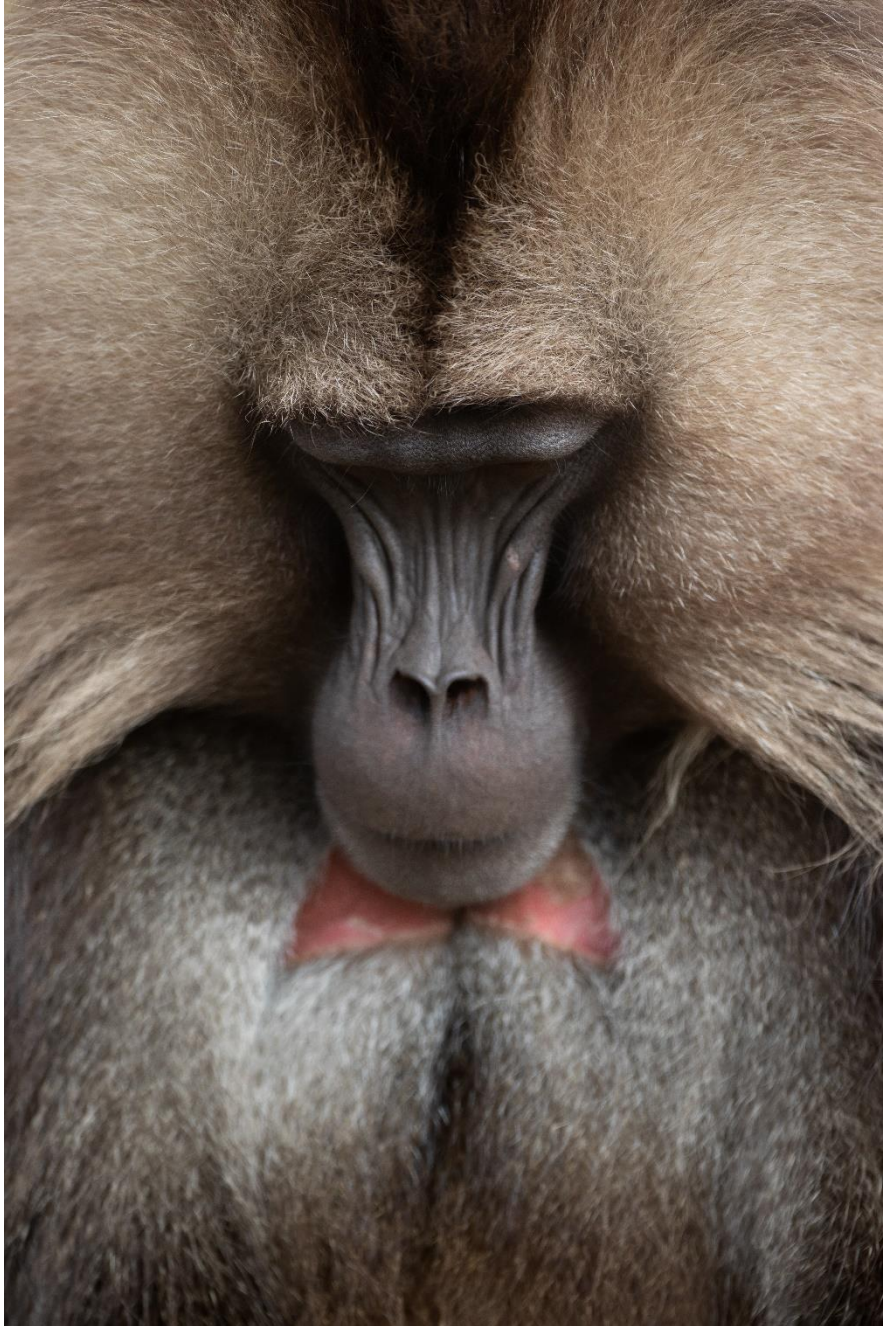


ETHIOPIA

« On the Highlands of Abyssinia »

Rémi Pichard



January 2021 – May 2022 – January 2024

3 seasons in Ethiopia, 46 days in the highlands

INTRODUCTION

I went to Ethiopia in January 2021 for a photographic project mainly focused on the Ethiopian wolf. From then on, I completely fell in love with this multifaceted country and especially its extraordinary wildlife and breathtaking landscapes. What was initially supposed to be a one-off trip turned into an annual pilgrimage. I then decided to create a photographic book paying tribute to the fabulous, and so little known, nature of this beautiful country. It should be released later this year.

Unfortunately these 3 expeditions were not without risks. Indeed, even if this report could make you want to visit the country, I can only recommend that you wait a little longer if you want to see all of the Ethiopian wildlife. In November 2020, a civil war broke out in northern Ethiopia pitting the Ethiopian federal government against the Tigray People's Liberation Front. Although the government officially announced that this armed conflict had been brought under control and that it had ended, this is not the case in reality and certain areas still remain very dangerous for tourists while other areas are completely safe. I sometimes had to take some risks, perhaps inconsiderate, to go to certain natural areas in order to photograph the wildlife for which I had come. I wanted to tell you about this experience.



I traveled and worked with a local guide called Muzeyen. He is knowledgeable about the wildlife of his country and mainly about the Ethiopian wolves since Muzeyen was born in the heart of the Bale Mountains ! It is possible to travel on your own in Ethiopia but I do not recommend it. Indeed, the roads being quite bad, the country faces a fairly impressive number of road accidents which are, for the most part, very serious. In addition, it is not possible to go to national parks without a guide. Muzeyen is excellent and is always accompanied by a very safe driver. He works for a company but it is much easier to contact him directly.

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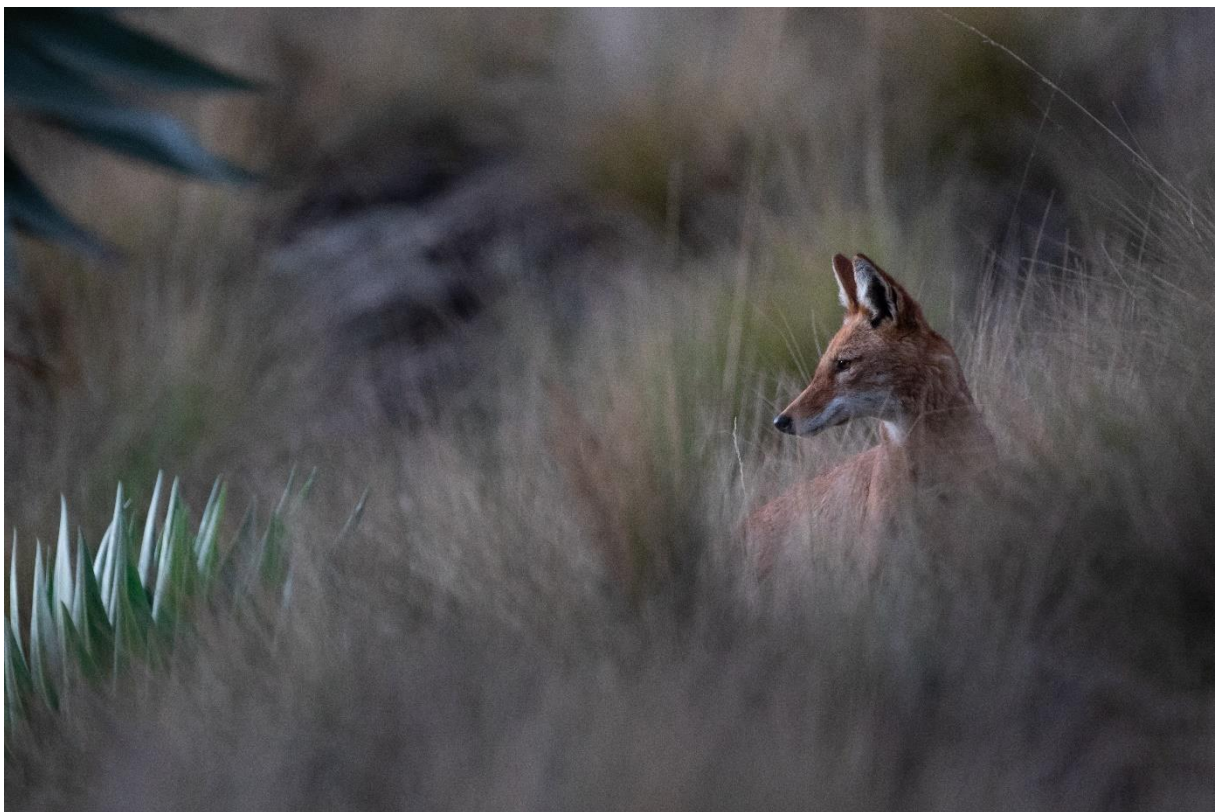
The main country in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia stands out for its diversity of ecosystems. We can count 6 different ones in total : Desert and semi-desert, Bush and savanna, Woodland, Forest, Montane, Wetlands and rivers. All this offers striking contrasts and astonishing landscapes !

This multitude of ecosystems offers Ethiopia extremely diverse vegetation. The diversity is such that many species are still discovered today. In high altitude regions we find the famous giant lobelia.

The geographical isolation of Ethiopia has favored the endemism of a large number of species among mammals and birds. This fauna is mainly adapted to life at high altitude. Unfortunately, these fascinating species are greatly threatened by sedentary agricultural activity and its great advance even within national parks and, recently, the war too. However, major conservation efforts are carried out internally.

This report brings together 3 consecutive trips to Ethiopia and will therefore not be divided into a precise itinerary but rather by areas visited.

So I'm taking you with me to discover this multifaceted country during 3 travel trips totaling 46 days spent in Ethiopia !



