

Report on birds seen in Cameroon

Mikko Pyhälä, 8-16 January 2013



I was in Cameroon thanks to an invitation by a research group of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, with the aim of providing some additional information on the avifauna. I paid for my own expenses, grateful for having such a unique opportunity.

I spent a couple of days (8.-9.1.; 15-16.1.) in the capital city Yaoundé (YA) and could see a few species such as flocks of Grey Parrot, and a Black Sparrowhawk near the president's palace. I birded one morning in the gardens of Hotel Le Raffia in Lomié (LO) (10.1.) in East Cameroon. The forested areas behind the hotel had good birds such as the spectacular Woodland Kingfisher. Superb and Olive-bellied Sunbirds were abundant. I think the cisticola near the water tank was Winding, because I could also hear winding sounds. There was a male Lesser Whitethroat that seemed to be quite further to the south from its normal wintering areas.

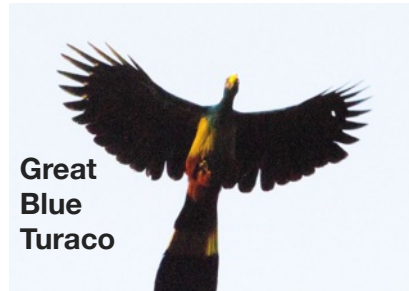
The Baka are an indigenous forest dwelling people with very distinct culture of their own



Blue-spotted Wood Dove



Olive-bellied Sunbird



Great Blue Turaco



Winding Cisticola

I stayed about four days (11.-14.1.) in the indigenous Baka village Bizam (BZ), Arrondissement Messok, East Cameroon (N 03°00.776", E 014°07'162") which still has rainforest right next to it, but a new timber road had been constructed in 2011-12. There is a bantu village about 1 km away and hence, a number of bantu farming fields. There has been illegal logging of hardwood in the forest and we found fresh cut uncollected planks. Timber lorries are constantly rolling by. Mercifully our hut was on a side road with less traffic, and less dust in the air.



African Green Pigeon

© Mikko Pyhäla

I did a couple of hours birding every day at Bizam. The Bizam village had a sizable colony of weavers, as all African villages have. Great Blue Turacos could be seen and heard very near, and hornbills were flying over in the mornings. I spent much time at a flowering tree with many sunbirds and warblers. Only there did I see the Blue-throated Sunbird, male and female. I had walks along the road and along tracks in the forest. One could hear almost constantly calls of Grey-throated Barbet. Also tinkerbirds were constantly calling. African Green Pigeons came but seemed very shy. A brook with many palms down the road had a noisy group of Swamp Palm Greenbuls. The most common bird seems to have been Plain Greenbul, but I could not get a good picture of it.

Grey-throated Barbet

Other common birds were Woodland Kingfisher and the above mentioned sunbirds. Flocks of White-throated Bee-eaters were moving around in migration. Western Nicator was present, but not easily seen. By the roadsides, always many Mannikins.

I was delighted to get a glimpse of a male African Dwarf Kingfisher. I could see a moving shadow in the bushes and considered it a Coucal, and when it called it clearly was Gabon Coucal, at the northern limit of its range. I was puzzled by a Yellobill which seemed to have an entirely black plumage, but it could be identified by the bright yellow bill and the cuckoo-like



© Mikko Pyhäla



**Yellow-footed
Flycatcher**

© Mikko Pyhälä



**African Grey
Flycatcher**

© Mikko Pyhälä

flight and posture. I considered myself lucky to get a picture of the Yellow-footed Flycatcher. I could not see its feet, but see the pale breast in the picture to the left and compare with the darker breast of the African

Grey Flycatcher to the right.

One day I went south to the Dja river where there is a ferry for crossing over. Many African Harrier Hawks were seen along the road. The nearest town had a number of fruit trees which seemed to attract birds such as Dwarf Hornbills. In this part of Cameroon there are no popular markets. We were lucky to be able to buy some papayas from the locals.

