

# Ethiopia

28 Sep – 04 Oct 2019

## Introduction

How much can you see in Ethiopia in only 6 days?

Well, the answer is: Pretty much!

I had a week at my disposal and contacted the well known company <http://www.ethiopianquadrants.com> to arrange a mammalwatching tour. They were very fast in setting up a trip for me that would cover much of my targets and before I knew it I had a tour in Ethiopia booked...

I had one of the very best birding and mammals-guide in Ethiopia, Abiye Dagne: [abiybird@gmail.com](mailto:abiybird@gmail.com)

A more or less standard tour to well known places. You have seen trip reports from those places before but maybe there is some additional interesting information.

I visited **Debre Libanos, Awash, Allideghe, Sanetti Plateau, Gaysay grassland (Dinsho)** and **Harennna forest**. With the most important targets of Ethiopian wolf, Grevy's Zebra, Soemmerring's Gazelle, Bale monkey, Giant forest hog, Bushpig and to take a better photo of a Serval cat...

First some words about those places. Number one lesson in Ethiopia is that there are people everywhere! And I mean everywhere! Behind every bush, behind every stone. If you think you are alone, you are not, there is always anyone watching you. The national parks are infested with people and their livestock, Camels, Cows and Goats. In fact it's a sad sight and not worthy.

Having said that – Ethiopia is still home to some very good wildlife and interesting endemic species and I got 35 species in 6 days.

## Debre Libanos

Home of the Geladas. The scenery is beautiful. It's more or less the only mammal you will see here but it's a good one 😊





### Awash

One of the parks who is infested with livestock. But at late evenings and at night there is some good wildlife here. The livestock is gone and the wild take over. It is a bit pathetic though, that I had to have a park ranger with me in the car to see that I follow the park rules or something, I don't know. You can't visit without a park ranger and at the same time there is ALOT of illegal grazing going on and people is everywhere which no one cares about.



### Allideghe

The place in Ethiopia where I visited with least people. Some 130km from Awash I did it on a day tour.

This is the place with around 35 Grevy's Zebras still roaming.



*Where are those Zebras??*



### **Gaysay grassland (Dinsho)**

A fairly small protected area on the way to Bale Mountains (Sanetti plateau). I only spent around 1 ½ hour here in search for Servals.

### **Sanetti plateau**

4000 mas high plateau. Home to Ethiopian Wolves. Sadly, the livestock have found their way to this remote place as well. And maybe even worse... dogs!



*The home of Ethiopian Wolves*

### **Hareenna forest**

On the “other side” of the plateau a forest spreads out – Hareenna forest. Still very much unexplored. Here you also find the lovely Bale mountain lodge which is pricey but in a perfect location to explore this forest.



*View from my veranda*



## **My species list**

**1. Gelada** --- Easily found in Debre Libanos.



**2. Salts Dik-Dik** --- Very common in Awash. Also one seen in Alledeghe.





**3. Caracal ---** Two different individuals seen within 1½ hour in Gaysay grasslands (Dinsho) in broad daylight!  
Amazing!

I only stayed here 2 hours in total in search for Servals but got heavily rewarded with Caracals instead. My guide Abiye told me that the cats usually start moving around 17:00 and he was obviously right. Could be a very reliable place to tick off Caracals on your list if you don't have it. You can also spotlight here if you want. The closest hotel is some 50 minutes away.



*First Caracal*



*Second Caracal*



**4. Abyssinian hare** --- Very common in Awash.



**5. Ethiopian wolf** --- 4 different individuals seen on Sanetti plateau. Two the first day and two the second day.  
Three of them some distance away but one close view.

I do recommend at least two days on the plateau if you want to make sure to have a good look at one.





**6. Bat eared fox** --- 3 seen in Awash and 1 in Alledeghe. Quite skittish all of them.



**7. Bushbuck (Menelik's bushbuck)** --- Very common in Hareenna forest. When you take a walk in the forest you will both see and hear them. Also crossing the road every now and then.





**8. Aardwolf** --- A very nice surprise in Awash just before sunset. He was running as hell towards it's burrow when he saw us. A quick look at us before entering the hole allowed me to take a photo.



