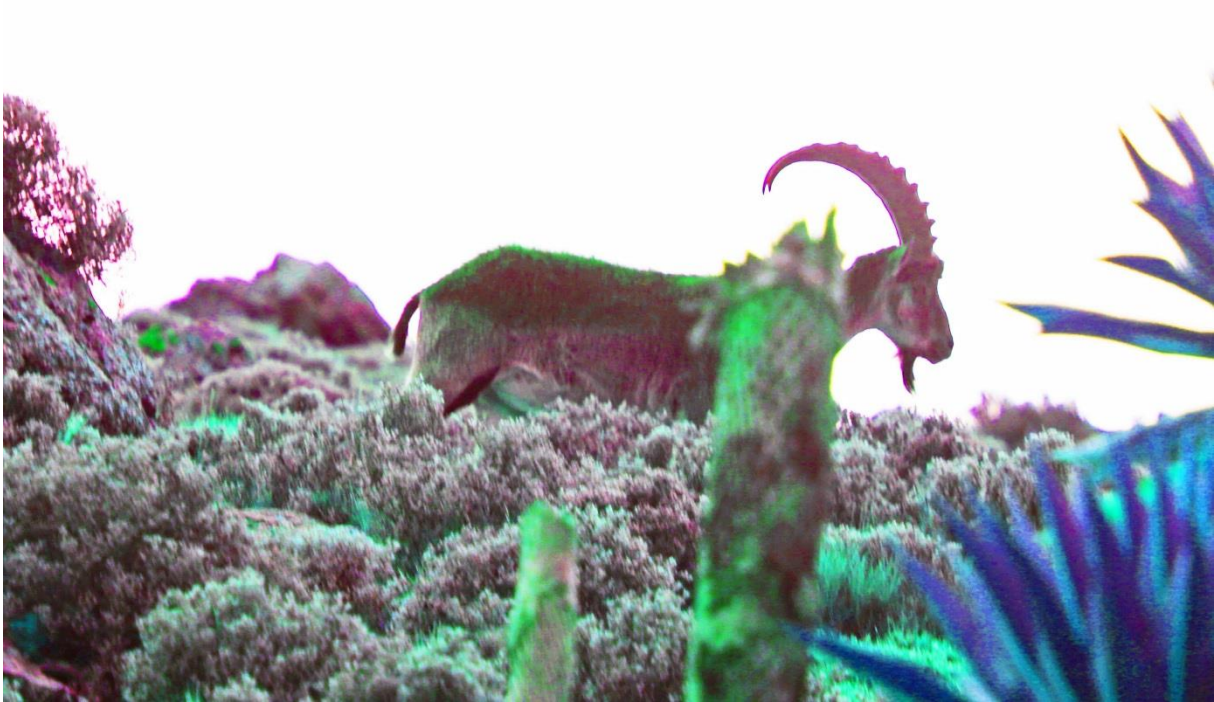


ETHIOPIA Somali- and Gondar Regions

Nov13th - Nov27th 2018

Stefan Lithner



Walia Ibex

Photo Stefan © Lithner

This trip consisted of two legs; Somali Region, with prime target Dibatag, and Gondar Region with prime target Walia Ibex.

The trip also focused on a few “sub-target”-species of mammals and a few target species of birds.

Trip conductor Somali Region: Håkan Pohlstrand; main tour leader, guide and driver (Hakan), in corporation with Brook Kassa, Magic Land Tours Addis Abbaba.

For Gondar Region; Jemal Hussein Siemien Park Tours, Gondar.

For Somali Region: Local Wildlife Expert: Hassan Yusuf, Jijiga.

Participants Somali Region: Andrew Holman USA (AH), Stefan Lithner Sweden (SLi) David Mallon UK (DM), Tommy Mårtensson Sweden (TM), Ingrid Persson Sweden (IP), Lennart Persson Sweden (LP), Ludwig Siege Germany (LS).

Participants Gondar Region: Stefan Lithner Sweden (SLi), Ingrid Persson Sweden (IP), Lennart Persson Sweden (LP).

ITINERARY

In the early morning of November 13th we landed on Addis Abbeba International Airport. We were booked on Ghion Hotel for the first day and first night.

Since we arrived in Addis Abbeba and stayed at Ghion Hotel, situated next to a small park; Ghion Park, it offered some opportunity to get acquainted with the Ethiopian birdlife here. In the evening Stefan spent some time recording bats with his ultrasound bat-detector.

Nov 14th

We took an early flight to Jijiga, where Brook and his team with our four-wheel drives were waiting for us at the airport. First stop we made in Jijiga at the Culture and Tourism Bureau as a courtesy to the organization, since we were only the second group of eco-tourists ever to have obtained permission to visit the area.

In the afternoon we did some birding in the outskirts of Jijiga. About one hour from Jijiga we stopped at a site where Archer's and Somali Sort-toed larks were reported (Spottiswode 2011). We found no Archer's Lark here, but maybe 150 Somali short-toed Larks, two Blanford's Lark and a group of Somali Courser, Lesser Kestrel and Chanting Goshawks.

Nov 15th

In the morning of Nov 15th we started driving south-east on tarmac Road A10. From the road we saw Kori-, Northern White-bellied- and Chestnut-crested Bustards, Abdim- and White Storks. After about another hour on tarmac road we turned off on a sand road towards Gurdumi. This road we followed for 240 km. Our first stop we made for breakfast. Here we encountered our first Harar Dik-diks, which then proved to be fairly common along this road. At our lunch-stop Hakan started a Slender Mongoose and our local wildlife expert Hasan Yusuf showed me tracks of a Caracal.



Road from tarmac road to Gurdumi about 240 km



Little Brown Bustard

Photos Stefan © Lithner

We birded along the road all the way to a sight about six kilometres beyond the town of Gurdumi. On the way we saw our first Rufous Elephant-Shrew. From one of the vehicles our first Little Brown Bustard was seen next to the road.

In Gurdumi we picked up a second tracker to facilitate locating Dibatag and also interpreter between the two languages up here. Just beyond the village Hakan had chosen a sight for camping during his first visit to the area, under a magnificent Acacia. We referred to this campsite as Camp Gurdumi.



Lunch at Camp Gurdumi

Photo Stefan © Lithner

We arrived about two hours before sunset. After a short break we mounted our vehicles and went out on some of the sand roads starting our search for Dibatag.

Brook and his team mounted our “Ten-thousand Star Hotel”, or rather “Ten-thousand Star Hotent”, equipped with only a mosquito net covering sides and roof, thus allowing free communication for a soft wind and sweet sounds at night. Most obvious were Little Owl at dusk and dawn, African Scops Owl and Jackals*(see below) at night. Hakan took a walk after dark to a shallow water about 200 metres away from our camp and found two Donaldson-Smiths Nightjars on the ground.