One morning we spent about one superbly rich hour from 7 to 8 at the Adelibam (AD) community forest 12 kms south of Bizam. Every moment dozens of birds were buzzing around including flycatchers, weavers, warblers, parrots, greenbuls, puffbacks and what not. I was excited about seeing and taking pictures of the endemic Bates's Paradise Flycatcher and of the very rare and seldom photographed Yellow-capped Weaver. The rare



**Woodland
Kingfisher**

© Mikko Pyhälä



Bates's Paradise Flycatcher

© Mikko Pyhälä



**Black-casqued
Wattled
Hornbill m**

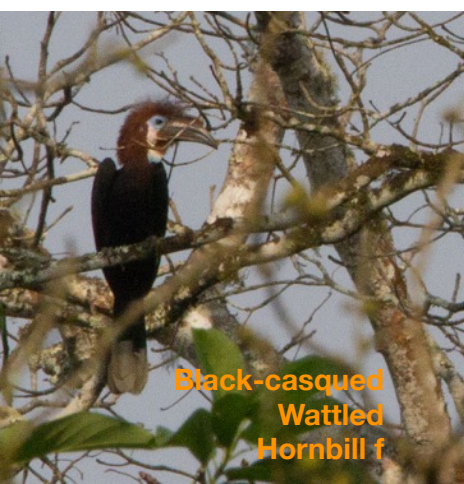
© Mikko Pyhälä



Yellow-capped Weaver

© Mikko Pyhälä

endemic Bates's Swift was there, but no picture. A group of Pied Hornbills came right at us, and a group of Black-casqued Wattled Hornbills flew over and settled so that I could take pictures also of the females (see left) in addition to a picture of a male flying over.



**Black-casqued
Wattled
Hornbill f**

One afternoon we travelled about 30 kms south-east from Bizam to Safari Camp (SC) and did some birding there. Mostly I was accompanied by two Baka men, M. Ine (Georges) who was pretty good in spotting birds and he gave me bird names (they usually have names for categories of birds, not individual species) in Baka language, as well as his brother M. Akpangui (Davide) and the 13 some years old son of one of them Waki (Emmeron). The bird names were written down by me or our Baka consultant M.

Apolinaire Ambassa, resident of Le Bosque (BO), with the name in English identified by me. I am happy that our list of Baka bird names may have given some additional material for the already well advanced doctoral dissertation of M. Romain Duda.

I am grateful to Romain for sharing significant ornithological information with me and for accompanying me one morning.

Little Greenbul



One afternoon we travelled about 30 kms south-east from Bizam to Safari Camp (SC) and did some birding there. We were exceptionally lucky in seeing a juvenile Black Guinea fowl cross the road right in front of us. Safari Camp is a luxurious village for hunting elephant, buffalo and other big game which is becoming scarce and is affecting the food availability of the Baka. Near the camp, African Piculet was common. I managed to get a picture of Western Nicator (see above right), note yellow vent **but** grey throat. In comparison, see right below Yellow-throated Nicator with yellow vent **and** yellow throat. The latter (seen only near Yaounde) was constantly hiding in thick bushes and never



came out in the open.

The fabulously colorful sunbirds merit some space in this report. To the right, Superb Sunbird, female at Lomie and male at Bizam, and probably juvenile in Bizam.



