

Birdwatching in Eritrea January 2005

Trip Report by
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Eritrea

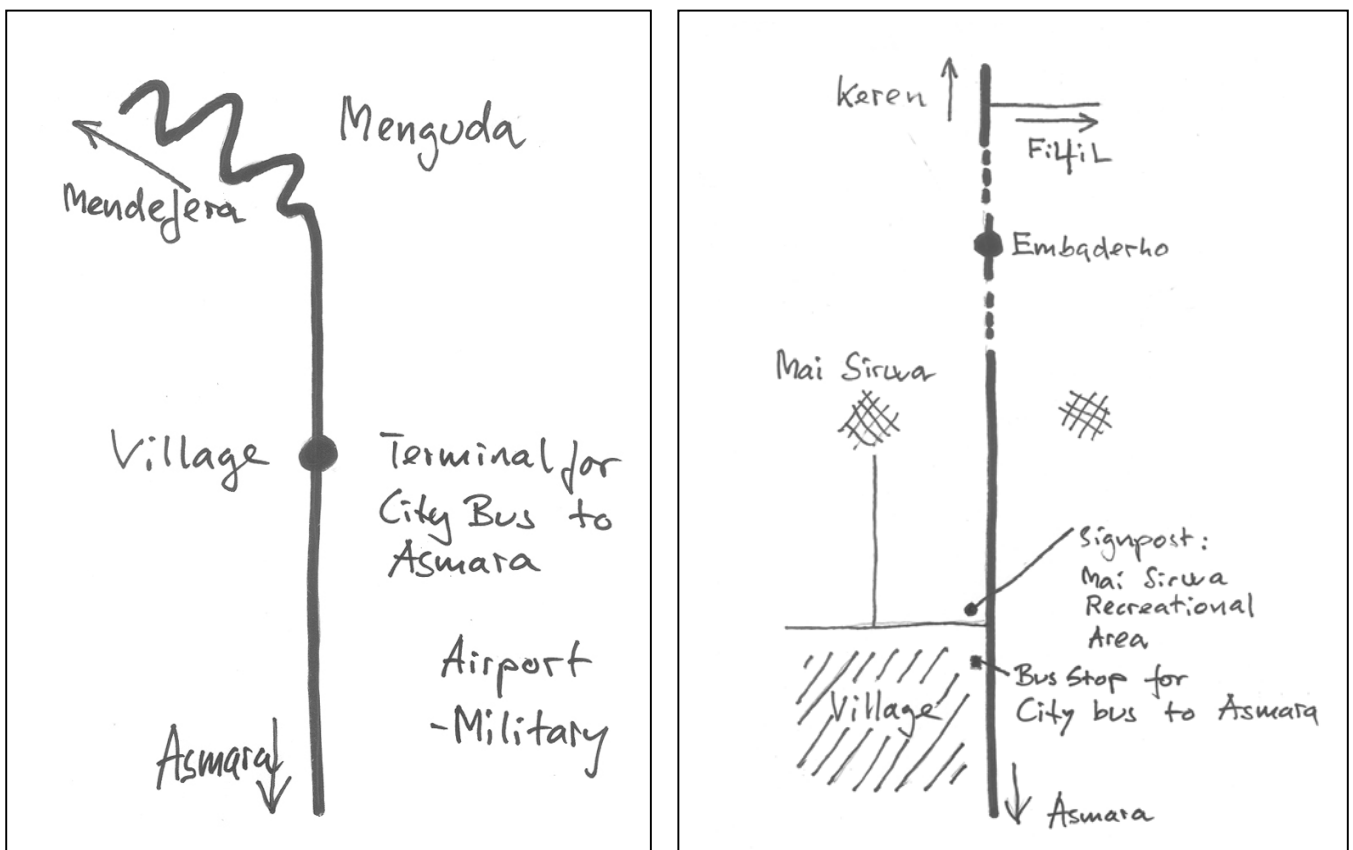
Eritrea is a safe country with generally friendly and helpful inhabitants. It is also relatively small with good roads, at least in part of the country. Thus, travelling is easy, and, although Eritrean wildlife does not compare with that of more famous East African destinations, a good variety of interesting birds may easily be seen in a short time.

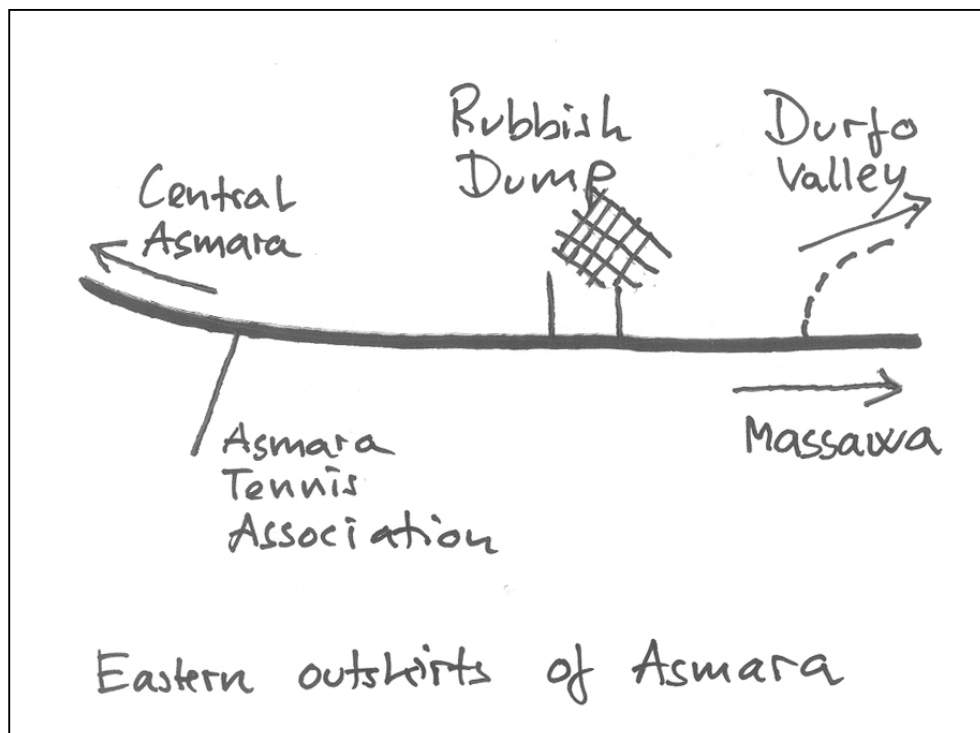
In the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, a cease-fire has been effective for several years. Eritrea does, however, officially consider itself a country at war and soldiers may be very sensitive to the use of cameras and even binoculars. We were contacted a couple of times by soldiers telling us to stop using our binoculars and were even detained once for about half an hour.

