simon Fletcher


Yellow-billed Stork, Ad © Wanyoike Wamiti

Yellow-billed Stork am *Mycteria ibis* **NJÜÜ** 108cm
Identification: Large white stock with black flight feathers, a black tail, red face, slightly downward-curved yellow bill and pinkish legs. Imm dull brown with darker flight feathers, a dirty brownish-yellow bill and brown legs
Habitat: Muddy pools, marshes, and agricultural areas
Behavior: To flush out evasive prey, it churns up/mixes the muddy bottom vegetation with one foot at a time before moving forward
Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Has lightning-fast "snap-bill" reflex: when wading through murky waters, it sweeps its bill open and snaps it shut in a record c. 0.025 seconds upon feeling prey

African open-billed Stork am *Anastomus lamelligerus* **NJŨŨ** 81cm
Identification: Medium-sized all black stork with a purple-green gloss and open-bill (gap near the tip). Sexes similar. Imm duller with some white speckling on the hindneck.
Habitat: Flooded areas, shallow lake edges, swamps, marshes, and riverbanks
Behavior: Highly specialized hunting method. The bird uses the curved, specialized tip of the bill to grip, crack, and pull the operculum (lid) off aquatic snails and freshwater mussels
Conservation status: LC, stable population
Interesting fact: Uniquely adapted to feed almost exclusively on aquatic snails and freshwater mussels



African open-billed Stork © Wanyoike Wamiti | Woolly-necked Stork © David Jolley

(African) Woolly-necked Stork am *Ciconia episcopus* **NJŨŨ** 86cm
Identification: Distinctive stork with a glossy purple-blue and green sheen, white woolly neck and head, blue-black crown, red eyes, black bill with a reddish tip and grey-black legs. Sexes alike. Imm duller above and with slightly blacker crown, dark eyes and dark pinkish legs
Habitat: Flooded areas, shallow lake edges, swamps, marshes, and riverbanks
Behavior: Predominantly carnivorous, largely solitary, and communicates primarily through expressive visual displays rather than vocalizations
Conservation status: VU declining population
Interesting fact: It's an aerial acrobat. Although known for being a slow walker, it's an excellent sourer and sometimes "roll, tumble, and dive" at steep angles, letting the wind whistle through their quill feathers

Black Stork PM (In Kenya Sept-Mar) *Ciconia nigra* **NJŨŨ** 102cm
Identification: Large black stork with mostly glossy purple-green and white on the lower breast to the vent, bright red long bill, facial skin eye-ring and legs (all bright red). Sexes alike but female slightly smaller
Habitat: Flooded areas, shallow lake edges, and riverbanks
Behavior: Shy, solitary, and wary bird
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Shy and solitary bird that hides deep within old-growth forests and marshes



Black Stork © Jacques de Speville



White Stork © Jacques de Speville

White Stork PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Ciconia Ciconia* **NDERI YA THINGI** 122cm
Identification: Large white stork with black flight feathers, white tail, red bill and red legs. Has a small black line through the dark eyes. Sexes alike
Habitat: Flooded areas, shallow lake edges, and riverbanks
Behavior: Socially monogamous wading bird
Conservation status: LC, increasing population
Interesting fact: Does not have a voice box, so cannot sing

PELECANIDAE: PELICANS

Great White Pelican am *Pelecanus onocrotalus* 178cm
Identification: Very large black and white pelican with yellow bill and throat pouch. Bill of a br Ad pinkish color and short-ragged crest. Male has purplish facial skin. Female with orange-yellow bill
Habitat: Shallow part of the lake.
Behavior: Highly social; often fishes cooperatively in groups by herding fish into shallow waters and scooping them up with the pouch.
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: One of the heaviest flying bird, yet capable of graceful soaring over long distances and can hold up to 13 liters of water in its pouch.



Great White Pelican © Wanyoike Wamiti



Pink-Backed Pelican © Wanyoike Wamiti

Pink-Backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* 146cm

Identification: Medium-sized pelican (has smaller bill compared to the Great White Pelican) with greyish-white appearance and a distinctive pinkish bill pouch. Small pointed crest gives its head a peaked look. Br ad develops yellow pouch and brighter pink and yellow facial skin. Imm like dull ad with a grey–brown head and back, and paler below.
Habitat: Shallow part of the lake
Behavior: Usually feeds alone or in small groups, diving the bill into water to scoop fish. Nests colonially in trees or reed beds.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Unlike its larger cousin, it often roosts and nests in trees, giving it a more arboreal (forest) lifestyle.

SCOPIDAE: HEMERKOPS

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* **KAROGI NGUNŨ** 56cm
Identification: Medium-sized dull brown waterbird with a distinctive hammer-shaped head and long crest, slightly hooked bill. Sexes and imm are all similar, but female slightly larger. In flight largely brown with tawny (brown) bases to the flight feathers.
Habitat: Lakeshores, marshes and riverbanks.
Behavior: Famous for building enormous, elaborate nest that can weigh up to 50 kg. Feeds mainly on fish, frogs, and aquatic invertebrates.
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Its nest is so large that other animals, including owls and snakes, often move in after the Hamerkop abandons it.



Hamerkop © Wanyoike Wamiti, in flight © Varto Nielsen

ARDEIDAE: HERONS, EGRETS AND BITTERNS

RESIDENT HERONS, EGRETS AND BITTERNS

Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca* 51cm
Identification: smaller than dark morphs of other egrets and entirely plain slaty-black with ragged short crest, black bill and black legs and orange-yellow feet. Imm slightly paler blackish-brown and lacks the head plumage
Habitat: Shallow part of the lake and marshes
Behavior: Famous for its "umbrella feeding" — spreading wings like a canopy to shade water to attract fish.

Conservation status: LC, increasing population.
Interesting fact: Its feeding dance makes it look like a moving black umbrella on water




Black Heron, showing crest (L) © Lionel Sineux, showing yellow feet (R) © Stefan Behrens

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala* **CŨCŨ WA NJOKA** 92cm
Identification: Ad is similar to Grey Heron, but with black head and hindneck contrast markedly with white throat and foreneck. Imm grey above including crown and hindneck, not contrasting strongly with white foreneck as in adult.
Habitat: Open grasslands/savannah part of the lake, and near water
Behavior: Hunts alone, stalking insects, rodents, and frogs.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Often seen far from water, unlike most herons




Black-headed Heron © Wanyoike Wamiti | **Goliath Heron © Wanyoike Wamiti**

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* **CŨCŨ WA NJOKA** 152cm
Identification: Large heron which is grey above with a heavy spear-like bill, chestnut head and hindneck, white foreneck streaked with black and a dark chestnut belly. Imm is similar to ad but rather paler grey above with chestnut fringes and paler below with dark streaking; belly washed tawny (brown).
Habitat: In deeper part of the lake and along the river

Behavior: Hunts for fish slowly and deliberately, striking with its huge bill.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its booming call can be heard over a kilometer away and also can stand over 1.5m tall

Great White Egret *Ardea alba* **NYANGE** 92cm
Identification: Largest white egret with a long neck and a dark gape which extends well behind the eye. Long dagger-like bill that is yellow in non-br ad and black in br birds, while lores (space between the eye and base of bill) turn from yellow to green. Imm very similar to ad, but has duller black-tipped yellow bill.
Habitat: Lakeshores, and marshes.
Behavior: Stalks for fish and amphibians in shallow water.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Once prized for hat decorations, and elegant courtship displays




Great White Egret (L) © Wanyoike Wamiti, the green lore identification feature (R) © Stefan Wegleitner

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* **NYANGE** 64cm
Identification: medium sized white egret with a slender black bill, black legs and bright yellow feet. Lore (part between the eye and base of bill) usually blue –grey, but may turn yellowish in br birds.
Habitat: Lakeshores, and river edges.
Behavior: Actively chases for fish, often stirring water with feet.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its yellow "slippers" are thought to attract fish.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata* 40cm
Identification: Small, short heron: ad dark grey above with blue-green sheen, a black crown and greyish below with some rufous streaks and yellow legs. Imm much brown-grey above with paler crown light tips to wings coverts, broad brown and buff- brown streaks
Habitat: Riverbanks and lakeshores
Behavior: Clever hunter, sometimes using bait (like insects or bread) to lure fish.

Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: One of the few birds known to use tools.


Little Egret © Wanyoike Wamiti


Striated (Green-backed) Heron © Henry Ndithia

Yellow-billed (Intermediate) Egret *Ardea intermedia* **NYANGE** 69cm


Yellow-billed (Intermediate) Egret © Bram Piot

Identification: Similar to Great Egret, but smaller with a short yellow bill and gape. Neck is shorter, legs and feet yellowish, but black in br birds.
Habitat: Lakeshores, and farmlands
Behavior: Hunts for fish and frogs in shallow waters.
Conservation status: LC, increasing population.
Interesting fact: Often confused with Great Egret but smaller and with a shorter neck.

MIGRATORY HERONS, EGRETS AND BITTERNS (pm, am)

(Western) Cattle Egret am *Bubulcus ibis* **KARĨITHIA** 56cm



(Western) Cattle Egret © Wanyoike Wamiti

Identification: Br ad is white with a buff-orange wash on their head, back and breast, has short yellow bill, lores and short yellow legs which turns orange in courtship. Non-br ad is all white, with a pale-yellow bill and yellowish-green legs. Imm similar to non-br ad, but has darker legs
Habitat: Grasslands, farmlands, lakeshores, often near cattle or other large mammals.
Behavior: Follows livestock to catch insects disturbed by their movement.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Known as a "cow companion," it often rides on backs of cattle to feed on ticks and flies

Black-crowned Night Heron am, pm *Nycticorax nycticorax* 61cm
Identification: Stocky heron with a black crown and back, grey wings, and red eyes. Imm brown and buff with white spots on the back and wings-coverts, and well streaked underpants
Habitat: Lakeshores
Behavior: Nocturnal feeder, hunting for fish and amphibians at dusk and at night.
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Known for its harsh quack at night

Grey Heron (am, pm) *Ardea cinerea* **CŨCŨ WA NJOKA** 100cm
Identification: Tall grey, black and white heron, dark blue-grey above with thick black eye-streak, a white face and foreneck, with black streaks and is grey-white below. Imm darker and plainer than ad, with overall grey plumage: lacks well defined black-eye streaks of ad, but crown often dark grey
Habitat: Lakeshores, along the river and in marshes
Behavior: Patient hunter, standing motionless before striking on fish.

Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Commonly seen perched on hippo backs in rivers and also seen standing motionless for long periods



Black-crowned Night Heron © Zlatan Celebic | Grey Heron © Wanyoike Wamiti

Little Bittern am, pm *Ixobrychus minutus* 38cm
Identification: Small bittern with cream upper wing patch. Two fairly similar races occur: ad female has rich chestnut face and neck. In both races ad male is browner above with streaking below.
Habitat: Near dense reed beds and marshes.
Behavior: Often freezes with bill pointing upward to blend into reeds.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Despite its tiny size, it has a loud booming call.




Little Bittern © Simon Fletcher **Purple Heron © Werner Suter**

Purple Heron (am) *Ardea purpurea* 84cm

Identification: Slender and slim-necked heron, dark blue-grey above, with a yellowish bill, black crown and rich chestnut face and neck and black stripe on either side, chestnut flanks and black belly.
Habitat: Near reed beds, marshes, and on lakeshores.
Behavior: Shy and secretive, often hidden in reeds.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Its long neck allows it to strike prey with lightning speed.