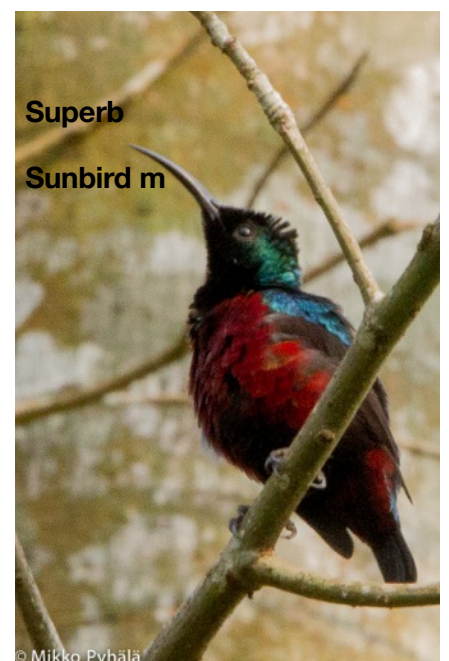
I also want to include a picture of female Blue-throated Sunbird which I could only photograph in the darkness of the forest. Also the male is mostly grey with a bright blue throat. Too bad I could not get any photographs of the splendid Western Violet-backed Sunbirds which were flitting at the Le Bosque health center. In Bizam I also saw Tiny, Olive and

Johanna's Sunbirds, and in

Yaounde

Green-headed Sunbird was common.

Blue-throated Sunbird f





**Yellow-fronted
Tinkerbird**

© Mikko Pyhälä



Upon my return to Yaounde, I went one morning to the Nkolakie (NK) community (N 3°59'29"; E 11°24'06") at the Mbaminkom mountain some 40 km north east from Yaoundé where *Picatarthes* occurs. However, we did not try to see that bird because one would need to stay overnight or come extremely early. My guide was M. Jean Bernard Dongmo (cel. +237-7743 0031, e-mail jbdxy(a)yahoo.com). He knows bird calls very well and records them right there for playback.

Immediately upon arrival before sunset we saw Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird perched right next to us,



Speckled Tinkerbird

© Mikko Pyhälä



Chestnut Wattle-eye m

© Mikko Pyhälä

and Little Greenbul was feeding on the ground among leaves. Green Crombec was there and many Simple Greenbuls. Speckled Tinkerbirds were calling at distance and we managed to get one near with playback which allowed for a decent photo. Klaas's Cuckoo and Diederik Cuckoo were well seen. A walk through the densest bushes above the village took us to a noisy flock of birds which we could not see. We decided to stay put and soon the birds came to inspect and allowed nice photographs - they were Eastern Bearded Greenbuls! As a bonus, we got right above us a pair pair of Chestnut Wattle-eyes (In Yaounde, the whistle of Brown-throated Wattle-eye was a common sound). And not far from us Piping Hornbill. Yellow-throated Nicator was calling, but extremely difficult to get into view. On the other hand, a handsome male Black-and-white Flycatcher gave us excellent views for a moment.

Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to the doctoral research team from the Autonomous University of Barcelona lead by Prof. Victoria Reyes García and Dr. Aili Pyhälä, including doctoral students Mlle. Sandrine Gallois and M. Romain Duda and another consultant, M. Ernest Isidore Simpoh. I am extremely grateful to all of them for their friendship and for sharing the very basic living conditions with me. Important institutional support was provided by CIFOR-Cameroun (Dr. Patrice Levang and his staff). Absolutely essential was the full scale support given by Institut de reserche pour le developpement of France (IRD), Representative M. Bruno Bordage, Administrator M. Mohamed Elomo Molo, Responsible for Missions Mme. Bertha Njowe Penda, and last but not least our driver M. Alain Fezeu. I have promised to share my bird pictures with IRD, J.B. Dongmo and the Cameroon Biodiversity Protection Institute who helped me to get my guide. I saw about 120 species, almost half of them life-species for me.

Birds observed

Black Guinea fowl *Agelastes niger* one juvenile crossing the road near SC

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash* a flock in LO

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* numerous in YA, some in LO

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* one in YA

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* very common in YA, one in NK

Black Kite *Milvus m. migrans* everywhere but usually in small numbers

Palm-nut Vulture (Vulturine Fish-Eagle) *Gypohierax angolensis* one adult one juvenile in NK

African Harrier Hawk *Polyboroides typus* commonly seen in YA, BZ, NK and along the main roads

Black Sparrowhawk *Accipiter melanoleucus* YA near the president's palace

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus* one in LO

Red-necked Buzzard *Buteo auguralis* many Buteos seen along the LO-YA main road, some identified as this sp.