LIST OF ALL THE SPECIES OBSERVED

Legend :

(E) : Endemic of Ethiopia

(EoA) : Endemic of Abyssinia (Ethiopia + Eritrea)

MAMMALS

Hyracoidea (Hyraxes)

- Bush Hyrax (*Heterohyrax brucei*)
- Rock Hyrax (*Procavia capensis*)

Primates

- Grivet Monkey (*Chlorocebus aethiops*)
- Bale Monkey (*Chlorocebus djamdjamensis*) **(E)**
- Olive Baboon (*Papio anubis*)
- Hamadryas Baboon (*Papio hamadryas*)
- Gelada (*Theropithecus gelada*) **(E)**
- Guereza (*Colobus guereza*)

Rodentia (Rodents)

- Unstriped Ground Squirrel (*Xerus rutilus*)
- Giant Mole Rat (*Tachyoryctes macrocephalus*) **(E)**
- Blick's Grass Rat (*Arvicanthis blicki*) **(E)**
- Neumann's Grass Rat (*Arvicanthis neumanni*)

Lagomorpha (Lagomorphs)

- Ethiopian Highland Hare (*Lepus starcki*) **(E)**
- Abyssinian Hare (*Lepus habessinicus*)

Carnivora (Carnivorans)

- Serval (*Leptailurus serval*)
- Common genet (*Genetta genetta*)
- Egyptian Mongoose (*Herpestes ichneumon*)
- Spotted Hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*)
- African Golden Wolf (*Canis lupaster*)
- Ethiopian Wolf (*Canis simensis*) **(E)**

Perissodactyla (Odd-toed Ungulates)

- Grevy's Zebra (*Equus grevyi*)



Artiodactyla (Even-toed Ungulates)

- Common Warthog (*Phacochoerus africanus*)
- Forest Hog (*Hylochoerus meinertzhageni*)
- Bushpig (*Potamochoerus larvatus*)
- Soemmerring's Gazelle (*Nanger soemmerringii*)
- Gerenuk (*Litocranius walleri*)
- Salt's Dik-dik (*Madoqua saltiana*)
- Klipspringer (*Oreotragus oreotragus*)
- Mountain Nyala (*Tragelaphus buxtoni*) (E)
- Bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*)
- Walia Ibex (*Capra walie*) (E)
- Common Duiker (*Sylvicapra grimmia*)
- Beisa Oryx (*Oryx beisa*)
- Bohor Reedbuck (*Redunca redunca*)



BIRDS

STRUTHIONIFORMES : Struthionidae (Ostriches)

- Somali Ostrich (*Struthio molybdophanes*)

ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae (Ducks, geese, and waterfowl)

- Blue-winged Goose (*Cyanochen cyanoptera*) (E)
- Egyptian Goose (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*)
- Ruddy Shelduck (*Tadorna ferruginea*)
- African Pygmy-Goose (*Nettapus auritus*)
- Yellow-billed Duck (*Anas undulata*)



GALLIFORMES : Numididae (Guineafowl)

- Helmeted Guineafowl (*Numida meleagris*)

GALLIFORMES : Phasianidae (Pheasants, grouse, and allies)

- Moorland Francolin (*Scleroptila psilolaema*) (E)
- Chestnut-naped Spurfowl (*Pternistis castaneicollis*)
- Erckel's Spurfowl (*Pternistis erckelii*)
- Harwood's Spurfowl (*Pternistis harwoodi*) (E)
- Yellow-necked Spurfowl (*Pternistis leucoscepus*)



COLUMBIFORMES : Columbidae (Pigeons and doves)

- Speckled Pigeon (*Columba guinea*)
- White-collared Pigeon (*Columba albitorques*) (EoA)
- Rameron Pigeon (*Columba arquatrix*)
- Dusky Turtle-Dove (*Streptopelia lugens*)
- African Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia roseogrisea*)
- Mourning Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decipiens*)



- Red-eyed Dove (*Streptopelia semitorquata*)
- Ring-necked Dove (*Streptopelia capicola*)
- Black-billed Wood-Dove (*Turtur abyssinicus*)
- Tambourine Dove (*Turtur tympanistria*)
- Namaqua Dove (*Oena capensis*)

PTEROCLIFORMES : Pteroclididae (Sandgrouse)

- Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse (*Pterocles exustus*)



OTIDIFORMES : Otididae (Bustards)

- Arabian Bustard (*Ardeotis arabs*)
- Kori Bustard (*Ardeotis kori*)
- White-bellied Bustard (*Eupodotis senegalensis*)



MUSOPHAGIFORMES : Musophagidae (Turacos)

- White-cheeked Turaco (*Menelikornis leucotis*)

CUCULIFORMES : Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

- White-browed Coucal (*Centropus superciliosus*)



CAPRIMULGIFORMES : Apodidae (Swifts)

- Alpine Swift (*Tachymarptis melba*)

GRUIFORMES : Rallidae (Rails, gallinules, and coots)

- Rouget's Rail (*Rougetius rougetii*) (EoA)
- Red-knobbed Coot (*Fulica cristata*)
- Black Crake (*Zapornia flavirostra*)



GRUIFORMES : Gruidae (Cranes)

- Wattled Crane (*Bugeranus carunculatus*)

CHARADRIIFORMES : Charadriidae (Plovers and lapwings)

- Three-banded Plover (*Charadrius tricollaris*)
- Spur-winged Lapwing (*Vanellus spinosus*)
- Black-headed Lapwing (*Vanellus tectus*)
- Crowned Lapwing (*Vanellus coronatus*)
- Spot-breasted Lapwing (*Vanellus melanocephalus*) (E)



CHARADRIIFORMES : Jacanidae (Jacanas)

- African Jacana (*Actophilornis africanus*)

CHARADRIIFORMES : Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and allies)

- Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

CICONIIFORMES : Ciconiidae (Storks)

- Abdim's Stork (*Ciconia abdimii*)
- African Woolly-necked Stork (*Ciconia microscelis*)
- Marabou Stork (*Leptoptilos crumenifer*)



SULIFORMES : Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and shags)

- Long-tailed Cormorant (*Microcarbo africanus*)

PELECANIFORMES : Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

- Great White Pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*)

PELECANIFORMES : Scopidae (Hamerkop)

- Hamerkop (*Scopus umbretta*)



PELECANIFORMES : Ardeidae (Hérons, egrets, and bitterns)

- Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)
- Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)
- Western Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)
- Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)



PELECANIFORMES : Threskiornithidae (Ibises and spoonbills)

- African Sacred Ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*)
- Hadada Ibis (*Bostrychia hagedash*)
- Wattled Ibis (*Bostrychia carunculata*) (EoA)

ACCIPITRIFORMES : Sagittariidae (Secretarybird)

- Secretarybird (*Sagittarius serpentarius*)



ACCIPITRIFORMES : Accipitridae (Hawks, eagles, and kites)

- Black-winged Kite (*Elanus caeruleus*)
- African Harrier-Hawk (*Polyboroides typus*)
- Bearded Vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*)
- Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*)
- Lappet-faced Vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*)
- Hooded Vulture (*Necrosyrtes monachus*)
- White-backed Vulture (*Gyps africanus*)
- Long-crested Eagle (*Lophaetus occipitalis*)
- Tawny Eagle (*Aquila rapax*)
- Steppe Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*)
- African Hawk-Eagle (*Aquila spilogaster*)
- Dark Chanting-Goshawk (*Melierax metabates*)
- Eastern Chanting-Goshawk (*Melierax poliopterus*)
- Gabar Goshawk (*Micronisus gabar*)
- Montagu's Harrier (*Circus pygargus*)



- Little Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter minullus*)
- Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter rufiventris*)
- Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*)
- African Fish-Eagle (*Ichthyophaga vocifer*)
- Augur Buzzard (*Buteo augur*)



STRIGIFORMES : Strigidae (Owls)

- African Wood-Owl (*Strix woodfordii*)
- Abyssinian Owl (*Asio abyssinicus*)

COLIIFORMES : Coliidae (Mousebirds)

- Speckled Mousebird (*Colius striatus*)



BUCEROTIFORMES : Upupidae (Hoopoes)

- Eurasian Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)

BUCEROTIFORMES : Bucorvidae (Ground-hornbills)

- Abyssinian Ground-Hornbill (*Bucorvus abyssinicus*)

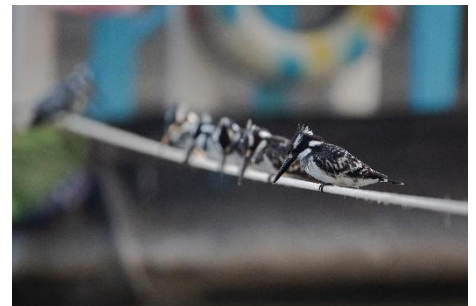
BUCEROTIFORMES : Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

- Hemprich's Hornbill (*Lophoceros hemprichii*)
- Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill (*Tockus flavirostris*)
- Northern Red-billed Hornbill (*Tockus erythrorhynchus*)
- Silvery-cheeked Hornbill (*Bycanistes brevis*)



CORACIIFORMES : Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

- Half-collared Kingfisher (*Alcedo semitorquata*)
- Malachite Kingfisher (*Corythornis cristatus*)
- Woodland Kingfisher (*Halcyon senegalensis*)
- Pied Kingfisher (*Ceryle rudis*)



CORACIIFORMES : Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

- Little Bee-eater (*Merops pusillus*)
- Ethiopian Bee-eater (*Merops lafresnayii*)
- Blue-cheeked Bee-eater (*Merops persicus*)
- Northern Carmine Bee-eater (*Merops nubicus*)

CORACIIFORMES : Coraciidae (Rollers)

- Abyssinian Roller (*Coracias abyssinicus*)

PICIFORMES : Lybiidae (African barbets)

- Yellow-breasted Barbet (*Trachyphonus margaritatus*)



FALCONIFORMES : Falconidae (Falcons)

- Pygmy Falcon (*Polihierax semitorquatus*)



- Eurasian Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)
- Lanner Falcon (*Falco biarmicus*)

PSSITTACIFORMES : Psittaculidae (Old World parrots)

- Black-winged Lovebird (*Agapornis taranta*) (EoA)

PASSERIFORMES : Oriolidae (Old World orioles)

- Ethiopian Black-headed Oriole (*Oriolus monacha*)

PASSERIFORMES : Malaconotidae (Bushshrikes and allies)

- Black-crowned Tchagra (*Tchagra senegalus*)
- Tropical Boubou (*Laniarius aethiopicus*)

PASSERIFORMES : Dicruridae (Drongos)

- Fork-tailed drongo (*Dicrurus adsimilis*)

PASSERIFORMES : Laniidae (Shrikes)

- Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*)
- Woodchat Shrike (*Lanius senator*)

PASSERIFORMES : Corvidae (Crows, jays, and magpies)

- Red-billed Chough (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*)
- Cape Crow (*Corvus capensis*)
- Pied Crow (*Corvus albus*)
- Fan-tailed Raven (*Corvus rhipidurus*)
- Thick-billed Raven (*Corvus crassirostris*)

PASSERIFORMES : Paridae (Tits, chickadees, and titmice)

- White-backed Black-Tit (*Melaniparus leuconotus*) (EoA)

PASSERIFORMES : Alaudidae (Larks)

- Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark (*Eremopterix leucotis*)
- Blanford's Lark (*Calandrella blanfordi*)
- Thekla's Lark (*Galerida theklae*)

PASSERIFORMES : Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and allies)

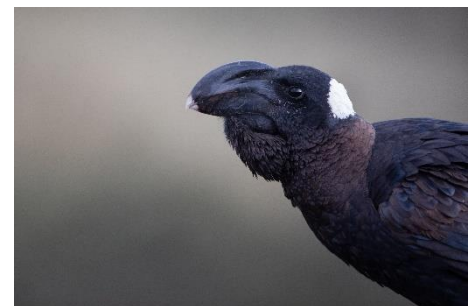
- Green-backed Camaroptera (*Camaroptera brachyura*)
- Buff-bellied Warbler (*Phyllolais pulchella*)
- Ethiopian Cisticola (*Cisticola lugubris*) (EoA)