Nov 16th

We got up about two hours before sunrise, had breakfast and moved out of the camp by car. We stopped after about 45 minutes, at a site where Dibatags had previously been seen. Hassan and a local tracker were accompanying us.

Along our way out we saw more Rufous Elephant-shrews, Unstriped Ground-squirrels, Günther’s Dik-diks but also some *Canis** (see below). These *Canis* up here looked to have a rather solid shoulder-part, head and at least front legs, which made them look like wolves rather than jackals. On the other hand the *Canis* we heard at night reverred rather pitiful and did not remind us of a wolf. We treated this taxon as African Golden Wolf.



Dibatag track

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Gerenuk track

Photo Stefan © Lithner

The Dibatag is slightly smaller than the Gerenuk. Its tracks are rather similar, but tracks of Gerenuk have a slightly convex outlining near the tip of the toes, while the tracks of the Dibatag has a straight outline. The Dibatag also usually sticks its toe-tips a little bit deeper into the ground, and often leaves some grains of gravel or sand in front of the footprint.



Speeke's Pectinator

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Even if the beauty of sunrise in the Acacia-savanna in the Somali Region is hard to top, we were slightly disappointed not to have met any Dibatag this morning. We visited a stone pile where both Speeke's Pectinator and the elephant-shrew were located during Hakans first trip to the area. The pectinator was cooperative, but the elephant-shrew was not spotted here.

We followed some Dibatag tracks. We saw some Gerenuks and birds characteristic for this area, like Little Brown Bustard, Northern Red-billed- and Yellow-billed Hornbills, Somali Bee-eater, Somali Fiscal, Philippa's Crombec, Pygmy Batis.



Somali Fiscal

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Pygmy Batis

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Shortly before noon we returned to Gurdumi Camp where the Support-team had prepared lunch for us, a lovely one. The team served lovely meals at practically every meal.

The temperature had passed 30°. We planned our next effort to see the Dibatag to start at 15:30. Some participants spent their leisure time relaxing in their tents, while others walked around the camp looking for more birds. Around the magnificent acacia in centre of our camp there were White-crowned-, Superb- and Golden-breasted Starlings, Nubian Woodpecker, Somali Bunting, Somali Sparrow, Red-billed Buffalo -weaver, Dwarf Raven.



Northern Red-billed Hornbill

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Nubian Woodpecker

Photo Stefan © Lithner

At 15:30 we left in search of Dibatag and Silver Dik-dik. The latter slightly more choosy of its habitat. We split up in two groups. One of the groups got a quick but excellent view of Silver Dik-dik but the Dibatag remained unseen.

During tracking HY picked up a call of an Aardwolf, which we all were able to hear.

Laughing Spotted Hyena and Jackals* were heard during the night. In the morning the staff told us one of the members had seen an Aardwolf crossing our campsite. At lunch the we

were told that the driver of the bunch, Achegrew had seen a Caracal crossing the sand road before sunrise.

After supper, Ludwig, David and Stefan walked to the shallow water behind the camp and found a Nightjar, retrospectively identified as a Nubian ,heard some lapwings and saw a smaller unidentified mammal.



White-crowned Starling

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Somali Bunting

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Nov 17th

We left Camp Gurdumi before sunrise and selected new spots for search of the Dibatag. Our “temporary scout” made his way up in an Acacia tree and saw three Dibatags from there. We searched for them but did not find them.

After that we returned to look for the pectinator again. Here we spotted a Donaldson Smith’s Nightjar on the ground. We walked slowly closer until it was startled less than three metres from us. It landed after about another three metres but eventually took off and disappeared in the semi-dense thorny vegetation.



Donaldson-Smith’s Nightjar

Photo Ludwig Siege



Nubian Nightjar

Photo Stefan © Lithner

After lunch, rather shortly before sunset we did better with the Dibatag. Again we were split in two groups. One group got really good, but not very long views of the Dibatags, while only one member of the second group caught sight of one. Brook, waiting at his vehicle also saw some crossing the road.



Dibatag

Photo Ludwig Siege

Nov 18th

Since not all participants had seen Dibatag and Silver Dik-dik we went for those two species again. This time we were more successful with the Dik-dik. Only the moment's "temporary scout" saw dibatags from an Acacia, but Silver Dik-diks were seen again.

We then went to a probably permanent waterhole about 1½ kilometres west of the camp, which we called Gurdumi Waterhole. Here we found a number of Somali Terrapins* (see below) in the water and shells of a huge Leopard Tortoise* (See below). Since the waterhole was frequented by flocks of goats, sheep and camels (Dromedars), not a lot of birds were there. We however saw a nice flock of Vulturine Guinea fowl, some Black-fronted Sandgrouse, Wood Sandpipers, a Greenshank and a Grey Wagtail.

At lunch we discussed our chances of seeing Desert Warthog. Since Stefan was the most anxious, Hakan suggested Stefan should take a ride back to Gurdumi Waterhole about two hours before sunset with a chair, walk down, look up a natural hide or cover, like bushes or trees, and sit down, and wait. So he did. He found some bushes about 200 metres from the present water-line, with short vegetation between him and the waterline, from where he had a good view over the waterhole and higher vegetation's edges.



Vulturine Guineafowl

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Black-faced Sand-grouse

Photo Stefan © Lithner

While things started to settle down two shepherds with their herd of Black-headed (?) Sheep and goats passed Stefan. They greeted Stefan probably in Af-Soomaali. Stefan recognized the greeting and replied with the only phrase he knew. The shepherds continued in their language like they thought Stefan understood. Stefan replied in Swedish like he expected the shepherds knew Swedish. The two shepherds asked: “Svenska (- which means “Swedish”, in English)...?” When he confirmed they all had a good laugh and shook hands. Then the shepherds continued with their herd.



Domestic Black-headed (?) Sheep

Photo Stefan © Lithner

After about an hour the activities among local people and their cattle had ceased. Shortly thereafter four Greater Flamingos and a Black Stork landed in the water. Green Sandpiper and White Wagtail were also added to our trip list. An African Golden Wolf * and another huge Leopard Tortoise* sneaked by. Stefan caught up with the tortoise and made a brief estimation of its length and weight* (see below).

Shortly before dark four Desert Warthogs and a Slender Mongoose appeared. Some Günther's Dik-dik were present. At some distance an ungulate which was not expected to occur here showed up. It was photographed (at distant) and later by Hakan and LS suggested to be a Bush Duiker.*(see below)



Bush Duiker (?)*

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Nov 19th

Before rise, a Spotted Hyena was heard laughing. Some Jackals* were also heard. Several White-tailed Mongoose were seen in the outskirts of our camp (DM).