Eritrea's elevation spans from well below sea level in the Dankalia (Danakil) depression to the 3018 m of Eritrea's highest mountain, the Amba Soira. A considerable part of the country is more than 2000 m above sea level. A prominent topographic feature is the escarpment that runs more or less parallel to the Red Sea coast separating the central highland plateau from the narrow coastal plain. While the highland as well as the coastal plain are arid with sparse seasonal rainfall, much of the escarpment receives plenty of rain year round.

Asmara and surroundings

The pleasant, and architecturally unique, capital is situated at the eastern edge of the highland at 2300 m. The **city dump** and the **Durfo Valley** east of Asmara are within walking distance along the road towards Massawa. **Menguda**, on the road towards Mendefera, and **Mai Sirwa**, towards Keren, are easily reached by city bus or taxi from central Asmara.





Menguda is a relatively dry valley with some trees and bushes. The road between Asmara and Menguda passes through agricultural land, some of it irrigated. (In the species account below, “Menguda” even includes the road between Menguda and Asmara.) Using binoculars, not to speak of a camera, in the vicinity of the Military Airport should be avoided.

Mai Sirwa is a lake surrounded by a few trees, there is a restaurant at the lakeside. In this area there are one or two more lakes - which we did not visit – one is to the east of the main road to Keren. A few km further on towards Keren, at the village of **Embaderho**, there is still another lake visible from the main road – we did not stop to visit this lake either.

The **Top Five Hotel** in Asmara is good value and friendly, the restaurant there is excellent, probably the best in town. (The Ambasoira Hotel is good, but overpriced; the beautifully located Africa Pension is cheap and basic.)

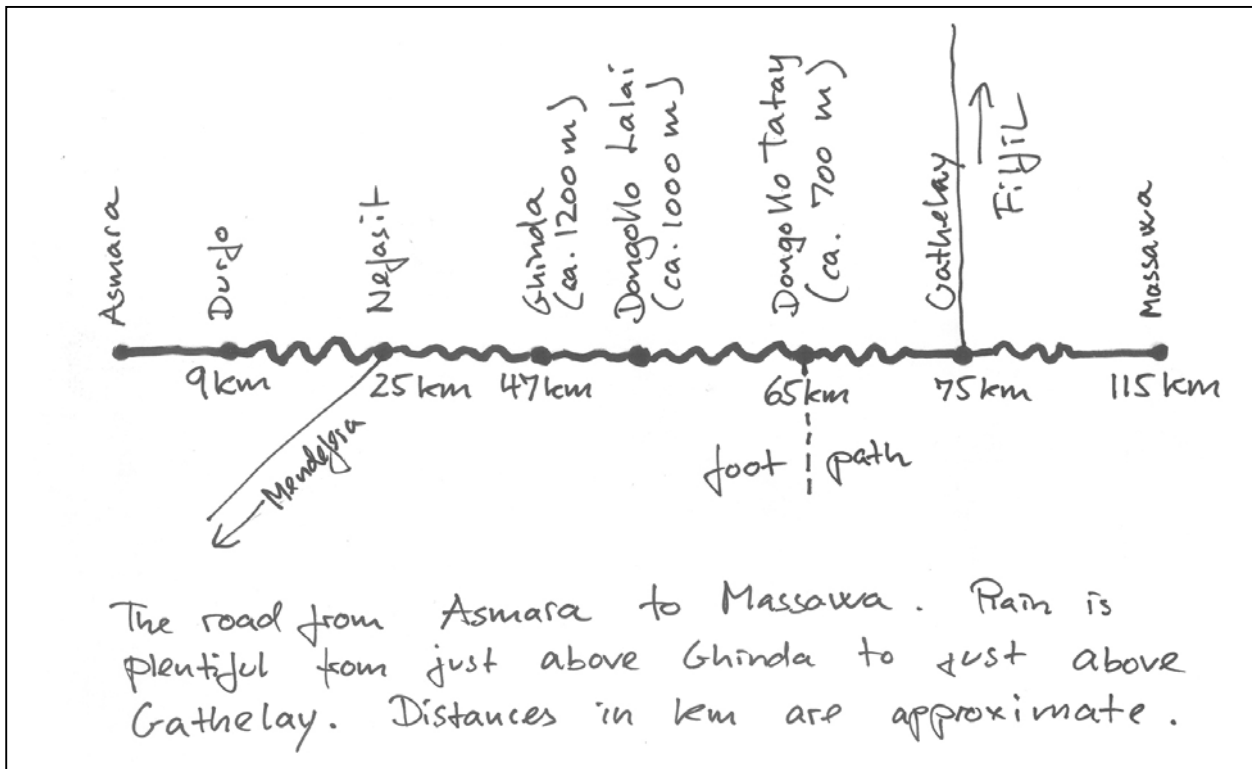
Habte, phone 125203, mobile 0711 6338, is a reliable taxi driver who speaks good English and knows Asmara very well.

Teddy c/o Aida Gift Shop opposite the Cathedral might be the person to contact for bike rental in Asmara.

The Escarpment

Filfil some 60 km N of Asmara lies in the narrow 'Green Belt' of Eritrea where rain is plentiful. It is a famous tourist destination and an excellent place for birdwatching. Unfortunately, permission to go to this part of the country could not be obtained by tourists at the time of our visit, and we were told that this had been the case for more than a year.

The obvious alternative approach is to birdwatch along **the road between Asmara and Massawa** where patches of forest are found in between lush green fields. There is good birdwatching all the



way **from Ghinda to Gathelay**, and this stretch of road may easily be explored by taxi either from Asmara or from Massawa. A foot-path that branches off to the south in the middle of the village of **Dongollo Tatay** is easily found and can be followed into a forested valley.

Massawa and Gurgusum

Massawa on the Red Sea coast is architecturally almost as interesting as the capital and the town is the point of departure for trips to the Dahlak Islands famous for their coral reefs. Unfortunately, such trips are extremely overpriced. Green Island, just outside of the harbour of Massawa, has modest snorkelling, but crab plovers roost here.

12 km N of Massawa at the Gurgusum Beach Resort, sea birds as well as waders are markedly more numerous than at Massawa. Several (remains of) gardens along the road between Gurgusum Beach Resort and the Hamasien Hotel also offer interesting bird-watching. See map on next page.