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* a pair in a pool in YA

Lemon Dove *Columba larvata* one on the road when approaching LO in the evening

Red-eyed Turtle Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata* common in YA

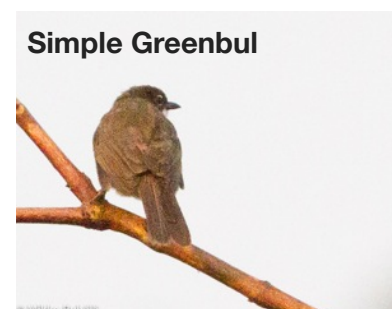
Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtus ager* very common in south east, AB, LO, BZ, NK

African Green Pigeon *Treron calve* numerous at BZ, one at AD

Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* occasional flocks in Yaounde, flocks at BZ, AD, NK

Great Blue Turaco *Corythaeola cristata* common in BZ and SC, also seen in NK and flying over forest roads

Yellowbill *Ceuthmochares aureus* one BZ plumage seemed black, bill was yellow



Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas* one male actively calling NK
 Diederik Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius* male and female at NK, also calling
 Gabon Coucal *Centropus anelli* BZ identified by call, seen but not very clearly
 Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis* NK heard
 Mottled Spinetail Swift *Telacanthura usher* one of the species regularly seen in YA
 African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* everywhere
 Little Swift *Apus affinis* everywhere
 Bates's Swift *Apus bates* one flying over the forest AD
 Speckled Mousebird *Colius striates* everywhere in good numbers
 Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis* visible and vocal in LO, BO, BZ, YA, AD
 African Dwarf Kingfisher *Ceyx lecontei* one in mixed flock BZ
 Blue-headed Bee-eater *Merops muellerii* probably this species near rivers in forest, LO, BZ
 White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis* flocks BO, BZ
 African Pied Hornbill *Tockus fasciatus* BZ, SC, NK most common of the hornbills
 Black Dwarf Hornbill *Tockus hartlaubi* two seen at SC
 Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill *Tockus erythrohynchus* one at river Dja
 Piping Hornbill *Ceratogymna fistulator* BZ, NK
 Black-casqued Wattled Hornbill *Ceratogymna striata* a family group at AD, also at BZ
 White-thighed Hornbill *Ceratogymna cylindricus* BZ, NK
 Grey-throated Barbet *Gymnobucco bonapartei* very common BZ, also NK
 Speckled Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus scolopaceus* one pair and several males heard NK, heard BZ
 Red-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus atroflavus* several heard BZ, NK
 Yellow-throated Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus subsulphureus* seen and heard in NK, heard in LO, BZ
 Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilieatus* perhaps the most common of genus YA, NK, LO, BZ
 Yellow-spotted Barbet *Buccanoidon duchaillui* heard NK
 Yellow-billed Barbet *Tachyphonus purpuratus* heard NK
 African Piculet *Sasia africana* SC, common in AD
 Woodpecker sp. heard but not seen BZ, NK
 African Broadbill *Smithornis capensis* one in AD
 Black-and-white Flycatcher *Bias musicus* BZ, NK male
 Chestnut Wattle-eye *Dyaphorophya castanea* pair NK
 Brown-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira cyanea* calling in YA, NK
 Red-eyed Puffback *Dryoscopus senegalensis* NK, pair in mixed flock in AD, probably also BZ
 Fiscal Shrike *Lanius collaris* YA
 Western Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus brachyrhynchus* several in a mixed flock AD
 Velvet-mantled Drongo *Dicrurus modeste* overflight BZ, AD
 Rufous-vented Paradise-flycatcher *Terpsiphone rufocinerea* BZ
 Bates's Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone batesi* AD
 African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis* LO, BZ, BO
 Pied Crow *Corvus albus* everywhere, in forest less
 Forest Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus flavifrons* one BO
 Square-tailed Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne nitens* everywhere
 Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustic* small numbers everywhere
 Rock Martin *Hirundo fuligula* near hills YA, NK
 Common House Martin *Delichon urbica* one along the trunk road