This morning we made a last effort for those who had not seen the Dibatag. Once again they were seen only by our “temporary scout” but did not become visible for everyone. More Günther's Dik-dik, African Golden Wolves*, Abyssinian Hares were seen.

After lunch we left Gurdumi Camp and headed towards Harar. Passing the Gurdumi Waterhole we found two juvenile African Spoonbills.



Greater Flamingo

Photo Stefan © Lithner



African Spoonbill

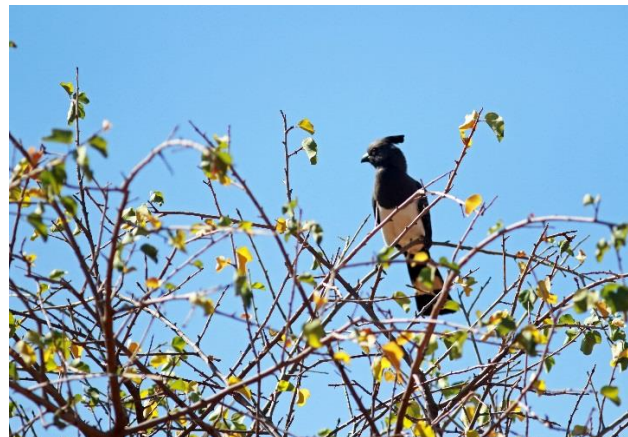
Photo Stefan © Lithner

Along the road we found a Spotted Sand Snake sunbathing on a termite mound, some Unstriped Ground-squirrels and Harar- and Günther’s Dik-diks. Half way between Gurdumi and Harar we stopped for the night. After supper Ludwig, David and Stefan went spotlighting around the camp without finding anything.



Pygmy Falcon

Photo Stefan © Lithner



White-bellied Go-away Bird

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Nov 20th

Stefan woke up at 01:30. Between then and 01:50 he heard Somali Galagos calling in three directions.

In the morning we birded after breakfast until shortly before 09:00, walking the habitat around the campsite. Since the habitat is rather similar to that around Gurdumi Camp, the species of birds were the same, but a few were added to our trip-list.

Here we also encountered our fourth species of Dik-dik. It looked to match Salt’s Dik-dik, but also Phillip’s Dik-dik. We decided to call these as well as future Dik-diks looking like this “Salt’s Dik-dik.”



Günther's Dik-dik

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Silver Dik-dik

Photo Hassan Yussuf

We drove through Daketa Valley (Valley of the Rocks) where we stopped to look at some of the extraordinary rock-formations, and also picked up a family of Hamadryas Baboon and two Rock Hyraxes.

In Harar we checked in at a hotel. For the afternoon Hakan had arranged a local guide to show some of the old Harar for interested participants.

After supper we pulled out at 19:50 to go to the feeding place where Mr Abatjesus had habituated Spotted Hyenas to come and grab a piece of meat nearly from this hand. He whistled and a number of hyenas came out of nowhere. During feeding we counted over 15 Spotted Hyenas.



Right: *Crocota crocuta*. centre: *Homo sapiens* (pale morph), left: *Homo sapiens* (dark morph)

Photo Håkan Pohlstrand

Nov 21st

We continued towards Aledede Plains. At Lonekoko we stopped and searched for the Maroon-crested (Donaldson's-) Turaco and found it after about 20 minutes of searching. Here was also a pair of Agur Buzzards and an Eastern Black-headed Oriole.

We reached the Aledede Plains and National Park in the afternoon, and after some courtesy-drinking we picked up park-personnel to accompany us.

Here Arabian- and Hartlaub's Bustards, Somali Ostrich, Secretary Bird, Salt's Dik-dik, Gerenuk, Sommerings Gazelle, Beisa Oryx were rather easy to see. Common Warthog was also present but not quite as easy to see. At dusk, just before it turned dark we were driving in the national Park. One of the cars saw a Striped Hyena.



Secretary Bird

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Hartlaub's Bustard

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Nov 22nd

We got up about two hours before sunrise, so we could start driving at crack of dawn. During sunrise and early sunshine we saw four species of Sand-grouse (Chestnut-bellied-, Four-banded-, Black-faced- and Spotted-), three species of Bustards, Three-banded- and Temminck's Courser and Spotted Thick-knee. An effort to estimate the number of Sommering's Gazelle landed between 140 and 180, and Beisa Oryx about 300 plus more than 30. Gerenuks were seen several times, An Aardwolf was started, seen running and diving into a den's opening. Abyssinian Hares and Black-backed Jackals were also present.



Beisa Oryx

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Sommering's Gazelle

Photo Stefan © Lithner

During lunch-brake some birds were picked up in the clump of trees and bushes next to the campsite; Black Scrub-robin (LS), Grey Wren-warbler, Northern Crombec, Eastern Paradise

Wydah. A yellow-winged Bat was also started here (DM).

Hakan also found a skin from a two metres long snake about 25 metres from our tents, probably a Spitting Cobra.



Green Wood-hoopoe

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Superb Starling

Photo Stefan © Lithner

In the afternoon we again drove across the plains. Several species we had not previously seen were added; African White-backed Vulture, Pallid Harrier, Northern Carmine Bee-eater and a little group of six Grevy's Zebra, including a fowl.

At sunset we returned to the site where the Striped Hyena was seen previous evening, but failed to find it again.

At shower-time a snake was found curled up at the stem of a tree only three metres behind our "socializing-table.". It was retrospectively identified as a Common Egg Eater Snake (Hakan).

We had decided to make a little bit of spot-lighting at night. At about 21:00 first car left for an about 45 minutes ride and about 21:45 the second car took off. Mammals seen were Abyssinian Hare; first ride about five and last ride about 15. Dik-diks, Gerenuks, Black-backed Jackals, Jackal/Wolves*(see below) and African Wild Cats; first drive about four and last drive only one.



Cheeta track

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Salt's Dik-dik

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Grevy's Zebra

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Nov 23rd

We made an early start hoping to see some more mammals. Caracal and Cheetah were most wanted. Both species are seen here regularly but not frequently. We didn't find any of those but started another African Wild Cat and two Bat-eared Foxes.



African White-backed Vulture

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Somali Ostrich

Photo Stefan © Lithner

The rest of the day we spent travelling back to Addis Abbeba, stopping at some sights for birdwatching. During late afternoon and evening, we said goodbye to participants returning home, while Ingrid, Lennart and Stefan returned to Hotel Ghion for the night.

