

CHEEPERS! **AFRICA**

GHANA

November 10 – 20, 2023

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**\$4800 / \$4950
(2023/2024)**

**Single
Supplement
\$480**





Birding and Wildlife in Ghana

Situated in the heart of West Africa, Ghana is a must visit destination for any birding and wildlife enthusiast. A comprehensive coverage of varied West African habitats from coastal wetlands and lagoons, moving inland through the coastal savannah into the rich Upper Guinea Rainforests that protect so many West African speciality species that include the Yellow-headed Picathartes a.k.a White-necked Rockfowl amongst many others.



Continuing northwards, enjoying the transition between the southern forests through the broadleaved Guinea woodland and finally the savanna plains and touching the Sahel on the Burkina Faso border, Ghana offers you the chance of seeing a wide range of species and habitats. It was no surprise Arjan Dwarshuis chose to dedicate 14 days in Ghana during his successful Biggest Year world record. Most West African Upper Guinea endemic species occur here in Ghana, and the safe, friendly, hassle-free environment and most developed infrastructure of any West African country, makes it a must visit destination for any birding and nature enthusiast. Travelling with West Africa's best local bird and wildlife guides, our 100% record of seeing the White-necked Rockfowl (Yellow-headed Picathartes) and Egyptian Plover (recently placed in a family of its own) ensures a spectacular trip awaits you.



Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 (10 Nov): Arrival in Ghana

You will be met upon your arrival at the Kotoka International airport in Accra Ghana which is situated on the beautiful “Gold Coast” (Ghana’s former name during its time under British colonial rule) of Western Africa. After clearing immigration, collecting your bags, and passing through customs you will enter the main arrival hall where your tour leader/local guide and driver will be waiting to meet you. We will take care of you from here and offer you “Akwaaba” (welcome) once you have boarded your air-conditioned vehicle which will be your mode of transport for the duration of your time with us.

We make the journey (approximately an hour’s drive depending on traffic) to your hotel which is located close to Shai Hills Reserve. After checking you in your guide will brief you on the following days activities and answer any questions you may have. Depending on your arrival time, you can enjoy your early evening meal whilst acclimatizing yourself to West Africa.

Accommodation- Alexis Hotel (Tema)

Day 2 (11 Nov): Birding Shai Hills Reserve, Sakamona Lagoon, transfer to Kakum NP

Our first morning with you here in Ghana as we head for the open grassland savannah of Shai Hills Reserve hoping to see a good selection of species that include, Northern Crombec, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Snowy-crowned Robin Chat, African Pygmy Kingfisher, Cardinal Woodpecker, Viellots and Double-toothed Barbets, White-crowned Cliff Chat, Rock Martin, Red-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike, Violet Turaco, Senegal Parrot, Senegal Batis, Blue-bellied Roller, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Oriole Warbler, Black-cap and Brown Babblers, Copper and Splendid Sunbirds, White-crested Helmet-shrike, Croaking and Short-winged Cisticolas, African Thrush, Red-necked and Lizzard Buzzards, Lanner Falcon, Green Wood-hoopoe and Stone Partridge to mention a few species on offer here.

After a wonderful morning and time permitting, we head for more familiar birding at the Sakamona Lagoon. There is usually an abundance of birds to see here depending on the level of water, we hope to see Black-winged Stilt, Senegal Thick-knee, Common Ringed, Grey and Spur-winged Plovers, Black-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Common Greenshank, Spotted Redshank, Wood and Common Sandpipers, Collard Pratincole, Marsh and Curlew Sandpipers, Ruddy Turnstone, Little Stint, Long-tailed Cormorant, Squacco, Grey, Purple, Striated and Black Herons, Little, Cattle, and Intermediate Egrets. From here we head towards the famous Atewa Range stopping for a slightly late lunch on route. Our accommodation will be close to our birding spot and we aim to arrive in the early evening. On arrival we check in to relax and enjoy our evening meal and checklist in preparation for an early start in the morning.

Accommodation- Nelsban Palace (New Tafo)



Day 3 (12 Nov): Birding Atewa Range

Atewa is critically endangered highland upper guinea rainforest and as it protects so many quality and rare species, we will dedicate a full morning birding here. It is a full day outing to get to the top of the Atewa Range so for today we'll focus on the lower slopes where we are bound to find a ton of good birds such as Red-cheeked Wattle-eye, Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike, West African (Bioko) Batis, Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, African Hobby, Long-tailed Hawk, Congo Serpent Eagle, Red-rumped, Yellow-rumped and Speckled Tinkerbirds, Little Green, Buff-throated, Blue-throated Brown, Olive-bellied and Collard Sunbirds, African Goshawk, Red-tailed and Green-tailed Bristlebills, Red-headed and Crested Malimbos, Forest Robin, Little, Little Grey, White-throated, Icterine, Red-tailed, Western-bearded and the upper guinea endemic Yellow-bearded Greenbul, Many-coloured Bushshrike, Western Nicator, Brown Illadopsis and Western Bronze-naped Pigeon.