PASSERIFORMES : Locustellidae (Grassbirds and allies)

- Cinnamon Bracken-Warbler (*Bradypterus cinnamomeus*)

PASSERIFORMES : Hirundinidae (Swallows)

- Red-rumped Swallow (*Cecropis daurica*)



- Mosque Swallow (*Cecropis senegalensis*)

PASSERIFORMES : Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)

- Common Bulbul (*Pycnonotus barbatus*)

PASSERIFORMES : Phylloscopidae (Leaf warblers)

- Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

PASSERIFORMES : Zosteropidae (White-eyes, yuhinas, and allies)

- Heuglin's White-eye (*Zosterops poliogastrus*)

PASSERIFORMES : Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes and allies)

- White-rumped Babbler (*Turdoides leucopygia*)

PASSERIFORMES : Buphagidae (Oxpeckers)

- Red-billed Oxpecker (*Buphagus erythrorhynchus*)

PASSERIFORMES : Sturnidae (Starlings)

- Wattled Starling (*Creatophora cinerea*)
- Slender-billed Starling (*Onychognathus tenuirostris*)
- Red-winged Starling (*Onychognathus morio*)
- White-billed Starling (*Onychognathus albirostris*)
- Rüppell's Starling (*Lamprotornis purpuroptera*)
- Superb Starling (*Lamprotornis superbus*)
- Greater Blue-eared Starling (*Lamprotornis chalybaeus*)

PASSERIFORMES : Turdidae (Thrushes and allies)

- Ethiopian Thrush (*Turdus simensis*) (EoA)
- Abyssinian Thrush (*Turdus abyssinicus*)

PASSERIFORMES : Muscipidae (Old World flycatchers)

- African Dusky Flycatcher (*Muscicapa adusta*)
- African Gray Flycatcher (*Bradornis microrhynchus*)
- Abyssinian Slaty-Flycatcher (*Melaenornis chocolatinus*) (EoA)
- Rüppell's Robin-Chat (*Cossypha semirufa*)
- Little Rock-Thrush (*Monticola rufocinereus*)
- White-winged Cliff-Chat (*Monticola semirufus*) (E)
- African Stonechat (*Saxicola torquatus*)
- Moorland Chat (*Pinarochroa sordida*)
- Rüppell's Chat (*Myrmecocichla melaena*) (EoA)
- Rusty-breasted Wheatear (*Oenanthe frenata*) (EoA)
- Isabelline Wheatear (*Oenanthe isabellina*)
- Blackstart (*Oenanthe melanura*)



PASSERIFORMES : Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and spiderhunters)

- Tacazze Sunbird (*Nectarinia tacazze*)
- Malachite Sunbird (*Nectarinia famosa*)
- Beautiful Sunbird (*Cinnyris pulchellus*)
- Shining Sunbird (*Cinnyris habessinicus*)



PASSERIFORMES : Ploceidae (Weavers and allies)

- White-headed Buffalo-Weaver (*Dinemellia dinemelli*)
- White-browed Sparrow-Weaver (*Plocepasser mahali*)
- Baglafaecht Weaver (*Ploceus baglafaecht*)
- Spectacled Weaver (*Ploceus ocularis*)
- Northern Masked-Weaver (*Ploceus taeniopterus*)
- Rüppell's Weaver (*Ploceus galbula*)
- Red-billed Quelea (*Quelea quelea*)
- Yellow Bishop (*Euplectes capensis*)



PASSERIFORMES : Estrildidae (Waxbills and allies)

- Bronze Mannikin (*Spermestes cucullata*)
- African Silverbill (*Euodice cantans*)
- Red-cheeked Cordonbleu (*Uraeginthus bengalus*)



PASSERIFORMES : Passeridae (Old World sparrows)

- Swainson's Sparrow (*Passer swainsonii*)



PASSERIFORMES : Motacillidae (Wagtails and pipits)

- Western Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*)
- African Pipit (*Anthus cinnamomeus*)
- Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*)

PASSERIFORMES : Fringillidae (Finches, euphonias, and allies)

- Reichenow's Seedeater (*Crithagra reichenowi*)
- Northern Grosbeak-Canary (*Crithagra donaldsoni*)
- Brown-rumped Seedeater (*Crithagra tristriata*)
- Ethiopian Siskin (*Serinus nigriceps*) (E)

PASSERIFORMES : Emberizidae (Old World buntings)

- Cinnamon-breasted Bunting (*Emberiza tahapisi*)



TOTAL OBSERVATIONS :

34 mammal species + 169 bird species



English Name	French Name	Scientific Name	IUCN Status	Endemic of Ethiopia	Endemic of Abyssinia	Bale Mountains NP										
						Gaysay Grasslands	Dinsho Forest	Web Valley	Sanetti Plateau	Hareenna Forest	Lac Awasa	Debre Libanos	Guassa CCA	Simien Mountains NP	Alledaghi Plains	On The Way
Totals of species observed : 34 mammals + 169 birds						30	22	40	7	18	38	50	14	26	68	3

BIRDS 169 species

STRUTHIONIFORMES : Struthionidae (Ostriches)

Somali Ostrich	Autruche de Somalie	<i>Struthio molybdophanes</i>	VU											x	
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ANSERIFORMES: Anatidae (Ducks, geese, and waterfowl)

Blue-winged Goose	Ouette à ailes bleues	<i>Cyanochen cyanoptera</i>		E		x									
Egyptian Goose	Ouette d'Egypte	<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>					x			x					
Ruddy Shelduck	Tadorne casarca	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>					x	x							
African Pygmy-Goose	Anserelle naine	<i>Nettapus auritus</i>							x						
Yellow-billed Duck	Canard à bec jaune	<i>Anas undulata</i>					x								

GALLIFORMES : Numididae (Guineafowl)

Helmeted Guineafowl	Pintade de Numidie	<i>Numida meleagris</i>												x	
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GALLIFORMES : Phasianidae (Pheasants, grouse, and allies)

Moorland Francolin	Francolin montagnard	<i>Scleroptila psilolaema</i>		E								x			
Chestnut-naped Spurfowl	Francolin à cou roux	<i>Pternistis castaneicollis</i>				x	x	x							
Erckel's Spurfowl	Francolin d'Erckel	<i>Pternistis erckelii</i>								x		x			
Harwood's Spurfowl	Francolin de Harwood	<i>Pternistis harwoodi</i>		E			x								
Yellow-necked Spurfowl	Francolin à cou jaune	<i>Pternistis leucoscepus</i>												x	

COLUMBIFORMES : Columbidae (Pigeons and doves)

Speckled Pigeon	Pigeon roussard	<i>Columba guinea</i>			
White-collared Pigeon	Pigeon à collier blanc	<i>Columba albitorques</i>			EoA
Rameron Pigeon	Pigeon rameron	<i>Columba arquatrix</i>			
Dusky Turtle-Dove	Tourterelle à poitrine rose	<i>Streptopelia lugens</i>			
African Collared-Dove	Tourterelle rieuse	<i>Streptopelia roseogrisea</i>			
Mourning Collared-Dove	Tourterelle pleureuse	<i>Streptopelia decipiens</i>			
Red-eyed Dove	Tourterelle à collier	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>			
Ring-necked Dove	Tourterelle du Cap	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>			
Black-billed Wood-Dove	Tourterelle d'Abyssinie	<i>Turtur abyssinicus</i>			
Tambourine Dove	Tourtelette tambourette	<i>Turtur tympanistria</i>			
Namaqua Dove	Tourterelle masquée	<i>Oena capensis</i>			

x						x	x	x	x	
x		x	x			x	x	x		
x										
						x				
									x	
x										
						x				
				x						
								x		
				x						
									x	

PTEROCLIFORMES : Pteroclididae (Sandgrouse)

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse	Ganga à ventre brun	<i>Pterocles exustus</i>			
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OTIDIFORMES : Otidae (Bustards)

Arabian Bustard	Outarde arabe	<i>Ardeotis arabs</i>			
Kori Bustard	Outarde kori	<i>Ardeotis kori</i>			
White-bellied Bustard	Outarde du Sénégal	<i>Eupodotis senegalensis</i>			

									x	
										x
									x	

MUSOPHAGIFORMES : Musophagidae (Turacos)

White-cheeked Turaco	Touraco à joues blanches	<i>Menelikornis leucotis</i>			
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						x				
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CUCULIFORMES : Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

White-browed Coucal	Coucal à sourcils blancs	<i>Centropus superciliosus</i>			
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									x	
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CAPRIMULGIFORMES : Apodidae (Swifts)

Alpine Swift	Martinet à ventre blanc	<i>Tachymarptis melba</i>			
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GRUIFORMES : Rallidae (Rails, gallinules, and coots)

Rouget's Rail	Râle de Rouguet	<i>Rougetius rougetii</i>			EoA	x			x										
Red-knobbed Coot	Foulque à crête	<i>Fulica cristata</i>				x													
Black Crake	Râle à bec jaune	<i>Zapornia flavirostra</i>								x									

GRUIFORMES : Gruidae (Cranes)

Wattled Crane	Grue caronculée	<i>Bugeranus carunculatus</i>	VU					x											
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CHARADRIIFORMES : Charadriidae (Plovers and lapwings)

Three-banded Plover	Pluvier à triple collier	<i>Charadrius tricollaris</i>				x													x
Spur-winged Lapwing	Vanneau à éperons	<i>Vanellus spinosus</i>						x											x
Black-headed Lapwing	Vanneau à tête noire	<i>Vanellus tectus</i>																	x
Crowned Lapwing	Vanneau couronné	<i>Vanellus coronatus</i>																	x
Spot-breasted Lapwing	Vanneau d'Abyssinie	<i>Vanellus melanocephalus</i>						x	x									x	

CHARADRIIFORMES : Jacanidae (Jacanas)

African Jacana	Jacana à poitrine dorée	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>								x									
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CHARADRIIFORMES : Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and allies)

Common Sandpiper	Chevalier guignette	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>						x											
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CICONIIFORMES : Ciconiidae (Storks)

Abdim's Stork	Cigogne d'Abdim	<i>Ciconia abdimii</i>				x													
African Woolly-necked Stork	Cigogne à pattes noires	<i>Ciconia microscelis</i>							x										
Marabou Stork	Marabout d'Afrique	<i>Leptoptilos crumenifer</i>								x									x

SULIFORMES : Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and shags)

Long-tailed Cormorant	Cormoran africain	<i>Microcarbo africanus</i>								x									
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PELECANIFORMES : Pelecanidae (Pelicans)										
Great White Pelican	Pélican blanc	<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>								

PELECANIFORMES : Scopidae (Hamerkop)										
Hamerkop	Ombrette africaine	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>								