**9. Hamadryas baboon** --- Very common along a stretch of the road between Awash and Allideghe where they use to hang around at the truck stops for food. Didn't see them anywhere else.





**10. Soemmerring's gazelle** --- Common and easy to see in both Awash and Allideghe. Big groups in Allideghe but also much more skittish than in Awash. The latter is more use to people as there is a lot of illegal grazing in Awash.



**11. Rock hyrax** --- Seen on Sanetti plateau. My guide knew a reliable place for them among a pile of rocks.





**12. African golden wolf** --- A couple of them seen in Awash during spotlighting.



**13. Common warthog** --- Very common in Hareenna forest and Gaysay grasslands (Dinsho). Also seen in Awash.





**14. Aardvark** --- Excellent sighting when spotlighting in Awash. Just a couple of meters from our car. In fact it was too close for a photo and when the camera triggered, he was almost gone. Aardvark and Aardwolf on the same evening in Awash was a jackpot.



**15. Black backed jackal** --- Only one seen in Allideghe. Taking a bath in the middle of the day.





**16. Black and white colobus** --- Very common in Harenna forest and easily seen. A little shy to come close.



**17. Beisa oryx** --- Very common in Allideghe with big groups seen. Only a few individuals in Awash where it seems they soon will be gone because of the illegal grazing push them out.





**18. Common genet** --- One seen while spotlighting in Awash. The rings on the tail went all the way to the tip and therefore we identified it as a common genet.



**19. Rusty spotted genet** --- One seen while spotlighting in Hareenna forest. Unlike the Common genet this one had a fairly large black tip on it's tail. Therefore we identified it as a Rusty spotted genet.



*You can clearly see the black tip on it's tail*



**20. Gerenuk** --- 4 individuals seen in Allideghe. Not very cooperative. They stayed at a distance.



**21. Common duiker** --- Easily seen in Gaysay grasslands (Dinsho) where they hide, eat and (I guess) live their life in the high grass.





**22. Starck's hare** --- Common on the Sanetti plateau. You just have to look very close. If you take a walk you will notice that some of the rocks aren't rocks... they suddenly start to move.



