ITINERARY

GHANA: WINDOW INTO WEST AFRICAN BIRDING

March 13- April 1, 2027

The Blue-moustached Bee-eater is a West African specialty found in rainforest habitats. These birds are considered near-threatened, as their habitat is disappearing. We'll look for this beautiful bird in Ankasa. Photograph by guide Tarry Butcher.

We include here information for those interested in the 2027 Field Guides Ghana: Window into West African Birding *tour:*

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

Those who register for the tour will be sent this additional material:

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our web site)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

With over 755 species of birds, Ghana is an exciting birding destination, featuring excellent opportunities for a number of West African endemics and other highly prized avian species. Foremost perhaps among those endemics is the legendary White-necked Rockfowl, *Picathartes gymnocephalus*, a sensational prize. The site in Ghana is one of the best in West Africa, with a colony of the birds constructing their bulky mud-cup nests on an overhanging rock face deep in the forest. Enjoying this "charisma bird," one of just two members of the family, will doubtless be one of the highlights of the tour, which makes for an excellent introduction to West African birding in a bustling, safe, and fast-developing country.

We will also visit several of the country's national parks, including Kakum Forest with its spectacular canopy walkway, ideal for providing access to a range of canopy dwellers. In addition to many world-class species, Kakum Forest hosts a

remarkable array of hornbills: the rare Black-casqued, Yellow-casqued and Brown-cheeked, both Red-billed and Black Dwarf, and White-crested! We'll also visit Bobiri Butterfly Sanctuary, critical in conserving another fragment of the sorely endangered West African primary lowland forest; the nearby (and now gravely threatened by a Chinese bauxite mining proposal) Atewa reserve, conserving forest that holds additional species including Blue-moustached Bee-eater, Blue-breasted Kingfisher and Red-cheeked Wattle-eye; the drier savannas at Shai Hills; and Mole National Park, where White-throated Francolin, Forbes's Plover, Long-tailed and Standard-winged nightjars, Stone Partridge, and Lavender Waxbill are possible as well as some big game including African Elephant.

This year we are again avoiding the two-day return drive to the far north, as we have another good site for Egyptian Plover on the White Volta near Mole, saving us much travel time. We have instead added a day to Mole and another at Ankasa, both of which have very nice new lodges, as well as a morning exploring the little-known forest at the Picathartes site which also has a new, more basic tourist lodge. These new lodges mean the accommodations in 2027 have improved significantly over past years' lodging, and we are happy to bring you the added extra comfort on what has been for many years a somewhat basic accommodations tour.

Our tour this year again visits the large forest block at Ankasa in the far west, on the border with Ivory Coast, with a now remnant forest site at Nsuta en route promising additional exciting species, including perhaps Piping and Western Pied hornbills and African Piculet. Camping is no longer required, and we will use comfortable hotels at both sites, with the new lodge at Ankasa being very nice indeed. Targets there include Hartlaub's Duck, Congo Serpent Eagle, Shining-blue and White-bellied kingfishers, Cassin's and Black spinetails, Rufous-sided Broadbill, as well as Orange-breasted Forest Robin, Yellow-bearded Greenbul, and three species of bristlebill. En route out, we can expect both Mouse-colored and Reichenbach's sunbirds and Orange Weaver.

The Standard-winged Nightjar is found in the savannas of sub-Saharan Africa. The "standards" are elongated primary feathers, used by the males in display. Photograph by guide Tarry Butcher.

We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.

Physical requirements of this tour

- **TRAILS & WALKING**: Moderate amounts of walking (up to 4-5 miles per day), some of it on roads, some on trails. The terrain is generally either flat or slightly hilly. The walk to the rockfowl cave is about 2 miles through

forest and involves a short and steep (100 yards) clamber up to the rock overhang at the end. Walking sticks are recommended here, as the terrain is undulating and uneven in places. The hills in Shai Hills NP have one short but moderately steep trail with many rocks, so sticks are advised here if you need them.

- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES**: We cover much ground on this tour, and on several days, we must use dusty, bumpy roads. There are a few fairly long travel days to get to some of our birding sites. Participants should be able to step up 12 inches into and out of our safari vehicles and other transports. We do spend a lot of time standing to watch birds on this tour (a small folding stool can provide relief as needed) and walks will generally be 2 to 3 hours away from the vehicle. The walkway at Kakum Forest involves a short uphill walk (750 yards) on an uneven stepped track to the structure itself; the walkway is about 120 feet above the forest floor and has several observation platforms linked by stretches of rope-and-board walkway.
- **PACE**: Early mornings (5:00-6:00 a.m. breakfasts), with afternoon breaks on some days followed by optional afternoon outings. Optional nighttime outings will also be offered.
- **WEATHER**: Temperatures will range from the low 70s at night to high 90s F (25-30 C) during the day. Rain showers are a possibility, and humidity is generally high on this tour.
- **VEHICLE SEATING**: So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS**: Participants must be prepared to make comfort stops in nature for most of this tour, as there are simply no other options along most of the tour's route, away from our lodgings.
- **OPTING OUT**: Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations.

******** Be aware that Ghana is heavily populated, and the precious primary forest is being degraded in some sites, whilst roads are somewhat slow and with a multiplicity of speed bumps making journey times longer. That said, the people are very welcoming, the birds outstanding at times, and the whole experience a great intro to bustling vibrant West Africa.

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with the guide.

Habitat loss is an ongoing problem in Ghana, as it is in many places. This logging truck was seen in Bobiri. We may see similar sights. Photograph by guide Phil Gregory.

Accommodations: Accommodations are generally quite good, and now with very nice hotels at Ankasa and near luxury at Mole NP, with just one or two more basic. Do be aware, however, that maintenance is an issue throughout West Africa, and things may not be quite what they are back in Kansas! Power points often don't work, A/C may be sporadic, hot water can be erratic, etc. Our new "glamping" tented lodge at Mole is situated overlooking a waterhole and is much nicer than the aging government-run facility at Mole NP and is right at the birding sites.

We'll have a comfortable stay at the perfectly positioned and recently built Ankasa Reserve Lodge (photos below), with walk-in hot water showers and most rooms have air conditioning. (https://ankasareservelodge.com/) It's sure to be a relaxing stay (bathrobes and butler service included!!), and best of all… it's just a short drive to the morning birding location! Doesn't get much better!!

The air-conditioned tented chalets at Zaina Lodge have full size beds, private bathrooms, and a surprising touch of luxury – for such a remote area! (See photos below.) Check out their website to view their well-appointed rooms (with both indoor and outdoor showers!), as well as their pristine pool (https://www.zainalodge-ghana.com/).

We hope you'll find the extra value in the new accommodations we've included! The ability to enjoy some creature comforts on this somewhat longer, more basic trip goes a long way, we feel, and the increase in price is justified, we hope!

About the Birding Areas

Shai Hills is a dry, thorn-scrub reserve near Tema with attractive rocky hills that hold the localized Mocking Cliff-Chat (White-crowned Cliff-Chat, if *coronatus* is split). Other bird species possible here include Stone Partridge, Red-necked Buzzard, African Gray Hornbill, Violet Turaco, Blue-bellied Roller, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Senegal Eremomela, Senegal Batis, and Bearded, Double-toothed, and Vieillot's barbets.

Sakumono (Sakumona) Lagoon is a great waterbird site near Accra, actually a RAMSAR site. It's an important area for migrant West Palearctic shorebirds, including Ruff and Wood Sandpiper, as well as Senegal Thick-knee, Collared Pratincole, sometimes Black Egret (Heron), Western Reef Egret, and West African Crested (Royal) and Black terns, Yellow-throated Longclaw, and Senegal Eremomela. This will be done on arrival day if the flight timings permit or next day if not. We may also visit Legon Botanic Gardens in Accra if everyone gets in early and we have a spare morning before going to Sakumono, this can be good for Violet and Green turaco, Piping and Northern Red-billed hornbills and Black Heron, also our first barbets.

Winneba Lagoon is an important shorebird site on the coast, good for West African (Royal) Tern and shorebird migrants**.** This site will be visited if the time and tide are correct.

Bokoro Pond is a wetland remnant near Takoradi that holds African Pygmy-goose, Black Crake, and sometimes Allen's Gallinule and Orange Weaver.