Squacco Heron (am) *Ardeola ralloides* 46cm




Squacco Heron, (L) © Wanyoike Wamiti, in flight © John Caddick

Identification: Small buff-brown heron; in flight shows white wings. Br ad is rather plain buff above and below, with some streaking on the head and dark-tipped blue bill. Non-br ad dark brown above, with brown streaking, with buff underpants and pale greenish-yellow base to the bill. Imm similar to non-br ad, but more heavily streaked below
Habitat: Marshes, lakeshores, and on farmlands
Behavior: Hunts for insects and small fish, often motionless among vegetation.
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Its transformation from dull brown to gleaming white in flight surprises many observers.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE: IBISES AND SPOONBILLS

RESIDENT IBISES AND SPOONBILL

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba* 91cm
Identification: Ad is all white with bare red face, blue-grey edged bill, pale blue eyes and bright pinked-red legs. Sexes similar. Imm lacks red face, has a yellow bill, dark eyes, dark-tipped primaries and blackish legs and feet.
Habitat: Shallow part of the lake and marshes
Behavior: Sweeps bill side-to-side in water to catch small fish and invertebrates.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Its spoon-shaped bill is highly sensitive, detecting prey by touch.



African Spoonbill, both Ad, showing a white eye (R) © Wanyoike Wamiti

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash* **KWARARA** 82cm
Identification: Dark ibis with green-purplish wings and short legs. Bill heavy and down-curved with a red culmen (top ridge of a bird's upper bill or beak, running from the base of the forehead to the tip) which may brighten in br ad. Imm duller than ad without red in the bill, lacks glossy wings.
Habitat: Grassland and farmlands.
Behavior: Forages in soil for worms and insects, often heard before seen.
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Its call is a familiar sound in many African towns and villages.



Hadada Ibis © Wanyoike Wamiti | African Sacred Ibis © Wanyoike Wamiti

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* **NGAGAWA** 82cm
Identification: Largely White ibis with black head, neck, long black bill and black legs. Br ad grows black feathers from scapulars (the group of feathers that cover the "shoulders" or the upper part of the wing where it joins the body) and inner secondary feathers and bare skin on underwing turns bright red. Imm similar to ad, but rather dull with some white feathering on the neck.
Habitat: Lakeshores, and in dirty waters.

Behavior: Opportunistic feeder, eating fish, insects, and scraps.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Revered (respected) in ancient Egypt

MIGRATORY IBIS (am, pm)

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* **NGAGAWA** 65cm
Identification: Similar to hadada ibis but slimmer with slender bill and neck and longer legs. Br ad is largely rich dark chestnut with greenish-purple back, wings and tail. Non-br ad has the neck and head covered with white grey.
Habitat: Marshes and flooded fields.
Behavior: Probes mud for insects, crustaceans, and small fish.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its shimmering (reflect a metallic glow that changes color with change in light) plumage looks black from afar but glows green and purple in sunlight.



Glossy Ibis © Wanyoike Wamiti

PHALACROCORACIDAE: CORMORANTS

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* 100cm
Identification: Br ad is dark greenish-black with a white throat and neck and white thigh patches, white chin. Non-br ad is duller black with no patches. Appears long-necked, short tailed and heavy in flight.
Habitat: In open waters and along the river
Behavior: Expert diver, catches fish underwater. Often seen drying wings in the sun.
Conservation status: LC, increasing population.
Interesting fact: Used traditionally in Asia for fishing, with a ring around its neck to prevent swallowing large fish.





Great (wings open) and long-tailed/Reed (below it) Cormorant (L) © Fletcher, non-br Reed Cormorant (R) © Jacques de Speville

Long-tailed (Reed) Cormorant *Microcarbo africanus* 53cm
Identification: Small cormorant with a shorter neck and bill, long tail. Br ad is black with a short crest and silvery-edged wing coverts. Non br ad lacks the crest and is dull brown–black, white chin, dirty white throat and dull off white underparts. Imm similar to non-br ad but duller brown above and whiter below
Habitat: In open waters, along the river and in marshes.
Behavior: Dives for fish and insects, often in reed beds.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its slender build makes it more agile in dense vegetation than larger cormorants.

ANHINGIDAE: DARTER

African Darter *Anhinga rufa* 79cm




African Darter © Jacques de Speville (L), Norman Barrett (R)

Identification: A large cormorant-like bird with a long neck, pointed bill and large tail. Ad male has dark foreneck and thin white line from below the eye down side of neck. Ad female is browner above with less distinct neck stripe. Imm much pale brown, lacks the neck line and is whitish-buff below.
Habitat: Open waters and along the river

Behavior: Swims with only neck above water, spearing fish with its bill.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Nicknamed "snakebird" because of its swimming posture.

SAGITTARINIIDAE: SECRETARYBIRD

Secretarybird *Sagittarius serpentarius* **KAHIŨ ITINA/MWANGI MŨRANI** 150cm
Identification: Large grey and black bird with orange-red face, thick eagle-like bill, long legs with black legging and long narrow central tail. Sexes alike. Imm is similar but browner with duller facial skin. If disturbed it often runs rather than fly.
Habitat: Open bush and wooded grasslands
Behavior: Hunts for snakes and small mammals by stomping (walking/moving with intentionally heavy, noisy steps) them with powerful legs.
Conservation status: EN, declining population.
Interesting fact: Its common name comes from the crest-like head feathers, resembling a secretary with pens tucked behind the ear. Its Kikuyu names refers to the tail feathers that look like a knife protruding from its anus area.




Secretarybird, walking © Wanyoike Wamiti, in flight © Stefan Behrens

PANDIONIDAE: OSPREYS

MIGRATORY OSPREY (PM)

(Western) Osprey PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Pandion haliaetus* **HŨNGŨ** 59cm
Identification: A slender brown and white raptor, with uniquely shaped wings. Dark brown above and white below with small flat head, white crown and broad black band through the yellow eyes. Sexes similar.
Habitat: Flies over the lake and the river.
Behavior: Dives feet-first into the water to catch fish, carrying them head-first in flight.
Conservation status: LC, increasing population.
Interesting fact: Specialized for fishing, with reversible outer toes and spiny foot pads to grip slippery prey.




Osprey, R © Jugal Tiwari (L), in flight (R) © Jacques de Speville

ACCIPITRIDAE: HAWKS, VULTURES, BUZZARDS, EAGLES AND ALLIES

RESIDENT HAWKS, VULTURES, BUZZARDS, EAGLES AND ALLIES

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer* **HŨNGŨ** 73cm

Identification: Ad has white head, breast and tail, chestnut shoulders and underparts and mostly black back and wings. Sexes alike but female larger than male.

Habitat: On tall trees overlooking the open waters of the lake and river Ewaso Nyiro

Behavior: Hunts fish by swooping down and snatching them with talons; also scavenges.

Conservation status: LC, stable population.

Interesting fact: Its ringing call is considered the "voice of Africa," often heard across lakeshores.



African Fish Eagle, Ad © Wanyoike Wamiti

African Harrier-hawk *Polyboroides typus* **HŨNGŨ** 66cm
Identification: Large grey raptor with rather small slim head and bare yellow facial skin that turns red if excited. Ad is grey above with a single broad white band across the black tail. Female slightly larger than male. Imm dark to light brown above, with pale feather edges and from dark to brown below, facial skin is grey-green
Habitat: Woodlands, savannas, and farmlands.
Behavior: Uses flexible legs to reach into tree holes for nestlings and insects. It is hence popularly known as the "Gymnogene"
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: One of the few raptors able to bend its knees backward.




African Harrier-hawk. Ad (L & C), Juv (R) © Friedemann Vetter (L), Jacques de Speville (C & R)

African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus* **RWĨGĨ** 50cm



African Marsh Harrier both ad © John Sawyer (L), in flight, Stephane Doppagne (R)

Identification: Ad is mostly dark brown above and pale brown below with dark streaking. The extend of the pale areas varies between individuals. Imm is similar but darker with a cream buff nape and throat and a pale breast band
Habitat: Marshes and reed beds.
Behavior: Flies low over reeds, hunting for small mammals and birds.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.

Interesting fact: Strongly tied to wetland habitats, making it vulnerable to habitat loss.

Augur Buzzard *Buteo augur* **NGORU** 60cm



Augur Buzzard, M (L) © Wanyoike Wamiti, in flight, F (R) © Bayou Elias

Identification: Large buzzard with striking black-and-white plumage and reddish tail. Ad is black above with a black panel across the flight feathers and white below with brick-red tail. Imm brown above, with heavy streaks on the throat and slightly dark brown
Habitat: Open grasslands.
Behavior: Hunts for rodents and small birds, often seen soaring.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Commonly seen perched on poles and trees

Black-chested Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini* **HŨNGŨ** *68cm*



Black-chested Snake Eagle (L) © Tadeusz Rosinski, in flight (R) © Paul van Giersbergen

Identification: Ad blackish-brown above, on the head, throat and upper breast and plain white below. Imm totally different, being dark-brownish above with some pale fringes and paler below, whitish face and narrow streaking on the throat.
Habitat: Open savannahs/grasslands and woodlands.
Behavior: Specializes in hunting for snakes, swallowing them whole.

Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Immune to many snake venoms, allowing it to tackle dangerous prey.

Black Kite (Resident) *Milvus migrans* **HŨNGŨ** 61cm



Black Kite (Resident) © Wanyoike Wamiti (L), in flight © Simon Fletcher (R)

Identification: Fairly large brown raptor with long slightly forked tail. Two races occur, sometimes considered two distinct species: the dark-billed nominate race remains Black Kite, while the yellow-billed African race becomes the Yellow-billed Kite
Habitat: Urban areas, farmlands, and over water.
Behavior: Opportunistic scavenger, often seen circling over towns and dumpsites.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Bold enough to snatch food from people's hands in markets.

Little Sparrowhawk *Accipiter minullus* **RWĨGĨ** 28cm



Little Sparrowhawk © Jacques de Speville

Identification: Small woodland sparrowhawk: Ad is grey above with white rump and white spots on the black tail, with grey head and cheeks, white throat, the remainder of

underparts white with fine brown barring. Eyes orange-yellow and legs yellow. Imm brown above with some white on the rump and white tail spots.
Habitat: Woodlands and forest edges.
Behavior: Hunts for small birds with fast, agile flight.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Fierce predator of songbirds.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* **HŨNGŨ** 74vm



Tawny Eagle, ad (L) © Jacques de Speville, in flight, ad (C) © Alex Tait, right, Juv (R) © Jacques de Speville

Identification: Overall color varies from dark to very pale brown to creamy-buff, some are streaky and present a rather scruffy (untidy) appearance. Eyes yellowish-brown on ad, dark on imm. Perched imm shows very narrow bars across closed wings
Habitat: Savannah, grassland and woodlands.
Behavior: Opportunistic feeder, eating carrion, small mammals, and birds.
Conservation status: VU, declining populations
Interesting fact: Opportunistic hunter, feed on just about anything they are able to catch.