Nov 24th

In the early morning Ingrid, Lennart and Stefan went to the airport and took a flight to Gondar where our Gondar-tour leader; Jemal Husein, Simien Park Tours picked us up. We drove

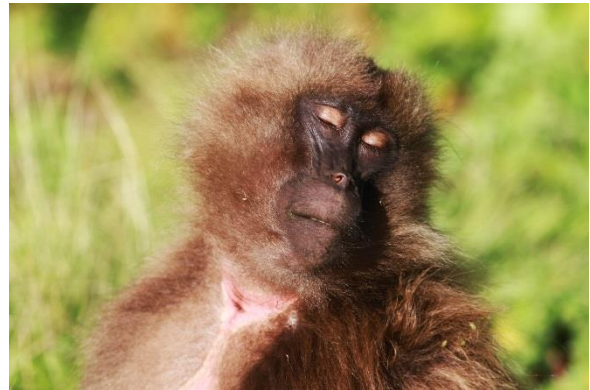
about half an hour to the village Debark and checked in at Sona Hotel, the only hotel with previous experience of foreign birders and mammal-watchers in the area.

After lunch we took a drive up the slopes of Simien Mountains. Along the road we saw several Moorland Chat, Thick-billed Raven, Fawn-breasted Raven, Red-billed Chough, Red-winged Starling, Black-headed Siskin, Pale-throated Sand-martin. We soon drove into a large group of Geladas. Whether these were habituated by eco-tourists or had developed a coexistence with mutual respect was not easy to see. They were not begging for food.



Geladas; cuddling (?)

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Gelada; movie-star (?)

Photo Stefan © Lithner

We then returned to the hotel, had dinner and prepared us for the following day.

Nov 25th

Communication at the hotel was rather “African” and previous experiences of birdwatchers was not traceable, why we were about one hour delayed for departure.

We started by picking up a guide for the park, Mr Birrara Setev. As soon as we started to climb birds started to show up. Along our way we saw Crested Lark at lower altitude (~ 2000 metres a.s.l.) and higher up we saw Thekla Larks. On our way an Erckel’s Francolin crossed the road and an Ankober Serin took off from the roadside. A little higher up we met the Chestnut-naped Francolin and odd Lammergeiers and Rüppell’s Vultures were seen.

We speeded up our drive up to 4250 metres a.s.l., since that’s where the “target species” for this trip-leg was supposed to be found. The park previously held about 200 heads of ibex, but the abundance has now increased and is estimated to be about 800 heads. During non-mating-season the adult males gather at this altitude and live much like a “bachelor-group”.

Before reaching this altitude we were a little bit worried that the weather might be unfavourable in terms of thick clouds or rain, but when we reached 4250 the view was clear.

Our guides did not need a lot of time to spot a group of seven male Walia Ibex. It was amazing to see these big Ibexes strolling peacefully surrounded by Ethiopian Lobelias (*Lobelia rhynchopetalum*).

From here the view was grand. The Ethiopian Wolf is seen from here every now and then, crossing the fields with low vegetation. Jemal also told us that sometimes you see plenty of rodents, probably rats in the plowed/worked fields. We scouted for both species without success.



Walia Ibex among Ethiopian Giant Lobelias (*Lobelia rhynchopetalum*)

Photo Stefan © Lithner

On our way down we stopped again to watch the Geladas. We scanned for Harnessed Bushbuck which dwells in the thickets along the hillside and also the Ethiopian Wolf, which is seen regularly here too but is not easy to catch sight of. At lunch we stopped at Cheneck Café/Restaurant about half way between Debarq and the summit. We continued to scan for bushbucks and wolves. We didn't see any of those, but were accompanied particularly by some rather unabashed Thick-billed Ravens and Yellow-billed Kites. Meanwhile we saw a Lanner Falcon and more Chestnut-naped Francolins.

Nov 26th

This morning Ingrid and Lennart did not feel like climbing the mountain again, so they stayed in the village while Stefan went up again with Jemal.

Again the Francolins were active along as well as on the road. Jemal spotted a large rodent



Erckel's Francolin

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Ethiopian Klippspringer

Photo Stefan © Lithner

along the side of the road, retrospectively identified as Grey-tailed Narrow-headed Rat *(see below). Along the road we also encountered an (Ethiopian) Klippspringer.

Several Doves and Pigeons were seen here. Among those, the endemic White-collared Pigeon, but also a European Turtle Dove.

Today we stopped for more birds along the road for closer looks and occasionally also photographs. At about 3200 metres a.s.l. we made a walk up into the bush-country to look for Harnessed Bushbuck. We rather soon found two or possibly three in the semi-dense vegetation. Meanwhile we counted African Thrush, African Bare-eyed Thrush, Ethiopian Catbird, Moorland Chat, Mountain Wagtail.

At higher altitude we visited a heavily grazed area where Botta´s Wheatear was common.



Moorland Chat

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Botta´s Wheatear

Photo Stefan © Lithner

In the evening we learned that Ingrid and Lennart also had a pleasant day. They were able to add Blue Rock-thrush and Mountain Thrush to our trip-list.

Nov 27th

This morning we had a late breakfast (07:00) before we started our return trip. This included a visit to the Coptic Church at Gondar (built in 362) and “The Castle”. During the morning some Hooded Vultures and Yellow-billed Kites were hanging over us. At dinner an African Firefinch made us company for a while.



Terrace cultivation of barley at about 3750 metres a.s.l.



Photos Stefan © Lithner

School-girl at about 3000 metres a.s.l.

After lunch we drove to Gondar Airport, took a flight to Addis Abbaba, where we outwaited and bordered our flight back to Sweden.

MAMMALS



Dibatag male

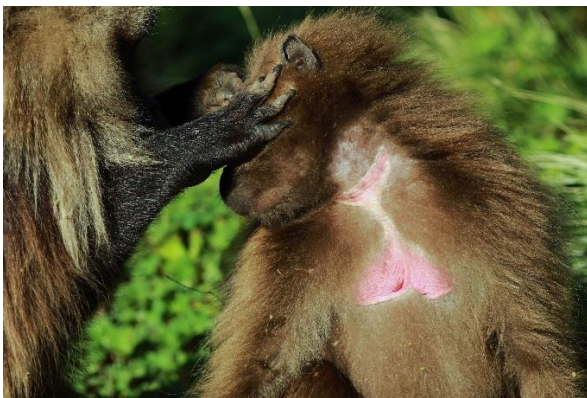
Photos Hassan Yusuf

We listed 38 species of mammals identified, two “highly plausible” but “not (100%) assessed”, two unidentified rodents and only tracks of Cheeta and, Aardvark and mounds of Naked Mole-rat during this fifteen days combined birding- and mammal tour. Species presented in order as in Kingdon; The Kingdon Field Guide to African Mammals.

