

Additions to the Ethiopian bird atlas: 126 new records from 14 atlas squares

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Summary

The bird atlas for Ethiopia provides an unsurpassed overview of the country's avian diversity and species distribution. However, many atlas squares have not been regularly visited by ornithologists, and there are numerous knowledge gaps. I provide 126 major and minor range extensions for 118 species across 14 atlas squares. A total of 15 species were also recorded outside their known altitudinal range in Ethiopia. All records are from 2007–2014. Records from big game hunting areas Demmero and Odo Bulu (square 99a) and Sala (107a) constitute the bulk of the report. There are also new species from sites frequently visited by travellers, such as Awasa (83c), Gonder (29a) and Axum (16d). Prominent gap-fillers include Wattled Crane *Bugeranus carunculatus*, Bronze-winged Courser *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus*, Red-pate Cisticola *Cisticola ruficeps*, Shelley's Starling *Lamprolornis shelleyi* and Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*.

Introduction

In 2009, John Ash and John Atkins published the most comprehensive bird account for Ethiopia to date (Ash & Atkins 2009). The atlas is based on more than 100,000 records, and describes in detail the known range for a total of 837 species across 418 Ethiopian atlas squares (tetra I remote and more or less inaccessible regions, results in numerous species distribution gaps in the atlas. This applies for many, if not most, bird species.

This report is a supplementary account to the Ethiopian bird atlas. It comprises gap-filling records for bird species seen outside the range presented in Ash & Atkins (2009). All records are from the period 2007–2014, and cover a total of 14 widely spread atlas squares (Figure 1). For easy comparison, atlas square numbers, as well as bird nomenclature and sequence, follows Ash & Atkins (2009) throughout. English nomenclature according to Redman *et al.* (2011) is given in brackets where this work diverges.

Observations outside the altitudinal limits indicated in Ash & Atkins (2009), Redman *et al.* (2011) and a recent publication by Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire (2015) are discussed and marked with an asterisk (*). For details on ecology and behaviour, see species accounts provided in Brown *et al.* (*The Birds of Africa*, volumes 1–7, 1980–2004).

Species endemic to either Ethiopia or to the Abyssinian highlands (i.e. Ethiopia and Eritrea) are labelled accordingly. Species regarded as Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU) or Near Threatened (NT) by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) are labelled according to their current Red List status (IUCN 2015). Details for sites mentioned in this report are found in Appendix 1.

