Comprehensive Ghana

Tour Leaflet
2021

5 - 22 January 2021
Our comprehensive Ghana tour takes in the best birding this stable West African country has to offer, in 18 days. The trip has a strong emphasis on lowland forest birding, specifically endemics of the Upper Guinea region such as Buff-throated Sunbird, Fire-bellied Woodpecker, Red-billed Helmetshrike and Red-cheeked Wattle-eye. We will visit Kakum National Park with its spectacular canopy walkway, Ankasa Reserve, Nsuta Forest, Bobori Butterfly Sanctuary and Atewa Hills. Right on top of the hit list is the incomparable Yellow-headed Picathartes, better seen in Ghana than anywhere else. Other tricky forest birds we hope to see include Nkulengu Rail, Brown Nightjar, Blue-moustached Bee-eater and Forest Wood Hoopoe. Moister coastal savannas and thickets at Shai Hills and at Kalakpa will add some variety, and two full days will be spent in the Guinea woodlands of Mole National Park, with the chance to see White-throated Francolin, Sun Lark, Dorst’s Cisticola, Forbes’s Plover and Standard-winged Nightjar, amongst many others.

Ghana 2021

Michael’s incredible focus, dedication and ability to locate and show Africa’s toughest birds is probably unequalled on the continent. He has led dozens of tours across Africa and his experience in locating birds on just the softest of calls or briefest of views impresses those who travelled with him.

**DATES**
Ghana 2021 5-22 Jan 2021

**PROVISIONAL PRICES**
Per person sharing $TBA
Single supplement $TBA

Includes all ground costs.

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Visit www.birdingafrica.com
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**Tour Focus**
Ghana offers a good list of specials for world listers and a wide array of species and other wildlife for those with a more general interest. This trip has a strong focus on watching birds, but there are opportunities too for some mammal watching (especially primates) and bird photography.

Let us know if you have target species or want to know more about the species we might encounter. A species list will be handed out to you at the start of the tour and is available beforehand upon request.

The tour is timed to coincide with most pleasant time (drier and cooler) to travel in Ghana. We don’t expect to encounter any rain. Weather will mostly be warm and humid.

We will travel in a spacious bus. More details about what to expect, how to prepare and what to pack are provided in our Tour Instructions.
INTRODUCTION

Ghana, straddling the forest and broad-leaved savanna zones of West Africa, offers the easiest and safest access to the region and its special birds. Large numbers of lowland forest reserves dot the south of the country, and it is here that many of the Upper Guinea specials can be found. Forest birding is mostly fairly hard work, but we’ll inject our bird list with some productive savanna birding in the east and centre of the country.

Our 18-day itinerary takes in the best that the country has to offer, and aims to find as many regional specialties as possible.

We start off in the savannas and thickets east of Accra, at Shai Hills and Kalakpa. Here our main targets will include the likes of Capuchin Babbler, Baumann’s Greenbul, Ahanta Francolin, Stone Partridge, Violet Turaco, Blue-bellied Roller, Double-toothed Barbet, Senegal Parrot, Rock-loving Cisticola, Oriole Warbler, White-crowned Cliff Chat and Splendid Sunbird, before visiting the first of two Yellow-headed Picathartes colonies.

Our first true forest birding will see us climb into the hills of the Atewa Range, where Blue-moustached Bee-eater is the top target and other specials include a range of Upper Guinea species. From here we’ll make the long journey north to Mole National Park, where two full days will allow us to search out many of the savanna specials of the area, possibly including White-throated Francolin, Standard-winged Nightjar, Sun Lark, Rufous Cisticola, Dorst’s Cisticola, Senegal Eremomela, Blackcap Babbler, Bronze-tailed Glossy Starling and White-fronted Black Chat, and with a great deal of luck, Red-winged Pytilia, Black-faced Firefinch, West African Seedeater, Emin’s Shrike, Yellow Penduline Tit and Rufous-rumped Lark. Moving back south we pause in the Kumasi area to visit Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary where we hope to find Forest Wood Hoopoe and Black Spinetail, Little Green Woodpecker, Red-billed Helmetshrike, Sabine’s Palmchat, Copper-tailed Glossy Starling, etc. We also have a second shot at Yellow-headed Picathartes, if not seen to everyone’s satisfaction previously. The better part of three days will then be spent in and around Kakum National Park, including two mornings on the canopy walkway, where we hope to see Long-tailed Hawk, Congo Serpent Eagle, Brown Nightjar and Sharpe’s Apalis, among many other forest birds. Ankasa Forest in the far south-west of the country is our next port of call, and offers the chance of finding some of the region’s trickiest birds, including Yellow-bearded Greenbul, Rufous-winged Illadopsis, Akun Eagle-Owl and White-crested Tiger Heron. From here we’ll return to Accra, pausing for an overnight stay near Nsuta Forest for a final morning of lowland forest birding.

ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS

Accommodation and meals are generally fairly good by African standards, and vary from lodges and guest houses to rustic bush camps and small hotels. Rooms mostly have private facilities and hot water. We may need to share ablution facilities on the odd occasion.

Meals are Western-style. Please advise if you are vegetarian and what foods you enjoy, so that we can cater for you.

Water is not safe to drink so we supply complimentary bottled water in the vehicle.

GROUP SIZE

Five to nine participants.

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

Please plan to fly in to Accra by the night of 5 January 2021: Departure from Accra is possible any time from 21h00 on the night of 22 January.

Please email callan@birdingafrica.com a copy of your proposed flight details for approval before paying for your ticket.

WALKING

This tour requires a moderate degree of fitness. Most walks will be done at a gentle pace, although there will be a couple of longer outings lasting the better part of a day (Atewa Hills in particular).
DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Day 1 (5 Jan): Arrive Accra
Welcome to Ghana! From the airport we transfer to our hotel for dinner and an overnight stay. Overnight on the eastern side of Accra.

Day 2 (6 Jan): Accra to Ho via Shai Hills
Having spent the night on the eastern side of Accra we’ll escape into the nearby savannas in the early morning, to commence our birding at Shai Hills. The moist savannas here hold a good range of birds and we expect to have a bird-filled morning.

Highlights may include Double-spurred Francolin, Senegal Coucal, Yellow-throated Longclaw, Splendid Sunbird, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Senegal Batis, Senegal Eremomela, Vieillot’s Barbet, Bearded Barbet, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Rufous-crowned Roller, Blue-bellied Roller, Oriole Warbler, Northern Black Flycatcher, Woodchat Shrike, Red-necked Buzzard, Long-crested Eagle, Grey Kestrel, Stone Partridge, Black-billed Wood Dove, Senegal Parrot, Violet Turaco, Western Grey Plantain-Eater, Grey-headed Kingfisher, Yellow-throated Longclaw, White-crowned Cliff Chat, Croaking Cisticola, Northern Crombec, Northern Puffback, Purple Glossy Starling and Barbred Firefinch. We will also make a special effort to try to see African Barred Owlet. In the afternoon we’ll continue on to the Ho area. Overnight Ho.

Day 3 (7 Jan): Kalakpa to Royal Senchi
This morning we’ll make our way to the rarely-visited thickets and gallery forests of Kalakpa reserve near Ho. Our main targets here, which are often hard to see, include Capuchin Babbler, Brown Illadopsis, Ahanta Francolin, Broad-billed Roller, Leaflove, Buff-spotted Woodpecker, Forest Robin and White-crested Helmetshrike. If we are very lucky we may also see Pied-winged Swallow, Yellow-throated Cuckoo and Black-shouldered Nightjar. In the early afternoon we’ll make our way to the comfortable Royal Senchi resort. Not far from our hotel we’ll make our first attempt to see the spectacular Yellow-headed Picathartes in the evening.

Day 4 (8 Jan): Royal Senchi Resort to Atewa
Having done little forest birding by now we’ll start off in the vicinity of our hotel looking for various more widespread forest birds. In the afternoon we’ll make our way to our hotel near the base of the Atewa Hills. If time allows we’ll do some evening birding in the farmlands at the base of the Atewa Hills, where Black-throated Coucal and Black-bellied Seedcracker are possible.

Day 5 (9 Jan): Atewa Hills to Kumasi
Today we commence our Upper Guinea forest birding in earnest in the Atewa Hills. We will push on through the farmland at the base of the hills to get into the proper forest as early as possible, watching out for Blue-moustached Bee-eater as we climb. A good selection of forest birds is on offer and may include Western Bearded Greenbul, Blue-headed Wood Dove, Naked-faced Barbet, Yellow-throated Tinkerbird, Melancholy Woodpecker, Black-capped Apalis, Sharpe’s Apalis, White-tailed Alethe, Forest Robin, Ussher’s Flycatcher, Grey-throated Tit-Flycatcher and Copper-tailed Starling. In the afternoon we’ll make our way west to Kumasi. Overnight in Kumasi.

Day 6 (10 Jan): Kumasi to Mole
Today is essentially a travel day, as we make our way north into the Guinea woodlands of central Ghana at Mole National Park. We hope to arrive in time for some introductory woodland birding. Overnight Mole National Park.

Day 7-8 (11-12 Jan): Mole National Park
We have two full days at Mole National Park where a wide range of woodland and savanna species can be found. A number of rarer or sought-after species can be seen here too, and we hope to find at least...
Day 10 (14 Jan): Bobori Butterfly Sanctuary and Picathartes

This morning we’ll bird the rich lowland forests to the east of Kumasi at Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary. A wide range of sought after species occur here, including Forest Wood Hoopoe, Lagden’s Bushshrike (very rare), Black Spinetail, Narina Trogon, Least Honeyguide, Little Green Woodpecker, Red-fronted Parrot, Red-billed Helmetshrike, Sabine’s Puffback, Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike, Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher, Dusky Tit, Copper-tailed Glossy Starling, Yellow-mantled Weaver, Maxwell’s Black Weaver and Red-vented Malimbe.