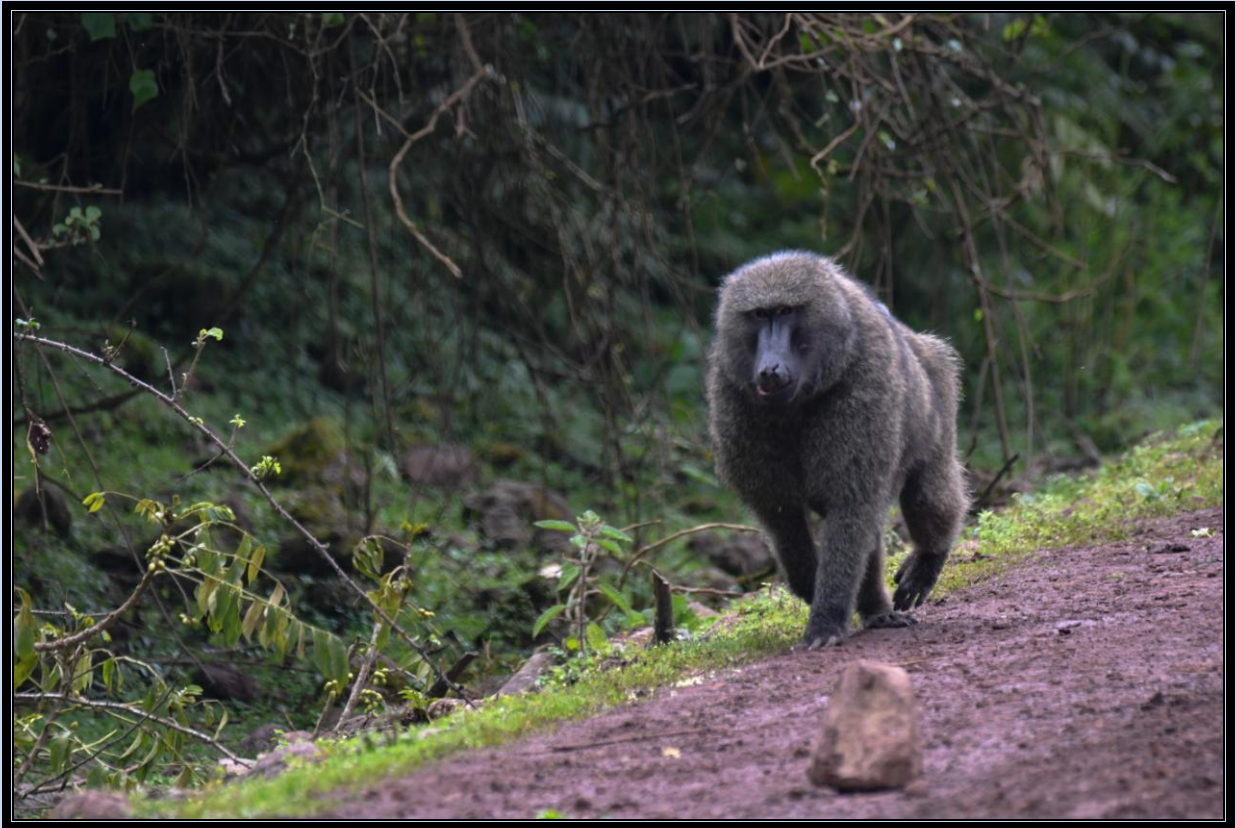
*Very well camouflaged*

**23. Lesser Kudu** --- 3 individuals seen in Awash. Two when spotlighting and this baby Kudu.





**24. Olive baboon** --- Seen in Haremma forest and on the road between Awash and Allideghe. Also in Gaysay grasslands (Dinsho).



**25. Mountain nyala** --- Easily seen in Gaysay grasslands (Dinsho) but there is also a few of them roaming the Sanetti plateau. Like this male which we encountered on the plateau.





**26. Spotted hyena** --- Common during spotlighting in Haremma forest and Awash. In Haremma forest a dead horse along the road had attracted some of them an early morning.



**27. Bohor reedbuck** --- Common and easy to see in Gaysay grasslands (Dinsho).





**28. Bale monkey** --- My most sought after species on this trip as it's distribution range is narrowed down to only Hareenna forest in the whole world. We struggled quite hard to get them. First afternoon, none. But on the second – just before dark – after involving five people in a “Bale monkey”-search we finally got close contact with a group eating bamboo.



*Bamboo is the place to find this endemic species*

**29. Big-headed African mole rat** --- Common on the Sanetti plateau but hard to see properly. I just have to sit and wait for it's head to pop up.





**30. Blick's grass rat** --- It's suppose to be at least 8 different rodents on the Sanetti plateau. And yes, there is ALOT of them! We could identify three of them. This is the most common one.



**31. Black-clawed brush furred rat** --- This one is more gray and bigger than the Grass rat and the third one we could identify on the Sanetti plateau.





**32. Egyptian tomb bat** --- My guide Abiye knew of a building in Awash, close to Awash falls lodge where we stayed overnight, where some Egyptian tomb bats usually spend their time. Sometimes also more bat species are here but this time, only one.



**33. Grivet monkey** --- I don't know why I didn't photo them. Always thinking I would have a better opportunity and like so many times before when you think like this you end up with nothing 😊

Seen on the road between Awash and Allideghe and also one was seen in Awash falls lodge area.

**34. Bush hyrax (Yellow spotted rock hyrax)** --- Two of them seen in Harennā forest. Quickly running away and hiding.

**35. Spiny mouse??** --- A rodent, very similar to Cairo spiny mouse ran along the road in Awash.

### **Stuff I missed**

The most notable miss was the Grevy's Zebra in Alleddeghe. They were seen the day before I visited but despite a lot of effort we went empty on them.

Klipspringer used to be easy on Sanetti plateau but not anymore. After some manmade fire for livestock (what else?) all the Klipspringers seems to have disappeared. Maybe they come back one day.

Giant forest hog and Bushpig. You need some luck in Harennā forest for them. The luck I didn't have 😊

Lions were seen a couple of months ago in Harennā forest.

No Serval for me on Gaysay grasslands but only spent short time here.

ANDREAS JONSSON

[Andreas\\_19@hotmail.com](mailto:Andreas_19@hotmail.com)