MIGRATORY HAWKS, VULTURES, BUZZARDS, EAGLES AND ALLIES (PM, am, AM)

Black–winged (Black-Shouldered) Kite am *Elanus caeruleus* **WAKARŨGŨRŨ** 35cm
Identification: A whitish hawk with grey back and wings, black shoulders and a short white tail. Sexes similar. Imm browner with heavily scaled back and wings and buff across the breast.
Habitat: Moister open bushed and wooded grasslands, farmlands.
Behavior: Hovers like a kestrel before swooping on rodents.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its hovering hunting style resembles that of falcons



Black–winged (Black-Shouldered) Kite, Ad (L) © Simon Fletcher, ad in flight (C) © Alex Auer, Juv (R) © Mike Hounsinou

Common (Steppe) Buzzard PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Buteo buteo* **NGORU** 50cm



Common (Steppe) Buzzard, Ad (L & C) © Jacques de Speville, showing the comma-like patch on wing edges (R) © Ruben Barone Tosco

Identification: Medium-sized buzzard with grey-brown, rufous and dark morphs. Typical bird with barring below and pale band across lower breast. In flight, ad have brown underwing coverts, a dark thin comma-like carpal patch and pale flight feathers with black tip and trailing edges. Imm have fewer trailing edges to wings.
Habitat: Grasslands, farmlands, and open woodlands.
Behavior: Hunts for rodents and small birds.
Conservation status: LC, increasing population.
Interesting fact: Highly variable plumage makes it tricky to identify.

Montagu's Harrier PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Circus pygargus* **RWĨGĨ** 50cm



Montagu's Harrier, Ad, M (L & C) © Simon Fletcher, Ad F (R) © Thomas Varto Nielsen

Identification: Ad male has smoke-grey upperparts, head and upper breast, and white belly, chestnut flank streaking and short black bar on closed wings. Ad female is dark

brown above, streaked brown on buff-white below. Imm has similar face pattern as female, but is plain white below.
Habitat: Grasslands, marshes, and farmlands.
Behavior: Hunts for insects and small mammals while flying low.
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Breeds in Europe and migrates to Africa for winter.

Pallid Harrier PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Circus macrourus* **RWĨGĨ** 46cm
Identification: Very similar to Montagu's Harrier, but slightly more build with longer tail. Ad male is pale grey above and very white below, with no black bars across closed wings. Ad female differs from female Montagu's by having a thicker black line through the eye and a whitish collar around the eye coverts. Imm similar to imm Montagu's except for more distinctive face patterns.
Habitat: Grasslands and open grasslands.
Behavior: Feeds on small mammals and birds.
Conservation status: NT, declining populations.
Interesting fact: Its graceful flight makes it one of the most beautiful harriers.



Pallid Harrier, Ad M (L) © Simon Fletcher, Ad F (C & R) © Tadeusz Rosinski

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* **HŨNGŨ** 80cm
Identification: Ad slightly larger and darker than Tawny Eagle, with a buff nape patch and a gape that extends back to rear edge of dark eye. Imm paler with two bars across closed wing
Habitat: Open grassland,
Behavior: feeds on carrion and small mammals.
Conservation status: EN, declining population.
Interesting fact: known to feed on carrions (remains of the already dead animals).



Steppe Eagle, Ad with gape (L) © Nik Borrow, Imm (R), with two bars on wing © Peter Nash

Wahlberg's Eagle *Hieraaetus wahlbergi* **HŨNGŨ** 60cm



Wahlberg's Eagle, Ad (L & R) © Jacques de Speville & Ursula Franke-Bryson respectively

Identification: Smaller than other brown eagles with small pointed crest on back of the head. In flight dark morph differs from similar plain brown eagles in having a longish narrow square-ended tail.
Habitat: Open savannah and woodlands.
Behavior: Feeds on small mammals, reptiles, and birds.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Named after Swedish naturalist Johan Wahlberg

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* **RWĨGĨ** 56cm



Western Marsh Harrier, Ad, M (L & C,) © Lionel Sineux & Thomas Varto Nielsen respectively, Ad F (R) © Agnès Giannotti

Identification: A heavy-looking harrier: Ad male is dark brown, grey and black, with a pale cream-brown nape and throat, variable dark streaking across the chest and rufous brown in lower breast to vent. Ad female is dark brown with creamy head.
Habitat: Marshes and reed beds
Behavior: Hunts for small mammals and birds by flying low over reeds.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Largest of the harriers, recognized by its long tail and light flight

TYTONIDAE: OWLS

(African) Grass Owl *Tyto capensis* **NDUNDU** *38cm*
Identification: Similar to Barn Owl but with much darker brown back and wings and paler buff underparts. Flying birds are dark brown above with a small buff patch at the base of primaries.
Habitat: Grasslands and marshes
Behavior: Hunts for rodents at night, gliding low over the grass.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Builds nests in tall grass rather than trees.



(African) Grass Owl © Peter Ginn



Barn Owl © Thomas Varto Nielsen

Barn Owl *Tyto alba* **NDUNDU** *36cm*
Identification: Ghostly owl with patterned golden-buff and pale grey above, with small dark eyes set in the pale heart shape facial disc and white creamy-buff underparts.
Habitat: Farmlands and grasslands.

Behavior: Hunts rodents at night using exceptional hearing.
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Found worldwide, making it one of the most widespread owls.

COLIIDAE: MOUSEBIRDS

Speckled Mousebird, *Colius striatus* (race *kikuyuensis* potentially endemic**) MŨTHŨ** 33cm
Identification: Ad is a brown bird with a brown crest, whitish cheeks, blackish patch around the eye and fine dark barring on the throat and breast. Bill black above and pink below. Similar imm has shorter crest and paler duller bill.
Habitat: Woodlands and scrublands.
Behavior: Gregarious (highly sociable), often climbs through bushes like rodents.
Conservation status: LC, increasing population; race *kikuyuensis* is endemic.
Interesting fact: Sleeps upside down like a bat.



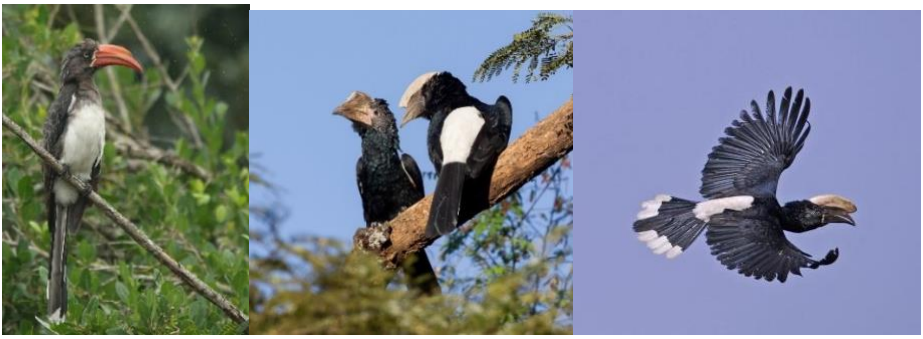

Speckled Mousebird, Ad (L & R) © Savithri Singh (L), Amanda Tanfield (R)

BUCEROTIDAE: HORNBILLS

Crowned Hornbill *Lophoceros alboterminatus* **KARĨA CIĨMBU/MŨNGUUKU** 55cm
Identification: Slender dark hornbill with a bright red bill and long black tail with white corners. Ad male slightly larger than ad female with a heavier casque (helmet-like structure). Imm similar to female but duller with dull yellowish bill.
Habitat: Forest edges and woodlands.
Behavior: Feeds on insects, fruit, and small animals.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Females seal themselves inside tree cavities during nesting, relying on males to feed them.

Silvery-cheeked Hornbill *Bycanistes brevis* **KARĨA CIĨMBU/MŨNGUUKU** 66cm
Identification: Large hornbill with white on lower belly and vent. Face and ear-coverts are tipped silvery in ad. Ad male has a large bill and pale cream casque (helmet-like structure) and a blue-grey eye ring. Female has duller casque confined to back half of bill and pinkish eye ring. Imm duller with smaller bill and brownish face.
Habitat: Forest and woodlands
Behavior: Feeds mainly on fruit, especially figs.

Conservation status: LC, declining population
Interesting fact: Its loud calls echo across the forest



Crowned Hornbill (L) © Tadeusz Rosinski;. Silvery-cheeked Hornbill pair (C); Ad M showing white back/mantle/rump (C) © Paul van Giersbergen, in flight, Ad M (R) © Marie Grenouillet

RHAMPHASTIDAE (LYBIINAE): BARBETS AND TINKERBIRDS

Black-throated Barbet *Tricholaema melanocephala`* 14cm
Identification: Has striped head and long blackish brown bib (patch of feathers on the throat or upper chest) which gradually becomes smaller into a sharp point at the center of the whitish belly.
Habitat: Woodlands and grasslands.
Behavior: Feeds on fruit and insects, often heard giving repetitive calls.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Good seed disperser.



Black-throated Barbet, Ad, © John Caddick



Moustached Green Tinkerbird, Ad, © Paul van Giersbergen

Moustached Green Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus leucomystax* 9cm
Identification: Has pale greyish stripe and pale pink base to the bill. Greenish above with yellow wing bars, golden–yellow rump and is greyish-green below. Imm yellower below.
Habitat: Forest edges.
Behavior. Eats fruits and berries
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Its call gives rise to the name "tinkerbird"

Spot-flanked Barbet *Tricholaema lacrymosa* 14cm



Spot-flanked Barbet, Ad © Paul van Giersbergen

Identification: Ad has broad black bib (patch of feathers on the throat or upper chest), black throat that gradually becomes smaller into the breast, boldly spotted buff-white flanks and pale yellowish-orange eye. Imm greyer above with brown eyes.
Habitat: Woodland and scrubs.
Behavior: Feeds on fruits and insects, often in pairs.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Unmistakable black triangle on the throat and large spots on the sides of belly.

MEROPIDAE: BEE-EATER

RESIDENT BEE-EATER

Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater *Merops lafresnayii (oreobates)* **GĨKANDA ŨŨKĨ** 15cm
Identification: Medium-sized bee-eater with cinnamon breast, dark green above, and yellow throat. Imm paler, lacks black gorget (cover) and is washed green below. Formerly called *Merops oreobates*
Habitat: Forest and forest edges.
Behavior: Hunts flying insects, especially bees and dragonflies.
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: Occurs at higher altitudes compared to most bee-eaters.



Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater. Ad M (L) © Simon Fletcher. Ad F (R) © Artur Bujanowicz

MIGRATORY BEE-EATER (PM)

European Bee-eater PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Merops apiaster* **KĨARE/NGŨŨNI** 28cm
Identification: Strikingly colorful bird with chestnut back, yellow throat, and pale blue underparts. Ad male has broad golden sides of wing and chestnut back, female much duller and greener above. Imm is greenish-brown above, with brown washed crown, dull green sides to the back, pale-yellow throat and blue underparts.
Habitat: Open woodlands, grasslands, and along the river
Behavior: Catches bees and wasps mid-air, removing stingers by hitting them against a perch.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Migrates from Europe to Africa, adding seasonal bursts of color to Laek Ol'Bolossat.