Ankasa is a very large block of primary rainforest on the border with Ivory Coast. The birding can be quite hard, but it has many very special species that take some effort to find – Nkulengu Rail is a good bet, Fraser's, Akun and African Wood Owl, Shining-blue, White-bellied, Blue-breasted and Chocolate-backed kingfishers, Rufous-winged Illadopsis, Black and perhaps Blue-moustached Bee-eater, Reichenbach's, Tiny, Black-throated Blue and Superb sunbirds, Yellow-billed Turaco, a chance for Spot-breasted Ibis, Long-tailed Hawk, Black and Cassin's Spinetail and more, a long list indeed.

Brenu Beach is farmbush cleared country with shrubby regrowth, it's good for secondary scrub species like Rufous-winged Prinia, Oriole Warbler, Marsh Tchagra, Olive-naped Weaver, Western Bluebill and Orange-cheeked and Black-rumped Waxbill.

Kakum National Park—Set in hill and ridge country, Kakum preserves a precious fragment of the gravely threatened Upper Guinea forest habitat. The walkway is an incredible rope, ladder and wood slat bridge slung some 40m up in the mid stratum giving great access to some huge forest trees. Three rare (2 endemic) hornbills, the rare Brown-cheeked and Yellow-casqued plus also Black-casqued are possible here, as well as such good forest birds as White-headed Wood-hoopoe, Sharpe's Apalis, Violet-backed Hyliota, Black and Rosy bee-eaters, and Black and Sabine's Spinetail. A dusk foray can be good for mammals such as Potto, Prince Demidoff's Galago, and the extraordinary Pel's Anomalure, with a chance of the rare Brown Nightjar and Fraser's or even Akun Eagle-Owl.

Bonkro is a forest patch on a small hill area that is home to a colony of the enigmatic, legendary White-necked Rockfowl (Yellow-headed Picathartes), which will surely be a major trip highlight. This colony is built on the overhang of a huge rock, and it's possible to get a good view of the large, mud-cup nests as well as the birds when they return to the nests in the late afternoon. Revenue from visiting birders has become a very important source of income for the local village,

which provides guides and helps to manage and protect the forest. You may wish to make a donation to Ashanti Africa's Primary School project here after such a great Rockfowl experience. On past tours we have waited from a few minutes to several hours for the birds to come in—you never know. We then had incredible views, but please be aware that a lengthy sit in silence on bench seats and/or stools may be necessary.

Mole National Park is a completely different savanna and grassland habitat in the dry north where we have a chance of Forbes's Plover, White-throated Francolin, Stone Partridge, Standard-winged and Long-tailed nightjars, and the amazing African endemic family of Bucorvidae (Ground-Hornbills), here represented by the Abyssinian species. Lavender Waxbill and Black-faced Firefinch can be seen, as can the striking and noisy Oriole Warbler, Sun Lark, and both Pygmy and Beautiful sunbirds. This year we will also make a 2-hour bus ride to visit a site on the nearby White Volta River where Egyptian Plover can be seen, saving us basically two days on the bus heading to the far north and back.

The elegant Egyptian Plover is a monotypic shorebird that we'll look for along the White Volta River near Mole National Park. Photograph by guide Tarry Butcher.

Bobiri Reserve—Set aside for its incredible variety of butterflies, Bobiri is also an important refuge for some scarce forest birds. Here we'll have a chance for Long-tailed Hawk, Bristle-nosed Barbet, African Piculet, Red-billed Dwarf and White-crested hornbills, Forest and/or White-headed woodhoopoes, the rare Preuss's Weaver, and a good selection of other forest birds. We were lucky enough to see a Long-tailed Pangolin here in 2014.

Atewa is a hill-forest reserve that holds one of the few Blue-moustached Bee-eater sites in Ghana. It's also the home of such specialties as Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, Rufous-winged, Brown, Puvel's, and Blackcap illadopses, Golden Greenbul, the very rare Nimba Flycatcher (as yet never by me though it was found again in 2019), Narina Trogon, Western Bluebill, Black-and-white Shrike-Flycatcher, Kemp's and Grey Longbill, West African Batis, Western Bearded Greenbul, and several other apalis and flycatcher species. Birding the access foothills is good and means a longish, steady, and quite warm climb, but well worth the effort as Yellow-throated Cuckoo can sometimes be found as well.