Hamadryas Baboon

Papio hamadryas

A few groups along main road through Valley of the Rocks Nov 20th.



Gelada; injured. Such injuries are often lethal (Jemmal)



Gelada; hippie ?

Photos Stefan © Lithner

Gelada

Theropithecus gelada

Numerous above 3000 metres a.s.l. in Simeon Mountains National Park; Nov 24 over 250 and Nov 25th about 300 around 3000 metres a. s. l., plus about 300 at about 4200 metres a. s. l.

Somali Galago*Galago galorum*

At campsite half way between Gudumi and Harrar three individuals were calling well audible from campsite in the morning of Nov 20th between 01:40 and 02:00. According to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somali_bushbaby this is the endemic and only galago in thorny woodland-scrub and semi-arid thorn-scrub.

B A T S S E E N**Yellow-winged Bat***Lavia frons*

One individual as seen taking off from the scrub behind our camp site at Aledegue National Park Nov 22nd.

B A T S R E C O R D E D

During our visit to Addis Abbeba I recorded 8 and in Gurdimi I recorded 8 bats with my Pettersson D 240X ultrasound-bat-recorder. I analyzed them with Pettersson Batsound 4.03. Four recordings coincide well with one of the genus *Pipistrellus*, *Plecotus* and *Myotis* (2). The remaining 12 recordings were less typical.

Plausible species from each genus have been recognized from Checklist; Mammals of Ethiopia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_mammals_of_Ethiopia

Reference recordings of selected species have been studied on the internet, well aware that spectrograms as well as photos are not always correct, and spectrograms shown in articles do not always come from the species mentioned in the title of the article.

Rufous Mouse-eared Bat*Myotis bocagii*

One was recorded around the big Acacia-tree in Gurdumi Camp several times Nov 16th. Three species of *Myotis* are likely to be found in the dry Savanna-acacia habitat. TM saw this bat. We could conclude, only one of these three species was big enough. Spectrogram on internet coincides with this species.

Scott's Mouse-eared Bat*Myotis scotti*

Recorded from Ghion Park near Ghion Hotel in Addis Abbeba in the evening of Nov 14th. This is one of two *Myotis* known to occur in and around Addis Abbaba. (This species also in the city). Spectrogram, peak frequency and end frequency matches this species.

Rüppell's Pipistrelle*Pipistrellus rueppellii*

Recorded from Ghion Park near Ghion Hotel in Addis Abbeba in the evening of Nov 14th. The checklist mentions two species of Pipistrelles from Ethiopia. This is the only one known from the Addis Abbeba region. It is also known to hunt and dwell among buildings. Spectrograms match well.

Ethiopian Big-eared Bat*Plecotus balensis*

Recorded from Ghion Park near Ghion Hotel in Addis Abbeba in the evening of Nov 14th. Spectrograms match well. The species is previously assessed in the NW outskirts of Addis Abbeba as well as in the Endebo Mountains about 300 kilometres south of AA, and also south of Tigrey about 350 kilometres north of AA in similar habitat and altitude.

Abyssinian Hare*Lepus habessinicus*

Species seen daily around Camp Gurdumi Nov 14th – 19th and in Aledede National Park Nov 20th - 22nd, particularly during night-drives Nov 21st.

Unstriped Ground Squirrel*Xerus rutilus*

Species seen once or twice daily in the Somali Region.

Speke's Pectinator*Pectinator spekei*

A few seen on a stone pile near Camp Gudumi Nov 15th.

Naked Mole-rat not observed, mounds only *Heterocephalus glaber*

Many areas in the Acacia-Savanna habitat around Gurdumi were sparsely covered with mounds from this species (Hakan). Several were fresh. Only a short while during the night of Nov 17th an area was watched, but no activity was observed.

Grey-tailed Narrow-headed Rat not assessed *Stenocephalemys griesicauda*

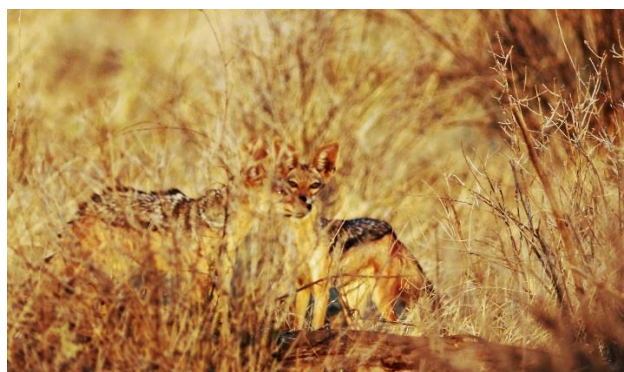
One was found foraging at about 3200 metres a. s. l. next to the road leading to summit of Simeon National Park Nov 26th. The rodent's size, relative tail-length, massive head and ear size and shape suggested *Stenocephalemys*. Two species occur in these mountains: *S. griesicatda* (2400 – 3900 metres a. s. l.) and *S. albipes* (800 – 3300 metres a. s. l.). According to Jemal, who saw its feet, they were black, or at least quite dark.

African Golden Wolf /Golden Jackal *Canis anthus/Canis aureus*

During our visit to Ethiopian Somaliland we encountered several individuals with a rather broad face and broader shoulders looking like wolves, while we also saw individuals on Aledede Plains with rather slender head and meagre shoulders and ears possibly/(probably) a fraction longer, making it look more like jackals. Even if colour of pelage varied we found no significant markings speaking in favour of either alternative. There seem to be no DNA-studies carried out on these two taxa.



African Golden Wolf/Golden Jackal from Aledede



Black-backed Jackal

Photos Stefan © Lithner

Black-backed Jackal*Canis mesomelas*

Several seen daily in Aledede National Park Nov 21st – 23rd.

Bat-eared Fox*Otocyon megalotis*

Two were started in Aledede National Park Nov 22nd.

Slender Mongoose*Herpetstes sanguinea*

One seen at lunchbreak Nov 14th (Hakan) and one seen at Gurdumi Waterhole Nov 18th (SLi)



African Golden Wolf/Golden Jackal from Gurdumi



African Golden Wolf/Golden Jackal from Aledede

Photos Stefan © Lithner

White-tailed Mongoose

Ichneumia albicauda

One or two seen daily Nov 14th – 18th, but at least six on Nov 17th in Gurdumi.

Striped Hyena

Hyaena hyaena

One was seen from one of the cars at sunset in Aledede National Park Nov 21st.