European Bee-eater. Ad (L) © SergioMaria Bianchi. Juv (R) © Jacques de Speville

CORACIIDAE: ROLLERS

MIGRATORY ROLLERS (am, PM)

European Roller PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Coracias garrulus* **KĨARE/NGŨŨNI** 31cm
Identification: Bright roller with blue head, chestnut-brown back, blue underparts and short square-cut tail

Habitat: Open woodlands, grasslands and farmlands
Behavior: Hunts insects from perches, swooping down to catch prey.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Performs dramatic aerial "rolling" displays during courtship hence its name "roller"



European Roller, Ad, © Simon Fletcher


Lilac-breasted Roller Ad, © Wanyoike Wamiti

Lilac-breasted Roller am *Coracias caudatus* 38cm
Identification: A striking blue roller with lilac (soft purplish color) breast and throat, light olive-chestnut back, dark blue wing coverts and deep blue belly. Imm is much duller and greener above with brownish wash to throat and breast and no tail streamers.
Habitat: Grasslands, woodlands and bushed areas.
Behavior: Hunts insects and small reptiles from perches.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Known as one of Africa's most photographed birds due to its dazzling color. It is the national bird of Kenya

ALCEDINIDAE: KINGFISHERS

RESIDENT KINGFISHERS

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima* **KĨGONDE** 43cm
Identification: Largest African kingfisher, blackish above with fine white speckles and bars. Ad male has broad chestnut breast band, white throat with black tiny stripes that tend to go round the neck. Ad female has broad chestnut belly and black and white stripes on the throat and breast. Imm similar to ads but chestnut bands are speckled and broken.
Habitat: Along the river, perches on vegetation adjacent to the lake to spot fish
Behavior: Hunts fish by diving from perches; loud, rattling call.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Its size makes it a powerful fisher, capable of catching large prey.




Giant Kingfisher Ad M (L), Ad F (R) © Jacques de Speville

Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus* **KĨGONDE** 12cm
Identification: Tiny kingfisher with bright blue back, blue crown and with crest that is barred with blue and black, bright red bill, and orange underparts. Imm is similar with shorter black bill, brownish underparts and a whitish belly.
Habitat: along the river and in the marshes.
Behavior: Perches low over water, diving for small fish and insects.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Despite its small size, it is one of the most dazzling jewels of African wetlands




Malachite Kingfisher,Ad (L & R) © Simon Fletcher (L) © Marco Thoma (R)

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* **KĨGONDE** 25cm
Identification: Black-and-white kingfisher. Ad male has two complete breast bands; ad female has single broken black band. Imm is similar to female but has brown fringing to the face and throat and duller band.
Habitat: Along the river and in the marshes.
Behavior: Hovers over water (see photo below right) before plunging to catch fish.
Conservation status: LC
Interesting fact: One of the few kingfishers that hovers like a kestrel.




Pied Kingfisher, Ad (L & R) © Simon Fletcher (L), Jacques de Speville (R)

MIGRATORY KINGFISHER (am)

Woodland Kingfisher am *Halcyon senegalensis* **KĨGONDE** 22cm
Identification: Ad has grey crown and head with black across eyes, black on shoulder, bright blue on the back and wings and with striking red (upper mandible) and black (lower mandible) bill. No blue on breast. Imm is similar to ad but has buff wash on the head lightly scaled breast, dark bill and girty blueish back.
Habitat: Woodlands and grasslands
Behavior: Hunts insects and small vertebrates, often away from water.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Its piercing "trill" call is a hallmark of African.




Woodland Kingfisher, Ad (L) © Jacques de Speville, Juv (R) © Stephane Doppagne

FALCONIDAE: FALCONS

MIGRATORY FALCONS (PM)

Common Kestrel PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Falco tinnunculus* **RWĨGĨ** 33cm
Identification: Ad male has rufous back spotted with black, and lightly barred blue-grey tail. Ad female is largely brown, with pale face and brown underparts heavily spotted and barred black, rufous underparts streaked blackish. Imm is similar to ad female.
Habitat: Grasslands, farmlands, and open woodlands.
Behavior: Hunts for rodents and insects by hovering before diving.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.

Interesting fact: Its hovering flight is so steady it looks suspended in the air.



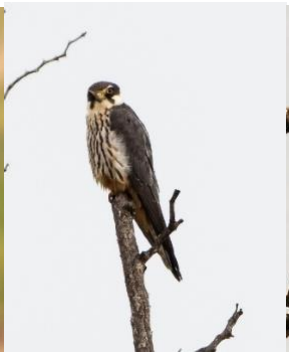
Common Kestrel, Ad (L & R) © Simon Fletcher (L), Thomas Varto Nielsen (in flight)

Lesser Kestrel PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Falco naumanni* **RWĨGĨ** 33cm`
Identification: Small falcon resembling Common Kestrel but ad has bluish-grey head and no heavy spotting. Perched ad female and imm can be differentiated by the white claws from ad female.
Habitat: Farmlands, grasslands, and open areas.
Behavior: Hunts for insects and small vertebrates, often in flocks.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Unlike most falcons, it is highly social, nesting in colonies.



Lesser Kestrel (L & C), Ad F © Jarle Fjortoft & Thomas Varto Nielsen respectively; Ad M (R) © Simon Fletcher

Eurasian Hobby PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Falco Subbuteo* **RWĨGĨ** 36cm
Identification: Ad is dark grey above and whitish below heavily streaked and with black legs and chestnut vent, with neat face patterns and white cheeks. Imm is similar but browner above with heavy dark streaking below.
Habitat: Woodlands, over the waters and open grasslands.
Behavior: Agile hunter, catching dragonflies and small birds in flight.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Migrates long distances from Europe to Africa.


Eurasian Hobby Ad (L & C) © Ursula Franke-Bryson & Jacques de Speville respectively; Juv (R) © Bjarne Olshoj Jensen

ORIOLIDAE: ORIOLES

Eastern Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus larvatus* 20cm
Identification: Bright yellow bird with black head and throat, wings greenish-yellow. Imm has the head and breast streaked blackish.
Habitat: Woodlands and grasslands
Behavior: Feeds on fruit, nectar, and insects.
Conservation status: LC, increasing population.
Interesting fact: Its melodious whistles is often heard from long distances




Eastern Black-headed Oriole © Jacques de Speville | Montane Oriole © Paul van Giersbergen

Montane (Mountain) Oriole *Oriolus percivali 20cm*
Identification: Very similar to Black-headed Oriole but the upper side of the tail feathers is black, wings bright yellow. Imm is streaked blackish on the head and upper breast.
Habitat: Forest and forest edges.
Behavior: Feeds on fruit and insects, often in the canopy.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Restricted to East African highlands, making it a regional specialty.

PLATYSTERIDAE: WATTLE-EYES AND ALLIES

Black-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira peltata* 13cm

Identification: Ad has bright red wattles above the eyes, no white on wings. Male has white throat and narrow black breast band. Female has black throat and white below, white spot below the beak. Imm browner above with tawny edges to the wings and buff wash to the throat.

Habitat: Forest edges and woodlands.

Behavior: Hunts for insects by attacking from perches.

Conservation status: LC, declining population.

Interesting fact: The red eye wattle is a striking feature used in displays; attains its name for the wattles.



Black-throated Wattle-eye, Ad M (L), Ad F (R) © Alan Manson

Brown-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira cyanea* 13cm



Brown-throated Wattle-eye Ad M (L) © Paul van Giersbergen; Ad F (R) © Roger Fotso

Identification: Ad has bright red wattles above eyes and white wing bar. Male has white throat and a black breast band. Female greyer above with dark chestnut-brown throat and upper breast, with a white patch below the beak and white below. Imm brownish-grey above with tawny-buff wing bar, throat and breast.

Habitat: Forest edges and thickets.

Behavior: Hunts for insects, often in pairs.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Its duet calls with mate strengthen pair bonds.

MALACONOTIDAE: BUSH-SHRIKES, TCHAGRAS AND PUFFBACKS

Tropical Boubou *Laniarius aethiopicus* **NGEREKERI/GĨTING'EIYA**
Identification: Black-and-white boubou, tinged some pale pink below, and a white wing stripe. Imm buff above on most races.
Habitat: Woodlands and scrubs.
Behavior: Often sings duets with mate; feeds on insects and small animals.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Its rich, fluting calls is among the most beautiful of African birds.



Brown-crowned Tchagra © Tadeusz Rosinski



Tropical Boubou © SergioMaria Bianchi

Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis* 19cm
Identification: Ad has crown striped with brown bordered with black. Imm is like ad but duller with more buffy-brown underparts.
Habitat: Grasslands, scrub, and thickets.
Behavior: Hunts for insects and small vertebrates, often solitary.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its mournful whistled song is a signature sound of African bush.

Northern Puffback *Dryoscopus gambensis* 18cm
Identification: Ad is pale grey on the scapulars (shoulders) and rump with heavier bill and orange-red eyes. Ad female all brown above, chestnut brown below with red eyes. Imm is similar to ad female but with buffy fringes above.
Habitat: Woodlands and grasslands.
Behavior: Hunts for insects, often in pairs.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Male puffed-back display gives the species its name.



Northern Puffback, Ad M (L), Ad F (R) © Paul van Giersbergen

DICRURIDAE: DRONGOS

Fork-tailed (Common) Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* **KĨNYUA NDOGO** 25cm



Fork-tailed (Common) Drongo, Ad © Wanyoike Wamiti (L) © David Jolley (R)

Identification: Glossy black bird with forked tail and red eyes. In flights shows a large pale window in the wing. Imm with brown eyes, grey-black below and has less deeply forked tail.
Habitat: Woodlands, grassland and farmlands.
Behavior: Bold and aggressive; mimics calls of other birds to steal food.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Known as the "trickster bird" for its clever food-stealing tactics.

LANIIDAE: SHRIKES

RESIDENT SHRIKE

Northern (Common) Fiscal *Lanius humeralis* **THŨRIŨ**
Identification: Black-and-white shrike with hooked bill
Habitat: Grasslands, farmlands and bushy areas
Behavior: Hunts for insects and small vertebrates, often impaling (fixing) prey on thorns.
Conservation status: LC

Interesting fact: Nicknamed the "butcher bird" for its habit of storing prey on spikes/thorns.



Northern (Common) Fiscal © Paul van Giersbergen | Red-Backed Shrike © Jacques de Speville

MIGRATORY SHRIKE (PM) (IMAGE ABOVE)

Red-Backed Shrike PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Lanius collurio* **THŨRIŨ**
Identification: Small shrike; male with rusty red back and grey head, female brown.
Habitat: Grasslands, scrubs and farmlands.
Behavior: Migratory; hunts insects and small vertebrates.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Breeds in Europe and migrates to Africa, including Kenya.

CORVIDAE: CROWS AND ALLIES

Cape Rook (Crow) *Corvus capensis* **IHURU/KĨGOGO** 43cm
Identification: Slim black crow with narrow bill and relaxed throat. Ad show bluish or purplish sheen in good light.
Habitat: Grasslands and farmlands
Behavior: Omnivorous scavenger, feeds on crops, insects, and carrion (dead and decaying flesh of an animal).
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Often seen in flocks, playing and calling noisily.



Cape Rook (Crow) © Jacques de Speville



Pied Crow © Wanyoike Wamiti

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* **IHURU/KĨGOGO** 46cm
Identification: Black crow with distinctive white belly and collar, and black chest and throat. Imm is similar to ad but duller.
Habitat: Farmlands and grasslands.
Behavior: Opportunistic feeder, scavenging in markets and dumps.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Commonly seen around villages, making it one of Africa's most familiar crows.

MONARCHIDAE: MONARCHS (PARADISE FLYCATCHERS)

African Paradise Flycatcher am *Terpsiphone viridis* **MŨNDŨ MŨGO** 36cm



African Paradise Flycatcher, Ad M (L), © Tadeusz Rosinski, Ad M white morph (C) © SergioMaria Bianchi, Ad F (R) © Jacques de Speville

Identification: Elegant bird with long tail streamers (elongated tail feathers); male chestnut. White morph (genetic variation) also occurs. Female similar to male but with shorter tail
Habitat: Woodlands and forest along the river.
Behavior: Hunts for insects mid-air with graceful flight.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its flowing tail feathers makes it look like a ribbon dancing in the air.