Itinerary for Ghana: Window into West African Birding

Days 1-2, Sat-Sun, 13-14 Mar. Flight from US to Ghana; coastal birding. Flights depart the US for Ghana on Day 1 (March 13) and arrive the following day on March 14. If possible, please plan to arrive before 2:00 p.m. You will be met on your arrival at the newly rebuilt Accra International Airport, which is situated on the attractive sandy Atlantic gold coast of Western Africa, for your transfer to the hotel. Meet for dinner in the lobby at 7 pm.

Official start of the tour is 14:00 at the hotel for an afternoon birding outing on March 14 to visit Sakumono Lagoon, or (if everyone is already in) have a morning trip to Legon Botanic Gardens in Accra as an optional intro for those not wishing to rest.

We'll have this afternoon to bird the Lagoon area in hopes of finding Purple and Gray herons, Western Reef Egret, Long-tailed Cormorant, Garganey, Black-winged Stilt, Collared Pratincole, Black-tailed Godwit, Ruff, Ruddy Turnstone, Senegal Thick-knee, African Swamphen and Black Tern to mention just a few. Night in Accra.

In the Shai Hills we'll look for species that are found in a savanna habitat, such as the Senegal Parrot. These small parrots are a West African specialty, found from Senegal to Cameroon. Photograph by participant Kevin Watson.

Day 3, Mon, 15 Mar. Shai Hills. We'll have an early start today to what is always an enjoyable tour of the Shai Hills savanna area reserve—a dry, thorn-scrub reserve near Tema with attractive rocky hills that hold the localized Mocking Cliff-Chat (White-crowned Cliff-Chat, if *coronatus* is split). Other bird species possible here include Stone Partridge, Red-necked Buzzard, African Gray Hornbill, Violet Turaco, Blue-bellied Roller, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Senegal Eremomela, Senegal Batis, Senegal Parrot and Bearded, Double-toothed, and Vieillot's barbet. A roost of tomb bats is worth seeing after a bit of a scramble up a rocky hillside, and African Barred (Chestnut) Owlet is a possibility here; we saw it in 2026. Lunch near Shai Hills. To save some time this year we are opting to spend the afternoon driving along the coast towards Cape Coast, stopping at Winneba Lagoon, a Ramsar wetland excellent for shorebirds and terns. A stop at Fosu Lagoon may turn up Black Heron, then we head north towards Kakum. Night at *Rainforest Lodge* near Kakum National Park.

Day 4, Tue, 16 Mar. **Kakum National Park.** We'll be out early this morning, heading for the canopy walkway at Kakum National Park. We will be spending the most critical hours 40m above the forest floor on the canopy walkway; the platforms here are large enough to support a telescope. Kakum National Park protects critically endangered primary Guinea tropical rainforest, and the species we hope to see from the canopy include Green Hylia, Violet-backed Hyliota, Lemon-bellied Crombec, Little Gray Flycatcher, Gray-headed, White-breasted, and Chestnut-breasted Nigrita, Gray Longbill, White-headed Woodhoopoe and Forest Scimitarbill, West African Batis, Western Bluebill, Blue Cuckooshrike, Chestnut-bellied Helmetshrike, Sabine's Puffback, Sharpe's Apalis, Rufous-crowned Eremomela, Brown-cheeked, Black-casqued, Piping, Yellow-casqued, and Black Dwarf hornbills, the scarce and beautiful Preuss's Weaver, Red-headed, Blue-billed and Red-vented malimbe, Rosy Bee-eater, Yellow-spotted and Hairy-breasted barbet, Red-fronted and Gray parrot, and Velvet-mantled Drongo. The raptors we may see include Red-necked Buzzard, Palm-nut Vulture, African Cuckoo-Hawk, maybe Congo Serpent-Eagle, Cassin's Hawk-Eagle, and perhaps Long-tailed Hawk. During the heat of mid-afternoon, we'll have the chance to rest at the hotel. Tonight, we'll stay late on the walkway to try for crepuscular and

nocturnal species like Brown Nightjar, Bat Hawk, and Potto and Pel's Anomalures. Night at *Rainforest Lodge Hotel* near Kakum NP.