Spotted Hyena

Crocuta crocuta

Individuals heard laughing several times at night from Gurdumi Camp Nov 14th – 19th.

We also visited the Hyena Feeding conducted by Arbatjesus in the outskirts of Harar, where he fed at least 15 animals.

Aardwolf

Proteles cristata

One was heard while sneaking for dibatag Nov 17th. One was seen crossing our campsite during the night between Nov 17^h and 18th (01:45 – 01:48) and one was seen fleeing from us in Aledede National Park Nov 22nd, before it suddenly stopped and dived into a den.

African Wild Cat

Felis lybica

This species was seen five times during spotlighting in the evening of Nov 22nd and one was seen the following morning in Aledede National Park.

Caracal

Felis caracal

Tracks of Caracal were revealed at our lunch-stop Nov 14th, and a Caracal was seen by Abatjesus, our driver of the bunch near the Gurdumi Waterhole in the morning of Nov 17th.

Cheetah not observed, tracks only

Acinonyx jubatus

Tracks were seen within half an hour's drive from asphalt road towards Gurdumi Camp (HY), near campsite half way between Gurdumi and Harar in the morning of Nov 20th (HY), and also in Aledede National Park in the morning of Nov 22nd.

Aardvark not observed, tracks only

Orycteropus afer

Tracks seen nearly daily during tracking for Dibatag around Gurdumi Nov 14th – 19th. Local people know the animal.

Rufous Elephant-shrew

Elephantulus rufescens

This little animal was seen as good as daily within an hour's drive from Gurdumi camp Nov 14th - 18th.

Rock Hyrax*Procavia capensis*

Two were seen while passing through Valley of the Rocks Nov 20th.

Grevy's Zebra*Equus grevyi*

Six individuals including a foal were seen in Aledede National Park Nov 21st and 22nd.

Common Warthog*Phacochoerus africanus*

Five individuals were seen Nov 21 and a few were seen Nov 22nd in Aledede National Park.

Desert Warthog*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*

Four individuals showed up at Gurdumi Waterhole shortly before dark Nov 18th (SLi).

Harnessed Bushbuck*Tragelaphus scriptus decula*

Two or three individuals were located at about 3200 metres a. s. l in Siemien National Park Nov 26th. The taxonomy of *Tragelaphus* is still subject to research. Name used here follows

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harnessed_bushbuck



Desert Warthog

Photos Hassan Yusuf

Bush Duiker**not assessed***Sylvicapra grimmia*

One ungulate was photographed (SLi) at Gurdumi Waterhole in the evening of Nov 18th. Håkan Pohlstrand, with several decades of eco- and wildlife-studies in Ethiopia, and Ludwig Siege, stationed many years in Ethiopia for work and also with lots of experience of eco- and wildlife-studies, both suggest Bush Duiker. Local Wildlife Expert HY had not seen this

species in the area, while some of his local colleagues/mates had done so. Bush Duiker is not known to occur anywhere near here.

(Ethiopian) Klippspringer

Oreotragus [oreotragus] saltatrixoides

Two individuals were seen about 3000 metres a.s.l. in Siemen National Park Nov 26th (SLi). Recent DNA-studies have suggested that *Dreotragus* should be split into 13 species.

Silver Dik-dik

Madoqua piacentinii

This species was seen during bush-walks about half an hour's to one hour's drive from Gurdumi Camp Nov 16th- 18th.

Harar Dik-dik

Madoqua hararensis

This Dik-dik was frequently seen when we left the tarmac road and entered the sand road to Gurdumi Nov 14th, and then a few as good as daily within an hour's drive from Camp Gurdumi Nov 15th – Nov 18th.

Salt's/Phillip's Dik-dik

Madoqua saltiana/phillipsi

From our campsite half way between Gurdumi and Harar Nov 20th thru Aledede National Park Nov 21st – Nov 23rd several were seen.

Taxonomy concerning Dik-diks is not clear https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt%27s_dik-dik . On Nov 20th they could be either Salt's- or Phillip's Dik-diks. In the latter site we treated them as Salt's dik-dik (Hakan, LS, DM).

Gunther's Dik-dik

Madoqua guentheri

Was the most common Dik-dik in the Somali Region. Several were seen daily Nov 14th –Nov 19th.



Sommerings Gazelle

Photos Stefan © Lithner

Sommerings Gazelle

Gazella sommeringi

Several seen in Aledede National Park Nov 21st- Nov 22nd. See also p 11)

Dibatag*Ammodorcas clarkei*

The name Dibatag is a mis-transformation of the Somali word dabatag, meaning “Tail up”, which is characteristic when the animal is running.

Target species during our Somali Region-leg, with focus around Gurdumi, was the Dibatag. We scouted from the vehicles while driving, and we made bush-walks from before sunrise about four hours, and from about two hours before sunset until dark. We were assisted by local/indigenous trackers. First sightings were made by Hakan and trackers. It was not until the afternoon bush-walk the second day other participants caught sight of it. The animals were shy and weary. Once discovered they never stayed long. Not all of the participants managed to catch sight of it. Hakan calculated we made 17 observations of eight individuals during our stay in Gurdumi.

Gerenuk*Litocranius walleri*

This species was seen in the Gurdumi Region with a few sightings daily Nov 15th - 19th, and more frequently in Alegege National Park Nov 21st – 23rd.

Beisa Oryx*Oryx beisa*

In Aledege National Park this species was present and seen Nov 21st – 23rd. Largest count was made Nov 22nd, when about 300 plus 30 were counted.

Walia Ibex*Capra walia*

At 4250 metres a.s.l. in Simien National Park about seven fully grown males, living “bachelor-life” were seen Nov 2th. With good guides it didn’t take long to spot them. The world population currently about 800 heads.



BIRDS



Thick-billed Raven

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Both in the Somali Region nor in Gondar Region we focused on finding a few target mammals. We did not do any “list” together, why this list of birds probably lacks species seen by participants while strolling on their own.