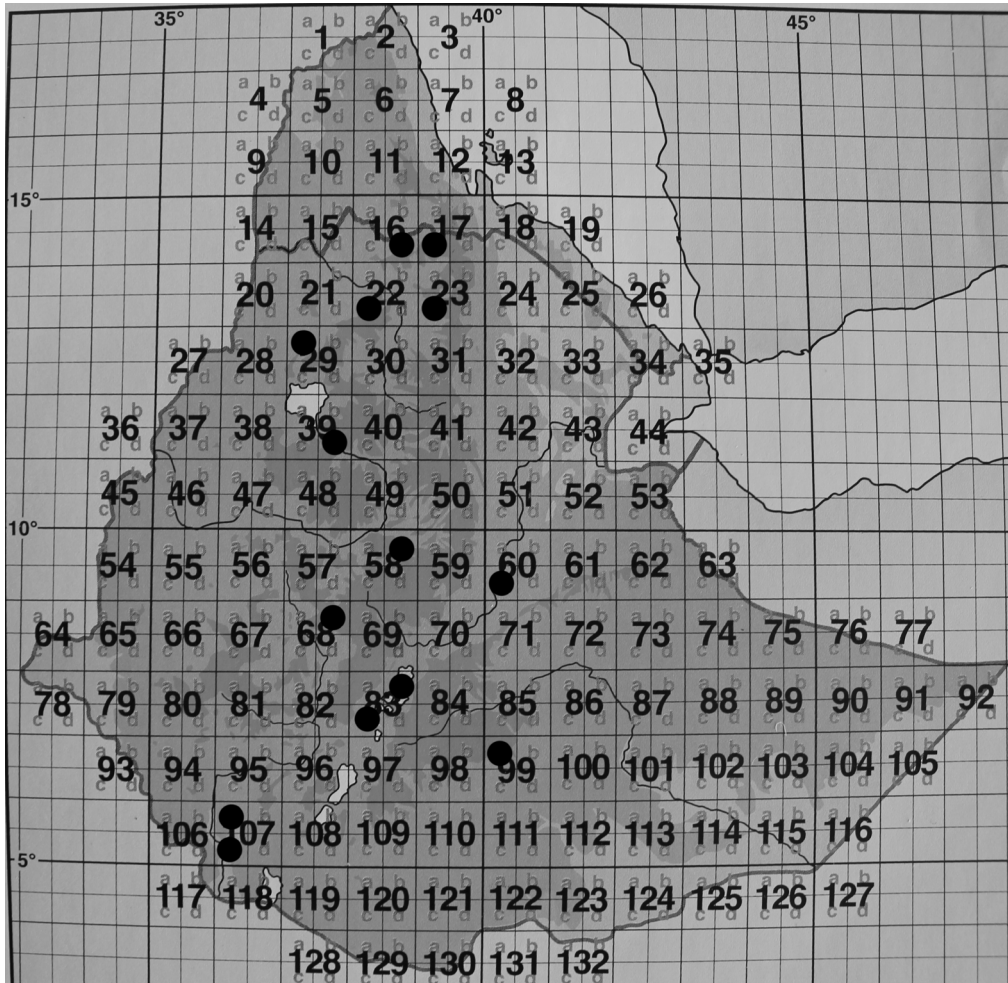


Figure 1. Map from Ash & Atkins (2009) showing the atlas squares (tetrads) for Ethiopia and Eritrea. A total of 418 squares are on Ethiopian territory. Squares with at least one new observation referred to in this report are marked with a black dot.

Results and Discussion

Major range extensions and most notable records

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*

One bird was seen in Demmero (99a), 24 October 2014, in damp, short grassland intensively grazed by cattle. My observation represents a moderate south-eastern extension of this species' range in Central Ethiopia.

Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides*

One bird was seen in Bilen (60c), 26 February 2014. The bird showed reddish hindcrown and neck, thus distinguishing it from Peregrine Falcon *F. peregrinus*. Fine barring of underparts further distinguished it from Lanner Falcon *F. biarmicus*.

White-headed vulture *Trigonoceps occipitalis* (CR)

One individual of this increasingly rare species was seen perched close to Sala River (107a), 12 March 2014.

Eastern Chanting Goshawk *Melierax poliopterus*

One bird seen on the western shore of Lake Langano (83b), 19 February 2014. Yellow cere and white rump were obvious. Even though the species has been frequently recorded in the north-eastern and south-western parts of the Rift Valley, this is the first record from the central part. My observation represents a moderate range extension in Ethiopia.

Mountain Buzzard *Buteo oreophilus* (NT)

Single birds seen in Demmero, 28 and 30 October 2014, and in Odo Bulu, 1 March 2014 (both 99a), hovering over forest. All birds were generally light coloured, with dominantly white, spotted underwing coverts and a dark carpal "comma". The bellies were boldly spotted. Ash & Atkins (2009) has only 13 reliable records of this species, and misidentification with other *Buteo* spp. is probably common. Mountain Buzzard is recorded in three adjacent atlas squares, one with an unconfirmed breeding record, suggesting that the Bale Mountains is a hot spot in Ethiopia.

Wattled Crane *Buggeranus carunculatus* (VU)

The same bird was seen on five consecutive days, 24–28 October 2014, in damp grassland in Demmero (99a). It was feeding close to livestock, and appeared undisturbed by herders. This species has one of its Ethiopian strongholds in the Bale Mountains, and has previously been recorded in two adjacent atlas squares, including one breeding record.