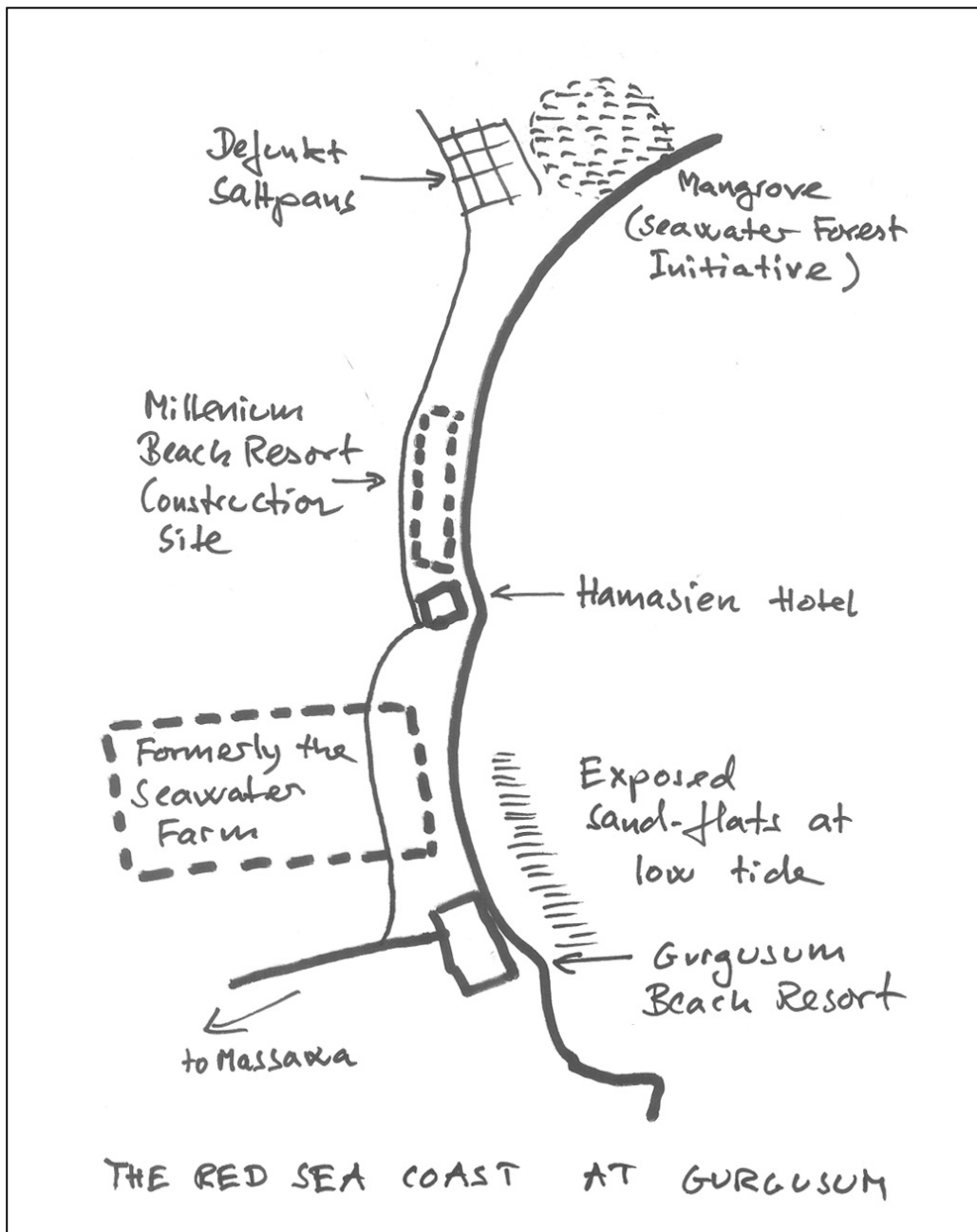
Alekha (the spelling of his name may not be entirely correct) is a reliable taxi driver who knows Massawa and the surrounding countryside very well, phone 540416, mobile 0712 3024.

Elabered Farm

The Elabered Estate is a large farm where a considerable part of the milk consumed in Asmara is produced. There is also a production of pigs, fruit and vegetables on the farm which has ca. 300 ha of arable land, the greater part of which is used for production of fodder (maize) for the livestock. Water for the more than 200 km of irrigation pipes, keeping a considerable part of the fields green year round, is taken from 7 dams. Situated in arid surroundings, the green environment of the

Elabered Estate naturally attracts great numbers of birds. The farm is located at an altitude of 1560 m ca. 70 km NW of Asmara on the main road to Keren.

There are bungalows for visitors and a basic restaurant inside the farm. Clean drinking water is served with the meals, but there is no shop nearby, so you should bring some extra bottles of drinking water for consumption during the rest of the day. Visitors should contact the Asmara office of the Elabered Estate to make arrangements a couple of days in advance. The office is in Marsatekly Ave. not far from the Top Five Hotel; walking from the Hotel towards Harnet Ave. you will see the office on a corner to your left ca. 100 m before Harnet Ave.



Literature

Birds of Eastern Africa / written and illustrated by Ber van Perlo. - London : HarperCollins, 1995.
Seems to be the most obvious choice of a field guide to Eritrean birds.

Birds of Africa : South of the Sahara / Ian Sinclair, Peter Ryan ; assisted by Patrice Christy and Phil Hockey ; illustrated by Norman Arlott, Peter Hayman, and Alan Harris. - Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2003. We did not use this field guide; it may be a good supplement to the above, but may also involve some complications since its taxonomy differs considerably from that of van Perlo.

Itinerary

08.01 Asmara
09.01 Asmara + Durfo
10.01 Asmara
11.01 Asmara-Elabered
12.01 Elabered
13.01 Elabered
14.01 Elabered-Asmara
15.01 Asmara
16.01 Asmara + Nefasit
17.01 Asmara-Gurgusum
18.01 Gurgusum
19.01 Gurgusum
20.01 Gurgusum-Massawa
21.01 Massawa + Ghinda
22.01 Massawa, Green Island
23.01 Massawa + Dongolo
24.01 Massawa-Asmara
25.01 Asmara + Menguda
26.01 Asmara-Keren
27.01 Keren-Elabered
28.01 Elabered
29.01 Elabered
30.01 Elabered-Asmara
31.01 Asmara + Mai Sirwa

My wife and I travelled by taxi and bus. Buses in Eritrea are often full and not easy to flag down along the road. Therefore, except for city buses, it is advisable to only go by bus if you are able to board at its point of departure.

Species Account

Sequence and nomenclature, as well as the numbering of species, follow van Perlo.

