

Somaliland, 16-26 June 2012

Somaliland is a de facto independent region north-west of Somalia. Its borders are based on the British Somaliland protectorate, after which it was briefly independent for a few days before joining the rest of Somalia. In 1991, the region fought a successful war against the south, and Somaliland colours (red, white and green) are painted on almost every conceivable surface throughout Somaliland together with the date of independence – 18 May.

Since then, Somaliland has been stable and avoided most of the problems of southern Somalia. However, most western governments still warn against travel not only to Somalia but also to Somaliland. I doubt this is a place it would be sensible to travel independently, and with all the police checkpoints, you might not get very far. I took a golden opportunity to join Abdi Jama, who grew up in Somaliland before emigrating to the United States, but is now back in the country, a very funny and friendly guy, a keen birder himself and leading several bird tours each year. Abdi, of course has contacts all over Somaliland – together with our two very friendly escorts from the special police unit (SPU), Nasir and Mohamed, as well as Zeinab, our excellent cook, and her cheerful son Zakaria—it seemed we hardly passed through a single village or checkpoint without running into someone that someone in the team knew. Thanks to everyone for making me feel so welcome in Somaliland!

Abdi kept saying June was the wet season... I can't imagine what things are like the rest of the year. We only experienced one, very brief drizzle in the plains west of Burao. Nevertheless, June is a good time to come if you're interested in the Warsangli Linnet. Abdi often finds good numbers of this bird at Daalo in May and June, when the Somalian Mountain Sage flowers are in bloom, but has seen only one bird outside this period. The only disadvantage I can think of is the wind (apparently seasonal at this time), which picked up at night and howled through our campsites wherever we stayed—near the coast, in the plains and in the mountains.

Zeinab's an excellent cook and makes different kinds of chapattis, samosas, spaghetti and stews. I'd somehow got the impression there wouldn't be many vegetables, but it was 100% vegetarian food with a mound of tomatoes, cabbage, beetroot, mangoes and oranges carried along for the trip.

Saturday, 16 June 2012

I live in Nairobi, and took a direct flight on East African Safari Express (a confidence-inspiring jet plane). The plane flew into the hot coastal port of Berbera, since the main airport at the capital (and largest city) Hargeisa was closed for renovation and upgrade. Probably one of the best options to fly into Somaliland, although I later discovered the return flight transited through Mogadishu. I read a web article that Ethiopian Airlines is resuming direct flights soon from Addis Ababa to Somaliland, which would be an excellent route if it's true (I couldn't find any reference to this on the Ethiopian Airlines web site, though).

Abdi's previous tours have come in overland or in a few cases by plane to Hargeisa, so my routing meant we had to try out a different approach. Personally, I think it allowed me to save several days in transit, since most of the unique birds are found to the east of Berbera—the only thing I can think of missing as a result of the routing through Berbera was Beira antelope (there is a stakeout in some hills near Hargeisa).

I met Abdi and the team straight after passing through immigration and paying for my visa, we started my acclimatization process at 11am by heading straight to the beautiful, deserted beach and driving about 15km west through the coastal desert, where a walk of a half-hour or so produced a couple of Greater Hoopoe-Lark and a few Nile Valley Sunbird (the latter is abundant in lowland, desert areas of Somaliland). Also a few remaining Grey (Black-bellied) Plover on the shoreline.

Then we headed into town for a delicious plate of fresh-caught fish on the sea front at Berbera. Our special police unit (SPU) folk apparently complained... most Somalis don't eat fish or chicken, preferring lamb, goat and camel. The other customers were three Chinese at the next table, who Abdi says operate a skin processing plant in Berbera. They were the only non-Somali people I saw outside the airport during my entire stay.

Like other areas of coastal East Africa, House Crow has invaded Berbera, and a few were competing for scraps at the restaurant as well as flotsam on the neighbouring beach with dogs and some Sooty and White-eyed Gulls. A Lesser Crested-Tern flew past a couple of times. After eating, we visited the beach on the east side of town, which had been appropriated by a group of camels and a large flock of Sacred Ibis, and a single Western Reef-Heron was working the shoreline.

The next stop was our campsite about 25km south, round the back side of the Bosti Hills, the dry coastal hills that are visible from Berbera. There is a wadi and a well here, with a pipe supplying drinking water to Berbera. Abdi is on good terms with the watchman, who wasn't in that afternoon (but we met him on the return trip). The well next to the watchman's hut attracts lots of doves and pigeons that come here to drink. We saw plenty of African Collared-Dove (the common dove in this area), Speckled Pigeon, and a Laughing Dove or two, but no Somali Pigeon.

Bosti Hills are limestone, and are intersected by dry canyons with plenty of caves where Somali Pigeon roosts. We camped in a wadi on the edge of the range, and it was just a quick walk up into a canyon where we sat down and only had to wait a few minutes for a few Somali Pigeon to show up and perch on nearby rocks. Abdi says they fly out to feed during the daytime, but return here to roost—we saw a couple leaving the following morning. An Archer's Buzzard flew over the canyon, which turned out to be the only sighting of the trip. The bird had pale underparts and a broad black trailing border of the wing (like Augur Buzzard!) with some tawny colour only on the flanks.

Sunday, 17 June 2012

The window of cool temperatures is very narrow at the coast, so we set out before breakfast for a walk along the wadi we'd camped next to. African Collared-Dove and Nile Valley Sunbird were the common birds, we also found a pair of Red Sea (Arabian) Warblers skulking in dense thorn bushes, two African Scrub-Robin singing on the top of small trees, an Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill, a Dorcas Gazelle and a few Salt's Dik-Dik (a red-legged dik-dik that is common throughout Somaliland). Abdi found some Beira scats, but the animals themselves are tough to find in this area without a dedicated day-long search.