NECTARINIIDAE: SUNBIRDS

Amethyst Sunbird *Chalcomitra amethystina* **KANYUA NJUI** 14cm
Identification: Ad totally black, but in good light shows blue-green cap and a purple throat patch. Female all brown above, creamy underparts with black spots and black throat
Habitat: Woodlands and forest edges.
Behavior: Feeds on nectar and insects, hovering like a hummingbird.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Throat of male glows amethyst color in sunlight.



Amethyst Sunbird, Ad M (L); Ad F (R) © David Jolley

Bronze Sunbird *Nectarinia kilimensis* **KANYUA NJUI** 23cm



Bronze Sunbird, Ad M (L); Ad F (R) © Zlatan Celebic & Simon Fletcher respectively

Identification: Ad male has bronze-green in the head, throat, back and breast, and black on belly. Ad female is dull olive-green with washed yellow below and white throat.
Habitat: forests and forest edges.
Behavior: Feeds on nectar and insects
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: One of the largest sunbirds in East Africa.

Eastern Double-collared Sunbird *Cinnyris mediocris* **KANYUA NJUI** 11cm
Identification: Small sunbird with green head and throat, red breast band (narrower than in Northern Double-collared Sunbird), bordered above with narrow blue band. Female all brown above and creamy-olive below
Habitat: Forest and forest edges
Behavior: Feeds on nectar and insects, often in pairs.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Restricted to East African highlands



Eastern Double-collared Sunbird, Ad M (L); Ad F (R) © Nik Borrow

Northern Double-collared Sunbird *Cinnyris reichenowi* **KANYUA NJUI** 11cm
Identification: Ad male has a broad red breast band that extends to the upper belly, and that is bordered above by narrow violet/blueish band. Upper tail coverts violet. Ad female and imm similar to Eastern Double-collared Sunbird but slightly darker overall.
Habitat: Forest and forest edges
Behavior: Feeds on nectar and insects.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Closely resembles the Eastern Double-collared Sunbird but ranges further north.



Northern Double-collared Sunbird, Ad M (L); Ad F (R) © Roger Fotso

Golden-winged Sunbird *Drepanorhynchus reichenowi*, potentially race *lathburyi* **KANYUA NJUI** 24cm



Golden-winged Sunbird, Ad M (L); Ad F (R) © Tadeusz Rosinski & Paul van Giersbergen respectively

Identification: Large sunbird with golden (deep yellow) wing feathers and long downward-curved bill. Female all brown above creamy throat, upper breast and upper belly and whitish lower belly
Habitat: Grasslands and forest edges.
Behavior: Feeds on nectar and insects
Conservation status: LC, stable population; race *lathburyi* endemic to Kenya's highlands
Interesting fact: Its golden wings shines in sunlight, making it spectacular in flight.

Malachite Sunbird *Nectarinia famosa* **KANYUA NJUI** *24cm*
Identification: Br male is a slim sunbird with uniform bright green color, with yellow pectoral (breast area) tufts. Non-br male similar to br male but all pale yellow below. Female all brown above and pale white below
Habitat: Grasslands.
Behavior: Feeds on nectar, insects, often seen hovering at flowers.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Tail feathers lengthen dramatically in breeding males.



Malachite Sunbird, Ad M br (L); Ad M non-br (C); Ad F (R) © Krzysztof Blachowiak, Gerhard Theron, Alan Manson respectively

Tacazze Sunbird *Nectarinia tacazze* **KANYUA NJUI** *23cm*
Identification: Br male with dark shines of brilliant purple, green and gold in good light. Has greenish head, purple back, wing coverts and breast. Ad female dusky-grey above

with dull whitish malar stripes (the cheek region of the face); unstreaked and paler grey below.
Habitat: Forest and forest edges
Behavior: Feeds on nectar and insects
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its long tail streamers make it one of the most elegant sunbirds.



Tacazze Sunbird, Ad M br (L) © Nik Borrow; Ad M non-br (C); Ad F (R) © Frank Priscus Shirima

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus* **KANYUA NJUI** 11cm
Identification: Small sunbird with iridescent (changing color with light intensity) green head, throat and upper breast, and with narrow purple and black bands between the breast and belly. With yellow belly.
Habitat: Woodlands and forest edges.
Behavior: Feeds on nectar and insects, often in pairs.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its plumage varies greatly across regions, hence the name "variable".



Variable Sunbird, Ad M br (L); Ad M non-br (C); Ad F (R) © John sawyer, Thomas Varto Nielsen, Jason Anderson respectively

PLOCEIDAE: WEAVERS, BISHOPS AND WIDOWBIRDS

Jackson's Widowbird *Euplectes jacksoni* **MŨRŨGŨ** 30cm
Identification: Br male all black with tawny-brown wing patch. In flight the tail bends downwards in an even curve, not loose and floppy (lacking stiffness) as in other widowbird species. Female and Imm with rich-buff below with variable streaking
Habitat: Grasslands
Behavior: Males perform spectacular display flights to attract females.

Conservation status: LC, stable population
Interesting fact: Famous for the male's acrobatic courtship displays




Jackson's Widowbird, Ad M br (L); Ad M non-br (R) © Tadeusz Rosinski & Paul van Giersbergen respectively

Long-tailed Widowbird *Euplectes progne*, race *delamerei* endemic **MŨRŨGŨ** 71cm
Identification: Br male black with extremely long tail feathers; female streaky brown. Non-br male has streaky brown sparrow-like plumage and orange-red shoulders
Habitat: Grasslands
Behavior: Males perform spectacular display flights to attract females.
Conservation status: LC, stable population; race *delamerei* endemic to the Kenya highlands
Interesting fact: During br, its tail feathers can be more twice its body length





Long-tailed Widowbird, Ad M br (L) © Wanyoike Wamiti; Ad M non-br (C) © Jacques de Speville; Imm (R), © Hans-Joachim Schulz

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis* **THONJO** 14cm
Identification: Ad male mostly yellow with olive-greenish back and wings, narrow black line through the eyes and broad black stripe down the throat. Eyes very pale yellow and with slender bill. Ad female similar but lacks the black throat stripe.
Habitat: Woodlands and forest edges.
Behavior: Builds neat woven nests; feeds on seeds and insects.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.

Interesting fact: Its eye mask makes it look like it's wearing glasses hence the name "spectacled".



Spectacled Weaver © Alan Manson



Speke's Weaver © Guido Keijser

Speke's Weaver *Ploceus spekei* **THONJO** 15cm
Identification: fairly large weaver with a heavy bill. Ad male with black masked face, female dull olive-green above with broad streaking on the mantle.
Habitat: Grasslands and farmlands
Behavior: Colonial nester, weaving hanging nests in trees.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Named after explorer John Hanning Speke.

Baglafecht Weaver *Ploceus baglafecht* **THONJO** 15cm
Identification: Male with yellow crown, female has black crown and stout bill. Imm mostly like the dull versions of the female but more olive brown above.
Habitat: Woodlands, farmlands and forest edges.
Behavior: Builds woven nests in trees; feeds on seeds and insects.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Often nests near human settlements, making it familiar around Lake Ol' Bolossat





Baglafecht Weaver, Ad © Tadeusz Rosinski **Village Weaver, Ad br © Simon Fletcher**

Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus* **THONJO** *17cm*
Identification: Br male with red eyes, heavy bill and black hood-like feather cap over the head. Female with olive-streaked back, yellow stripes and yellow underpart when breeding..
Habitat: Farmlands bushed areas
Behavior: Builds large colonies of woven nests, often in acacia trees.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its noisy colonies are a hallmark of African villages.

White-browed Sparrow-weaver *Plocepasser mahali* **THONJO** 17cm



White-browed Sparrow-weaver, Ad © Wanyoike Wamiti

Identification: Brown weaver with white patch on crown, white rump and white wing patches. Underparts white with dark smudges (dusty color) on the sides of the breast.
Habitat: grassland and bush country.
Behavior: Builds communal nests; feeds on seeds and insects.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Known for its melodious whistled songs.

ESTRILDIDAE: WAXBILLS

African Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubricata* **KAMĨRI/GATHŨITA** 10cm
Identification: Small finch, male bright red, females brownish.
Habitat: Grasslands, bush, and farmlands.
Behavior: Feeds on grass seeds, often in pairs.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its soft "firefinch" call is a gentle whistle.




African Firefinch pair © Jacques de Speville **Red-billed Firefinch pair © Jarle Fjortoft**

Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala* **KAMĨRI/GATHŨITA** 10cm
Identification: Small finch; male red with brown wings, female duller.
Habitat: Grasslands, farmlands, and villages.
Behavior: Feeds on grass seeds, often near human settlements.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Frequently seen around huts and gardens, making it a familiar companion bird.

Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullata* 9cm
Identification: small with blackish head and breast, dull brown nape, mantle and wings, black and white stripes on flanks and white on upper breast.
Habitat: Grasslands, bushy areas.
Behavior: Gregarious (social), often in flocks feeding on grass seeds.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: One of the most common small finches around villages.

Purple Grenadier *Granatina ianthinogaster* 13cm
Identification: brightly colored red-billed waxbill; male purple-blue with chestnut throat and upper breast and black tail. Female brown with streaks.
Habitat: Bushlands and grassland.
Behavior: Feeds on seeds and insects, often in pairs.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its vibrant plumage makes it one of the most beautiful waxbills




Bronze Mannikin, Ad M © Mike Hounsinou | **Purple Grenadier, Ad M © Tadeusz Rosinski**

VIDUIDAE: WHYDAY

Pin-tailed-Whydah *Vidua macroura* **MŨNYĨRI** 31cm




Pin-tailed-Whydah pair (L) © Lionel Sineux; M non-br (R) © Jacques de Speville

Identification: Br male black-and-white with extremely long tail feathers; female and non-br male streaky brown but non-br male with blackish crown.
Habitat: Grasslands, farmlands, and villages.
Behavior: Brood parasite, laying eggs in nests of waxbills
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Male perform spectacular aerial displays, fluttering with long tails to impress female

PASSERIDAE: OLD WORLD SPARROWS

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus* **KAHURA NJA** 15cm
Identification: Small brown sparrow with grey head, whitish throat and stout bill; lower belly whitish. Imm with yellowish/creamy gape (The fleshy, colored corners of a nestling's mouth where the upper and lower beaks join)

Habitat: Villages, farmlands, and bush country.
Behavior: Feeds on seeds and scraps, often in flocks around settlements.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: One of the most common sparrows across Africa.



Northern Grey-headed Sparrow, Ad (L) © Bram Piot; Juv (R) © Zlatan Celebic

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* **KAHURA NJA/KAIRI** 14cm
Identification: Br male differs from Rufous Sparrow in having a grey crown (rufous sparrow has browning/rufous crown), a large black bib (distinctly colored patch of feathers on the throat or upper chest), and chestnut nape, white cheeks and grey rump. Ad female and imm have a buffier yellow bill.
Habitat: villages and farmlands.
Behavior: Highly adaptable, feeds on seeds and human food scraps.
Conservation status: LC, declining population; non-native to Kenya
Interesting fact: Introduced species, now widespread around human habitation.

Kenya Rufous Sparrow *Passer cordofanicus rufocinctus* **KAHURA NJA** 14cm
Identification: Br male has pale eyes, small black bib (distinctly colored patch of feathers on the throat or upper chest) streak around the ear and rufous rump. Females duller and paler with grey throat.
Habitat: Grasslands, farmlands, and bush country.
Behavior: Feeds on seeds and insects, often in small flocks.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: A regional sparrow unique to East Africa.