African Wattled Plover (Lapwing) *Vanellus senegallus*

Surprisingly, being recorded in 81 atlas squares (Ash & Atkins 2009), none of these are from the Omo River Valley. I saw four Wattled Plovers in grassland on stony ground about 100 m from Sala River (107a), 16 March 2014. My observation represents a moderate range extension in Ethiopia.

Bronze-winged Courser *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus*

I saw three birds close to Sala River (107a), 14 March 2014. The birds were standing in the shade at midday, which is typical behaviour for the species. This observation represents a large range extension in Ethiopia, where this species has been recorded only four times (Ash & Atkins 2009). The species has, however, been recorded around Lake Turkana in northern Kenya.

? Green Wood-hoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus*

Two *Phoeniculus* wood-hoopoes were observed in riverine forest along Sala River (107a), 16 March 2014. The taxonomic status of this genus is unclear (Turner 2014), and care should be taken when identifying birds in the field. I had good views of both birds, and they displayed a bright red beak, as well as iridescent green head, upper breast and upper back. My initial conclusion was *P. purpureus*. That would have meant a large range extension for the species in Ethiopia, the nearest confirmed records being in the Gambela region in the far west. However, unresolved and confusing taxonomy leads me to believe that my record should be left undecided for now. Ash & Atkins (2009) included an observation of Violet Wood-hoopoe *P. d.*

damarensis in their List D (species not considered acceptable for the Ethiopian Atlas). Redman *et al.* (2011), however, speculated that *P. damarensis* was present in the lower Omo Valley, and this has recently been confirmed from Murle and Lake Dipa (both 107c) (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 2015). These taxa have a more blue or violet shine compared to *P. purpureus*, but Ash & Atkins (2009) refers to one bird from square 106b with a green tinge on the upper mantle.

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Several birds were flushed from thickets along Sala River (107a) between 19 and 21 March 2014. There is only one other record (94d) from this southwestern corner of the country.

Red-pate Cisticola *Cisticola ruficeps

This species is apparently rare in Ethiopia, and has only been reliably recorded six times in five squares; two in the very north (subspecies *scotoptera*) and three in the south-west (subspecies *mongalla*) (Ash & Atkins 2009). I saw two small groups of 5–7 birds close to Sala River (107a), 19 and 20 March 2014. Both groups were seen in dry bush growing on the steep, stony riverbank approximately 200 m west of the Sala River at 600–650 m. This is below the known lower altitudinal limit of 750 m. Being a small, fairly nondescript cisticola with a rufous crown, it could also have been confused with Tiny Cisticola *C. nana*, which has been recorded in adjacent squares 107c and 106b. Conveniently, one bird was singing, the song matching with the description given for *C. ruficeps* in Redman *et al.* (2011). I was unable to determine subspecies, but the previous record of *C. r. mongalla* from adjacent atlas square 95d gives an indication.

Shelley's Starling *Lamprotornis shelleyi*

One bird was seen in dry bush on the western shore of Lake Langano (83b), 19 October 2008. Superb Starling *L. superbis* is very common in the area. A close view from less than ten metres revealed the lack of a white breast band and a glossy blue head, confirming it to be *L. shelleyi*. The habitat in the area is suitable for Shelley's Starling, which is common in dry *Acacia* woodland in Ogaden, Borana and Southern Omo. It is also recorded in the Afar area in the north-eastern part of the Rift Valley. This Langano record represents a moderate range extension in Ethiopia, but the bird should be considered a vagrant.

? Somali Starling *Onychognathus blythii*

Two dark-headed, long-tailed *Onychognathus* starlings were seen perched on the cliffs above the Jemmu River Canyon close to Debre Libanos (58b), 2 January 2011. My initial reaction was Somali Starling, but later scrutiny of an unclear photograph could not entirely rule out Slender-billed Starling *O. tenuirostris*. Considering Ash & Atkins (2009), this observation would have represented a large range extension for Somali Starling, but Behrens *et al.* (2010) also reported it to be present at this site.