4.11 Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

2 Elabered 12.01, 1-2 Elabered 13.01, 3 Elabered 29.01

1 Mai Sirwa 31.01

4.12 Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

3 Elabered 11.01, 2 Elabered 13.01, 3 Elabered 28.01, 3 Elabered 29.01

4.13 Great Crested Grebe *P. cristatus*

3 Mai Sirwa 31.01

5.2 Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*

Commonly seen at Gurgusum and Massawa, e.g. 20-30 Gurgusum 18.01

5.5 Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

1 Gurgusum 19.01

6.5 Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens*

1 Elabered 11.01, 2 Elabered 12.01, 2-3 Elabered 13.01

Commonly seen at Gurgusum and Massawa, e.g. 40-50 Gurgusum 18.01

2 Gathelay 23.01

7.1 Western Reef-egret *Egretta gularis*

Ca. 10 Gurgusum 18.01

Also noticed at Massawa (Green Island) 22.01

7.5 Yellow-billed egret *E. intermedia*

1 Elabered 12.01-13.01

7.7 Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

30 Asmara 08.01

20-30 Elabered 11.01, 10 Elabered 13.01, ca. 10 Elabered 28.01, 13 Elabered 29.01

8 white egrets flying over the town of Massawa after dark 22.01 were believed to be late cattle egrets on their way to a night roost

7.8 Green-backed Heron *Butorides striatus*

2 Gurgusum 18.01, 1 Massawa 22.01

7.16 Black-crowned Night-heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

1 Elabered 13.01

8.2 Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

5 Elabered 11.01-13.01

2 Gurgusum 18.01

3 Elabered 28.01, 2 Elabered 29.01

2 Mai Sirwa 31.01

8.3 Black-headed Heron *A. melanocephala*

1 Elabered 11.01 and 13.01

1 Asmara 25.01

1 Elabered 28.01

8.4 Purple Heron *A. purpurea*

1 Massawa 20.01

8.7 Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii*

5 Gurgusum 17.01, ca. 10 Gurgusum 18.01

8.8 Woolly-necked Stork *C. episcopus*

1 Elabered 13.01 and 29.01

8.9 Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*

1 Elabered 13.01, 1 Mai Sirwa 31.01

9.6 Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopica*

1 Asmara 08.01

10 Gurgusum 17.01, 20-30 Gurgusum 18.01, + Massawa 20.01

4 Keren 27.01

9.9 Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*

3 Gurgusum 19.01

9.12 Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

5 Gurgusum 19.01, 3 Massawa (Green Island) 22.01

10.3 Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

2 en route Asmara-Elabered 11.01, 2 Elabered 11.01, 15 Elabered 12.01, 4 Elabered 13.01

1 Gathelay 23.01

2 Elabered 28.01, 7 Elabered 29.01

200 Mai Sirwa 31.01

12.1 Osprey *Pandion Haliaeetus*

1 Gurgusum 17.01-18.01, 1 Massawa (Green Island) 22.01

12.5 Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

2 Elabered 11.01, 1 Elabered 14.01, 1 Elabered 29.01

12.7 Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

100+ Asmara 08.01 (one carried nest material)

2 Nefasit 16.01, 1 Ghinda 21.01, small numbers noted here and there along the Asmara-Massawa road 17.01, 1 Gurgusum 18.01, + Massawa 20.01 and 22.01

ca. 5 Menguda 25.01, 1 Keren 27.01, + Mai Sirwa 31.01

13.1 African Fish-eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*

1 Elabered 11.01-13.01 and 28.01-29.01

14.2 Brown Snake-eagle *Circaetus cinereus*

1 Elabered 28.01

15.1 African White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*

1 imm between Ghinda and Dongollo 21.01, 1 Elabered 29.01

15.2 Rueppel's Griffon *G. ruepellii*

2 Asmara (the city dump) 09.01

16.2 Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

1 en route Asmara-Elabered 11.01, 2 MM Menguda 25.01, 1 M + 1 brown Mai Sirwa 31.01

16.4 Eurasian Marsh-harrier *C. aeruginosus*

1 Elabered 11.01-12.01 and 28.01- 29.01, 1 Mai Sirwa 31.01

16.5 Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar*

1 Elabered 12.01-13.01, 2 (1M + 1F) Elabered 14.01, 2 Keren 27.01

16.7 Eastern Chanting Goshawk *Melierax canorus*

2 ad Elabered 29.01

18.3 Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

1 Dongollo Tatay 24.01

18.5 Long-legged Buzzard *B. rufinus*

1 Asmara 08.01

18.7 Augur Buzzard *B. rufofuscus*

2 Durfo 09.01, 1 Elabered 14.01, 1 Nefasit 16.01

19.2 Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*

Ca. 10 Asmara (the city dump) 09.01

19.3 Tawny Eagle *A. rapax rapax*

Ca. 5 Asmara (the city dump) 09.01

19.3 Steppe Eagle *A. r. orientalis*

Ca. 75 Asmara (the city dump) 09.01

1 Elabered 13.01, 1 ad Elabered 27.01, 1 imm Elabered 29.01, 1 ad Elabered 30.01

2 Mai Sirwa 31.01

20.3 Verraux's Eagle *A. verreauxi*

4 Elabered 12.01, 1 en route Asmara-Nefasit 16.01

21.1 Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis*

1 Elabered 28.01

21.5 African Hawk-eagle *Hieraaetus dubius*

1 Elabered 12.01, 14.01 and 27.01

22.3 Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

1 Asmara 08.01-09.01

1 Elabered 11.01, 2 Elabered 13.01

1-2 Ghinda 21.01, 1 Massawa 23.01, 2 Menguda 25.01

1 Elabered 28.01-30.01

1 Mai Sirwa 31.01

23.1 Eleonora's Falcon *F. eleonora*

1 Elabered 11.01. This seems an unusual occurrence, but the slender long winged falcon seen in late afternoon in swift hunting flight a few meters above ground looked very much like a typical light phase Eleonora's falcon.

23.5 Lanner *F. biarmicus*

2-3 Nefasit 16.01, 1 Elabered 29.01

23.7 Peregrine *F. peregrinus*

1 Elabered 12.01

24.12 Clapperton's Francolin *Francolinus clappertoni*

Common at Elabered, e.g. 20+ on 13.01

24.18 Erckel's Francolin *F. erckelii*

5-10 Durfo 09.01 (more birds than the single loose flock seen may have been present as an unidentified francolin-like voice was heard quite frequently within a large area)

25.8 Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

2 Elabered 30.01

25.11 Stone Partridge *Ptilopachus petrosus*

8-10 Elabered 13.01

25.19 Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*

Common Elabered with 30 on 13.01 as well as 28.01 being the highest counts

26.12 Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

1 Elabered 29.01

28.4 Crab-Plower *Dromas ardeola*

40+ Gurgusum 17.01, 20-25 Gurgusum 18.01, 24 ad + 7 imm roosting at high tide Gurgusum 19.01, 180 (incl. no more than ca. 5 imm) roosted at least 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at rising tide on Green Island, Massawa 22.01

28.5 Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

5 Gurgusum 17.01, ca. 5 Gurgusum 18.01, 8 Massawa (Green island) 22.01

28.6 Common Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
12 Elabered 12.01

28.9 Senegal Thickknee *Burhinus senegalensis*
Regular at Elabered with 10 on 12.01 being the highest count

30.1 Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*
2 Elabered 12.01

30.2 Ringed Plover *C. hiaticula*
+ Gurgusum 17.01, 50+ Gurgusum 18.01, + Massawa (Green Island) 22.01

30.4 Three-Banded Plover *C. tricollaris*
2 Elabered 11.01, 10 Elabered 12.01, 5 Elabered 13.01
1 Gurgusum 17.01, 3-5 Gurgusum 18.01
4 Elabered 29.01
1 Mai Sirwa 31.01