PELECANIFORMES : Ardeidae (Herons, egrets, and bitterns)										
Black-crowned Night Heron	Bihoreau gris	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>								
Little Egret	Aigrette garzette	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>								
Western Cattle Egret	Héron garde-bœufs	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>								
Great Egret	Grande aigrette	<i>Ardea alba</i>								

PELECANIFORMES : Threskiornithidae (Ibises and spoonbills)										
African Sacred Ibis	Ibis sacré	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>								
Hadada Ibis	Ibis hagedash	<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>								
Wattled Ibis	Ibis caronculé	<i>Bostrychia carunculata</i>								

ACCIPITRIFORMES : Sagittariidae (Secretarybird)										
Secretarybird	Messenger saggittaire	<i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	EN							

ACCIPITRIFORMES : Accipitridae (Hawks, eagles, and kites)										
Black-winged Kite	Elanion blanc	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>								
African Harrier-Hawk	Gymnogène d'Afrique	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>								
Bearded Vulture	Gypaète barbu	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>								
Egyptian Vulture	Vautour percnoptère	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	EN							
Lappet-faced Vulture	Vautour oricou	<i>Torgos tracheliotos</i>	EN							
Hooded Vulture	Vautour charognard	<i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>	CR							
White-backed Vulture	Vautour africain	<i>Gyps africanus</i>								
Long-crested Eagle	Aigle huppard	<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>								
Tawny Eagle	Aigle ravisseur	<i>Aquila rapax</i>	VU							



Steppe Eagle	Aigle des steppes	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>	EN		
African Hawk-Eagle	Aigle fascié	<i>Aquila spilogaster</i>			
Dark Chanting-Goshawk	Auutour sombre	<i>Melierax metabates</i>			
Eastern Chanting-Goshawk	Autour à ailes grises	<i>Melierax poliopterus</i>			
Gabar Goshawk	Autour gabar	<i>Micronisus gabar</i>			
Montagu's Harrier	Busard cendré	<i>Circus pygargus</i>			
Little Sparrowhawk	Epervier minule	<i>Accipiter minullus</i>			
Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk	Epervier menu	<i>Accipiter rufiventris</i>			
Black Kite	Milan noir	<i>Milvus migrans</i>			
African Fish-Eagle	Pygargue vocifer	<i>Ichthyophaga vocifer</i>			
Augur Buzzard	Buse augure	<i>Buteo augur</i>			

		x								
		x								
									x	
x										
		x								
									x	
				x		x		x		
	x									
x	x				x	x	x	x	x	
					x					
		x		x			x			

STRIGIFORMES : Strigidae (Owls)

African Wood-Owl	Chouette africaine	<i>Strix woodfordii</i>			
Abyssinian Owl	Hibou d'Abyssinie	<i>Asio abyssinicus</i>			

	x									
	x	x								

COLIIFORMES : Coliidae (Mousebirds)

Speckled Mousebird	Coliou rayé	<i>Colius striatus</i>			
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					x	x			x	
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BUCEROTIFORMES : Upupidae (Hoopoes)

Eurasian Hoopoe	Huppe fasciée	<i>Upupa epops</i>			
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									x	
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BUCEROTIFORMES : Bucorvidae (Ground-hornbills)

Abyssinian Ground-Hornbill	Bucorve d'Abyssinie	<i>Bucorvus abyssinicus</i>	VU		
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									x	x
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BUCEROTIFORMES : Bucerotidae (Hornbills)

Hemprich's Hornbill	Calao de Hemprich	<i>Lophoceros hemprichii</i>			
Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill	Calao à bec jaune	<i>Tockus flavirostris</i>			
Northern Red-billed Hornbill	Calao à bec rouge	<i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>			

						x		x		
									x	
									x	



Silvery-cheeked Hornbill	Calao à joues argent	<i>Bycanistes brevis</i>								x	x						
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CORACIIFORMES : Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

Half-collared Kingfisher	Martin-pêcheur à demi-collier	<i>Alcedo semitorquata</i>								x							
Malachite Kingfisher	Martin-pêcheur huppé	<i>Corythornis cristatus</i>									x						
Woodland Kingfisher	Martin-chasseur du Sénégal	<i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>									x						
Pied Kingfisher	Martin-pêcheur pie	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>										x					x

CORACIIFORMES : Meropidae (Bee-eaters)

Little Bee-eater	Guêpier nain	<i>Merops pusillus</i>															x
Ethiopian Bee-eater	Guêpier de Lafresnaye	<i>Merops lafresnayii</i>										x					
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	Guêpier de Perse	<i>Merops persicus</i>															x
Northern Carmine Bee-eater	Guêpier écarlate	<i>Merops nubicus</i>															x

CORACIIFORMES : Coraciidae (Rollers)

Abyssinian Roller	Rollier d'Abyssinie	<i>Coracias abyssinicus</i>																x
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PICIFORMES : Lybiidae (African barbets)

Yellow-breasted Barbet	Barbican perlé	<i>Trachyphonus margaritatus</i>																x
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FALCONIFORMES : Falconidae (Falcons)

Pygmy Falcon	Fauconnet d'Afrique	<i>Polyhierax semitorquatus</i>																x
Eurasian Kestrel	Faucon crécerelle	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>																x
Lanner Falcon	Faucon lanier	<i>Falco biarmicus</i>								x								x

PSITTACIFORMES : Psittaculidae (Old World parrots)

Black-winged Lovebird	Inséparable d'Abyssinie	<i>Agapornis taranta</i>									x							
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PASSERIFORMES : Oriolidae (Old World orioles)										
Ethiopian Black-headed Oriole	Loriot moine	<i>Oriolus monacha</i>						x		
PASSERIFORMES : Malaconotidae (Bushshrikes and allies)										
Black-crowned Tchagra	Tchagra à tête noire	<i>Tchagra senegalus</i>						x		
Tropical Boubou	Gonolek d'Abyssinie	<i>Laniarius aethiopicus</i>				x		x		
PASSERIFORMES : Dicruridae (Drongos)										
Fork-tailed drongo	Drongo brillant	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>								x
PASSERIFORMES : Laniidae (Shrikes)										
Red-backed Shrike	Pie-grièche écorcheur	<i>Lanius collurio</i>						x		x
Woodchat Shrike	Pie-grièche à tête rousse	<i>Lanius senator</i>								x
PASSERIFORMES : Corvidae (Crows, jays, and magpies)										
Red-billed Chough	Crave à bec rouge	<i>Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>							x	
Cape Crow	Corneille du Cap	<i>Corvus capensis</i>								
Pied Crow	Corbeau pie	<i>Corvus albus</i>								
Fan-tailed Raven	Corbeau à queue courte	<i>Corvus rhipidurus</i>								
Thick-billed Raven	Corbeau corbivau	<i>Corvus crassirostris</i>								
PASSERIFORMES : Paridae (Tits, chickadees, and titmice)										
White-backed Black-Tit	Mésange à dos blanc	<i>Melaniparus leuconotus</i>								EoA
PASSERIFORMES : Alaudidae (Larks)										
Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark	Moinelette à oreillons blancs	<i>Eremopterix leucotis</i>								x
Blanford's Lark	Alouette de Blanford	<i>Calandrella blanfordi</i>						x		
Thekla's Lark	Cochevis de Thékla	<i>Galerida theklae</i>							x	



PASSERIFORMES : Cisticolidae (Cisticolas and allies)

Green-backed Camaroptera	Camaroptère à dos gris	<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>			
Buff-bellied Warbler	Phyllolaïs à ventre fauve	<i>Phyllolais pulchella</i>			
Ethiopian Cisticola	Cisticole d'Ethiopie	<i>Cisticola lugubris</i>			EoA

						x					
	x										
		x					x				

PASSERIFORMES : Locustellidae (Grassbirds and allies)

Cinnamon Bracken-Warbler	Bouscarle cannelle	<i>Bradypterus cinnamomeus</i>			
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									x		
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PASSERIFORMES : Hirundinidae (Swallows)

Red-rumped Swallow	Hirondelle rousseline	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>			
Mosque Swallow	Hirondelle des mosquées	<i>Cecropis senegalensis</i>			

							x				
						x					

PASSERIFORMES : Pycnonotidae (Bulbuls)

Common Bulbul	Bulbul des jardins	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>			
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						x	x				
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PASSERIFORMES : Phylloscopidae (Leaf warblers)

Willow Warbler	Pouillot fitis	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>			
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							x				
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PASSERIFORMES : Zosteropidae (White-eyes, yuhinas, and allies)

Heuglin's White-eye	Zostérops alticole	<i>Zosterops polioogastrus</i>			
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	x						x				
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PASSERIFORMES : Leiothrichidae (Laughingthrushes and allies)

White-rumped Babbler	Cratéope à croupion blanc	<i>Turdoides leucopygia</i>			
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							x		x		
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PASSERIFORMES : Buphagidae (Oxpeckers)

Red-billed Oxpecker	Piquebœuf à bec rouge	<i>Buphagus erythrorhynchus</i>			
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							x			x	
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PASSERIFORMES : Sturnidae (Starlings)

Wattled Starling	Etourneau caronculé	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>			
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Slender-billed Starling	Rufipenne à bec fin	<i>Onychognathus tenuirostris</i>			
Red-winged Starling	Rufipenne morio	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>			
White-billed Starling	Sansonnet à bec blanc	<i>Onychognathus albirostris</i>			
Rüppell's Starling	Choucador de Rüppell	<i>Lamprotornis purpuroptera</i>			
Superb Starling	Choucador superbe	<i>Lamprotornis superbus</i>			
Greater Blue-eared Starling	Choucador à oreillons bleus	<i>Lamprotornis chalybaeus</i>			

								X		
X				X						
						X				
					X				X	
									X	
						X			X	

PASSERIFORMES : Turdidae (Thrushes and allies)

Ethiopian Thrush	Grive d'Ethiopie	<i>Turdus simensis</i>			EoA
Abyssinian Thrush	Merle abyssinien	<i>Turdus abyssinicus</i>			

		X						X		
X						X				

PASSERIFORMES : Muscipidae (Old World flycatchers)

African Dusky Flycatcher	Gobemouche sombre	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>			
African Gray Flycatcher	Gobemouche à petit bec	<i>Bradornis microrhynchus</i>			
Abyssinian Slaty-Flycatcher	Gobemouche chocolat	<i>Melaenornis chocolatinus</i>			EoA
Rüppell's Robin-Chat	Cossyphe de Rüppell	<i>Cossypha semirufa</i>			
Little Rock-Thrush	Monticole rougequeue	<i>Monticola rufocinereus</i>			
White-winged Cliff-Chat	Traquet demi-roux	<i>Monticola semirufus</i>		E	
African Stonechat	Tarier africain	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>			
Moorland Chat	Traquet afroalpin	<i>Pinarochroa sordida</i>			
Rüppell's Chat	Traquet de Rüppell	<i>Myrmecocichla melaena</i>			EoA
Rusty-breasted Wheatear	Traquet à poitrine rousse	<i>Oenanthe frenata</i>			EoA
Isabelline Wheatear	Traquet isabelle	<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>			
Blackstart	Traquet à queue noire	<i>Oenanthe melanura</i>			