Sharpe's Starling *Pholia sharpii*

A flock of five birds was seen in forest canopy in Odo Bulu (99a), 1 March 2014. My observation is the easternmost for this species in Ethiopia.

Rufous Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes*

One bird was seen on the western shore of Lake Langano (83b), 19 October 2008. The

species is frequently seen in the north-eastern part of the country, but my observation represents the southernmost record in the Rift Valley.

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti

One bird was seen above the Jemmu River Canyon close to Debre Libanos (58b), 2 January 2011. This species is common in north-eastern Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti, but rarely ventures this far south. The bird was seen at 2500 m, far higher than the upper altitudinal limits of 1000 m in Ash & Atkins (2009) and 1200 m in Redman *et al.* (2011). This suggests it was a vagrant.

White-winged Cliff Chat *Thamnolaea semirufa* (endemic to Abyssinian highlands)

Two single birds were seen at 2100 m elevation on rocky outcrops on the southern side of the Bale Escarpment in Demmero (99a), 27 and 29 October 2014. These are the southernmost records for this species east of the Bale Mountains.

Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra olivacea

One bird seen in *Hagenia abyssinica* forest in Odo Bulu (99a), 1 March 2014. The upper altitudinal limit for this species is reported at 2450 m, while I saw it at 2700 m. This is also the easternmost record in Ethiopia.

Minor range extensions

Chestnut-naped Francolin *Francolinus (Pternistis) castaneicollis*

Single birds and small groups daily in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

Common in and around aquatic habitats in Wonchi (68b), 30 December 2010. Common in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Five birds on Lake Wonchi (68b), 30 December 2010.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Several groups in reedbeds on Lake Wonchi (68b), 30 December 2010.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Two birds on Lake Wonchi (68b), 30 December 2010.

Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* (NT)

A group of seven birds next to a swampy waterhole in Bilen (60c), 27 February 2014.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

One individual seen foraging in damp grassland in Demmero (99a), 1 November 2014.

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Seen daily in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*

Seen daily in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Wattled Ibis *Bostrychia carunculata* (endemic to Abyssinian highlands)

Very common in grasslands and along streams in Demmero (21 October–3 November 2014) and Odo Bulu (27 February–5 March 2014) (both 99a). More than a hundred birds seen daily en route to roosting sites in Demmero.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Frequent in Gonder Town (29a), 6–7 October 2013. Seen daily in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Single birds seen three times in riverine forest along the Sala River (107a), 10–21 March 2014.

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*

Seen daily along the Sala River (107a), 10–21 March 2014. Seen daily in Murle (107c), 7–10 March 2014.

Long-tailed Cormorant *Phalacrocorax africanus*

Several birds on Lake Wonchi (68b), 30 December 2010.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Two single birds in Demmero (99a), 24 and 27 October 2014.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

One bird seen over Gonder Town (29a), 7 October 2013.

African Swallow-tailed Kite *Chelictinia riocourii*

Two individuals of this intra-tropical migrant seen in Murle (107c), 7 March 2014, perched on tall termite mounds and hovering over grassland.

Black (Yellow-billed) Kite *Milvus (migrans) aegyptius*

Ash & Atkins (2009) does not split Black Kite *M. migrans* into Black Kite *M. migrans* and Yellow-billed Kite *M. aegyptius*. The latter (sub-) species was seen daily in Sala (107a), 10–21 March 2014.

Short-toed (Snake) Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

One bird hovering over the so-called Queen of Sheba's bath in Axum Town (16d), 1 January 2013.

Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*

A single bird over grassland in Demmero (99a), 24 October 2014.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* (NT)

One bird in Murle (107c), 6 March 2014, hovering over grassland.

African Harrier-hawk *Polyboroides typus*

One bird roosting at forest edge in Demmero (99a), 29 October 2014.

African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro*

Seen and heard daily in aerial display over forest in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Shikra *Accipiter badius*

One bird at forest edge in Demmero (99a), 25 October 2014. Two single birds in riverine forest along the Sala River (107a), 20 and 21 March 2014.

Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk *Accipiter rufiventris*

One bird in forest in Demmero (99a), 25 October 2014, unsuccessfully hunting Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*.

Augur Buzzard *Buteo augur*

Seen daily in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014, perched at forest edge, or hovering over grassland and forest.

Verreaux's Eagle *Aquila verreauxii*

The same pair was seen daily, gliding over rocky outcrops at the Bale Escarpment in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Wahlberg's Eagle *Aquila wahlbergi*

One bird flying at forest edge in Odo Bulu (99a), 4 March 2014.

Booted Eagle *Aquila pennatus*

One bird gliding over grassland in Demmero (99a), 24 October 2014.

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis*

Two individuals, both perched, in Demmero (99a), 29 October and 1 November 2014.

Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata*

Three birds in reedbeds on Lake Wonchi (68b), 30 December 2010.

African Snipe *Gallinago nigripennis*

One bird seen at the "Amora Gedel" by Awasa Lake (83c), 25 December 2010, feeding with a flock of Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*.

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea

Several birds perched on a small building at the southern edge of the Geech Plateau in Semien Moutains National Park (22c), 4 October 2013. The upper altitudinal limit has been reported at c. 3000 m for this species, while I saw it at 3400 m.

White-collared Pigeon *Columba albitorques* (endemic to Abyssinian highlands)

Several large flocks were seen flying from roosting sites in cliffs to feeding sites in nearby barley fields in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

African Olive Pigeon *Columba arquatrix*

Two birds in montane forest in the Wonchi Crater (68b), 30 December 2010. Seen or heard almost daily in montane forest in Demmero (21 October–3 November 2014) and Odo Bulu (27 February–5 March 2014) (both 99a).

Lemon Dove *Columba (Aplopelia) larvata*

Two birds on the ground in a garden in Ghion Town (68b), 29 December 2010. Two single birds in thickets in Demmero (99a), 24 and 27 October 2014.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata

Common in agricultural areas and at forest edge in Demmero (21 October–3 November 2014) and Odo Bulu (27 February–5 March 2014) (both 99a). In Odo Bulu it was seen at 2700 m, extending the known upper altitudinal limit from 2500 m.

Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistria

Single birds in forest in Demmero (99a), 26 and 29 October 2014. They were seen at 2250 m, marginally extending the known upper altitudinal limit from 2150 m.

Bruce's Green Pigeon *Treron waalia*

Relatively common in riverine forest and fruiting trees in Sala (107a), 10–21 March 2014.

Brown (Meyer's) Parrot *Poicephalus meyeri*

Seen or heard daily in open woodland and riverine forest in Sala (107a), 10–21 March 2014.

White-cheeked Turaco *Tauraco leucotis (often considered endemic to Abyssinian highlands, but also recorded in the Boma Hills in South Sudan)

Seen or heard daily in forest and at forest edge in Demmero (21 October–3 November 2014) and Odo Bulu (27 February–5 March 2014) (both 99a). Also seen or heard daily in riverine forest in Sala (107a), 10–21 March 2014. The presence as low as 600 m in Sala has not been reported before, and Ash & Atkins (2009) and Redman *et al.* (2011) have 900 m as the lower altitudinal limit. The subspecies at all three sites was *T. l. leucotis*.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

One individual, probably a first year bird, was seen in Gonder Town (29a), 6 October 2013. The bird had a little yellow at the base of the bill and a lot of brown in the plumage. White fringes to coverts and remiges, and a greyish tail with white bars, could indicate African Cuckoo *C. gularis*, but detailed scrutiny of a picture by John Atkins, an anonymous referee and I, led to the identification as *C. canorus*. A possible *C. gularis* would have been far outside its known seasonal and altitudinal range in Ethiopia. Unspecified *C. canorus/gularis* has previously been recorded from square 29a, but my record represents the first definite *C. canorus*.