30.6 Kentish Plover *C. alexandrinus*
+ Gurgusum 17.01, 50+ Gurgusum 18.01

30.9 Lesser Sandplover *C. mongolus*
+ Gurgusum 17.01, 5-10 Gurgusum 18.01

30.10 Greater Sandplover *C. leschenaultii*
10-15 Gurgusum 18.01

30.12 Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*
10+ Gurgusum 17.01, 5-10 Gurgusum 18.01, + Massawa (Green Island) 22.01

31.6 Spur-Winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus*
Regular at Elabered with 10-15 on 12.01 being the highest count
3 Gurgusum 18.01

31.9 Black-winged lapwing *V. melanopterus*
9 in fields along the road from Menguda to Asmara 25.01

32.1 Sanderling *Calidris alba*
20+ Gurgusum 18.01, + Massawa (Green Island) 22.01

32.4 Little Stint *C. minuta*
+ Gurgusum 17.01, 50+ Gurgusum 18.01, + Massawa (Green Island) 22.01

32.9 Curlew Sandpiper *C. ferruginea*
+ Gurgusum 17.01, 40+ Gurgusum 18.01, 50 Massawa (Green Island) 22.01

33.2 Bar-Tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*
10+ Gurgusum 17.01-18.01

33.4 Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*
+ Gurgusum 17.01, 5-10 Gurgusum 18.01, 1 Massawa (Green Island) 22.01

33.5 Whimbrel *N. phaeopus*
Ca. 5 Gurgusum 18.01

34.1 Redshank *Tringa totanus*
+ Gurgusum 17.01, 40+ Gurgusum 18.01, + Massawa (Green Island) 22.01

34.3 Marsh Sandpiper *T. stagnatilis*
+ Gurgusum 17.01, ca. 5 Gurgusum 18.01

34.4 Greenshank *T. nebularia*
3-5 Gurgusum 18.01

34.5 Green Sandpiper *T. ochropus*
2 Elabered 11.01, 5 Elabered 12.01, 4 Elabered 13.01
1 Gathelay 23.01
2 Elabered 28.01, 8-10 Elabered 29.01
1 Mai Sirwa 31.01

34.6 Wood Sandpiper *T. glareola*
3 Elabered 12.01

34.7 Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*
+ Gurgusum 17.01, 10-20 Gurgusum 18.01

34.8 Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*
30+ Gurgusum 17.01, 20+ Gurgusum 18.01, 20-30 Massawa (Green Island) 22.01

34.9 Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleuca*
1 Elabered 11.01, 5 Elabered 12.01, 2 Elabered 13.01
+ Gurgusum 17.01, 15+ Gurgusum 18.01, + Massawa (Green Island) 22.01, 1 Massawa 23.01
1 Elabered 29.01

35.1 Sooty Gull *Larus hemprichii*
+ Gurgusum 17.01, 20+ Gurgusum 18.01, + Massawa 20.01, + Massawa 23.01

35.2 White-eyed Gull *L. leucophthalmus*
Ca. 5 Gurgusum 17.01

35.8 Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus*
+ Gurgusum 17.01, ca. 20 Gurgusum 18.01

35.9 Slender-billed Gull *L. genei*
+ Gurgusum 17.01, 3 Gurgusum 18.01, 6 Gurgusum 19.01

35.10 Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. fuscus*
++ Gurgusum 18.01

35.11 Herring Gull *L. argentatus*
+ Gurgusum 17.01, + Gurgusum 18.01

37.1 Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*
3 Gurgusum 19.01

37.2 Swift Tern *S. bergii*
3+ Gurgusum 17.01, ca. 5 Gurgusum 18.01

37.3 Crested Tern *S. bengalensis*
+ Gurgusum 17.01, 20+ Gurgusum 18.01, + Massawa (Green Island) 22.01

37.7 Common Tern *S. hirundo*
+ Gurgusum 17.01

37.8 White-cheeked Tern *S. repressa*
50+ Gurgusum 19.01

37.13 Saunders's Tern *S. saundersi*
2+ Gurgusum 18.01, 5+ Gurgusum 19.01

37.14 Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*
2+ Gurgusum 17.01, 2 Gurgusum 19.01

38.7 Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea*
This very numerous bird was noted in and around Asmara (incl. Menguda and Mai Sirwa), Elabered and Keren, Nefasit and all the way between Ghinda and Massawa (incl. Gurgusum)

39.3 Bruce's Green Pigeon *Treron waalia*
Common at Elabered with 40-50 on 28.01 being the highest count

39.4 Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*
2 en route Asmara-Elabered 11.01
common at Elabered with 30 on 13.01 being the highest count
ca. 5 Gurgusum 18.01

39.7 Black-billed Wood Dove *Turtur abyssinicus*
Common at Elabered with 20 on 11.01 being the highest count
ca. 10 between Dongollo Tatay and Gathelay 23.01

39.11 Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquatus*
Noted in Asmara 09.01
Common at Elabered with ca. 15 on 27.01 being the only count and probably an underestimation

(39.16 Vinaceous Dove *S. vinacea*

1 was noted at Elabered 12.01, but this could be a mistake; doves are very numerous at Elabered and not too easily sorted out)

(39.17 Ring-necked Dove *S. capicola*

1 Elabered 13.01, 1 Gurgusum 18.01, 2+ Elabered 27.01

Looking back, I do not feel absolutely confident about these observation, cf. the note under 39.16)

39.19 Dusky Turtle-Dove *S. lugens*

2-3 Asmara 08.01, + Asmara 09.01

39.20 Laughing Dove *S. senegalensis*

Numerous; noted in Asmara, between Ghinda and Massawa, at Elabered and in Keren

40.11 Brown Parrot *Poicephalus meyeri*

Common at Elabered with 50+ 13.01 being the highest count

41.1 Eastern Grey Plantain-Eater *Crinifer zonurus*

Common at Elabered with ca. 20 on 28.01 being the highest count

41.12 White-cheeked Turaco *Turaco leucotis*

2 Elabered 14.01, 1 between Ghinda and Dongollo 21.01

42.3 Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius*

1 Gurgusum 18.01

42.11 White-browed Coucal *Centropus superciliosus*

1 Elabered 12.01, 1 Elabered 28.01

43.2 Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

A long winged owl seen entering one of the machinery sheds at Elabered shortly after dark on 29.01 was strongly believed to belong to this species

43.7 White-faced Scops-Owl *Otus leucotis*

1 Elabered 13.01, roosting; sitting on a branch a few meters above ground, next to the tree trunk, in late morning.

43.8 Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum*

1 Elabered 30.01 actively moving around in tree-top at 11 a.m.

A monotonous "pew – pew – pew ..." with one "pew" per second for periods of 10-20 seconds was heard late on 29.01. It did not appear to fit any of the voices described by Van Perlo and was tentatively classified as Scops-Owl sp. but could perhaps have been the Pearl-spotted Owlet.