House Sparrow, Ad M © Wanyoike Wamiti | **Kenya Rufous Sparrow, Ad M © Tim Wacher**

MOTACILIDAE: WAGTAILS, LONGCLAWS AND PIPITS

RESIDENT WAGTAILS, PIPITS AND LONGCLAWS

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp* **KARÎITHI/KEBEBIA** 28cm
Identification: Black and white wagtail. Ad without grey or brown in the plumage and with a broad black breast band. Imm brownish-grey above. All ages are identified from cape and white wagtails by extensive white wing patches.
Habitat: Lakeshore, along the river and farmlands.
Behavior: Constantly wags tail, feeds on insects near water.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.




African Pied Wagtail, Ad (L) © Wanyoike Wamiti; Cape Wagtail, Ad (R) © Jacques de Speville

Cape Wagtail *Motacilla capensis* **KARÎITHI/KEBEBIA** 20cm
Identification: Ad is olive brown above with no white panel in the wing. Has a washed creamy buff below with narrow dark breast band. Imm has buffy fringes to the coverts and is washed yellowish on the belly
Habitat: Lakeshores and riversides.
Behavior: Hunts for insects along water edges, tail wagging constantly.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: extraordinary high-efficiency feeding speed.

Mountain Wagtail *Motacilla clara* **KARÎITHI/KEBEBIA** 19cm

Identification: Has the longest tail than any other wagtail. Ad is largely clear grey above and white below with neat narrow black breast band. Imm is similar but washed brown above, with indistinct breast band.
Habitat: river streams
Behavior: Hunts for insects along rocky streams, wagging tail constantly.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Prefers fast-flowing streams in highlands.




Mountain Wagtail, Ad © Jacques de Speville | **Grassland (African) Pipit pair © Peter MacKenzie**

Grassland (African) Pipit *Anthus cinnamomeus* **THARI/THEGEA** 17cm
Identification: Medium-sized bird that is brown above with dark streaks on the crown and mantle, has narrow dark eye lines and dark malar (the cheek region) stripe. Lower mandible is yellowish with pinkish legs, buff white below with short dark streak across the breast and plain flanks.
Habitat: Grasslands and open fields.
Behavior: Walks and runs on the ground, feeds on insects.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its singing in flight is a quick rise followed by parachuting descent.

Sharpe's Longclaw *Macronyx sharpei* **GATHONJO KA WERŨ-INĨ** 17cm
Identification: Smallest longclaw. Ad male is broadly marked above, yellow below with back streaks across the breast and down the flanks. Ad female is similar but slightly duller. Imm is paler above. buffy below with brown breast streaking and pale yellow from breast to vent.
Habitat: Grasslands with tussocks
Behavior: Ground-dwelling insect feeder, often sings from tussocks.
Conservation status: EN, endemic to Kenya and only found in Kinangop grasslands Mau Narok grasslands, Molo grasslands, Mt. Kenya (Marania/Timau grasslands) and Lake Ol' Bolossat grasslands. Possibly also occurs in the moorland of the Aberdare, Mt. Elgon and Cherangani
Interesting fact: Restricted to central Kenya highlands, making Lake Ol' Bolossat vital for its survival.




Sharpe's Longclaw, Ad © Jacques Erard | **Yellow-throated Longclaw, Ad © Jacques de Speville**

Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus* **GATHONJO** 22cm
Identification: Ad brown above with dark brown centers to the feathers. Bright yellow below with broad black breast band and short black streaks on sides of the breast. Imm has paler and browner throat to the breast and pale-yellow flanks and belly.
Habitat: Grasslands and savanna-like vegetations.
Behavior: Ground-dwelling insect feeder, often sings from elevated perches.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Looks like, acts, and sounds almost identical to an entirely unrelated bird, the Western Meadowlark of North America

MIGRATORY WAGTAILS, PIPITS AND LONGCLAWS (PM)

Red-throated Pipit PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Anthus cervinus* **THARI/THEGEA** 15cm
Identification: Heavily streaked above and below including the rump and flanks with white outer tail feathers. Br ad has brick-red on the face and upper breast. Non-br shows little or no red
Habitat: Grasslands and lake shoreline
Behavior: Migratory; feeds on insects and seeds.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Ranks among the most colorful representatives of pipits.

Tree Pipit PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Anthus trivialis* **THARI/THEGEA** 15cm
Identification: Olive- brown and heavily streaked above with plain rump and narrow dark malar stripes (the face region). Buff white below with long dark streaks across the breast. White on outer tail feathers.
Habitat: Grasslands, woodlands, and farmlands.
Behavior: Migratory; feeds on insects and seeds.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Breeds in Europe, winters in Africa.




Red-throated Pipit, Ad © Paul van Giersbergen | Tree Pipit, Ad © Thomas Varto Nielsen

Western Yellow Wagtail PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Motacilla flava* **KARĨITHI/KEBEBIA** 19cm




Western Yellow Wagtail, Ad M (L) © SergioMaria Bianchi; Ad F (R) © Bruno Boedts

Identification: Yellowish-green with black above and variable yellow below, yellow often strongest on belly and flanks. Ad male with more yellow underparts. Females and 1st year birds have olive-brown or plain brown upperparts, some yellow on the belly but may have entirely white underparts.
Habitat: Grasslands, lake shoreline and farmlands.
Behavior: Migratory; feeds on insects near water.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Breeds in Europe and Asia, winters in Africa

FRINGILLIDAE: CANARIES, SEED-EATERS AND ALLIES

Abyssinian (African) Citril *Crithagra citrinelloides* **RŨTHANGŨ** 11cm
Identification: Small, streaky, yellowish-green finch-like bird with very distinct black facial mask. Yellow eyebrows and dark mask covering its eyes and chin, contrasting with a streaked olive back, yellow-green breast, and yellow-edged wings.
Habitat: forest and forest edges.

Behavior: Feeds on seeds and small insects, often in flocks.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its cheerful song is a common sound in highland forests.



Abyssinian (African) Citril © Wanyoike Wamiti | Brimstone Canary, Ad © Simon Fletcher

Brimstone Canary *Crithagra sulphurata* **RŨTHANGŨ** 14cm
Identification: Ad male has heavier pinkish horny bill, less distinct face pattern with olive green malar (cheek region) stripe. Rump and mantle both green with dark streaking. Female and imm are duller.
Habitat: Grasslands, farmlands, and bush country.
Behavior: Feeds on seeds and insects, often in small groups.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Massive, with heavy bill, which completely changes its diet compared to other canaries.

Streaky Seedeater *Crithagra striolata* **NYAGATHANGA** 14cm
Identification: Has creamy-white eyebrows and dark cheek, thick conical bill, densely streaked brown back, heavily striped breast and belly, and short, slightly notched (gap) tail
Habitat: Forests and gardens.
Behavior: Feeds on seeds, often in flocks.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: often seen at feeders.

Thick-billed Seedeater *Crithagra burtoni*, potentially race *albifrons* **NYAGATHANGA** 15cm
Identification: Dark brown above with two narrow buffy wing bars, olive-green edged primary feathers and very heavy bill, mostly dull brown below paler on the buffy belly.
Habitat: Grassland and forest edges.
Behavior: Feeds on hard seeds, using powerful bill.

Conservation status: LC, declining population; race *albifrons* is endemic to the Central Kenya highlands including Lake Ol' Bolossat
Interesting fact: Specialized in cracking tough grass seeds.



Streaky Seedeater, Ad © Werner Suter



Thick-billed Seedeater, Ad © Nik Borrow

PARIDAE: TIT

White-bellied Tit *Melaniparus albiventris* 14cm



White-bellied Tit © Paul van Giersbergen

Identification: Small black-and-white tit with white belly and black head and back, and a white patch of the wing.
Habitat: Woodlands and forest edges.
Behavior: Active insect hunter, often in mixed flocks.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Agile and curious, often seen hanging upside down while feeding.

ALAUDIDAE: LARKS

Rufous-naped Lark *Corypha (Mirafra) Africana* 18cm

Identification: With short erectile crest on its head, distinct rufous nape, sturdy pinkish-brown bill, heavily streaked back and wings, densely-speckled buffy breast, pale belly, and moderately long pinkish legs

Habitat: Grasslands with taller grass and savannah-like vegetation

Behavior: Ground-dwelling insect and seed-feeder; males sing from elevated perches.

Conservation status: LC, declining population.

Interesting fact: It is a classic "sentinel" (watchman) bird of the African savannah. Males will spend hours perched prominently on top of termite mounds, fence posts, or small bushes



Rufous-naped Lark, Ad M © Wanyoike Wamiti |



Red-capped Lark, Ad M © Wanyoike Wamiti

Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea* 15cm

Identification: With bright chestnut crown on its head, distinct white eyebrows, short dark bill, streaked grey-brown back with rufous patches on the shoulders, clean unstreaked white breast and belly, and slender pinkish-brown legs.

Habitat: Grasslands with short grass or almost bare ground, farmlands

Behavior: Ground feeder, ground-nester, feeds on seeds and insects.

Conservation status: LC, increasing population.

Interesting fact: Nomadic and opportunistic, highly attracted to recently burned grasslands

CISTICOLIDAE: CISTICOLAS AND ALLIES

Grey Apalis *Apalis cinerea* 13cm

Identification: Dark grey head and back, sharp black bill, bright reddish-brown eyes, unstreaked white breast and belly, pale pinkish legs, and an extraordinarily long, slender tail with white outer-tail feathers

Habitat: Forest edges and thickets.

Behavior: Hunts for insects, often in pairs.

Conservation status: LC, declining population.

Interesting fact: Its soft call is often heard before the bird is seen.




Grey Apalis, Ad © Paul van Giersbergen | **Grey-backed Camaroptera, Ad © Jacques de Speville**

Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brachyura* 10cm
Identification: Uniform grey head and back contrasting sharply with bright olive-green wings, dark bill, distinctive orange-red eyes, pale greyish-white breast and belly, and short tail held high, pinkish legs.
Habitat: Bushlands and thickets.
Behavior: Hunts for insects in dense cover, often skulking (jumping) low.
Conservation status: LC, increasing population.
Interesting fact: Commonly known as the "Tailorbird of Africa," it builds its nest by using its sharp beak to pierce holes along the edges of large living green leaves, collects spider silk and plant fibers to literally sew the leaves together, creating a perfectly camouflaged, living green pouch to hide its eggs.

Hunter's Cisticola *Cisticola hunteri* **KONOKONO** 14cm
Identification: With rufous crown on head, uniform and unstreaked dark olive-brown back, plain buffy-grey breast and belly, a relatively long graduated tail, and dark pinkish legs.
Habitat: grasslands and bush country
Behavior: Ground-dwelling insect feeder, often sings from grass stems.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Restricted to East African highlands, including Lake Ol'Bolossat.




Hunter's Cisticola pair © Nik Borrow **Rattling Cisticola, Ad © Nik Borrow**

Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana* **KONOKONO** 14cm
Identification: With bold chestnut crown, heavily streaked brownish-black back, robust bill, unstreaked buffy-white breast, and a medium-length tail which it frequently wags, long pinkish legs.
Habitat: Grasslands and savannas.
Behavior: Known for its rattling song; feeds on insects.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: A widespread African cisticola, the loudest, most common cisticola of the dry acacia savannahs

Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans* **KONOKONO** 14cm
Identification: With bright rufous-chestnut cap, smooth and entirely unstreaked greyish-brown back, whitish breast and belly, black bill, and pale flesh-colored legs.
Habitat: Grasslands and bushland.
Behavior: Performs song flights, singing while fluttering above its territory
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its melodious song contrasts with its drab (dull) appearance.