African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii

One pair heard calling in *Hagenia abyssinica* forest in Odo Bulu (99a), 4 March 2014. This record at 2700 m extends the known upper altitudinal limit of 2600 m.

Abyssinian Nightjar (Montane Nightjar) *Caprimulgus poliocephalus*

One bird heard calling in Demmero (99a), 1 November 2014.

Freckled Nightjar *Caprimulgus tristigma*

One bird heard calling in Sala (107a), 19 March 2014.

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus*

Seen daily in small groups above *Hyphaene* palms and riverine forest in Sala (107a), 10–21 March 2014.

Nyanza Swift *Apus niansae*

Several birds seen in the southern outskirts of Mekele Town (23c), 27 December 2012.

Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina*

Single birds seen in dense forest in Demmero, 25 October 2014 and in Odo Bulu, 1 March 2014 (both 99a).

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*

Single birds seen eight times in woodland and riverine forest in Sala (107a), 10–21 March 2014.

Blue-breasted Bee-eater *Merops variegatus (lafresnayii)*

Small groups seen on grassy slopes at 2250 m altitude along the Bale Escarpment in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Black Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus aterrimus*

Small groups seen in open woodland and along the Sala River (107a), 10–21 March 2014.

Silvery-cheeked Hornbill *Bycanistes brevis

Common in montane forest and at forest edge in Demmero (21 October–3 November 2014) and Odo Bulu (27 February–5 March 2014)(both 99a). The upper altitudinal limit was known to be 2430 m, but my records from Odo Bulu were at 2700 m.

Red-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus pusillus*

One bird seen in an old *Olea europaea* at 2100 m altitude next to the historical temple in Yeha (17c), 3 January 2013.

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus*

Frequently heard, but rarely seen at 2250 m altitude in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Black-billed Barbet *Lybius guifsobalito*

Recorded almost daily in riverine forest and woodland in Sala (107a), 10–21 March 2014.

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*

Three single birds seen in riverine forest in Sala (107a), 19 and 20 March 2014.

Scaly-throated Honeyguide *Indicator variegatus*

One bird seen in riverine forest in Sala (107a), 19 March 2014.

Grey Woodpecker (Grey-headed Woodpecker) *Dendropicos (goertae) spodocephalus*

Ash & Atkins (2009) treats African Grey Woodpecker *D. goertae* and Grey-headed Woodpecker *D. spodocephalus* as conspecific. The latter was seen twice at 2250 m altitude at forest edge in Demmero (99a), 24 and 29 October 2014.

Northern Puffback *Dryoscopus gambensis

Uncommon in forest and at forest edge in Demmero (21 October–3 November 2014) and Odo Bulu (27 February–5 March 2014) (both 99a). The upper altitudinal limit has been reported as 1900 m (once at 2576 m). Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire (2015) recently adjusted this to 2600 m, but my records from Odo Bulu are as high as 2700 m. I have also recorded this bird in Bihere Tsige (8°57'14''N, 38°45'12''E; 2200 m) on the southern outskirts of Addis Ababa in May 2007 and December 2010.

White-breasted Cuckooshrike *Coracina pectoralis*

Two males seen in *Terminalia/Combretum* woodland close to Sala River (107a), 11 and 17 March 2014.

Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike *Campephaga phoenicea

One male seen in riverine forest along the Sala River (107a), 17 March 2014. At 600 m altitude, this bird was below the known lower altitudinal limit of 750 m.

Abyssinian Oriole *Oriolus monacha* (endemic to Abyssinian highlands)

Common in forest and at forest edge in Demmero (21 October–3 November 2014) and Odo Bulu (27 February–5 March 2014) (both 99a).

Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus larvatus

Seen several times in Odo Bulu (99a), 27 February–5 March 2014). While expecting to see only Abyssinian Oriole *O. monacha* at this site, I was surprised to find birds in woodland and at forest edge at 2700m displaying white wing-panels. Both Ash & Atkins (2009) and Redman *et al.* (2011) have 1800m as the upper altitudinal limit for this species. Sinclair & Ryan (2010), however, report it to range up to 2300m elsewhere in East Africa. This leap in altitude in Odo Bulu could possibly be explained by the short distance to lower lying areas south of the Bale Escarpment.