45.6 African Palm-Swift *Cypsiurus parvus*

2 Elabered 11.01 and 13.01

5 Gurgusum 17.01, 10-20 Gurgusum 18.01

+ Elabered 28.01

45.7 Mottled Swift *Tachymarptis aequatorialis*
5 Asmara 08.01, 10 Elabered 11.01, 2 Menguda 25.01
3 Elabered 28.01, 1 Elabered 29.01

46.4 Nyanza Swift *Apus niansae*
+ Elabered 12.01, + Elabered 13.01

46.5 Eurasian Swift *A. apus*
+ Elabered 12.01 A few of each of the two similar swift species were identified, but their abundances were not assessed.

46.8 Little Swift *A. affinis*
5+ Asmara 08.01 (a small colony at the Cathedral)
10-15 Elabered 11.01-13.01, 1 Dongollo 21.01, ++ Elabered 28.01

47.1 Blue-naped Mousebird *Urocolius macrourus*
10 Elabered 12.01, ca. 10 Elabered 28.01, ca. 5 Elabered 29.01

47.3 Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus*
8 Asmara 08.01
5 Elabered 12.01, 10-15 Elabered 13.01
2 Nefasit 16.01, + between Ginda and Massawa 21.01 and 23.01
ca. 10 Elabered 27.01
ca. 10 Mai Sirwa 31.01

47.17 Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristata*
1 Elabered 11.01-13.01, 2 Elabered 14.01
1 Ghinda 21.01
1 Elabered 28.01

47.19 Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*
2 Elabered 29.01, 1 Elabered 30.01

48.5 Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus*
2 Asmara (the Massawa road) 10.01
5 Elabered 11.01, 10 Elabered 12.01, 2 Elabered 13.01
1-2 Nefasit 16.01, + between Ginda and Massawa 21.01
ca. 5 Menguda 25.01
+ Elabered 27.01-29.01
1 Mai Sirwa 31.01

48.14 Little Green Bee-eater *M. orientalis*
3 Gurgusum 17.01, ca. 40 Gurgusum 18.01, 4 Ghinda 21.01

49.1 Rufous-crowned Roller *Coracias naevia*
1 Elabered 12.01-13.01
1 between Ghinda and Massawa 21.01
1 Elabered 29.01

49.5 Abyssinian Roller *C. abyssinica*

2 Elabered 12.01, 3 Elabered 13.01, 1 Elabered 27.01, ca. 5 Elabered 28.01

49.10 Black-billed Wood-Hoopoe *Phoeniculus somaliensis*

9 Elabered 12.01, 4 Elabered 14.01 Of these, at least two birds had all red bills while the rest appeared to have all black bills.

49.16 Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

1 Asmara (eastern outskirts) 10.01

4 Elabered 14.01,

2 between Ghinda and Massawa 21.01, 3 between Dongollo Tatay and Gathelay 23.01

10-15 Elabered 28.01, 1 Elabered 29.01

The variation in numbers at Elabered could indicate migratory movements.

50.13 African Grey Hornbill *Tockus nasutus*

Common at Elabered with 30 on 11.01 being the highest count

ca. 10 Gathelay 21.01, ++ between Dongollo Tatay and Gathelay 23.01

50.17 Red-billed Hornbill *T. erythrorhynchus*

1 en route Asmara-Elabered 11.01

Common at Elabered with 30 on 13.01 being the highest count

+ between Dongollo Tatay and Gathelay 23.01

heard Keren 27.01

50.18 Hemprich's Hornbill *T. hemprichii*

2 Elabered 12.01 and 14.01, 2 Nefasit 16.01, 4 Keren 27.01

50.20 Abyssinian Ground-Hornbill *Bucorvus abyssinicus*

2 Mai Sirwa 31.01

51.7 Red-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus pusillus*

1 Elabered 28.01

51.16 Yellow-breasted Barbet *Thrachyphonus margaritatus*

1 Elabered 12.01, 2 Elabered 14.01

1-2 Nefasit 16.01, 2 Gathelay 21.01

1 Elabered 27.01, 2+ Elabered 29.01

2 Mai Sirwa 31.01

52.10 Black-billed Barbet *Lybius guifsobalito*

1 Elabered 11.01, 4 Elabered 12.01, 1 Elabered 13.01, 2+ Elabered 29.01

53.6 Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator*

1 Elabered 28.01

54.3 Nubian Woodpecker *Campethera nubica*

1 Elabered 28.01

56.17 Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

2 Gurgusum 17.01, 10+ Gurgusum 18.01, + Gathelay 21.01, + Menguda 25.01

57.3 African Singing Bushlark *Mirafra cantillans*

1 Gurgusum 19.01

58.2 Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo aethiopica*

1+ Elabered 13.01, 1 Elabered 14.01

58.5 Barn Swallow *H. rustica*

+ Elabered 11.01, + Elabered 13.01, ca. 20 Gurgusum 18.01

58.11 Red-rumped Swallow *H. durica*

5 Dongollo 21.01

59.3 Common Sand-Martin *Riparia riparia*

1 Gurgusum 18.01

59.5 Rock Martin *Hirundo fuligula*

2 Asmara 08.01, 1 Asmara 10.01,

2 Elabered 12.01-13.01

2 Nefasit 16.01

2 Elabered 29.01-30.01

59.10 Western House-Martin *Delichon urbica*

2 Dongollo 21.01

60.1 Richard's Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

1 Elabered 11.01-12.01, 5 Elabered 14.01

ca. 15 Menguda 25.01

2 Elabered 28.01, ca. 5 Elabered 29.01

2 Mai Sirwa 31.01

60.3 Red-throated Pipit *A. cervinus*

2+ Menguda 25.01 (The uncertainty about the number in this case was caused by soldiers keeping us from using our binoculars in the vicinity of the airport; there may well have been 10 or more birds present in fields along the Menguda road)

61.3 Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

2 Asmara 08.01, 1 Asmara (Dump) 09.01, 3 Asmara 10.01

3 Elabered 11.01, 1 Elabered 12.01-13.01

50+ Gurgusum 17.01, 200-300 Gurgusum 18.01

+ Massawa-Ghinda 21.01, + Gathelay-Dongollo Tatay 23.01

1 Menguda 25.01

ca. 5 Elabered 27.01, + Elabered 29.01

2 Mai Sirwa 31.01

61.5 Pied Wagtail *M. alba*

3 Asmara 08.01, 2 Asmara 09.01, 3 Asmara (Dump) 09.01, 1 Durfo 09.01, 10 Asmara 10.01

Regular Elabered with 15 on 12.01 being the highest count

10+ Nefasit 16.01, + Gurgusum 17.01-18.01, ++ Massawa-Ghinda 21.01, + Gathelay-Dongollo