Vieillot's Black Weaver



Common Bulbul



Lemon-bellied Crombec



Swamp Palm Greenbul

Red-breasted Swallow *Hirundo semirufa* several in open areas LO
 Forest Swallow *Hirundo fuliginosa* possibly at BO, rare
 Winding Cisticola *Cisticola galactotes* LO seen and heard
 Banded Prinia *Prinia bairdii* heard BZ
 Black-throated Apalis *Apalis jacksoni* one in a mixed flock BZ
 Yellow-browed Camaroptera *Camaroptera supercilialis* heard NK
 Olive-green Camaroptera *Camaroptera chloronota* heard NK
 Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brachyura*, flock of 15 AD,
 numerous and visible NK

Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus* everywhere
 Little Greenbul *Andropadus virens* very common in NK. Unlike image in Princeton guide
 Honeyguide Greenbul *Baeopogon indicator* heard NK
 Simple Greenbul *Chlorocichla simplex* LO, common in NK
 Swamp Palm Bulbul *Thescelocichla leucopleura* flocks LO, BZ, NK
 Plain Greenbul *Andropadus curvirostris* one LO, one AD, very common BZ actively singing
 Eastern Bearded Greenbul *Criniger chloronotus* family group NK
 Western Nicator *Nicator chloris* BZ, SC
 Yellow-throated Nicator *Nicator vireo* heard BZ, many seen and heard NK
 Dusky Crested Flycatcher *Elminia nigromitrata* SC
 African Blue Flycatcher *Elminia longicauda* BZ, NK
 Grey Longbill *Macrosphenus concolor* heard NK
 Green Hylia *Hylia prasina* heard NK
 Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* common BZ
 Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* one juvenile YA
 Rufous-crowned Eremomela *Eremomela badiceps* twice in mixed flocks BZ
 Green Crombec *Sylvietta vireo* singing male NK
 Lemon-bellied Crombec *Sylvietta denti* one SC
 Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* one LO exceptionally far south
 African Thrush *Turdus pelios* very common YA, also seen in BZ, NK
 Fraser's Forest Flycatcher *Fraseria ocreata* BZ-AD not confirmed
 Little Grey Flycatcher *Muscicapa epulata* pair SC
 Yellow-footed Flycatcher *Muscicapa sethsmithi* one BZ
 Black-cap Illadopsis *Illadopsis cleaver* one in mixed flock near ground BZ
 Violet-tailed Sunbird BZ, several males BO
 Western Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra obscura* BZ frequented a fruiting tree, NK



Rufous-crowned Eremomela



African Pied Hornbill

Green-headed Sunbird *Cyanomitra verticalis* YA
 Olive-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris chloropygia* LO, NK heard
 Tiny Sunbird *Cinnyris minulla* BZ
 Superb Sunbird *Cinnyris superba* common LO, BZ, NK
 Johanna's Sunbird *Cinnyris johannae* BZ
 Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis* one NK
 Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis* several pairs LO, BZ, NK
 Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus* common near human habitation
 Vieillot's Black Weaver *Ploceus nigerrimus* common near human habitation, less than previous
 Yellow-mantled weaver *Ploceus tricolor* AD
 Preuss's Weaver *Ploceus preussi* in mixed flock in canopy AD
 Yellow-capped Weaver *Ploceus dorsomaculatus* one male AD, very rare
 Blue-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubricate* small flock roadside BZ
 Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild* common in open areas
 Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus* YA, LO, NK
 Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura cucullata* YA, BZ roadsides, farms
 Black-and-White Mannikin *Lonchura bicolor* BZ, LO, NK
 Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava flavissima* first winter LO
 African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp* river Dja, along trunk road
 Yellow-fronted Canary *Serinius mosambicus* numerous YA