Day 5, Wed, 17 Mar. Kakum National Park. This morning we'll be concentrating our attention on the Antwikwaa section of Kakum National Park, as well as some trails within and surrounding the park, which should prove to be very productive. We can attempt to find White-tailed (Fire-crested) Alethe, Red-tailed and Gray-headed bristlebills, Johanna's, Tiny and Olive-bellied sunbirds, Blue-headed Wood Dove, Red-rumped Tinkerbird, Black Dwarf and Red-billed Dwarf hornbills, Black-headed Paradise Flycatcher, Finsch's Flycatcher-Thrush, Blue-shouldered Robin-Chat, Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, Pale-breasted Illadopsis, Red-chested Goshawk, Yellow-billed and Guinea turacos, Long-tailed Hawk, Fire-bellied and Melancholy woodpeckers, Black-throated Coucal, Western Black-headed Oriole, African Finfoot, and possibly a Congo Serpent Eagle. There's also a remote chance of Ahanta Francolin, and Willcocks's or Spotted honeyguide. We may stay out until dusk to try again for Fraser's Eagle Owl and Akun Eagle-Owl, and perhaps Brown Nightjar. Night *at Rainforest Lodge Hotel* near Kakum NP

Day 6, Thu, 18 Mar. Brenu Beach. Today we make our way further west towards Ankasa, making a few short stops along the way. We will stop at Brenu Beach for savanna species such as Marsh Tchagra, Oriole Warbler and perhaps Baumann's Greenbul, and then two small ponds, Bokoro Pond, hoping to see Allen's Gallinule, African Pygmy Goose, and Orange Weaver, and then Ebi River mangroves for Hartlaub's Duck, arriving at Ankasa National Park which is situated on the border with Ivory Coast, in the late afternoon. Night at the new and very nice Ankasa Reserve Lodge.

Day 7, Fri, 19 Mar. **Ankasa** is Ghana's only pristine, wet-evergreen upper-Guinea rainforest, a rarely visited forest protecting some wonderful species. We'll have an early start today to get a full day in at the park, where we will be in quest of Hartlaub's Duck, African Finfoot, African Crowned-Eagle, Great Blue and Yellow-billed turaco, Yellow-casqued, Black-casqued, Red-billed Dwarf and Black Dwarf hornbill, White-bellied, Shining-blue, and Chocolate-backed kingfisher, Red-billed Helmetshrike, Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike, Blackcap, Pale-breasted, Rufous-winged, and Brown illadopsis, Red-tailed and Green-tailed bristlebill, Yellow-bearded, Western Bearded, Plain, Spotted, Sombre, and Red-tailed greenbul, Blue-headed Wood-Dove, Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, White-tailed Ant-Thrush, and maybe Red-fronted Antpecker, to name a few. Also, there is a chance for Nkulengu Rail during the early evening, and in 2019 and 2023, we saw White-crested Tiger-Heron here. Night at the Ankasa Reserve Lodge.

Hartlaub's Duck is another West African specialty, found in wooded areas and secluded swamps. We'll look for them at Ankasa. Photograph by guide Tarry Butcher.

Day 8, Sat, 20 Mar. **Ankasa.** Another day at Ankasa in quest of any species that may be still missing; birding in these dense forests is quite challenging and species such as Orange-breasted Forest Robin and Rufous-winged Illadopsis may take several attempts. Night at the Ankasa Reserve Lodge.

Day 9, Sun, 21 Mar. Ankasa early morning; drive to Kakum area. We'll be out early this morning for a final walk through Ankasa, and then make the long drive back towards Kakum, stopping along the way for a second attempt at anything we missed the first time. The hotel is quite comfortable and in the farmbush quite close to the park. Should we arrive in time we will do some afternoon birding at a nearby farmbush area. Night at *Rainforest Lodge Hotel* near Kakum National Park.

Day 10, Mon, 22 Mar. Kakum early on, then drive to Bonkro for the Picathartes trek. We'll make an early start for our final morning at Kakum, visiting some of the outlying sections of the park or surrounds. We will spend all morning trying to see any species we may have missed previously, this being generally a good area for White-spotted Flufftail, Western Nicator, Kemp's Longbill, Black-capped Illadopsis, malimbes, and Black-throated Coucal.