Somali Ostrich	<i>Struthio molybdophanes</i>
Helmeted Guineafowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>
Vulturine Guineafowl	<i>Acryllium vulturinum</i>
Yellow-breasted Spurfowl	<i>Pternistis leucocephus</i>
Crested Francolin	<i>Dendroperdix sephaena</i>
Chestnut-naped Francolin	<i>Pternistis castaneicol</i>
Erckel´s Francolin	<i>Pternistis erckelii</i>
Common Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>
White-breasted Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax lucidus</i>
Great White Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubuculus ibis</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinereal</i>
Greater Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>
African Spoonbill	<i>Platalea alba</i>
African Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>
Wattled Ibis	<i>Bostrychia carunculata</i>
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>

White Stork
Abdim's Stork

Ciconia alba
Ciconia abdimi



Wattled Ibis

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Black Stork

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Egyptian Goose
Ruddy Shelduck
Mallard
Black-winged Kite
Yellow-billed Kite
Lammergeier
Egyptian Vulture
Hooded Vulture
African White-backed Vulture
Rüppell's Vulture
Booted Eagle
Tawny Eagle
Dark Chanting Goshawk
Eastern Chanting Goshawk
Pallid Harrier
Montagu's Harrier
Black Sparrowhawk

Alopochen aegyptiaca
Tadorna ferruginea
Anas platyrhynchos
Elanus caeruleus
Milvus aegyptius
Gypaetus barbatus
Neophron percnopterus
Necrosyrtes monachus
Gyps africanus
Gyps rueppellii
Hieraaetus pennatus
Aquila rapax
Melierax metabates
Melierax poliopterus
Circus macrourus
Circus pygargus
Accipiter melanoleucus



Augur Buzzard

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Arabian Bustard

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Shikra
Augur Buzzard
Common Kestrel
Lesser Kestrel
African Pygmy Falcon
Lanner Falcon
Red-knobbed Coot
Hartlaub's Bustard
Arabian Bustard
Kori Bustard
Buff-crested Bustard
Little Brown Bustard
White-bellied Bustard
Spotted Thick-knee

Accipiter badius
Buteo augur
Falco tinnuculus
Falco naumanni
Poliohierax semitorquatus
Falco biarmicus
Fulica cristata
Neotis heuglinii
Ardeotis arabs
Ardeotis kori
Eupodotis gindiana
Eupodotis humilis
Eupodotis senegallensis
Burhinus capensis



Spotted Thick-knee

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Temminck's Courser
Somali Courser
Double-banded Courser
Spur-winged Lapwing
Black-winged Lapwing
Crowned Lapwing
Black-winged Stilt
Common Greenshank
Wood Sandpiper
Green Sandpiper
Common Sandpiper

Cursorius temminckii
Cursorius somalensis
Rhinoptilus africanus
Vanellus spinosus
Vanellus melanopterus
Vanellus coronatus
Himantopus himantopus
Tringa glareola
Tringa glareola
Tringa ochropus
Actitis hypoleucos

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse
 Black-faced Sandgrouse
 Four-banded Sandgrouse
 Rock Dove
 Speckled Pigeon
 White-collared Pigeon
 Dusky Turtle Dove
 Red-eyed Dove
 Cape Turtle Dove
 Laughing Dove
 European Turtle Dove
 Namaqua Dove
 African Orange-bellied Parrot
 Maroon-crested Turaco
 (This subspecies – *donaldsoni* – distinct taxon, probable future split, also called Donaldson’s Turaco.)
 White-bellied Go-away-bird
 White-browed Coucal
 European Cuckoo
 African Scops Owl
 Little Owl

Pterocles exustus
Pterocles decoratus
Pterocles quadricinctus
Columba livia
Columba guinea
Columba albitorques
Streptopelia lugens
Streptopelia semitorquata
Streptopelia capicola
Streptopelia senegalensis
Streptopelia turtur
Oena capensis
Poicephalus rufiventris
Tauraco [leucotis] donaldsoni

Corythaixoides leucogaster
Centropus superciliosus
Cuculus canorus
Otus senegalensis
Athene noctua



European Cuckoo

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse female

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Donaldson Smith’s Nightjar
 Slender-tailed Nightjar
 Nubian Nightjar
 Little Swift
 European Swift
 Nyanza Sift
 Blue-naped Mousebird
 Eurasian Hoopoe
 Green Wood-hopoe
 Lilac-breasted Roller
 European Roller
 Little Bee-eater
 Somali Bee-eater

Caprimulgus donaldsoni
Caprimulgus clarus
Caprimulgus nubicus # (See p 6)
Apus affinis
Apus apus
Apus nianae
Urocolius macrourus
Upoppa epops
Phoeniculus purpureus
Coracias caudatus
Coracias garrulus
Merops pusillus
Merops revoilii

Northern Carmine Bee-eater
Northern Red-billed Hornbill

Merops nubicus
Tockus erythrorhynchus



Northern Red-billed Hornbill

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill
Von Der Decken's Hornbill
Black-throated Barbet
Nubian Woodpecker
Cardinal Woodpecker
Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark
Singing Bushlark
Gillett's Lark
Blanford's Lark
Somali Short-toed Lark
Short-tailed Lark
Thekla Lark
Crested Lark
Sand Martin
Brown-throated Sand Martin
Barn Swallow

Tockus flavirostris
Tockus deckeni
Tricholaema melanocephala
Campethera nubica
Dendropicos fuscescens
Eremopterix leucotis
Mirafraga passerine
Mirafraga gilletti
Calandrella blanfordi
Calandrella somalica
Spizocorys fremantlii
Galerida theklae
Galerida cristata
Riparia riparia
Riparia palludicola
Hirundo rustica

White Wagtail
 Mountain Wagtail
 Grey Wagtail
 Abyssinian Longclaw
 Plain-backed Pipit
 Fork-tailed Drongo
 Eastern Black-headed Oriole
 Red-billed Chough
 Cape Crow
 Pied Crow

Motacilla alba
Motacilla clara
Motacilla cinerea
Macronyx flavicollis
Anthus leucophrys
Dicrurus adsimilis
Oriolus larvatus
Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax
Corvus capensis
Corvus albus



Pied Crow

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Dwarf Raven

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Dwarf Raven
 Fan-tailed Raven
 Thick-billed Raven
 Mouse-coloured Penduline-tit
 Common Bulbul
 Somali Bulbul
 Blue Rock Thrush
 African Thrush
 Mountain Thrush
 Bare-eyed Thrush
 Moorland Chat
 European Wheatear
 Isabelline Wheatear
 Pied Wheatear
 Botta's Wheatear
 White-browed Scrub-robin
 Black Scrub-robin
 Chiffchaff
 Abyssinian Catbird
 Red-fronted Warbler
 Yellow-bellied Eremomela
 Northern Crombec
 Phillipa's Crombec
 Grey-backed Camaroptera

Corvus edithae
Corvus rhipidurus
Corvus crassirostris
Anthoscopus musculus
Pycnonotus barbatus
Pycnonotus somalicus
Monticola solitarius
Turdus pelios
Turdus abyssinicus
Turdus tephronotus
Cercomela sordida
Oenanthe Oenanthe
Oenanthe isabellinus
Oenanthe pleschanka
Oenanthe bottae
Cercotrichas leucophrys
Cercotrichas prodobe
Phylloscopus collybita
Parophasma galinieri
Urorhipis rufifrons
Eremomela icteropygialis
Sylvietta brachyura
Sylvietta phillipae
Camaroptera brevicaudata