	X					X				
	X									
	X									
	X			X		X				
						X				
X						X				
	X	X								
						X				
		X								
									X	
						X				

PASSERIFORMES : Nectariniidae (Sunbirds and spiderhunters)

Tacazze Sunbird	Souimanga tacazze	<i>Nectarinia tacazze</i>			
Malachite Sunbird	Souimanga malachite	<i>Nectarinia famosa</i>			
Beautiful Sunbird	Souimanga à longue queue	<i>Cinnyris pulchellus</i>			

		X				X				
		X								
		X								

Shining Sunbird	Souimanga brillant	<i>Cinnyris habessinicus</i>			
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										x	
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PASSERIFORMES : Ploceidae (Weavers and allies)

White-headed Buffalo-Weaver	Alecto à tête blanche	<i>Dinemellia dinemelli</i>			
White-browed Sparrow-Weaver	Mahali à sourcils blancs	<i>Plocepasser mahali</i>			
Baglafaecht Weaver	Tisserin baglafaecht	<i>Ploceus baglafaecht</i>			
Spectacled Weaver	Tisserin à lunettes	<i>Ploceus ocularis</i>			
Northern Masked-Weaver	Tisserin du Nil	<i>Ploceus taeniopterus</i>			
Rüppell's Weaver	Tisserin de Rüppell	<i>Ploceus galbula</i>			
Red-billed Quelea	Travailleur à bec rouge	<i>Quelea quelea</i>			
Yellow Bishop	Euplecte à croupion jaune	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>			

										x	
					x						
		x				x	x				
					x						
					x						
					x					x	
										x	
x											

PASSERIFORMES : Estrildidae (Waxbills and allies)

Bronze Mannikin	Capucin nonnette	<i>Spermestes cucullata</i>			
African Silverbill	Capucin bec-d'argent	<i>Euodice cantans</i>			
Red-cheeked Cordonbleu	Cordonbleu à joues rouges	<i>Uraeginthus bengalus</i>			

					x						
		x									
					x	x				x	

PASSERIFORMES : Passeridae (Old World sparrows)

Swainson's Sparrow	Moineau de Swainson	<i>Passer swainsonii</i>			
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		x				x					
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PASSERIFORMES : Motacillidae (Wagtails and pipits)

Western Yellow Wagtail	Bergeronnette printanière	<i>Motacilla flava</i>			
African Pipit	Pipit africain	<i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>			
Red-throated Pipit	Pipit à gorge rousse	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>			

						x				x	
						x					
		x									

PASSERIFORMES : Fringillidae (Finches, euphonias, and allies)

Reichenow's Seed eater	Serin de Reichenow	<i>Crithagra reichenowi</i>			
Northern Grosbeak-Canary	Serin à gros bec	<i>Crithagra donaldsoni</i>			

	x										
					x						



Brown-rumped Seedeater	Serin à trois raies	<i>Crithagra tristriata</i>			
Ethiopian Siskin	Serin à tête noire	<i>Serinus nigriceps</i>		E	

		x				x					
x		x					x				

PASSERIFORMES : Emberizidae (Old World buntings)

Cinnamon-breasted Bunting	Bruant cannelle	<i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>			
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						x					
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MAMMALS

34 species

Hyracoidea (Hyraxes)

Bush Hyrax	Daman de Rhodésie	<i>Heterohyrax brucei</i>			
Rock Hyrax	Daman des rochers	<i>Procavia capensis</i>			

				x							
		x									

Primates

Grivet Monkey	Grivet	<i>Chlorocebus aethiops</i>			
Bale Monkey	Singe de Balé	<i>Chlorocebus djamdjamensis</i>	VU	E	
Olive Baboon	Babouin olive	<i>Papio anubis</i>			
Hamadryas Baboon	Hamadryas	<i>Papio hamadryas</i>			
Gelada	Gelada	<i>Theropithecus gelada</i>		E	
Guereza	Colobe guereza	<i>Colobus guereza</i>			

				x		x					
				x							
x	x			x							
											x
						x	x	x			
	x			x							

Rodentia (Rodents)

Unstriped Ground Squirrel	Ecureuil de Cretzschmar	<i>Xerus rutilus</i>			
Giant Mole Rat	Rat-taube géant	<i>Tachyoryctes macrocephalus</i>	EN	E	
Blick's Grass Rat	Rat roussard de Blick	<i>Arvicanthis blicki</i>		E	
Neumann's Grass Rat	Rat roussard de Neumann	<i>Arvicanthis neumanni</i>			

									x		
		x									
		x									
							x				



Lagomorpha (Lagomorphs)

Ethiopian Highland Hare	Lièvre de Starck	<i>Lepus starcki</i>		E	
Abyssinian Hare	Lièvre éthiopien	<i>Lepus habessinicus</i>			

		x								
									x	

Carnivora (Carnivorans)

Serval	Serval	<i>Leptailurus serval</i>			
Common genet	Genette commune	<i>Genetta genetta</i>			
Egyptian Mongoose	Mangouste d'Egypte	<i>Herpestes ichneumon</i>			
Spotted Hyena	Hyène tachetée	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>			
African Golden Wolf	Loup doré africain	<i>Canis lupaster</i>			
Ethiopian Wolf	Loup d'Abyssinie	<i>Canis simensis</i>	EN	E	

							x			
									x	
		x				x				
x										
x									x	
		x	x				x	x		

Perissodactyla (Odd-toed Ungulates)

Grevy's Zebra	Zèbre de Grévy	<i>Equus grevyi</i>	EN		
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									x	
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Artiodactyla (Even-toed Ungulates)

Common Warthog	Phacochère commun	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>			
Forest Hog	Hylochère	<i>Hylochoerus meinertzhageni</i>			
Bushpig	Potamochère du Cap	<i>Potamochoerus larvatus</i>			
Soemmerring's Gazelle	Gazelle de Soemmerring	<i>Nanger soemmerringii</i>	VU		
Gerenuk	Gazelle de Waller	<i>Litocranius walleri</i>			
Salt's Dik-dik	Dik-dik de Salt	<i>Madoqua saltiana</i>			
Klipspringer	Oréotrague	<i>Oreotragus oreotragus</i>			
Mountain Nyala	Nyala des montagnes	<i>Tragelaphus buxtoni</i>	EN	E	
Bushbuck	Guib harnaché	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>			
Walia Ibex	Bouquetin d'Abyssinie	<i>Capra walie</i>	VU	E	
Common Duiker	Céphalophe de Grimm	<i>Sylvicapra grimmia</i>			
Beisa Oryx	Oryx beïsa	<i>Oryx beisa</i>	EN		
Bohor Reedbuck	Cobe des roseaux	<i>Redunca redunca</i>			

x	x								x	
				x						
				x						
									x	
									x	
									x	
			x					x		
x	x	x								
	x							x		
								x		
x	x						x			
									x	
x	x									



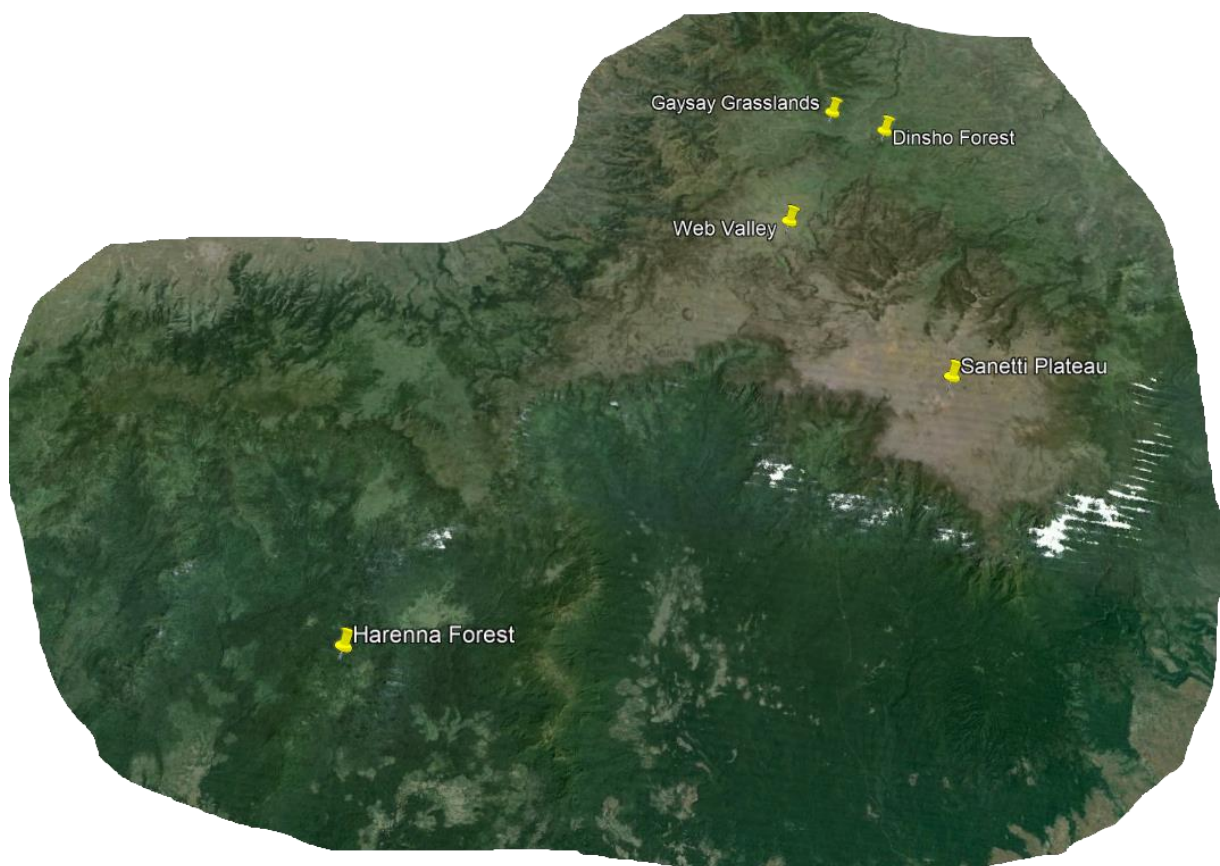
PLACES AND NATIONAL PARK

Bale Mountains National Park

The national park, considered "one park, many worlds" covers an area of approximately 2,150km². Its nickname is justified by the multitude of ecosystems that make up the park. In fact, our route begins from the scrubby plains of Gaysay to the tropical forest of Hareenna, passing through the mountain highlands of the Web Valley and the Sannetti plateau. For all these reasons the national park has just become a **UNESCO world heritage site**. It is in this national park that I spent half my time in Ethiopia since it is the home of **6 endemic mammals** : Ethiopian Wolf, Mountain Nyala, Bale Monkey, Giant Mole Rat, Blick's Grass Rat, Ethiopian Highland Hare. This is the absolute must-see place if you go to Ethiopia.