After lunch we'll set off for a remote village in the Ashanti region of Ghana for what should be a highlight of our tour. Our destination is a nesting site for White-necked Rockfowl (Yellow-headed Picathartes). There are around 20 nests at this location and experiencing this remarkable bird is an amazing feeling; after getting good looks, we spend the night at the new Ashanti Picathartes Lodge run by the local villagers at Bonkro close to the Rockfowl site**.**

We have had amazing experiences with the rare White-necked Rockfowl near Bonkro, where local villagers have protected a nesting site. Photograph by guide Tarry Butcher.

Day 11, Tue, 23 Mar. Exploring the rainforest around Bonkro. We have another chance at Rockfowl should we have been unsuccessful the night before, otherwise the morning will be spent in the nearby Kwabena Sam Forest section This area is little known, and could hold some surprises, including Yellow-footed Honeyguide, Western Long-tailed Hornbill, Tessmann's Flycatcher, African Piculet and Black-and-white Mannikin. Lunch at Picathartes lodge before departing to Kumasi as an overnight stop, reducing the drive the next day. Night at the Noda Hotel in Kumasi.

Day 12, Wed, 24 Mar. Travel day to Mole National Park. We'll leave Kumasi early after breakfast, heading north towards Mole National Park. We can expect to see different bird species en route as we gradually enter the Guinea savanna plains of northern Ghana. On our late afternoon arrival at the park, we'll check into our hotel, the only accommodation in the immediate area. Situated on a 250-metre-high escarpment overlooking the park, it offers highly scenic views. It is an amazing feeling to be sitting around the pool on the hotel terrace watching African savannah elephants bathing in the two nearby watering holes, which are also inhabited by crocodiles. Night in Mole National Park at *Zaina Lodge* tented camp.

Day 13, Thu, 25 Mar. Mole National Park. We'll awake early and move to the hotel terrace, which is an excellent spot to set up our telescopes and watch the dawn activity. We hope to see Stone Partridge, Red-throated Bee-eater, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver, Lavender and Orange-cheeked waxbill, Red-billed and Bar-breasted firefinches—with a chance of Black-bellied and Black-faced, if we are lucky—Senegal Batis, and Beautiful and Pygmy sunbirds. The watering hole attracts Senegal Thick-knee as well as African Woolly-necked Stork and Hadada Ibis. Raptors are more frequent in Mole, and in this area, we hope to see White-headed, Hooded, and perhaps White-backed vulture, Bateleur, Beaudouin's Snake-Eagle, Lizard Buzzard, African Hobby, Lanner Falcon, and perhaps several accipiters.

We'll take game guard escorted walks into the woodland surrounding the waterhole in the cooler early morning and late afternoon, expecting to encounter Bruce's Green Pigeon, Purple and Long-tailed glossy-starlings, White-shouldered Black Tit, Senegal Eremomela, Oriole Warbler, Violet Turaco, Golden-tailed, Fine-spotted, and Gray woodpecker, Blackcap and Brown babbler, Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Northern Puffback, perhaps Rufous Cisticola, Swamp and Lead-colored flycatcher, and Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird. The laterite pans to the north hold Forbes's Plover, Sun Lark and White-throated Francolin and they will be a focus this afternoon, with a drive back around dusk to check for nightjars, with a good chance of the amazing Standard-winged Nightjar.

During the heat of the afternoon, we can be resting or birding around the hotel grounds, where you have to watch out for warthogs. Night in Mole National Park at *Zaina Lodge* tented camp.

The Lizard Buzzard is a beautiful small raptor that we'll watch for in Mole National Park.
Photograph by guide Tarry Butcher.

Day 14, Fri, 26 Mar. Mole NP. After an early breakfast, we'll depart for the Egyptian Plover site on the White Volta, an approximately 5-hour round trip and back to the lodge for a late lunch. Afternoon spent in Mole. Night at the park at *Zaina Lodge* tented camp.

Day 15, Sat, 27 Mar. Mole National Park, **visiting Mognori River circuit.** This riparian growth holds Shining-blue and Giant kingfisher, Square-tailed Drongo, African Blue Flycatcher, and White-crowned Robin-chat. We will bird some nearby savanna areas later for Fine-spotted Woodpecker, Brown-backed Woodpecker, Brown-rumped Bunting and Rufous and perhaps Dorst's cisticola. Night in Mole National Park at *Zaina Lodge* tented camp.