Grey Wren-warbler
 African Grey Flycatcher
 African Paradise Flycatcher
 Pygmy Batis
 Southern Grey Shrike
 Somali Fiscal
 Rosy-patched Bush-shrike
 White Helmet-shrike
 Greater Blue-esred Starling
 Rüppell´s Starling

Calamonastes simplex
Bradornis microrhynchus
Terpsiphone viridis
Batis perkeo
Lanius meridonalis
Lanius somalicus
Rhodophonius crientus
Prionops plumatus
Lamprotornis chalybaeus
Lamprotornis purpuropterus



Rüppell´s Starling

Photo Stefan © Lithner

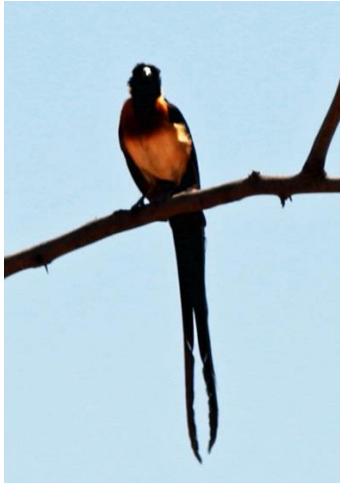


Red-winged Starling

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Golden-breasted Starling
 Superb Starling
 White-crowned Starling
 Red-winged Starling
 White-billed Starling
 Malachite Sunbird
 Taccazze Sunbird
 Scarlet-chested Sunbird
 Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird
 Marico Sunbird
 Abyssinian White-eye
 Eastern Paradise Whydah
 Somali sparrow
 Baglafecht Weaver
 Village Weaver
 Red-billed Quelea
 Yellow-spotted Petronia
 Bush Petronia
 Red-billed Buffalo Weaver
 White-headed Buffalo Weaver

Cosmosarus regalis
Lamprotornis superbus
Spreo albicapillus
Onycognatus morio
Onycognatus albirostris
Nectarinia famosa
Nectarinia tacazze
Chalomitra senegalensis
Anthreptes orientalis
Cinnyris mariquensis
Zosterops abyssinicus
Vidua interjecta
Passer castanopterus
Ploceus baglafecht
Ploceus cucullatus
Quelea quelea
Petronia pyrgita
Petronia dentata
Bubalornis niger
Bubalornis dinemelli



Eastern Paradise Whydah



Marico Sunbird

Photos Stefan © Lithner

White-browed Sparrow-weaver
 Green-winged Pytilia
 African Firefinch
 Purple Grenadier
 Yellow-fronted Canary
 White-bellied Canary
 Northern Grosbeak Canary
 Black-headed Siskin
 African Citril
 Ankober Serin
 Somali Bunting

Plocepasser mahali
Pytilia melba
Lagonosticta rubricate
Uraeginthus ianthinogaste
Serinus mozambicus
Serinus dorsostriatus
Serinus donaldsoni
Serinus nigriceps
Serinus citrinelloides
Serinus ankoberensis
Emberiza poliopleura

SNAKES



Speckled Sand Racer

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Common Egg Eater

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Speckled Sand Racer

One was seen sunbathing on a termite mound N of Gurdumi Nov 19.

Psammophis punctulatus

Common Egg Eater

One was found resting at the base of a tree near our dining-table on Aledge Plains Nov

Dassypeltis scabra

LIZARD



Brenners racerunner

Photo David Mallon

Brenner's racerunner

Pseuderemias brenneri

One was seen and photographed by DM near Gurdumi Camp Nov 16th.(DM)

Unidentified Geckos

Numbers of small geckos between five and ten centimetres long were frequently seen running fast particularly under brances, or when we lifted branches (DM, SLi)

TERRAPIN AND TORTOISE

Somali Terrapin

not assessed

Pelomedusa somalica

Previously: helmeted terrapin (*Pelomedusa subrufa sensu lato*). This superspecies has recently been studied throughout Africa and Arabian Peninsula including DNA-sequencing, and is now divided into twelve species. [Petzold et al; Zootaxa 3795 \(5\): 523–548](#)

<http://www.biotaxa.org/Zootaxa/article/viewFile/zootaxa.3795.5.2/8380>.

In the Somali region one species has been recognized: *Pelomedusa somalica*. Some specimen were collected in Boran District and some in Awal Somalia/Somaliland. These sights are situated only between 450 and 500 km from Gurdumi. The map shows three other sites where a taxon coinciding with *P. somalica* was collected about 500 km west of Gurdumi. No other taxon of *Pelomedusa* has been collected closer to Gurdumi than *P. somalica*. However according to Petzold et al., *P. somalica* should be a rather small terrapin. These found

in Gurdumi Waterhole seemed considerably larger than what is stated for this taxon in the article.

The article also remarks: “However, the relatively deep divergences among Somali Terrapins from two sites being only 40 km distant (Vargas-Ramírez et al. 2010; Table S1) raise the possibility that *P. somalica* consists of more than only one species. This situation warrants further research.”

Leopard Tortoise

Stigmochelys pardalis

The leopard tortoise is the fourth largest species of tortoise in the world, with typical adults reaching 40 centimetres and weighing 13 kilograms. Adults tend to be larger in the northern and southern ends of their range, where typical specimens weigh up to 20 kilograms (44 lb) and an exceptionally large tortoise may reach 70 centimetres and weigh 40 kilograms

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopard_tortoise

I (SLi) have seen Leopard Tortoise in several places but nowhere anywhere near as large as these. When one walked past me, in good speed it reminded me of the Aldabra Tortoise (*Aldabrachelys gigantea*), even if its size was not comparable to a fully grown individual of that species. I estimated its carapace length by comparing with my feet to be between 60 and 70 centimetres. I also grabbed one to get a brief estimation of its weight. My guess landed between 40 and 50 kilograms. Another two specimen were about the same size (one found dead).

Photo below does not show the largest individual.



Somali Terrapin*

Photo Stefan © Lithner



Leopard Tortoise

Photo Stefan © Lithner

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge our excellent guide Håkan Pohlstrand for sharing some of his knowledge about the country as well as Ethiopian wildlife, and his teams Brook Kassa and Jemal Hussein for their much appreciated efforts. I also thank Håkan Pohlstrand, Ludwig Siege, David Mallon and Hassan Yusuf for allowing me to use some of their photos.

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