African Paradise-flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis*

Common in forest and at forest edge in Demmero (21 October–3 November 2014) and Odo Bulu (27 February–5 March 2014) (both 99a). The white morph was particularly common in Odo Bulu.

Cape Crow *Corvus capensis*

Fairly common on agricultural land in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Northern Black Tit (White-shouldered Black Tit) *Parus (leucomelas) guineensis*

Ash & Atkins (2009) does not split *P. guineensis* and *P. leucomelas* (White-winged Black Tit). I saw *P. guineensis* twice in open woodland in Sala (107a), 14 and 18 March 2014.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*

Seen daily in small numbers in Sala (107a), 10–21 March 2014.

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula*

Seen daily in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Northern (Common) House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Seen daily in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis (Hirundo) abyssinica*

Small groups seen daily at 600 m in Sala (107a), 10–21 March 2014.

Boran Cisticola *Cisticola bodessa*

One bird seen and heard close to the “Amora Gedel” by Awasa Lake (83c), 7 May 2007.

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava*

Several birds seen in tall grassland and forest edge in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*

Common in Demmero (21 October–3 November 2014) and Odo Bulu (27 February–5 March 2014) (both 99a). The subspecies seen at both sites was *spurius*, displaying clear yellow vent, no white ear patch, and no scaling on breast.

Brown Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus umbrovirens*

Single birds seen on two occasions in forest in Demmero (99a), 1 and 2 November 2014.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Frequently seen and heard in forest and at forest edge in Odo Bulu (99a), 27 February–5 March 2014.

Green-backed Eremomela *Eremomela canescens*

Four birds seen close to Tis Isat Falls (39d), 7 October 2013.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Frequently seen in forest and forest edge in Odo Bulu (99a), 27 February–5 March 2014.

African Hill Babbler *Pseudoalcippe abyssinica*

Seen in forest in both Demmero (28 and 30 October 2014) and Odo Bulu (1 and 3 March 2014) (both 99a).

Brown Babbler *Turdoides plebejus*

Small, noisy groups seen or heard daily in riverine forest and dense bush at 600 m altitude in Sala (107a), 10–21 March 2014. This is below the lower altitudinal limit of 700 m given in Ash & Atkins (2009) and Redman *et al.* (2011), but Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire (2015) recently recorded the species at 400 m.

***Red-winged Starling** *Onychognathus morio*

Flocks of up to 50 birds frequently seen around cliffs and in fruiting trees in Demmero (21 October–3 November 2014) and Odo Bulu (27 February–5 March 2014) (both 99a). The known upper altitudinal limit for this species was c.2400 m, but my observations from Odo Bulu were at 2700 m.

Groundscraper Thrush *Psophocichla litsipsirupa*

Fairly common in grassland and around cultivation in Odo Bulu (99a), 27 February–5 March 2014.

African Thrush *Turdus pelios*

Single birds seen on several occasions in Sala (107a), 10–21 March 2014.

Olive Thrush (Mountain Thrush) *Turdus (olivaceus) olivaceus*

It is now thought that birds in Eastern Africa are Mountain Thrush *T. abyssinicus* (Redman *et al.* 2011, Sinclair & Ryan 2010), while *T. olivaceus* is restricted to Southern Africa. Ash & Atkins (2009) treats them as conspecific. Very common in forest, at forest edge and around cultivation in Demmero (21 October–3 November 2014) and Odo Bulu (27 February–5 March 2014) (both 99a).

Rüppell's Robin-chat *Cossypha semirufa*

Common in thickets and forest understorey in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher *Melaenornis chocolatinus* (endemic to Abyssinian highlands)

Several birds seen in Axum Town (16d), 31 December 2012. Common in woodland and at forest edge in Demmero (October/November 2014) and Odo Bulu (February/March 2014) (both 99a).