Day 16, Sun, 28 Mar. Mole to Kumasi. Birding around Mole Park and in transit, with a short cultural excursion to nearby Larabanga and the interesting 15th century, Malian-style mud and stick mosque (complete with swarms of over-eager local guides!). Lunch at Kintampo, and overnight in Kumasi.

Day 17, Mon, 29 Mar. Kumasi to Bobiri Sanctuary, and later Atewa. Bobiri is an amazing butterfly sanctuary, with over 440 species recorded! Upon our arrival, we'll search this lush forest for Red-billed Dwarf and White-crested hornbill, White-headed and Forest woodhoopoe, Swamp Palm Greenbul, Western Nicator, and some of the many raptors present, including Cassin's Hawk-Eagle, African Cuckoo-Hawk, and just maybe the great prize, Long-tailed Hawk. Then we'll leave mid-morning for the 2+-hour drive to **Atewa**, arriving for lunch in the afternoon, then checking into our hotel before a farmbush foray to the edge of Atewa forest. The hotel is quite serviceable, but is by a busy bus and truck stop (so we try to get the quieter rooms), it is however very close to our birding sites. Species possible here include Bristle-nosed Barbet, Melancholy Woodpecker, Black-and-white Shrike-Flycatcher, Grosbeak Weaver, Magpie Mannikin and Black-winged Bishop. We may perhaps try for Fraser's Eagle Owl if the weather permits (afternoon storms are frequent here), before returning to our hotel for dinner. Night at *Linda Dor Hotel* in Atewa.

Day 18, Tue, 30 Mar. Atewa. This year we've added an extra night in this area to maximise our chance at anything still needed. Morning spent birding with an early start, we'll visit the nearby Atewa Reserve and get as far up into the hill forest as is feasible, looking for Long-tailed Hawk (again!), West African Batis, Red-cheeked Wattle-eye, Golden Bulbul, and just possibly the rare Blue-moustached Bee-eater and Yellow-throated Cuckoo if we access the higher areas. After lunch, we will bird along a new section of forest edge near the Worobong Forest Reserve. Night at *Linda Dor Hotel* in Atewa.

Day 19, Wed, 31 Mar. Atewa to Accra; flights home. Our final morning will be spent in the Atewa range again, heading back to the hotel to shower and change for the flights home. We'll have lunch before heading back to Accra some two hours way. Depending on your departure times, we will visit a nearby local restaurant and enjoy our final dinner together before heading to the airport. If possible, try to book your flights home after 10:00 p.m. to allow enough time for dinner. Flights currently depart from Accra this evening, arriving in the US the following morning.

Day 20, Thu, 1 Apr. Arrival home.

About Your Guide

Tarry Butcher was born and raised in Namibia, where his interest in birds was kindled at an early age. He spent much of his childhood exploring the vast open areas of the dry Namibian wilderness, where his love for birds and animals grew. His interest in and knowledge of wildlife in general, and birds in particular, drew him inevitably to a career in guiding. That interest was further developed during his studies in Game Ranch Management in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, and he undertook additional travels to explore different areas of South Africa in search of new birds in different habitats.

> ***Tarry Butcher** is clearly ready to lead any tour in Africa. Tarry's knowledge of the botany and fauna of Namibia, his mastery of the tour's logistics and his work ethic are beyond excellent. This guy is a keeper." R.B., Namibia & Botswana*

After working as a Naturalist-Guide in the region for eight years, Tarry made the jump to guiding birding groups in both Namibia and South Africa, with his past experience as a solid base. He has also traveled to other parts of Africa, where he has always been keen to learn about new birds. Tarry's easy-going nature, his sense of humor, hosting, and logistical skills, and his yearning for adventure, coupled with his passion for sharing his love of nature with people of all ages, make him an excellent guide.

In recent years, Tarry worked as a driver/guide on Field Guides tours under Terry Stevenson's leadership, and he's co-led additional Field Guides tours to South Africa and Namibia with Field Guides veterans Megan Edwards Crewe, Marcelo Padua, and Doug Gochfeld, who with their groups found him to be a delightful and knowledgeable guide and traveling companion, as we think you will too. Tarry lives in Pretoria, South Africa.

Visit https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/ for a complete tour schedule for Tarry; just click his photo.