We discover 5 distinct habitats which constitute 4 ecoregions :

1. **Gaysay Grasslands** : Large scrubby plains with low vegetation
2. **Dinsho Forest** : Dry forest
3. **Web Valley** : Large high altitude plains in the form of plateaus
4. **Sanetti Plateau** : Huge Afro-Alpine plateau
5. **Hareenna Forest** : Misty rainforest



Bale Mountains National Park's Map

Gaysay Grasslands

(2021, 2022 & 2024)



The Grasslands also called "The Northern Plains" are the entry and exit gate to the Bale Mountains National Park. A long road which constitutes a main road divides the meadows into two parts. Moreover, highway code signs indicate "Be careful, frequent passage of antelopes".

Many buses use this route and it is therefore very common to observe large troops of **olive baboons** waiting on the road to obtain food thrown out of bus windows. And when the big males decide to gain momentum to jump on the roof of the bus it's all the more impressive. Even if we would obviously like not to have to attend this kind of spectacle.

The Grasslands are located at an altitude of between 3000 and 3500 meters. The land is flat, dominated by grasses, scrub, swamps and streams. Each season brings its own beauty. During the dry season the mornings are splendid. The nights are freezing and just after sunrise the bushes are still frosty, the still frozen ground cracks under our feet and the landscape turns pastel colors. It's very cold but what poetry! When the sun finally rises the frost disappears very quickly and it is suddenly very warm. The dry season therefore consists of very cold nights and mornings and very hot days. During the rainy season the meadows have a green color, the ground is muddy but the plants are in flower. A multitude of bright colors of great beauty. The temperature remains constant throughout the day.

The Grasslands are absolutely the best place to view the endemic and endangered Mountain Nyala. Moreover, it is not uncommon to observe large herds of up to forty individuals !

It is also very common to observe the following species : Olive Baboon, Common Duiker, Bohor Reedbuck, Common Warthog, Blue-winged Goose, Chestnut-naped Spurfowl, Rouget's Rail, Ethiopian Siskin...



Dinsho Forest

(2021, 2022 & 2024)



The Dinsho Forest also called "The Juniper Woodlands" is a kind of extension of the Grasslands. We find essentially the same species there with a few exceptions. Large herbivores and baboons take shelter and rest in the heart of the forest then move towards the Grasslands to feed. It is a dry forest which is clearly dominated by Hagenia Trees (*Hagenia abyssinica*) and African Juniper (*Juniperus procera*), hence its name "Juniper Woodlands". It is very easy to walk there without too much difficulty and it is not unpleasant to spend time there on hot days because the forest is very shaded.

When we stayed here we always slept in a tent at the camp located in the middle of the forest. We ate our evening meals around the campfire and our breakfasts sitting in the grass surrounded by families of curious warthogs.

I ultimately spent very little time in this forest, preferring the more open Grasslands and therefore more conducive to photography. In addition, antelopes are much more shy in the forest.



The most common species are : Olive Baboon, Guereza, Common Duiker, Bushbuck, Mountain Nyala, Bohor Reedbuck, Common Warthog, Wattled Ibis, Ethiopian White-eye, White-backed Black Tit, Abyssinian Slaty-flycatcher, Abyssinian Owl, Wood Owl...



Web Valley

(2021, 2022 & 2024)



We leave the road not far from the Grasslands to join the beaten paths towards Web Valley. The road is made up of rocks, bumpy areas and especially dust ! The road is extremely chaotic and thank you to the driver for his incredible driving and professionalism because the safari car very often finds itself in very complicated situations (wheels that do not pass rocks, starts on a steep slope, etc.) which the driver manages perfectly to master. It should also be noted that the roof of the car is loaded with all the supplies we will need for the duration of the camp : food, tents, stoves, sleeping bags... The road, as rough as it is, already gives a glimpse of the spectacular landscapes, rock and cliffs as far as the eye can see. An ideal playground for rock hyraxes who skillfully jump from rock to rock. And here we are, at an altitude of 3500 meters in wolf territory.

Web Valley is certainly the place in Ethiopia dearest to my heart. Indeed, since I have been traveling, it is one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen. On the one hand for its breathtaking landscapes and on the other hand for its unique fauna. These wild immensities, this gigantism reconnect us to nature, make us feel insignificant in the face of it. A feeling of freedom, far from the world and the incessant noise. Here only the sounds of wolves howling, owls hooting and the wind rushing through the valleys are heard. I am in love with this place.

Here the ecosystem is called "Afro-alpine". The vegetation is therefore very weak and the landscape takes the form of immense plateaus. However, a spectacular plant, endemic to Ethiopia, called the giant lobelia (*Lobelia rhynchopetalum*) is found here in large numbers. During the rainy season, when this plant is in flower it can reach a height of 6 meters high.



Afro-alpine landscape and giant lobelia

The base camp is a small comfortable house in which you will find study books on the Ethiopian wolf, skulls and bunks. Around this house we set up our tents and the campfire. The monitors travel on horseback across the highlands to observe and study the wolves. They often remain grazing around the camp.



Base and research camp

Around the camp lives a fairly impressive quantity of rodents that are only found on these high plateaus. When you look in the distance it runs everywhere from one burrow to another. We mainly find there the **Blick's Grass Rat** which is endemic. But the most notable and particular species remains the **Giant Mole Rat** which is not only endemic to Ethiopia but is, moreover, endemic to the highlands (Web Valley & Sanetti). This is a fascinating species that is not difficult to see. They live in burrows and when the weather is good they pull out a good part of their body to tear up tufts of grass around the burrow. They look very funny with their eyes on top of their heads.



The highlands consist of large expanses of dry grass, muddy soils, high altitude lakes, valleys and rocky slopes. These environments are very favorable for aquatic birds such as the endemic **Spot-breasted Lapwing** which is found here in very large numbers or for pairs of **Blue-winged Geese**, also endemic. The rocks are inhabited by **Rock Hyraxes** and the **Abyssinian Owl**. The plains are dominated by two endemic species : the **Ethiopian Wolf** and the **Ethiopian Highland Hare**.



The main reason for my visit was obviously the mythical **Ethiopian wolf**. This highly endangered red canid lives at high altitude where one would not imagine it. I spent a total of 15 days in Web Valley and the observations were therefore numerous. A climb to the high plateaus almost 100% guarantees seeing the Ethiopian wolf because their territory is quite small but you have to stay a long time to witness fantastic scenes of life.

As I said, each season in Ethiopia brings its share of beauties. The dry season, from December to April, brings hope since it is the period when families see their puppies born. At this time the nights are very cold, reaching -10° and the plains are therefore completely frozen in the early morning, offering a totally magical atmosphere. Seeing the wolves waking up in these cold lands is an incredible moment. Even more so when the puppies start to come out of the burrows. At this time, and because of the births, families are very united and very playful. The rainy season makes travel more complex because the soils are waterlogged but the plains are in bloom, a multitude of shimmering colors. It is then the return of the **sunbirds** who come to delight in nectar. It is not uncommon to see wolves moving between them and drinking between the petals. At this time, wolves are more solitary.



Web Valley offered me moments of rare intensity. These moments rich in emotion that give you chills and a little tear in your eye. One morning in January I had the joy of observing and photographing a family of 13 wolves playing together. I was also able to observe a pair of **Wattled Cranes** on the heights. Their presence is unusual. I was also lucky enough to see a pair of puppies come out of their burrow. Thank you nature !



Unfortunately this magnificent species is threatened. This canid has always been rare due to its geographic isolation, but in 2014 things became more complex when a major outbreak brought by domestic dogs decimated a large part of the population. This is how 40% of individuals present in the Bale Mountains National Park were found dead. From that moment on, the teams from the EWCP (Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Project) were activated to carry out a vaccination campaign, mainly against rabies, on wolf families and also on domestic dogs. This is why some wolves wear a colored earring on their ear.

Today the wolf faces new threats. The Ethiopian population is increasing more and more rapidly and the need to find new living areas is strongly felt. The highlands are blessed with rich and fertile soil, which is why more and more villagers are migrating to the highlands taking all their livestock with them. This human and animal pressure pushes away wolves, destroys and reduces their habitat. As a nature lover, it is obviously very sad to observe a wolf hunting in the middle of a herd of cows on such beautiful expanses.



During my presence in January 2024 we focused on the family who had the first puppies of the year. When we noticed that the puppies were playing outside the burrow we noticed that one of the adults was showing quite violent signs of neurological disorder. Unfortunately, we found him dead the next morning. The EWCP teams then came running. The death of a wolf is never a good sign. While going to retrieve the dead wolf, a second one was found near the burrow. Because of this tumult and agitation, the parents moved the young in the afternoon to another burrow much further away. Since then the puppies have not been seen or heard from and the monitors declared them dead too. The wolves spend a lot of time playing together, sleeping together, licking each other... The whole family therefore seems sadly doomed. This is therefore the strong comeback of rabies transmitted by domestic dogs. This is the reality of what is happening in the highlands. With less than 500 adult individuals surviving, this distinctive carnivore remains the rarest canid in the world and the most endangered African carnivore.

The EWCP teams have therefore planned to repeat a major vaccination campaign. And life always seems to prevail. Since my return to Belgium in February, 3 other families, who seem healthy, have had their puppies.



If you would like more information on the fabulous work of the EWCP or if you would even like to make a donation you can visit the website : www.ethiopianwolf.org



The most common species in Web Valley are : Ethiopian Wolf, Giant Mole Rat, Blick's Grass Rat, Rock Hyrax, Ethiopian Highland Hare, Spot-breasted Lapwing, Moorland Chat, Baglafaecht Weaver, Blue-winged Goose, Wattled Ibis, Augur Busard, Tawny Eagle, White-collared Pigeon... A single herd of Mountain Nyala also lives here. If you are very lucky you may have the opportunity to see a Serval or a Leopard.



Sanetti Plateau

(2021 & 2022)



The Sanetti Plateau is the crossing point between Web Valley and Harena Forest. So I just crossed it to go into the forest. The plateau rises to an altitude of 4000 meters to the second highest point in Ethiopia, Mount Tullu Dimtu, which rises to 4377 meters above sea level. The landscape is a mix between Web Valley and Gaysay Grasslands. In fact, the Sanetti high plateau is an immense arid expanse but dotted with bushes. I was able, once again, to observe the **Ethiopian Wolf** but above all, and I was extremely delighted, the **Klipspringer**.



