



Ethiopia

The 'Roof of Africa'

Saturday 4 – Friday 17 February 2012 (14 days)
Saturday 16 February – Friday 1 March 2013 (14 days)

Join Callan Cohen for a remarkable journey across the 'Roof of Africa', from Ethiopia's Rift Valley lakes to the Bale Mountains, and south to Yabello. Rich in endemics, from Rouget's Rail and Stresemann's Bush Crow to Mountain Nyala and the enigmatic Simien Wolf



Ethiopia, ancient Abyssinia, the axis of Africa... here the earliest known ancestors of man wandered in distant millennia. Still surviving in its remote mountains are creatures seemingly forgotten by time – animals like the long-legged Simien Wolf, being neither fox, jackal nor wolf but something of each.

Set against a backdrop of the most stunning scenery in all Africa, the unique avifauna includes many surprises too. From the familiar Chough, here in its sole lonely outpost in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa, to the puzzling Stresemann's Bush Crow, a sociable, Starling-like corvid that's also one of nearly 30 species of bird found only in Ethiopia – most of which we should see on this exciting tour!

It's a trip that begins in fine style, as we seek our first endemic birds – Wattled Ibis, Blue-winged Goose and the monstrous Thick-billed Raven - when we have barely left the capital, Addis Ababa. It's from Addis that we visit the ancient monastery of Debre Libanos. Perched on the brink of a spectacular gorge overlooking a tributary of the Blue Nile, here we'll watch for Banded Barbet, Rüppell's Chat and an array of other endemics, while the plains hold flocks of White-collared Pigeons. The giant male Gelada Baboons almost resemble lions, baring their long canines in regular scuffles while their long, golden manes blow in the alpine breeze.

Heading south, we travel down the Great African Rift Valley to explore the bird-rich lakes of Langano and Awassa, before arriving at the remote southern town of Yabello – home to two of Ethiopia's most sought-after endemics: White-tailed Swallow and Stresemann's Bush Crow.

We start back north and climb high into the Bale Mountains, watching for Rouget's Rail and searching the lush Hypericum forests for the mysterious Abyssinian Catbird. Emerging on to the weird, tundra-like landscape of the Sennati Plateau – 4000m above sea-level – we enter the other-worldly domain of Spot-breasted Plover and the rare

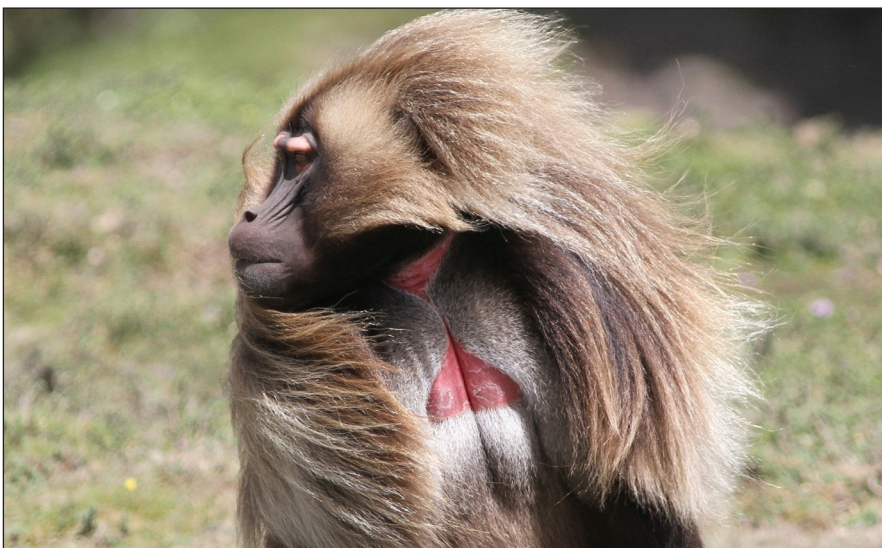


Simien Wolf. We finish at luxurious Bishangari Lodge, beautifully situated amongst the woodlands at Lake Langano, seeking Green Twinspot and the endemic Yellow-fronted Parrot.

We've chosen to spend more time in the highlands on this wonderful tour, to focus on Ethiopia's special birds and mammals (and so are not visiting lowland Awash National Park, which offers many general East African species). Travel with us to the 'Roof of Africa' and experience a truly remarkable country that is still one of the world's great treasure-houses of wildlife, scenery and history. This will be Callan's fourth visit to Ethiopia.

Outline Itinerary

- Day 1 :** Fly London-Addis Ababa.
- Day 2 :** Morning arrival Addis; drive to Soluta plains.
Overnight Debre Libanos
- Day 3 :** Jemmu River Valley.
Overnight Addis
- Day 4 :** The Rift Valley and Lake Ziway.
Overnight Awassa
- Day 5 :** Lakes Awassa and Langano.
Overnight Awassa
- Days 6 - 7 :** Lake Awassa to Yabello.
Two nights Yabello
- Day 8 :** Yabello to Wondo Genet.
Overnight Wondo Genet



Gelada Baboon and, top, Spot-breasted Plover (Photos: Callan Cohen)

TRIP DETAILS

TRAVEL : Ethiopia is a vast country in which we will cover only the central and southern regions. Our carefully planned itinerary maximizes the overall number of birds possible, with a good chance of seeing most of Ethiopia's endemic birds. We'll have some unavoidably long drives in a large and comfortable bus or 4WD vehicles if necessary, with frequent stops for birding. We'll also have some early departures in order to reach birding areas at a time of day when the key specialities will be most active and visible, planning to return to our hotel in time for a rest later in the day where appropriate.

ACCOMMODATION : will be in twin-bedded and single rooms at the best available hotels and chalet-style complexes. They are somewhat basic by western standards, but clean and comfortable with private bathrooms (we avoid the really basic accommodation on this tour that has in the past made Ethiopia somewhat notorious). See our website for more information.

MEALS : All included in the price. Food is mostly western in content, including soups, chicken, meat, fish, rice and pasta (spaghetti being a common first course). While there are not a great number of choices for vegetarians, generally pasta, rice, soups and omelettes are available. Some lunches will be picnics.

WALKING : Short walks over easy to moderate terrain. The going is mainly easy, but moderate due to altitude in the Bale Mountains, where we will be birding up to a maximum elevation of 4500m/13500ft above sea level. Stout walking shoes or lightweight boots advised.

PRINCIPAL LEADER : Callan Cohen

NUMBERS : Max. 12 clients

PRICE : **2012: £ 2,945**

2013: £ tbc

Single supp. : **2012: £ 215**

2013: £ tbc

Deposit : £ 400 per person

The price is per person, and is fully inclusive of return scheduled flights London-Addis Ababa, all accommodation, meals, ground transport, entrance fees, tips for baggage handling and meal service, airport taxes, bird and mammals checklist, map and services of the leaders.

The price excludes travel insurance, visa costs (ca. £14 in summer 2011), optional tips to local drivers drinks & other personal expenses.

Both trips will be operated in conjunction with Limosa Holidays.

Day 9 : Wondo Genet to Bale Mountains
Overnight Goba

Day 10 : Bale Mountains National Park
Overnight Goba

Days 11 - 12 : Morning at Bale, transfer to Lake Langano.

Two nights Bishangari Lodge

Day 13 : Bishangari and return to Addis.

Day 14 : Fly Addis Ababa-London.