Sadly, Atewa forest range is under severe threat as the Ghanaian government are considering allowing it to be mined for bauxite. Several NGO's are petitioning the government to establish Atewa as a National Park to protect this beautiful habitat for future generations. Atewa protects some rare species of birds and we hope to get good views of Red-fronted Antpecker, Nimba Flycatcher, Crowned Eagle, Brown-chested Alethe, Forest Scrub Robin and Lowland Akalat amongst other species. We return to our lodge for lunch and to freshen up before heading for remote village close to a small upper guinea rainforest in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. On arrival we check into our accommodation which was built by Ashanti and donated to the communities surrounding the picathartes forest along with a restaurant and school that now offers over 300 children access to education.

Choosing to travel with us means you are also helping to protect the picathartes forest and all the wonderful wildlife that call it home as this project is funded from tours such as ours. This project has created employment in the communities to patrol and stop illegal hunting and logging activities in the forest reserve.

There are 12 active nesting sites in this forest, and we will visit one of the largest colonies that have approximately 30 nests, 16 of these active. As we set off on the walk through this beautiful forest you can see why this is one of the must-see species in the world, the whole experience adds to this mythical bird's reputation. The walk should take between 45 minutes to 1 hour depending on your fitness levels. As we approach the nesting site, we need to be incredibly quiet as we take our seat on bamboo benches purposely made for your comfort. The overhanging rock face and small cave with mud nests sets the atmosphere as we wait for the birds to come back from foraging for snails, frogs, and insects during the day. It will be hard to contain your excitement as these legendary prehistoric looking birds hop and jump on the rocks whilst preening themselves just meters from our eyes (no telescope needed). Once we



have enjoyed good views, we leave the birds in peace as we set off back through the forest to our accommodation and a well-deserved cold drink. Our hosts will have prepared a wonderful celebratory meal and we will enjoy our evening, reflecting on one of the best birding days of our life. Staying in this remote local community is a definite highlight of our time together, meeting the locals and relaxing in this perfect setting. Previously before the new lodge was built, we used to travel 3 hours through the night to Kumasi arriving around 10pm. Having the facilities to stay here not only benefits the protection of this forest but also allows us to enjoy the other wonderful birds and wildlife that call it home. As always there will be the option to go for night birding and nature walks before we settle down for the evening.

Accommodation – At the new Picathartes Guest House (Bonkro) right next to the Picathartes Forest.

Day 4 (13 Nov): Full day birding at Bonkro and Kwabena Sam Forest

Slightly more relaxed breakfast as we are so close to the forest this morning. There are several trails we can enjoy; your guide will determine which one we take based on the bird species we have already seen and species we still need. Such a productive forest and species we could see include White-crested and Black-dwarf Hornbill, Gray-headed and Red-tailed Bristlebill, Rufous-sided Broadbill, Fire-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-throated and Thick-billed Cuckoo, Forest Woodhoopoe, Blue Cuckoo-shrike, Sharpe's Apalis, Black and White Shrike Flycatcher, Gray-throated Tit Flycatcher, Long-tailed Hawk, Congo Serpent Eagle and this is also the forest we where we have seen the extremely rare and difficult to see Western-wattled Cuckoo-shrike on the most occasions.

A well-deserved afternoon rest during the heat of the day. If rest is not for you then why not visit a local school. Our bar and restaurant are always open, and we will all meet to enjoy lunch before heading out back into the forest for afternoon and evening birding. The nearby Kwabena Sam forest is the final forest location before we head north tomorrow to the drier guinea woodland and savannah habitat.

Target species this afternoon and evening include, Fraser's Forest Flycatcher, Yellow-browed and Olive-green Camaroptera, Western Nicator, Puvel's Illadopsis, Tit Hylia, Yellow-footed and Hairy-breasted Barbet, Green Crombec, Kemp's Longbill, Black-cap Apalis, Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher, West African Wattle-eye, Red-cheeked Wattle Eye, Black-throated Coucal and Western Bronze-naped Pigeon amongst others. Depending on which nocturnal species we still need we can also stay after dark looking for owls and nightjars. A final night in this remote community as we enjoy a wonderful evening meal, checklist and relax at the bar and restaurant.