Yellow wagtail

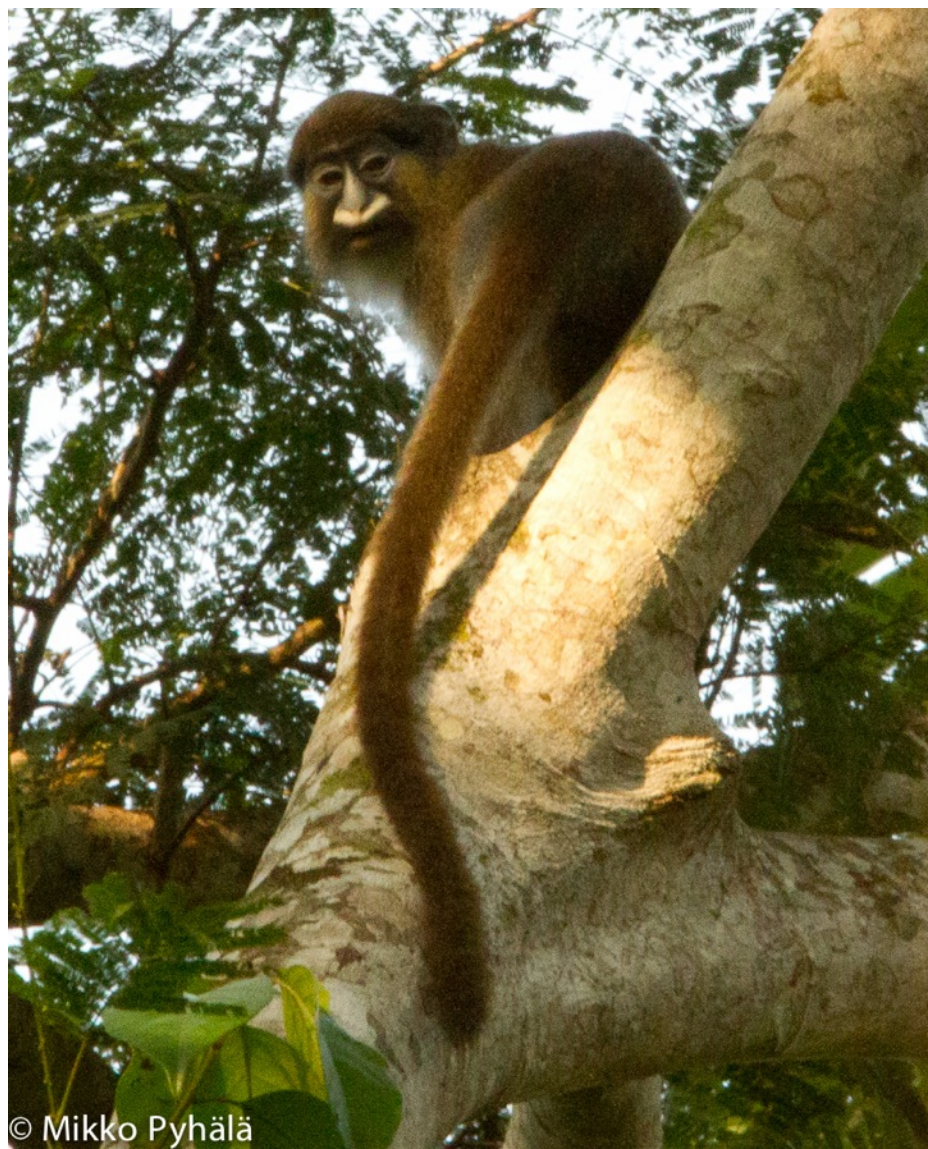
Moustached Monkey

**All photographs by Mikko Pyhälä
 Helsinki, Finland**

Finalized 25 January, 2014

Nomenclature as in Ber Van Perlo: Birds of Western and Central Africa. Princeton 2002.

Another useful guide book was Dr. William Serle and Dr. Gérard J. Morel: A Field Guide to the Birds of West Africa. Collins 1977,



23 August, 2014