Harena Forest

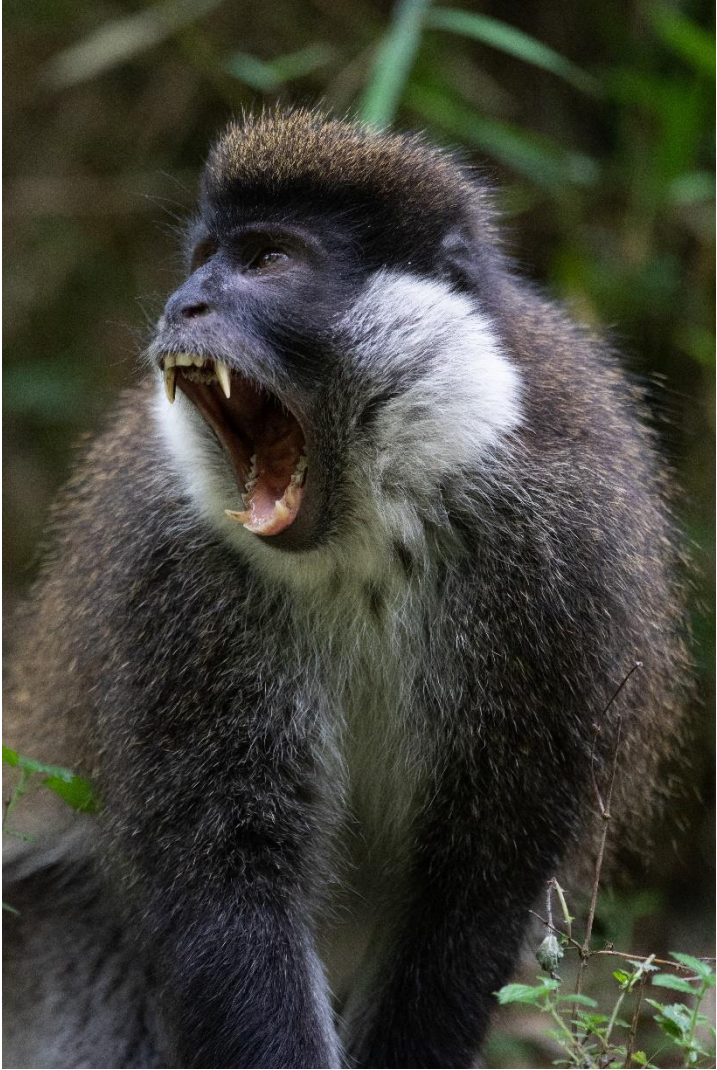
(2021 & 2022)



Below the Sanetti plateau the contrast is absolutely striking. After crossing an arid and almost desert plateau, we are immersed in the heart of a humid and misty tropical forest. Covering an area of 4000km², it is the second largest forest in the country and the only rainforest. The flora is extremely dense and some trees reach a height of 40 meters high. It is very difficult to move around on foot in the forest if you want to deviate from the dirt road. Some rivers cross the vegetation. The landscape is extremely different from what we have known until now. Particularly in the rainy season, it is not uncommon for the canopy to be completely submerged in clouds.



The fauna is very rich due to the density of the vegetation, the numerous fruit trees and fertile soil. Many bamboo belts cut through the forest. They are the ideal haunt for the **Bale Monkey** which feeds exclusively on young bamboo shoots. This little monkey is quite difficult to observe due, once again, to the villagers and livestock that roam the forest. It is not only endemic to Ethiopia but especially endemic to the Harena forest. It is very often confused with the Grivet but it is in fact very different physically, much smaller and with a small hat on its head.



With a little patience and research it is not uncommon to see the **Forest Hog**. Other common species are : **Bush Hyrax**, **Guereza**, **Olive Baboon**, **Bushbuck**, **Silvery-cheeked Hornbill**... And if you are lucky it is possible to see a **Lion** or a **Bushpig**.



We then leave the Harena Forest as well as the Bale Mountains National Park by reversing. we cross the Sanetti plateau, the Web Valley and the Grasslands one last time. Last looks at Wolves and Nyala. On the way to the north of the country.



Awasa

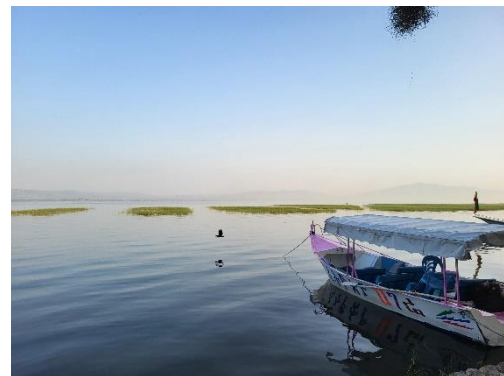
On the way back to the capital it is very easy to stop at Awasa. The town is known for its lake and its multitude of fishermen. The lake is an important food reservoir for residents as well as for the many species of birds that live there. This is also the place where I observed the most different avian species. It is also the best place to observe the **Grivet Monkey**.

Lac Awasa

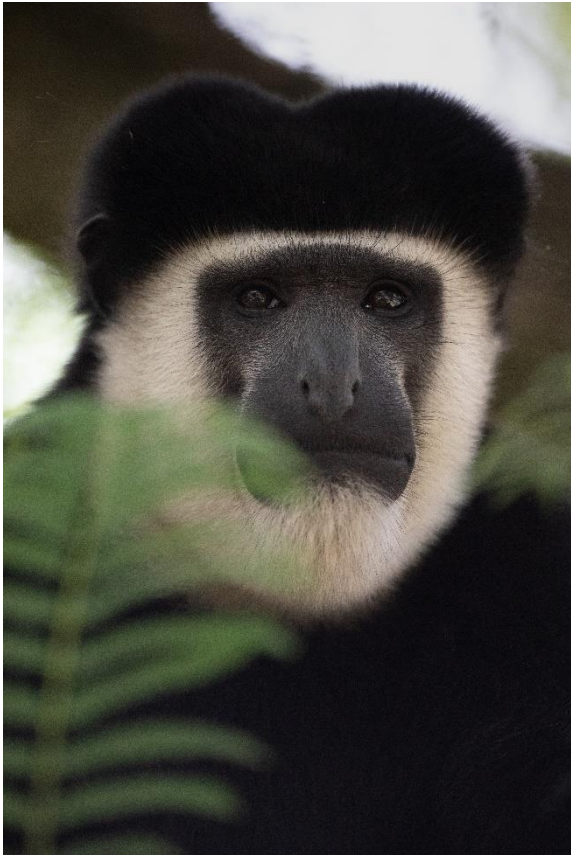
(2022)



It is a freshwater endorheic lake located in the main Ethiopian Rift south of the capital. It measures 129km². Because it is easily accessible, it is the most studied lake by scientists in Ethiopia. Its surroundings are mainly made up of swamps and dry forests. The huge fish market is very well known in the country but I do not recommend getting one.



Many species of fishing birds live here. Marshes favor the presence of insects which attract other species of birds. The forests are, for their part, inhabited by numerous **Grivet Monkey** and **Guereza**.



Debre Libanos

Crossing again through the capital then heading to the north of the country to meet the other main reason for my visit : the endemic **Geladas** ! The main place to observe them, due to their impressive number and the beauty of the landscapes, is obviously the Simien Mountains National Park. Unfortunately when I booked my trip for January 2021 the war in the north of the country was already raging and I was therefore totally advised not to go to the far north of the country because the national park was located in the middle of the armed conflict. It was a hard blow and a big disappointment for me who dreamed of visiting these mountains. Muzeyen then offered me two solutions to still observe the geladas. First at Debre Libanos Gorge then at Guassa Community Conservation Area.

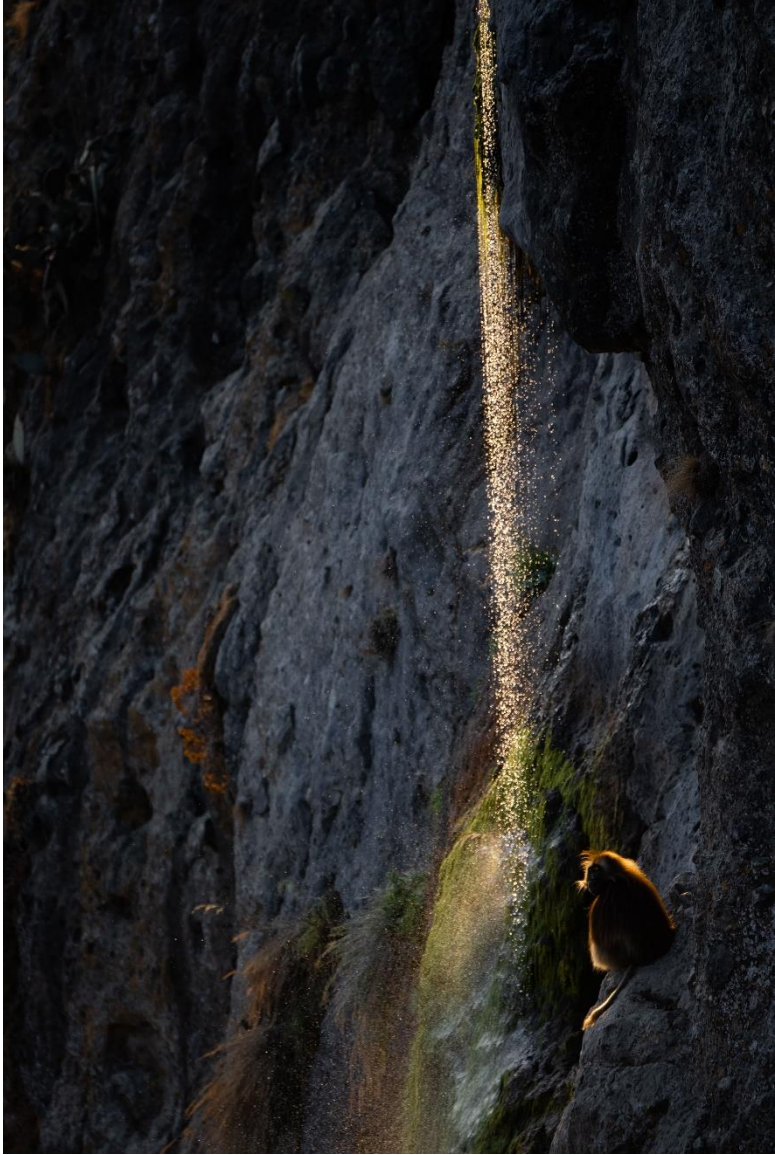
Debre Libanos Gorge

(2021 & 2024)



The town of Debre Libanos is well known in Ethiopia for its Orthodox monastery. Many pilgrims and tourists go there every year. The city is located on a series of high plateaus and cliffs as far as the eye can see. It is therefore an ideal habitat for **Geladas** which sleep on the cliffside and gather during the day to graze on the flat heights. The problem is that we are in the heart of a city and therefore, although the geladas are present in very large numbers, the site is absolutely not protected and therefore neither are the animals. Pimates are hated by the villagers here since they eat their plantations and crops. People throw stones at them and yell at them to scare them away. They are constantly persecuted. So this makes them very fearful. It is therefore very easy to observe them but more difficult to photograph them. So I went there in January 2021 and again in January 2024 since the war resumed in the north and it was therefore still not safe.