Accommodation – At the new Picathartes Guest House (Bonkro) right next to the Picathartes Forest.



Day 5 (14 Nov): Birding Kwabena Sam and driving to Ankasa

We have the morning to catch up on some species we might have missed around Kwabena Sam and Bonkro forests before heading to Ankasa Reserve, Ghana's only wet evergreen rainforest that is in near pristine condition. While today will mostly be a driving day we will have time to do some roadside birding before getting to Ankasa, particularly at some roadside ponds where we often find the sought-after Hartlaub's Duck, Shining Blue Kingfisher and Reichenbach's Sunbird.

As we arrive in the late afternoon we settle into our chosen accommodation before heading out for early evening birding where we hope to see Frasers and Akun Eagle Owls. Your guide will also be looking for the legendary Nkulengu Rail.

Accommodation- at the newly completed Ankasa Reserve Lodge

Days 6 & 7 (15 & 16 Nov): Birding Ankasa Reserve

Such an incredible forest protecting so many rare and sought-after species we now choose to dedicate 3 nights here. Your guide will be up before first light listening for the unmistakable call of the Nkulengu Rail, if he locates this species, he will alert the group before breakfast. Staying so close to a birding location is always a bonus as time is not wasted travelling. After breakfast we set off venturing deeper into this lush forest with our main targets being the upper guinea endemics Yellow-bearded Greenbul, Rufous-winged Illadopsis and Green-tailed Bristlebill in addition to Anson's, Icterine, Red-tailed and Western-bearded Greenbul's, Pale-breasted and Blackcap Illadopsis, Forest Robin, White-tailed Ant Thrush, White-tailed Alethe, Shinning Drongo, Cassin's Flycatcher, Yellow-spotted Barbet, White-throated Bee-eater, Chestnut-breasted Negrofinch, Blue-headed Wood Dove, Western Bronze-naped Pigeon, Yellow-billed and Great Blue Turaco's, Black-capped Apalis, Grey-headed Bristlebill, Tiny Sunbird and Red-fronted Antpecker.

Your guide knows where the speciality species are found inside Ankasa and it is important we give you the best opportunity to see them. We organize support landrover 4x4's enabling us to navigate the difficult forest road ensuring we get to these sites at the best time of day, this also enables us to bird the remote trails around the pools where we have seen African Pitta on a few occasions. As we approach the watering holes located deeper inside the forest, we hope to see Crested Guinea fowl on the road. Our target birds will include Hartlaub's Duck, Dwarf Bittern, African Finfoot, Shining Blue, White-bellied, Blue-breasted and Dwarf Kingfishers. Forest raptors are always welcome, and we hope to see Long-tailed Hawk and Congo Serpent Eagle. We will scan the sky for Crowned Eagle, Square-tailed and Fanti Saw-wings, Black and Yellow Casqued Hornbills in addition to Black Dwarf and Piping Hornbills. There are some rare species here and if we are lucky which we sometimes are we may see White-breasted



Guineafowl, White-crested Tiger Heron, African Pitta, Grey-throated Rail, Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo, Forest Scrub Robin, Blue-moustached Bee-eater, Red-chested Owlet and Akun Eagle Owl. Our evening is spent enjoying good food and discussing the days birding over a cold refreshing drink.

Accommodation- at the newly completed Ankasa Reserve Lodge

Day 8 (17 Nov): Birding Ankasa Reserve and Brenu Akyinim

A final mornings birding at this wonderful location, we will bird the lodge grounds, enjoying the exceptional biodiversity of this tropical habitat. After a scrumptious breakfast we freshen up before our departure after a wonderful 3 nights at this seldom visited location.

After loading our vehicle we set off towards Kakum National Park, during our journey we will be targeting several species not seen in other parts of Ghana. These include Reichenbach's and Brown Sunbird, White-browed Forest Flycatcher, Orange Weaver, African Pygmy Goose, Carmelite Sunbird, and Little Grebe to mention a few.

A visit to Brenu Akyinim and the coastal savannah plains will give us some new species to enjoy. There are some special species found in this area and new birds we hope to see include Marsh Tchagra, Compact Weaver, Double-spurred Francolin, Oriole Warbler, Red-headed Quelea, Black-rumped Waxbill and if we are lucky Yellow-winged Pytillia, Wilsons Indigobird and African Wattled Lapwing. We continue towards Jukwa to our hotel not far from Kakum Forest

Accommodation- Rainforest Lodge (Jukwa)

Day 9 (18 Nov): Birding Kakum National Park

After an early breakfast we head for the world-famous canopy walkway at Kakum National Park which is approximately 15 minutes' drive from our lodge. We aim to get to Kakum for first light enabling us to spend the most critical bird viewing hours 40 meters above the forest floor on the canopy walkway, with 7 platforms that are large enough to support Telescopes. The 360 km² Kakum National Park protects secondary upper guinea semi deciduous tropical rainforest and it is a wonderful feeling being so close to the canopy of this beautiful forest.