Singing Cisticola, Ad © Paul van Giersbergen


Tawny-flanked Prinia, Ad © Jon Pullen

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava* 11cm
Identification: With pale/creamy eyebrows, dark bill, olive-brown back, pale throat, tawny-buff flanks, and characteristically long, graduated tail tipped with white.
Habitat: Bushlands, grasslands and thickests
Behavior: Hunts for insects, often flicking tail.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Builds intricate, uniquely-shaped nests out of woven green grass blades.

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida* 13cm

Identification: With grey crown, yellowish-green wings and back, reddish-brown eyes, yellow breast marked by a tiny dark central spot (in male), white belly, and long, slender tail.
Habitat: Forest edges, and bushlands.
Behavior: Hunts for insects, often in pairs.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Male and female usually duet



Yellow-breasted Apalis, Ad M (L) © Craig Evenhouse; Ad F (R) © John sawyer

LOCUSTELLIDAE: GRASSLAND WARBLER

Cinnamon Backen-warbler *Bradypterus cinnamomeus* **MŨINI/GATEETE** 15cm
Identification: With pale eyebrows, rich cinnamon-brown back and wings, rufous breast, pale dirty-whitish belly, long, broad, rounded tail and pinkish legs.
Habitat: Dense grass and forest
Behavior: Skulking insect feeder, rarely seen in open.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its loud song betrays its presence in otherwise hidden cover.



Cinnamon Backen-warbler Ad © Tadeusz Rosinski | Little (Southern) Rush-warbler, Ad © Jacques de Speville

Little (Southern) Rush-warbler *Bradypterus baboecala* 15cm

Identification: With pale brownish eye stripe, dark brown back, streaked whitish throat, dull brownish-buff breast and belly, and broad brown tail and pinkish-brown legs.
Habitat: Reed beds and marshes.
Behavior: Secretive, feeds on insects among reeds.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Lives in impenetrable parts of papyrus and reed beds, almost impossible to see, often heard singing but difficult to spot.

ACROCEPHALIDAE: REED WARBLER

Mountain Yellow Warbler *Iduna similis* 14cm



Mountain Yellow Warbler, Ad © Martin Goodey

Identification: With bright yellow face without dark markings, a pointed bill, unstreaked olive-green back and wings, yellow underparts, and slender dark legs. Imm slightly darker above and more buff below.
Habitat: forest and forest edges.
Behavior: Hunts for insects in foliage, often in pairs.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Restricted to East African highlands.

HIRUNDINIDAE: SWALLOWS AND MARTINS

RESIDENT SWALLOWS AND MARTINS

Black-Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne pristoptera* **THŨNGŨRŨRŨ** `15cm
Identification: With iridescent (color changes when light shines on it) blue-black body, wings, and head, dark eyes, forked tail, and very short legs
Habitat: Forest and forest edges
Behavior: Hunts for insects in flight, often near streams.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.

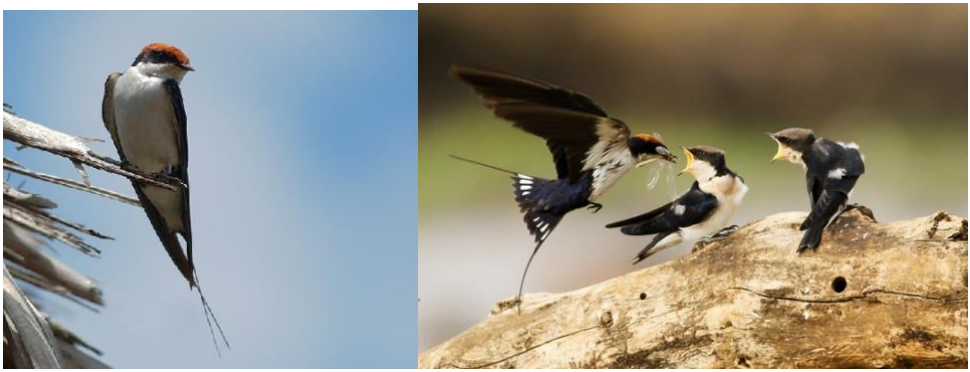
Interesting fact: When flying, creates a soft, audible whistling or hissing sound through the air



Black-Saw-wing Ad (L) © Nik Borrow | Rock Martin, Ad (C & R) © Jacques de Speville

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula* **THŨNGŨRŨRŨ** 12cm
Identification: Has dull earth-brown back and crown, a pale pinkish-buff throat, unstreaked dull brown underparts, and a square tail displaying distinct white spots on the inner feathers when fanned out.
Habitat: Cliffs, rocky outcrops, and buildings.
Behavior: Nests on cliffs and walls; feeds on flying insects.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* **THŨNGŨRŨRŨ** 18cm



Wire-tailed Swallow, Ad (L) © Atle Helge Qvale; Ad feeding chicks (R) © Thomas Varto Nielsen

Identification: Has bright chestnut cap, a metallic sapphire-blue back, unstreaked white underparts, and two extraordinarily thin, thread-like tail streamers extending well past the main tail feathers.
Habitat: Lakeshores and along the river
Behavior: Hunts for insects in flight, nests near water.
Conservation status: LC, increasing population.
Interesting fact: Its wire-like tail streamers make it unmistakable

MIGRATORY SWALLOWS AND MARTINS (PM, am)

Banded Martin am *Neophedina cincta* **THŨNGŨRŨRŨ** 15cm
Identification: Has white line above the eye, a square tail, earth-brown back and wings, and white underparts divided by a dark brown breast band.
Habitat: Grasslands, farmlands, and riverbanks.
Behavior: Hunts for insects in flight, nests in burrows.
Conservation status: LC, increasing population.
Interesting fact: Digs nesting burrows in sandy banks.



Banded Martin, Ad © John Caddick



Barn Swallow, Ad © Jacques de Speville

Barn Swallow PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Hirundo rustica* **THŨNGŨRŨRŨ** 19cm
Identification: Has blue-black back and crown, rufous forehead and chin, dark blue throat band, white belly, and an exceptionally long, deeply forked tail with long outer streamers
Behavior: Feeds on flying insects.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.
Interesting fact: Breeds in Europe and Asia, winters around Lake Ol' Bolossat among other African sites

Northern House Martin PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Delichon urbicum* **THŨNGŨRŨRŨ** 14cm
Identification: Has glossy blue-black head and mantle area, bright white rump, white underparts, and a short, moderately forked tail.
Habitat: Farmlands and villages
Behavior: Builds mud nests under eaves (roof, buildings); feeds on flying insects.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Nests close to human habitation

(European) Red-rumped Swallow PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Cecropis daurica* **THŨNGŨRŨRŨ** 18cm
Identification: Has blue-black crown and back, rufous nape and rump, heavily streaked buffy underparts, and a long, forked tail with broad outer feathers.

Habitat: Grasslands and farmlands
Behavior: Feeds on flying insects
Conservation status: LC, increasing population.
Interesting fact: Builds mud nests with tunnel-like entrances.




Northern House Martin, Ad © Tomislav Gracanin | European Red-rumped Swallow © Ruben Barone Tosco

Grey-rumped Swallow am *Pseudhirundo griseopyga* **THŨNGŨRŨRŨ** 15cm
Identification: Has dark blue-black cap and mantle, distinct grey rump, dark bill, plain greyish-white underparts, and deeply forked dark tail.
Habitat: Grasslands and near water
Behavior: Hunts for insects in flight, often in flocks.
Conservation status: LC, stable population.
Interesting fact: Its grey rump distinguishes it from other swallows.




Grey-rumped Swallow, Ad © Bruno Boedts **African Plain Martin, Ad © Varto Nielsen**

African Plain Martin am *Riparia paludicola* **THŨNGŨRŨRŨ** 12cm
Identification: With uniform greyish-brown head, back and wings, pale grey-brown throat and breast, white belly and a slightly notched tail.
Habitat: Riverine and lakeshores
Behavior: Nests in burrows; feeds on flying insects.
Conservation status: LC, declining population.

Interesting fact: Often nests colonially in sandy banks.

PYCNONOTIDAE: BULBULS

Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus* **GĨCOGORU** 18cm
Identification: With dark brownish-black head, crown, crown with tiny black crest, pale brownish throat, dull olive-brown back, pale greyish-white breast and belly, short dark bill, dark eyes, and a bright yellow patch beneath its tail (vent – under-tail coverts).
Habitat: Farmlands and bush country
Behavior: Feeds on fruit, seeds, and insects; noisy and social.
Conservation Status: LC, increasing population.
Interesting Fact: Bold and quick to mob potential predators like snakes or hawks, and uses its loud, scolding, chattering alarm calls to alert all neighboring birds of danger.



Common Bulbul, Ad © Jacques de Speville

Eastern Mountain Greenbul *Arizelocichla nigriceps* 18cm
Identification: With dark charcoal-grey head and crown, streaked pale grey throat, olive-green back, wings and tail, pale yellowish-green breast and belly, and dark bill.
Habitat: forest and forest edges
Behavior: Forages in canopy for fruit and insects.
Conservation Status: LC, declining population.
Interesting Fact: Important seed disperser

Yellow-whiskered Greenbul *Eurillas latirostris* 18cm
Identification: Has dull olive-brown head, back, and wings, dark eyes, short and slightly flattened bill, pale olive breast and belly, and a pair of thin, bright yellow whisker-like stripes running down the sides of its throat along the lower jaw (malar region).
Habitat: Forest, forest edges and thickets
Behavior: Hunts insects and feeds on fruit in dense foliage.
Conservation Status: LC, stable population.
Interesting Fact: its plumage offers perfect camouflage in the undergrowth



Eastern Mountain Greenbul © Paul van Giersbergen



Yellow-whiskered Greenbul, Ad © Paul van Giersbergen

LEIOTHRICHIDAE: BABBLERS

Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardineii* **KĨGEGE/NJAMUTE** 22cm





Arrow-marked Babbler, Ad (L) © Graham Crawshaw; Ad (R) showing red eye © Jacques de Speville

Identification: Has a scaly brown head and back, sharp dark bill, bright orange-to-red eyes, a medium-length tail, and dusky-brown breast and belly with white, V-shaped arrow-like tip markings.
Habitat: Bushlands and grasslands/savannahs
Behavior: Gregarious found in groups), noisy groups forage together for insects.
Conservation Status: LC, stable population.
Interesting Fact: Live in highly synchronized, cooperative family groups of 4 to 12 birds that defend their territory together

ZOSTEROPIDAE: WHITE-EYES

Kikuyu White-eye *Zosterops kikuyuensis* 11cm

Identification: With a broad, silky-white ring of tiny feathers around its black eyes, a bright yellow forehead and throat, grass-green back, wings, and crown, yellow belly, and tiny dark legs.
Habitat: Inside forest and bushland
Behavior: Feeds on insects and nectar, often in large flock called hunting party
Conservation Status: LC, declining population; endemic to the Kenyan highlands including Lake Ol'Bolossat
Interesting Fact: Restricted entirely to montane forest canopies of the Kenyan highlands, hyper-active bird



Kikuyu White-eye, Ad © Paul van Giersbergen

STURNIDAE: STARLINGS

Greater Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chalybaeus* **WANJIRŨ MŨIRŨ** 22cm
Identification: Has a metallic blue-green iridescent feathers (changing color with light intensity) across its crown, back, wings, and tail, dark blueish-purple patch over its ears (auriculars), row of dark spots on its wing-coverts, sharp dark bill, and golden-yellow eyes.
Habitat: Savannahs, grasslands and villages.
Behavior: Feeds on insects and fruit, often in noisy flocks
Conservation Status: LC, stable population.