In the end I was not disappointed to go to Debre Libanos. In fact I had spotted a waterfall on the side of a cliff. A family of geladas spends the night near the latter. I stationed myself there very early in the morning, on the edge of the void, waiting for the primates to wake up. And it was incredibly beautiful. It would have been impossible for me to take these images if I had not gone there.



Bird enthusiasts also often go to Debre Libanos because it is a hotspot for bird life. It is possible to observe many species there, some of which are endemic. The most common species in Debre Libanos are : **Gelada, White-cheeked Turaco, White-backed Vulture, Bearded Vulture, Ethiopian Bee-eater, Tropical Boubou, Rüppell's Chat, Humprich's Hornbill...**



Northern Area

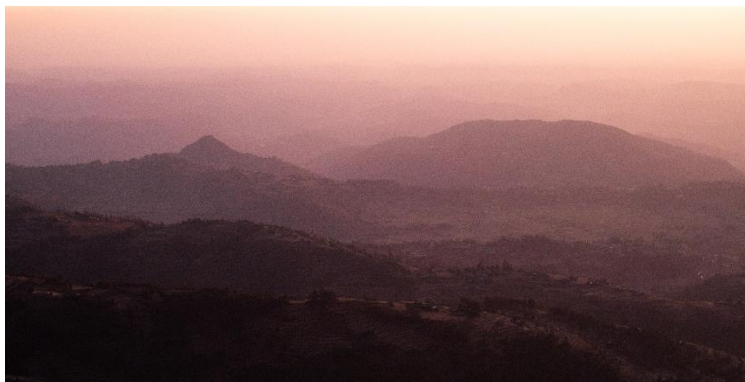
Further north of Debre Libanos, we gain altitude again towards the conserved areas of Guassa where large populations of geladas live.

Guassa Community Conservation Area

(2021)



The Guassa area is made up of large shrub meadows as is the case in Gaysay except that here we are at high altitude. The Afro-alpine grass *Festuca* also called « Guassa » and present in very large quantities on the plains gives its name to this protected natural area. The rugged mountain plateau is crosscut by gorges and river valleys running westwards. The area forms the watershed between the Nile and Awash River systems and thus performs an important hydrological function and catchment area.



The Guassa area is home to 9 mammals endemic to Ethiopia, including the **Ethiopian Wolf** or **Gelada**. The different families of geladas gather during the day on the meadows to graze and can then form large groups of up to 400 individuals before separating again into families to spend the night on the cliffs. 6 packs of wolves live in Guassa and therefore play a major role in the survival of the species.



Simien Mountains National Park (2022)

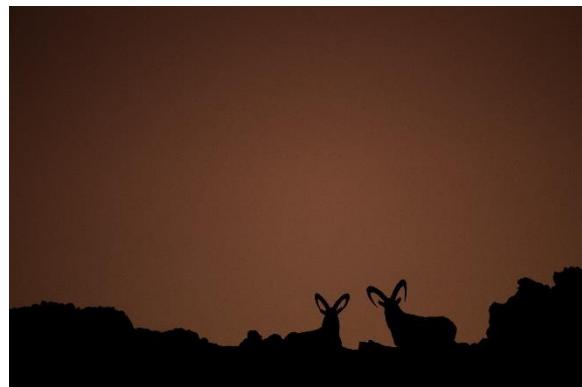


As previously said, the Simien Mountains National Park is a protected area but terribly in danger because of the war which is hitting the north of the country. I took advantage of the lull in May 2022 to go there. However, the atmosphere remained tense and I had some problems with my camera because the authorities thought I was coming to film the conflict. I had to negotiate a lot and explain that I only photographed the animals so that they agreed to give me access to the national park. An armed guard also slept outside my tent in case there was a problem. Very nice atmosphere ! Since the war has resumed and it is once again strongly advised against going there.

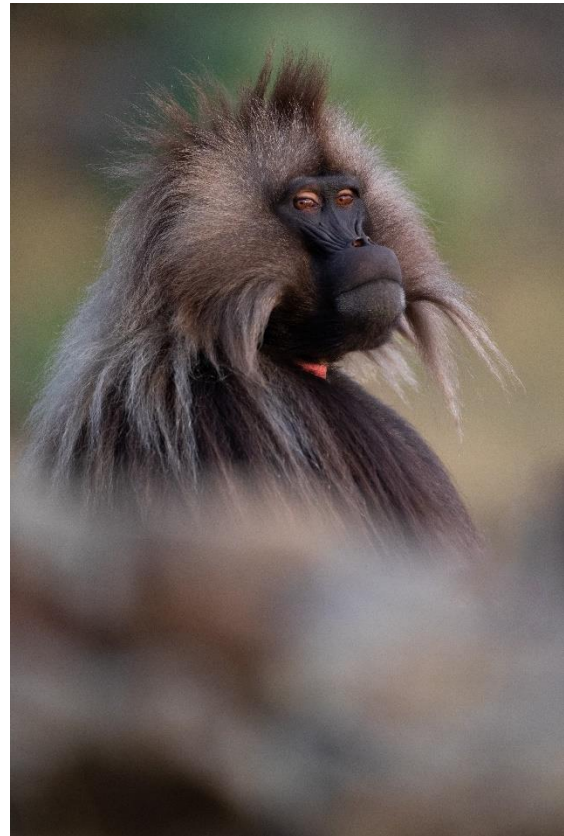


It is the largest and highest Ethiopian national park which includes “Ras Dashan”, the highest point in the country. The national park was one of the first sites to be made a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, inscribed in 1978 because of its outstanding biodiversity and spectacular landscape. The landscape is divided into steep plateaus with wide plains interspersed with peaks, cliffs and valleys. This immensity makes us vulnerable. It's incredibly beautiful !

I absolutely wanted to go to Simien because of the unique presence of the **Walia Ibex**. This ibex is not only endemic to Ethiopia but it is also endemic to the Simien Mountains. It is classified as vulnerable by the IUCN but the presence of armed troops puts it in increasing danger. Scientists observe that ibexes are moving more and more towards the steepest areas of the mountains, where humans have difficulty accessing them. The ibex is therefore increasingly difficult to observe in the national park. I had the opportunity, very early in the morning, to observe a group of large males walking along the high ridges at sunrise. A moment suspended in time.



The national park is best known for being home to the largest population of **Geladas** in the country. Their population is estimated at around 3000 individuals. This is the place where the species has been most studied by scientists, which makes the primates very accessible since, unlike Debre Libanos, they are absolutely not afraid of people. It is possible to sit in the tall grass surrounded by a hundred geladas which graze quietly as if we were not there.



In addition to ibexes and geladas, we can also observe the **Ethiopian wolf**, whose population is estimated at between 30 and 40 individuals within the national park. The wolf photo in the introduction was taken here in Simien. I therefore had the great chance to observe and photograph the Ethiopian wolf in all the places where it is present.

Other species common to Simien are : Bushbuck, Klipspringer, Bearded Vulture, Thick-billed Raven, Tawny Eagle, Ethiopian Thrush...



Afar Region

Last stage of the trip, the great savannah plains located in Eastern Ethiopia to discover a fauna absolutely different from anything we have seen so far.

Alledeghi Wildlife Reserve

(2024)



Contiguous to each other, the Awash National Park and the Alledeghi Plains are the proud representatives of the Ethiopian savannah. The basic plan was to go to Awash but after many discussions with my guide it was decided to focus on the Alledeghi Wildlife Reserve. In fact, pastoral overactivity within the national park has increasingly pushed back animals who are frightened by people and who are no longer able to feed sufficiently. Awash National Park is today considered a dead park.

Larger, more remote, wilder, the Alledeghi plains are considered better protected even if during my 2 days there I found the presence of livestock stifling. This is the place where I have seen the most cows grazing in a national park, so much so that in some places there is no vegetation left, like a plowed field. You have to leave the road a lot and go very far into the plains for it to become wild again. The plains are currently only considered a nature reserve but are not officially protected. The goal is for them to become a national park in the near future.

In terms of Wildlife the Alledeghi plains are rewarding since they are what you might imagine a savannah to be, that is to say animals everywhere ! Even if some species still remain very fearful because they are not used to the presence of tourists.

Among the most notable species we can cite : Soemmering's Gazelle, Gerenuk, Salt's Dik-dik, Beisa Oryx, Grevy's Zebra, Golden Wolf, Common Genet, Arabian Bustard, Carmin Bee-eater, Abyssinian Roller...



CONCLUSION

Ethiopia is a completely atypical country in the African landscape due to its unique and little-known fauna and its landscapes of rare beauty, as if drawn by a master's hand. It is one of the countries which, in my opinion, absolutely must be seen even if all countries are worth the detour. Its endemic and threatened fauna give an urgent context to visit.

Unfortunately the whole country is suffering. The dry seasons are increasingly harsh and the rainy seasons less and less humid. Crops are therefore difficult and people therefore raise a lot of livestock which takes up more and more space in the heart of protected areas and national parks, pushing back already very threatened wildlife. The Covid period and the wars that followed it have further weakened the country, which is struggling to raise its head because so many tourists have deserted.

The big challenge for Ethiopia now is to strengthen the protection of its natural sites so that they remain unique beauties in the world.

For my part, I fell madly in love with this multifaceted country. Even if I didn't have the opportunity to visit the entire country due to the time spent in certain places for photography, what I was able to see there will always remain engraved in my memory. Here, to conclude, is a text that I wrote on site and which appears in my book :

« Sitting on the top of the mountains I contemplate the valleys that extend below seeking inspiration to write these last words in my travel journal. An angry and irascible wind has taken hold of the set, carried by the cries of the geladas that echo in the distance. Beyond the clouds, the sun delicately licks my face and calms my body engulfed by the gusts. How good its to feel so fragile, to surrender to the wild. Soothed, I see the images of my various journeys pass by like an animated flip book. I had met the gaze of the Ethiopian Wolf, witnessed the ascent of the ibexes, admired the nyala with spiral horns, heard the murmur of the beasts. Feeling of fullness. So that was going to conquer them. Months of organization, hours of waiting and doubts, walking for miles and, sometimes, the desire to give up which fades under huge bonfires. To desire these encounters with all of one's being, to provoke them, to contemplate the animals, to express one's gratitude to their mere presence, to live these short minutes with intensity and, without restraint, to let them slip away without ever expecting anything in return. I had witnessed the unspeakable. »