Tatay 23.01

30-40 Menguda 25.01

+ Keren 26.01-27.01

62.11 Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*

2 Asmara 08.01 and 10.01

Common at Elabered with 50+ 11.01 and 13.01 being the highest counts

10+ Nefasit 16.01, + Gurgusum 18.01, ++ Massawa-Ghinda 21.01, + Gathelay-Dongollo Tatay

23.01

ca. 5 Menguda 25.01, + Keren 26.01-27.01, + Mai Sirwa 31.01

64.1 Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* / 64.2 Northern Wheatear *O. oenanthe*

1 Asmara 10.01, 1 Elabered 11.01 and 13.01, 1 Gurgusum 18.01, 1 Gathelay-Dongollo Tatay 23.01,

15-20 Menguda 25.01, 1 Elabered 29.01

64.2 Northern Wheatear *O. oenanthe*

1 M Elabered 11.01,

64.3 Black-eared Wheatear *O. hispanica* / 64.5 Pied Wheatear *O. pleschanka*

1 Asmara 08.01 and 10.01, 1 Elabered 11.01, 2 Elabered 12.01, 3 Elabered 13.01, + between

Massawa and Ghinda 21.01, 2 Menguda 25.01, 2 Elabered 27.01-29.01

64.9 Mourning Wheatear *O. lugens*

10-15 Durfo 09.01

64.13 White-fronted Black Chat *Pentholea albifrons*

1 Asmara 08.01, 1 Elabered 28.01

64.17 Mocking Cliff-chat *Myrmecocicla cinnamomeiventris*

1 M Durfo 09.01, 1 Elabered 13.01, 1 Keren 27.01, 3 Elabered 29.01

65.4 Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

1 M Asmara 08.01, 1 Asmara (Dump) 09.01, 2 Elabered 11.01 and 13.01, 1 Dongollo 21.01, ca. 5

Elabered 27.01, + Elabered 29.01

65.6 Little Rock-thrush *Monticola saxatilis*

2 Nefasit 16.01

65.8 Blue Rock-thrush *M. solitaria*

1 M Durfo 09.01, ca. 5 Nefasit 16.01, + Massawa-Ghinda 21.01

65.10 Familiar Chat *Cercomela familiaris*

1 Elabered 13.01, 2 Elabered 29.01

65.12 Blackstart *C. melanura*
1 Elabered 12.01 and 29.01

65.15 Eurasian Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*
1 Elabered 11.01, 2 Elabered 12.01, 5-10 Elabered 13.01
1 Nefasit 16.01, + Massawa-Ghinda 21.01, 1 Menguda 25.01
2 Elabered 27.01, + Elabered 28.01-29.01

65.21 Rufous Scrub-robin *Cercotrichas galactotes*
1-2 Durfo 09.01, 1 Dongollo 21.01

65.24 Black Scrub-robin *C. padobe*
1 Gurgusum 18.01, 2 Gathelay-Dongollo Tatay 23.01, 1 Elabered 27.01

67.1 African Thrush *Turdus pelios*
2 Elabered 11.01-12.01, 3 Elabered 13.01, 1 Elabered 27.01, 3 Elabered 28.01, 10-15 Elabered 29.01

67.2 Olive Thrush *T. olivaceus*
1 Asmara 08.01 and 10.01, + Dongollo-Ghinda 21.01

67.5 Song Thrush *T. philomelos*
2-3 Durfo 09.01, 1 Elabered 12.01, 1 Dongollo-Ghinda 21.01, 3 Elabered 27.01

68.1 Grasshopper-Warbler *Locustella naevia*
1 Dongollo 21.01

68.10 Clamorous Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus*
1 Gurgusum 18.01 This warbler, heard from the replanted mangrove N of Gurgusum, had a song very similar to that of Great Reed-Warbler, the bird differed, however, by choice of habitat and by its skulking behaviour.

69.8 Chiff-Chaff *Phylloscopus collybita*
2 Asmara 09.01, 2 Durfo 09.01, 2 Nefasit 16.01, + Massawa-Ghinda 21.01, ca. 5 Elabered 29.01, 1 Mai Sirwa 31.01

69.17 Menetrie's Warbler *Sylvia mystacea*
1 Nefasit 16.01, 1 Dongollo 21.01, 2 Dongollo Tatay-Gathelay 23.01
1 Elabered 30.01

69.20 Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca*
1 Gathelay 21.01

69.21 Common Whitethroat *S. communis*
1 Elabered 11.01, + Keren 27.01

69.24 Blackcap *S. atricapilla*
1 M + 1 F Durfo 09.01, 1 M Nefasit 16.01

71.12 Graceful Warbler *Prinia gracilis*

3 Gurgusum 18.01, 1 Massawa (Green Island) 22.01

71.13 Tawny-flanked Prinia *P. subflava*

2 Elabered 14.01 and 28.01, ca. 5 Elabered 29.01

72.23 Common Camaroptera *Camaroptera brachyura*

Regular at Elabered with 5-10 on 12.01 being the highest count

1 Nefasit 16.01, + Keren 27.01

73.5 Northern Sylvieta *Sylvieta brachyura*

1 Elabered 11.01, 1 Nefasit 16.01, 3-4 Elabered 29.01

73.12 Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis*

1 Nefasit 16.01, 1 Elabered 29.01

75.12 Black-headed Batis *Batis minor*

2 Elabered 11.01, 5 Elabered 13.01

1 M + 1 F Nefasit 16.01, 3 Dongollo Tatay-Gathelay 23.01

1 Elabered 29.01

76.2 African Paradise-Monarch *Terpsiphone viridis*

1 F Elabered 12.01-13.01

1 M sitting on its suspended nest Dongollo Tatay 21.01

1 M Elabered 29.01

77.17 White-rumped Babbler *Turdoides leucopygius*

Ca. 25 Ghinda-Dongollo 21.01

78.17 Montane Whiteeye *Zosterops poliogaster*

1 Asmara 09.01

5 Elabered 11.01, 10 Elabered 12.01, 2 Elabered 13.01

10+ Nefasit 16.01

1 Elabered 27.01

79.1 Variable Sunbird *Nectarinia venusta*

2 M Asmara 08.01, + Durfo 09.01

Common at Elabered with 20 on 12.01-13.01 being the highest counts

10+ Nefasit 16.01, + Gurgusum 18.01, + Massawa-Ghinda 21.01, + Menguda 25.01, + Keren 26.01,

3 Mai Sirwa 31.01

79.5 Shining Sunbird *N. habessinica*

An immature male and three females observed in the garden of the Hamasien Hotel, Gurgusum

19.01. Male dark grey with black tail, black legs, almost black bill; malar stripe and short eyebrow

lighter grey; dark metallic gloss on chin and central part of neck and upper breast. Females all grey,

not much lighter than male. Size and structure like Marico Sunbird.