In the afternoon, if there is a demand for it, we will visit our second Yellow-headed Picathartes colony south of Kumasi. This is the most famous site at which to see the bird, located in community-owned forest. We will wait for birds to come in to roost in their nesting caves in the evening. Overnight at Obuasi.

Day 11 (15 Jan): To Kakum

Today we drive to Kakum National Park, approaching the park from the north and visiting the park at Aboabo. A long list of birds is possible, including quite a few scarce species such as Tessmann’s Flycatcher, Long-tailed Hawk, Ahanta Francolin, Yellow-footed Honeyguide, Kemp’s Longbill, White-tailed Alethe, Western Bronze-naped Pigeon, Yellow-throated Cuckoo, Black Dwarf Hornbill, Fraser’s Forest Flycatcher, Little Grey Flycatcher, Ussher’s Flycatcher and Red-fronted Antpecker. Overnight near Kakum National Park

Day 12-13 (16-17 Jan): Kakum National Park

We have two full days at Ghana’s most famous birding reserve, Kakum National Park. On the first morning we’ll ascend the world-famous canopy walkway in the dark, and wait for the forest to wake up around us. Not only does the canopy walkway some of Beaudouin’s Snake Eagle, Grasshopper Buzzard, White-throated Francolin, Four-banded Sandgrouse, Forbes’s Plover, Standard-winged Nightjar, Brown-backed Woodpecker, Sun Lark, Rufous Cisticola, White-fronted Black Chat, Red-winged Pytilia, Emin’s Shrike, Black-faced Firefinch, Yellow Penduline Tit, Rufous-rumped Lark, Dorst’s Cisticola, Wilson’s Indigobird, Exclamatory Paradise Whydah and West African Seedeeater, many of which will require a great deal of luck to encounter.


Nights in Mole National Park.

Day 9 (13 Jan): Mole to Kumasi

After some final birding in the Mole area we’ll make the long drive back south to Kumasi. Overnight in Kumasi.

Day 14 (18 Jan): Kakum to Ankasa
After a second morning on the canopy walkway at Kakum we will drive to far western Ghana, arriving in the late afternoon at Ankasa Forest. Overnight on the edge of Ankasa Reserve.

Day 15-16 (19-20 Jan): Ankasa Forest
The remote forests of Ankasa, near the border with Ivory Coast, are the most exciting that we will and regularly come up with some great surprises. Besides general forest birding there are several forest pools which hold interest. During our visit we’ll have chances to search for many of the species also found at Kakum, but here we specifically will be targeting Hartlaub’s Duck, African Finfoot, Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo, Red-chested Owlet, White-bellied Kingfisher, African Dwarf Kingfisher, Shining-blue Kingfisher, Yellow-casqued Hornbill, Shining Drongo, Dusky Crested Flycatcher, Yellow-bearded Greenbul, Rufous-winged Illadopsis, Blackcap Illadopsis, Red-fronted Antpecker. There are also remote chances for White-breasted Guineafowl, Sandy Scops Owl, Akun Eagle-Owl, and Lowland Akalat. Nights on the edge of Ankasa Reserve.

Day 17 (21 Jan): Ankasa to Nsuta
After some final birding at Ankasa we’ll start our return journey to Accra, pausing overnight in the vicinity of Nsuta Forest. After dark we’ll search for Akun Eagle-Owl.

Day 18 (22 Jan): Nsuta to Accra
Our last stint of birding in Ghana will be done at Nsuta Forest this morning, which is a more reliable site for. We’ll aim to arrive back in Accra in the late afternoon. Departing flights can be taken any time from 9 pm.
BOOKLET AND CHECKLIST

Birding Africa provides:
1. Tour Details leaflet with detailed itinerary (this document).
2. Tour Information Pack, emailed to you.
3. Tour Booklet with checklists, provided in hard copy at the start of the tour.

QUESTIONS?

Email Michael at michael@birdingafrica.com and copy callan@birdingafrica.com.

HOW TO BOOK

1. Complete our easy online booking form.
2. Secure your booking deposit by credit card on our 3D secure online payment site ($150)
3. Settle the balance by bank transfer 150 days before the tour. We will email you a reminder and the banking details.

INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TOUR

- services of Birding Africa tour leader and local guides
- entry fees and activities as per itinerary
- ground transport in Ghana
- accommodation and all meals starting with dinner on the first night and ending with lunch on the last day
- airport transfers
- bottled water in the vehicle
- one soft drink per meal
- general tips