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Several single birds seen at forest edge in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

African Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta*

Seen daily at forest edge in Demmero (21 October–3 November 2014) and Odo Bulu (27 February–5 March 2014) (both 99a).

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis*

Pairs and single birds seen daily in Sala (107a), 10–21 March 2014.

Tacazze Sunbird *Nectarinia tacazze*

Common at forest edge and in wooded grassland in Demmero (21 October–3 November 2014) and Odo Bulu (27 February–5 March 2014) (both 99a).

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus*

Common at forest edge in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Baglafaecht Weaver *Ploceus baglafaecht*

Very common at forest edge in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Vitelline Masked Weaver *Ploceus vitellinus*

Surprisingly, Ash & Atkins (2009) does not have records of this species from Awasa (83c), even though it is evidently common, and the site is regularly visited by birders. My records are from 5 May 2007 and 27 December 2010.

Yellow-mantled Widowbird *Euplectes macrourus*

Three birds in breeding plumage seen in agricultural fields just south of Mekele Town (23c), 26 September 2013.

Yellow-bellied Waxbill *Estrilda (Coccopygia) quartinia*

Seen daily in damp grassland and in thickets in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura (Spermestes) cucullata

Small groups frequently seen in damp grassland in Sala (107a), 10–21 March 2014. My records at 600 m are below the known lower altitudinal limit of 750 m.

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*

A few breeding birds seen in damp grassland in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Single birds and pairs seen several times in Demmero (21 October–3 November 2014) and Odo Bulu (27 February–5 March 2014) (both 99a).

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*

Several single birds seen in grassland and along the Sala River (107a), 10–21 March 2014.

Yellow-crowned Canary *Serinus (flavivertex) canicollis*

Two single birds seen in Demmero (25 October 2014) and Odo Bulu (1 March 2014) (both 99a). Both birds were singing from canopy at forest edge, which is untypical behaviour for the species.

African Citril *Serinus citrinelloides

Common at forest edge in Demmero (21 October–3 November 2014) and Odo Bulu (27 February–5 March 2014) (both 99a). My Odo Bulu records were at 2700 m, higher than the known altitudinal limit of 2500 m.

Brown-rumped Seedeater *Serinus tristriatus*

Common at forest edge and along roads in Demmero (21 October–3 November 2014) and Odo Bulu (27 February–5 March 2014) (both 99a).

Streaky Seedeater *Serinus striolatus*

Common in grassland and at forest edge in Demmero (99a), 21 October–3 November 2014).

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Appendix 1: Site details

See Figure 1 for map with square numbers.

Square	Site name	Coordinates	Altitude (m)
16d	Axum Town	14°08'02''N, 38°43'20''E	2150
17c	Yeha	14°17'09''N, 39°01'08''E	2100
22c	Geech Plateau	13°13'41''N, 38°05'31''E	3400
23c	Mekele Town	13°28'14''N, 39°28'18''E	2200
29a	Gonder Town	12°37'11''N, 37°28'06''E	2300
39d	Tis Isat Falls	11°29'22''N, 37°35'21''E	1650
58b	Debre Libanos	9°44'03''N, 38°48'50''E	2500
60c	Bilen-Hertele	9°27'43''N, 40°18'34''E	750
68b	Wonchi Crater Lake	8°47'42''N, 37°54'00''E	2900
68b	Ghion Town	8°32'01''N, 37°58'54''E	2000
83b	Langano Lake	7°35'51''N, 38°41'36''E	1600
83c	Awasa Lake	7°02'23''N, 38°27'41''E	1700
99a	Odo Bulu	6°55'44''N, 40°09'58''E	2700
99a	Demmero	6°54'21''N, 40°18'24''E	2250
107a	Sala	5°58'52''N, 36°15'48''E	600
107c	Murle	5°09'47''N, 36°11'34''E	400