80.13 Beautiful Sunbird *N. pulchella*
1 M Elabered 13.01

80.19 Marico Sunbird *N. mariquensis*
7 Elabered 12.01, 10 Elabered 13.01, ca. 5 Elabered 29.01

81.2 Tacazze Sunbird *N. tacazze*
1 Asmara 15.01, 2 Mai Sirwa 31.01

82.18 Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegala*
1 Elabered 11.01-12.01, 5 Elabered 13.01
1 Nefasit 16.01, 1 Dongollo Tatay-Gathelay 23.01, ca. 5 Menguda 25.01
ca. 10 Elabered 28.01- 29.01

83.16 Tropical Boubou *Laniarius ferrugineus*
1 Elabered 11.01, 3 Elabered 13.01
3 Nefasit 16.01, 5 Ghinda-Dongollo 21.01, + Dongollo Tatay-Gathelay 23.01, 2 Menguda 25.01
3 Elabered 27.01, + Elabered 28.01

84.2 Red-tailed Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*
1 Elabered 11.01 and 13.01
1 Dongollo 21.01, 5-10 Dongollo Tatay-Gathelay 23.01, 1 Menguda 25.01
1 Elabered 27.01-28.01

84.3 Nubian Shrike *L. nubicus*
3 Elabered 12.01, 4 Elabered 13.01, 1 Gathelay 23.01, 1 Elabered 27.01, + Elabered 28.01

84.16 Lesser Grey Shrike *L. minor*
1 Gurgusum 19.01

84.17 Common Fiscal *L. collaris*
1 Asmara 08.01 and 10.01, 3 Elabered 11.01, 1 Nefasit 16.01
ca. 10 Menguda 25.01, + Elabered 27.01-29.01, 2 Mai Sirwa 31.01

85.12 Pied Crow *Corvus albus*
50+ Asmara 08.01, 1 Elabered 14.01, 2 Nefasit 16.01, + Mai Sirwa 31.01

85.13 House Crow *C. splendens*
+ Gurgusum 17.01, ca. 50 Gurgusum 18.01, + Massawa 20.01

85.16 Fan-tailed Raven *C. rhipidurus*
50+ Asmara 08.01, 50+ Asmara (Dump) 09.01, 50+ Durfo 09.01, 2 Elabered 12.01, 1 Elabered
14.01, ca. 5 Menguda 25.01, 2 Keren 27.01, 2 Elabered 29.01

85.17 African Rook *C. capensis*
3 Asmara 08.01, 2 Mai Sirwa 31.01

86.6 Red-winged Starling *Onychognatus morio*
20-30 Asmara 08.01, 50+ Elabered 11.01 and 13.01, + Elabered 27.01

86.11 White-billed Starling *O. albirostris*
Ca. 50 Durfo 09.01

86.14 Greater Blue-eared Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis chalybeus*
Abundant at Elabered with 100+ noted 11.01
+ Dongollo Tatay-Gathelay 23.01

86.15 Lesser Blue-eared Glossy Starling *L. chloropterus*
Ca. 50 Keren 27.01

87.1 African Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*
Common at Elabered with 50+ noted on 13.01
1 Dongollo Tatay-Gathelay 23.01

87.4 Red-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhynchus*
2 Dongollo Tatay-Gathelay 21.01 on a camel's leg, 1 Elabered 29.01 with cattle

87.8 Superb Starling *Spreo superbus*
5 Elabered 12.01, 10 Elabered 14.01, 3 Gathelay-Massawa 17.01, 10+ Gathelay 21.01, + Dongollo
Tatay-Gathelay 23.01, ca. 10 Elabered 28.01

87.18 Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea*
30 Gathelay 21.01, + Dongollo Tatay-Gathelay 23.01

88.1 Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus*
10+ Asmara 08.01, + Asmara 10.01,
Common at Elabered, 20 on 12.01 being the highest count
+ Menguda 25.01

88.2 House Sparrow *P. domesticus*
1 M + 2 F Asmara 08.01, 1 M + 1 F Asmara 10.01, 10+ Gurgusum 18.01, + Massawa 23.01, +
Keren 27.01, + Elabered 27.01-29.01

88.13 Speckle-fronted Weaver *Sporopipes frontalis*
15-20 Menguda 25.01, ca. 5 Keren 27.01

88.15 Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver *Plocepasser superciliosus*
2 Elabered 12.01

88.20 White-billed Buffalo-Weaver *Bubalornis albirostris*
2 Gathelay 21.01

89.20 Rueppel's Weaver *Ploceus galbula*
Common at Elabered with 5 on 12.01-13.01 no doubt being an underestimation
10+ Nefasit 16.01, 1 M Gurgusum 19.01, + Massawa 20.01
Especially numerous Massawa-Ghinda 21.01 and Dongollo Tatay-Gathelay 23.01

- 90.9 Baglafaecht Weaver *P. baglafaecht*
1+ Asmara 08.01-09.01, 3 Asmara 10.01, 2 F Menguda 25.01, 2 Elabered 28.01
- 91.17 Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*
Ca. 200 Elabered 12.01, + Elabered 13.01, + Nefasit 16.01, + Ghinda 21.01, + Elabered 27.01
- 93.5 Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta rufopicta*
5-10 Asmara 08.01, 5 Asmara 09.01
Abundant at Elabered with 50+ on 12.01 being the highest count
+ Keren 27.01
- 93.15 Village Indigobird *Vidua chalybeata*
10+ Asmara 08.01, 5 Elabered 13.01
- 94.2 Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus bengalus*
10-15 Asmara 08.01, 5 Asmara 10.01
Abundant at Elabered with 50+ on 11.01-12.01 being the highest counts
+ Nefasit 16.01, + Massawa-Ghinda 21.01, + Keren 27.01
- 94.6 Crimson-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda rhodopyga*
1 Elabered 14.01, 2 Ghinda 21.01, ca. 100 Dongollo Tatay-Gathelay 23.01
- 94.13 Yellow-bellied Waxbill *E. melanotis*
10 Durfo 09.01
- 95.8 African Silverbill *Lonchura cantans*
3 Asmara (Villa Roma) 10.01, 2 Gurgusum 18.01, 1 Elabered 29.01
- 95.10 Cut-throat *Amadina fasciata*
25-30 Menguda 25.01
- 95.12 Cinnamon-breasted Rock-Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi*
1 Elabered 28.01, 2-3 Elabered 29.01
- 95.14 House Bunting *E. striolata*
3 Mai Sirwa 31.01
- 96.7 White-throated Serin *Serinus xanthopygius*
1 Dongollo 21.01 - singing
- 96.18 Brown-rumped Serin *S. tristriatus*
1 Nefasit 16.01
- 96.21 Streaky Serin *S. striolatus*
10+ Asmara 08.01, ++ Asmara 10.01, 5 Nefasit 16.01, ca. 5 Menguda 25.01