An expert **local guide** will be added as tour size warrants; we usually have one of the very finest Ghana guides along, one who is part of a dynasty of birding brothers and outstanding in the field, ably supported by a helper who may also be a butterfly expert.

Financial Information

FEE: $8075 from Accra
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): $1375 *(single space is limited at a couple lodges and folks may be required to share, depending on the makeup of our group)*
DEPOSIT: $800
FINAL PAYMENT DUE: September 14, 2026
LIMIT: 8

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is Sharon Mackie. Sharon will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

ACCOMMODATIONS: A couple of our accommodations are very good, but generally most are categorized as quite good, with one or two more basic lodges. A few of the hotels have swimming pools, so bring your swimsuits if you wish! Do be aware, however, that maintenance is an issue throughout West Africa, and things may not be quite what they are back in Kansas! Power points often don't work, a/c may be sporadic, hot water can be erratic, etc.

***NOTE: We are again including two very nice **new lodges** that should make this 2027 tour easier than in the past. We are now using Ankasa Reserve Lodge at Ankasa National Park, and Zaina Lodge at Mole National Park. These enhancements, of course, increase the tour price; but we consider it money well spent and believe that these new and nicer lodges will set our tour apart from those offered by other companies.

DOCUMENTS: Be sure to verify the latest entry requirements for each country you will visit or transit.

Passport: US citizens will need a passport valid for six months beyond the date of their return. It should be in good condition, and have at least one blank page for each country on your itinerary.

Visa: US citizens must obtain a visa to enter Ghana. Ashanti, our ground operator, will issue a letter of invitation and accommodation—details that you will need when applying for your visa. We will provide detailed instructions once the tour is confirmed. Citizens of other countries should check with the consulates of each destination for current entry requirements.

Yellow Fever vaccination certificate: In accordance with International Sanitary Regulations, all persons entering Ghana are requested to have a valid certificate of immunization against yellow fever.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Ghana consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: This tour begins and ends in Accra, Ghana (Accra International Airport, ACC)

Arrival: Accra By 2:00 p.m. March 14**.** Flights depart the US for Ghana on Day 1 (March 13) and arrive the following day on March 14. If possible, please plan to arrive before 2:00 p.m.

Departure: Accra, March 31, after 10 p.m. You are welcome to book departure flights as early as 6:00 p.m. on the evening of March 31; however, since dinner is included on Day 19, keep in mind that you will miss the final dinner if you depart before 10:00 p.m.

Please wait to purchase airline tickets until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate. At that time, we'll be glad to assist with your flight arrangements at no service fee.

LUGGAGE: Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

SMOKING: Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The tour fee is $8075 for one person in double occupancy from Accra. It includes all lodging from Day 2 through Day 18, all meals from dinner on Day 2 through dinner on Day 19, all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fees do not include your airfare to and from Ghana, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for the tour is $1375 for those requesting a single room. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes). **Note**: A couple of the hotels do not have twin share rooms, but instead there will be several beds in the same room with a bathroom nearby to share. There will be separate units for men and women.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact us at fieldguides.com/contact-us/. Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please send your deposit of $800 per person; see https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/ for our Payment Options. **Full payment of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or September 14, 2026.** We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.

Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and full payment, less $100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date, 50% of the full tour fee is non-refundable, which would include the full deposit if the final payment has not yet been paid. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable and non- transferable.

Our cancellation policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of that insurance is not refundable, so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airline's restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure. In most such cases, full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. Note this exception, however: If you have been advised pre-tour that there is a non-refundable portion of your tour fee no matter the reason for Field Guides cancellation of the tour, that portion will not be refunded. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a refund when cancellation occurs outside of our cancellation policy as published in the itinerary (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of $50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When

consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive information from us regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance prior to, or within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights and in some cases, other arrangements), pre-existing conditions are covered. You may purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/ and clicking the link to CSA. The CSA webpage also includes a contact number.

Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii. We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance thru InsureMyTrip (https://www.insuremytrip.com/) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. When purchasing insurance with a company other than CSA, you will want to understand whether the timing of your purchase will affect coverage before paying your first deposit. Insurance purchase requirements can vary from company to company, and such requirements could limit your options if you do not look into this until making your final payment for your tour. Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

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