Our main target species during our time on the canopy walkway are Violet-backed Hyliota, Chestnut-capped Flycatcher, the upper guinea endemics Sharpes Apalis, Brown-cheeked Hornbill and copper-tailed Glossy Starling, Bioko Batis, Blue Cuckooshrike, Little Green Woodpecker and the White-crested Hornbill. Other species we hope to see include Blue-throated Brown, Green, Collard, Johanna's and the beautiful Buff-throated



Sunbirds, Red-headed and Crested Malimbos, Rosy Bee-eater, White-breasted and Grey-crowned Negropin, Red-fronted and African Grey Parrots, Yellowbill, Western Black-headed and Black Winged Orioles, Rufous-crowned Eremomela, Splendid Glossy and Forest Chestnut-winged Starlings, Preuss's Golden-backed and Yellow-mantled Weavers, Green Hylia, Golden, Slender-billed and Little Grey Greenbills, African Green Pigeon, Yellow-billed Turaco, Emerald Cuckoo, Blue-throated Roller, Yellow-throated, Red-rumped and Speckled Tinkerbirds, Hairy-breasted and Naked-faced Barbets, Usshers and Little Grey Flycatchers, Cassins Honeybird and African Pied Hornbill to mention a few.

The raptors we have a chance to see include, Congo Serpent Eagle, African Harrier Hawk, Palm Nut Vulture, Cassins Hawk Eagle, European Honey and Red-necked Buzzards. Some of the more difficult but still possible species from the canopy include Long-tailed Hawk, Black Dwarf Hornbill, Yellow-footed Honeyguide and Black-collared Lovebird. After a wonderful morning we return to our lodge to freshen up and enjoy our lunch. During the heat of mid-afternoon, you will have the option of birding around the lodge grounds, resting in your air-conditioned rooms, around the pool and bar or you could choose to go on a cultural excursion to Cape Coast castle. We re-visit the canopy walkway in the evening when our main targets will be the Brown-cheeked, Black and Yellow-casqued Hornbills, Great Blue Turaco, Brown Nightjar and Fraser's eagle owl amongst other specials. Our evening will be spent at the lodge restaurant and bar discussing the day's sightings, adding to our checklist, and enjoying the atmosphere of our surroundings.

Accommodation-Rainforest Lodge (Jukwa)

Day 10 (19 Nov): Birding Bonkro Forest and Kwabena Sam Forest

This morning we will be concentrating our time on the farmland scrub, forest edge and forest trails at Abrafo, a section of forest habitat near to Kakum National Park. Our guides are always focused on getting you good views of all species and this morning is no different as we search for Pale Flycatcher, Black and White Mannikin, Brown-crowned Tchagra, Sooty Boubou, Puvel's Illadopsis, Olive-green Camaroptera, Red-faced and Whistling Cisticolas, Lesser Striped Swallow, Fanti Saw-wing, Chestnut Wattle-eye, Naked-faced and Hairy-breasted Barbets, Frasers and Little-green Sunbirds, Yellowbill, Red-cheeked Wattle-eye, Swamp Palm Bulbul, Common Fiscal, Spotted Greenbul, Finsch's Flycatcher Thrush, Yellow-whiskered and Red-tailed Greenbills, White-crested Hornbill, African Harrier Hawk and the more sought after difficult species include Long-tailed Hawk, Red-billed Helmetshrike, Rufous-sided Broadbill, Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, Congo Serpent Eagle, Red-billed and Black Dwarf Hornbills.



On our way back to Accra we will also stop at Wanneba Lagoon where we have time to find some shore birds as well as the likes of Mangrove Sunbird.

Accommodation – Eratta Hotel or similar

Day 11 (20 Nov): Flights Out

Departure day.

Includes:

All Ground Transport and Fuel
Licensed local birdwatching guide from day 1 until day 11
International Tour Leader and Guide
Minimum of 4 guests, maximum of 8 guests
Small-group surcharge will apply for group size smaller than 6
Meals
Overnight accommodation for 10 nights
Bottled water throughout
One soft drink/local beer/glass local wine at dinner

Excludes:

All Flights
Personal expenses
Travel insurance (incl. health and trip cancellation insurance)
Visas
Drinks other than mentioned above

IMPORTANT NOTE

We may be forced to change or alter the itinerary at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.