Red-winged Starling *Onychognathus morio* **WANJIRŨ MŨIRŨ** 27cm
Identification: Uniform glossy blue-black head, body, and tail, long and heavily curved black bill, dark eyes, and long, powerful wings that reveal bright, chestnut-red patches on the flight feathers (primaries) when spread open.
Habitat: Cliffs, rocky areas, and villages/farmland
Behavior: Feeds on fruit and insects, often nesting on buildings.
Conservation Status: LC, increasing population.
Interesting Fact: Uniquely adapted to steep rocky terrains




Greater Blue-eared Starling, Ad © Wanyoike Wamiti | **Red-winged Starling, Ad © Bruno Porter**

Sharpe's Starling *Pholia sharpii* **WANJIRŨ MŨIRŨ** 18cm
Identification: Has glossy violet-blue head, crown and back, white throat, creamy-white or pale buff breast and belly, dark bill, and pale cream-colored eyes.
Habitat: Forest and forest edges
Behavior: Feeds on fruit and insects, often in flocks.
Conservation Status: LC, stable population.
Interesting Fact: An altitudinal migrant; it spends the breeding season high up in the cold montane mist forests of East Africa, but forms large, fast-flying flocks and descend to lower valleys in search of ripening forest fruits.




Sharpe's Starling, Ad © James Andrewes | **Slender-billed Starling, Ad © Nik Borrow**

Slender-billed Starling *Onychognathus tenuirostris* **WANJIRŨ MŨIRŨ** 27cm
Identification: Has exceptionally long, narrow, down-curved black bill, uniform glossy blue-black head, body, and crown, long graduated tail, and large wings showing rich chestnut panels on the primary feathers (wings) in flight.

Habitat: forest and cliffs
Behavior: Feeds on fruit, especially figs
Conservation Status: LC, declining population.
Interesting Fact: A high-altitude specialist

Superb Starling *Lamprotornis superbus* 18cm
Identification: Has glossy black head and face, an iridescent metallic-blue back, throat, upper breast and wings, white line cutting straight across its lower breast, reddish-orange belly, white patch under its tail, dark bill, and white/creamy eyes
Habitat: Savannahs, grasslands and villages
Behavior: Feeds on insects and scraps, often near people.
Conservation Status: LC, declining population.
Interesting Fact: Practices complex cooperative breeding; young birds from previous clutches will stay behind with their parents to act as nest helpers: bringing food and protecting new chicks from ground predators


Superb Starling, Ad © Wanyoike Wamiti |


Wattled Starling, Ad M br ©: Jacques de Speville

Wattled Starling am *Creatophora cinerea* 21cm
Identification: Pale grey body and back, dark blackish wings and tail, bare, bright yellow skin on the face, a bald black crown, and two large, fleshy black hanging lobes (wattles) under the chin.
Habitat: Grasslands, farmlands and woodland
Behavior: Feeds on insects, often in large flocks
Conservation Status: LC, stable population.
Interesting Fact: Tracks migratory swarms of insects, particularly locusts; they are so nomadic that they will suddenly arrive by the thousands in an area experiencing an insect outbreak, rapidly breed in massive colonial nests and vanish completely as soon as the locust numbers drop.

MUSCICAPIDAE: SCRUB-ROBINS, CHATS AND FLYCATCHERS

RESIDENT SCRUB-ROBINS, CHATS, AND FLYCATCHERS

African Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta* 12cm

Identification: With small, uniform brownish-grey head and back, an upright stance, tiny, dark bill surrounded by faint bristles at the base, an indistinct pale ring around its dark eyes, and a pale grey-white breast and belly
Habitat: forests and farmlands
Behavior: Hunts for insects by sallying (catching insects mid-air) from perches.
Conservation Status: LC, declining population; race *marsabit* is endemic to Kenya
Interesting Fact: A classic "sit-and-wait" aerial hunter



African Dusky Flycatcher, Ad © John Caddick



Cape Robin Chat © Wanyoike Wamiti

Cape Robin Chat *Caffrornis caffra* **NYAMĨNDIGI** 16cm
Identification: Has dark grey head, bright white eyebrow stripe (supercilium), an olive-grey back, orange throat and upper breast, pale grey belly, and bright orange-buff tail featuring a dark center stripe down the middle feathers
Habitat: Bushlands and forest edges
Behavior: Ground feeder, eating insects and fruit.
Conservation Status: LC, stable population.
Interesting Fact: Performs vocal mimics of other birds perfectly (e.g., starlings, sunbirds, and even domestic animal sounds)

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata* 17cm
Identification: With a black cap on its head, white forehead and eyebrow streak, broad black band or "collar" cutting across its white throat and breast, earth-brown back, pale buff belly, and a white rump visible above a short black tail.
Habitat: Grasslands and open plains.
Behavior: Ground feeder, eating insects.
Conservation Status: LC, stable population.
Interesting Fact: Stands rigidly upright on top of bare mounds; to attract mate, male perform an impressive parachute flight display where they fly vertically into the sky, hovers while singing and drift straight back down like a stone.

Common (African) Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*
KAMAARA/GĨCOCA/GACOKICOKI KA MŨGŨNDA 12cm

Identification: With black head, throat, and back (in male), a white patch on the sides of the neck, orange-chestnut breast, white belly, dark wings with a bold white patch, a short black tail, and thin black legs.
Habitat: Grasslands
Behavior: Hunts for insects from low perches
Conservation Status: LC, stable population.
Interesting Fact: It gets its name from its distinctive, sharp alarm call, which sounds exactly like two hard pebbles (STONES) being forcefully clicked together




Capped Wheatear, Ad © Artur Bujanowicz | Common Stonechat, Ad M © Wanyoike Wamiti

Northern Anteater Chat *Myrmecocichla aethiops* **MŨKŨRA NYŨNGŨ** 19cm
Identification: Has uniform, soot-black or dark chocolate-brown head, body, and tail, an upright posture over long black legs, dark eyes, stout black bill, and large white patches hidden inside its wings that flash brightly when in flight
Habitat: Grasslands and farmlands.
Behavior: Feeds on ants and termites, often near mounds.
Conservation Status: LC, stable population.
Interesting Fact: An obligate associate (fundamentally and entirely dependent on another specific organism) of termites and aardvarks; it lives around active termite mounds to feast on emerging insects, and intentionally digs its deep, horizontal nesting tunnels right into the roofs of abandoned aardvark burrows for safety.




Northern Anteater Chat, Ad (L) © Wanyoike Wamiti.| White-eyed Slaty-Flycatcher, Ad (R) © Nik Borrow

White-eyed Slaty-Flycatcher *Melaenornis fischeri* 15cm
Identification: Has bright white ring around its dark eyes, dark slate-grey head, back, wings, and tail, lighter grey breast, pale white belly, and dark bill.
Habitat: forest and farmlands
Behavior: Hunts for insects by attacking from perches.
Conservation Status: LC, declining population.
Interesting Fact: Highly cooperative; its white eye-rings serves as a visual marker to keep other flock members unified while moving through dark foliage

White-starred Robin *Pogonocichla stellata*, potentially race *akeleyae* endemic 15cm




White-starred Robin, Ad (L) © Bruno Boedts; Juv (R) © Nik Borrow

Identification: Has deep slate-blue head and crown, two tiny silvery-white feather spots (the "stars") located right in front of its eyes, olive-green back, yellow breast and belly, and black tail with bright yellow outer panels
Habitat: Interior of forest
Behavior: Hunts for insects in undergrowth, often shy.
Conservation Status: LC, declining population; likely the race *akeleyae* occurs in Lake Ol' Bolossat where it might be endemic
Interesting Fact: Undergoes seasonal altitudinal migration; during heavy mountain rains, it leaves the high-elevation bamboo forests and migrates down to lower river valleys. Uses its striking yellow tail panels to signal to partners in the dark forest floor

MIGRATORY SCRUB-ROBINS AND CHATS (PM)

Common Rock Thrush PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Monticola saxatilis* **WANGŨ KANYI** 19cm
Identification: Has bright cobalt-blue head, neck, and upper back (in male), a distinct white patch on the mid-back, orange-rufous breast and belly, dark-brown black wings, and a short, bright orange tail.
Habitat: On rocky slopes and cliffs.
Behavior: Hunts for insects and berries, often on rocks.
Conservation Status: LC

Interesting Fact: Long-distance migratory marvel that breeds in Europe and Central Asia before flying thousands of kilometers over deserts to spend its winter months in the rocky savannahs of East Africa.



Common Rock Thrush, Ad M (L) © Caglar Gungor; F (C) © SergioMaria Bianchi | Northern Wheatear, Ad (R) © Simon Fletcher

Northern Wheatear PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Oenanthe Oenanthe* 15cm
Identification: Has grey back and crown, white eyebrows, black mask running through its eyes, pale buff breast, white belly, black wings, and white rump with a sharp black inverted "T" pattern on its tail.
Habitat: Grasslands and rocky areas.
Behavior: Feeds on insects on the ground.
Conservation Status: LC, declining population.
Interesting Fact: astonishing migrant; breeds in northern Alaska or the Arctic tundra (extreme northern latitudes: Canada, Russia, Alaska in USA, Greenland in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) and flies over 14,000 km across continents and oceans to winter in East Africa

Pied Wheatear PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Oenanthe pleschanka* 15cm
Identification: Has white crown and nape (in male), black face, throat, back, and wings, white breast and belly, and white rump marked with a distinct black inverted "T" pattern across the tail feathers
Habitat: Grasslands and rocky slopes
Behavior: feeds on insects
Conservation Status: LC
Interesting Fact: Prefers harsh, overgrazed, stony ground where it uses its sharp vision to scan the earth from a small rock, dropping down instantly to pin moving beetles against the soil




Pied Wheatear, Ad © SergioMaria Bianchi **Whinchat, Ad © Mike Hounsinou**

Whinchat PM (in Kenya Sept-Mar) *Saxicola rubetra* 12cm
Identification: With a bold, wide white stripe above the eyes, streaky brown-and-black crown and back, pale white throat, apricot-orange breast and belly, and short tail with distinct white patches at the base
Habitat: Grasslands near water
Behavior: hunts for insects from perches.
Conservation Status: LC, declining population.
Interesting Fact: It perches dynamically on reeds from where it tracks flies for food

TURDIDAE: TRUE THRUSHES

Abyssinian Thrush/Northern Olive Thrush *Turdus abyssinicus* **GĨCHOCHO** 22cm




Abyssinian Thrush (Northern) Olive Thrush, Ad (L), Imm (R) © Bruno Boedts

Identification: With uniform dark olive-brown head, crown, back, and wings, bright, orange bill, orange-ring around its eyes, dull grey-brown throat, orange-apricot breast and flanks, pale white patch on the lower belly, and long orange-yellow legs
Habitat: forest floor and farmland

Behavior: Feeds on fruit and insects, often on the ground.
Conservation Status: LC
Interesting Fact: It acts as an acoustic clock for mountain villages, singing with immense volume precisely at the first crack of dawn and again at the exact moment of dusk

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