Then back for fresh chapattis and bean stew for breakfast before starting the long drive south and east, over the dry mountains at Shikh village (about 1300m), where Abdi had attended high school, then down to Burao in the dusty plains, the second largest town in Somaliland, where Abdi bought a few supplies we were missing, then we had lunch at a restaurant downtown where the SPU folk (as they said) frightened me by attacking some goat flanks like hyenas.

The drive from Berbera to Burao is quite easy since it's on the only tarmac road in the country—and this stretch is in good condition. The road continues all the way down to Mogadishu, although Abdi thinks the southern sections have broken up. In Somaliland, the tarmac road continues at least as far as Laascaanood, after which travel would start to become quite unsafe. We followed the tarmac south-east from Burao and stopped about 4pm at Inaafmadobe village—perhaps 60km east of Burao—just before the road bends briefly to the north-east. This is also where the main track to Erigavo (Ceerigaabo) leaves the tarmac road to travel north-east through the plains. This is an area of pink, rocky ground on low hills, with some Acacia scrub, including some funny disk-like Acacias growing flat on the ground. Our best sightings at this spot was a Somali Wheatear and a couple of Little Brown Bustard. Abdi was slightly worried about whether we would find the wheatear—his groups normally see many much further west towards the border with Djibouti and stop focusing on this further east, but in the end we saw about 15 during the trip in rocky semi-desert areas from this site all the way east to Erigavo town.

We then continued about 40km further east on the tarmac road to a camp site in a beautiful patch of Acacia woodland next to the main road, arriving just before dusk. The only snag... people in this area are nomadic, and a family had moved in! Fortunately, Abdi got permission for us to stay... partly based on a legal argument of prior occupation? (I suppose birdwatching groups also follow the nomadic code) and had a chat with some of the nearby families in the evening.

Monday, 18 June 2012

A walk around the Acacia grove and surrounding scrub produced a number of birds that we didn't see elsewhere on the trip. A couple of Black-cheeked (Red-rumped) Waxbill in the grass made a lifer for Abdi. Based on call, I identified the batis at this site were Pygmy Batis, quite some distance from the range shown in the field guide. However, Abdi does see Pygmy Batis at a site about 50km south of here, where he takes some groups on a detour of a few days to look for Collared Lark (we didn't visit this area on my trip), so Pygmy Batis may well be present throughout southern Somaliland, near the border with

Ethiopia. Another highlight in the Acacia woodland is Red-naped Bushshrike, Abdi regularly finds this very beautiful but local and uncommon bird at this spot, and we had wonderful views of one carrying a large green caterpillar, wondering what to do with it. Some mixed groups contained several Banded Parisoma, Brubru, Abyssinian Scimitar-bill, Yellow-breasted Apalis and Grey Wren-Warbler, and Red-backed (White-winged/White-browed) Scrub-Robin is common at this spot. In the open semi-desert outside the Acacia grove, we saw more Somali Wheatear, Gillett's Lark, Black-throated and Red-and-yellow Barbets, a couple of Short-billed (Philippa's) Crombec, groups of cute, tail-wagging Red-fronted Warbler in the low Acacia, and another Red Sea (Arabian) Warbler, surprisingly well away from the coast. In fact, I thought I'd glimpsed another the previous afternoon during our stop at Inaafmadobe, so it seems they penetrate well inland in this area.

In the late afternoon, we drove further east as far as Oog village at the western edge of Sool province, where an alternative eastern track travels north to Erigavo. We topped up on fuel, and stopped briefly near a hotel where Red-billed Buffalo-Weavers hang out (Abdi's only site for this bird in Somaliland). Then we left the tarmac for the long journey north, starting off through sandy bush country, then after 25km or so entering the vast, flat, semi-desert Ban Cade plains, stretching in every direction with nearly no vegetation more than 10cm high. This is the home of Lesser Hoopoe-Lark, which are common here, and tons of Chestnut-headed Sparrow-Lark. Somali Short-toed Lark, Thekla Lark and Short-tailed Lark are the other common species here, but we failed to find Somali Long-billed or Blanford's Lark anywhere on these plains. Speke's Gazelle, a Somali endemic, also lives throughout these desert plains all the way to Erigavo, and we spotted a couple of male Heuglin's Bustard. Both lunch and the evening campsites were next to isolated trees in endless steppe stretching in every direction.

Tuesday, 19 June 2012

Abdi said "You think no one can see us!" An Egyptian Vulture and a Somali Crow ("Dwarf Raven") had certainly spotted us and flew in to feast off our leftover breakfast rice. Then we set off further north for another long, slow drive through wide vistas of semi-desert and grassland towards Erigavo, breaking the journey only at lunch at a town called Ceel Afwein (wide well). We saw a Scissor-tailed Kite flying over the grassland just before entering town. All parched, flat country despite the increasing altitude, over 1500m by our evening stop at a vlei (drainage line) about 25km south of Erigavo – an oasis of tall Acacia trees, a reservoir and many small pools (with water in them!) and Desert Warthog running around. I'd hoped to press on to town, since our faces and hair were matted with dust from the drive and it was quite cold, but gave in to Abdi especially since the site was so beautiful. And within 20 minutes of stopping, we had a good find, flushing a pair of Harlequin Quail a couple of times from grass near some of the pools (according to the field guide, this species is not known from this part of Somaliland). A cold, windy night, in the middle of which I was woken up by an animal that was pressing up hard against my leg for the warmth—my first reaction was to burst out laughing and the creature ran off. The next morning, Abdi saw a couple of Golden Jackal nearby, and he has seen them do this before.

Wednesday, 20 June 2012

Up at dawn to try to track down the Harlequin Quail, which was calling. Abdi and I got quite close but could not find the male, which may have been hidden inside long grass. However, the female flew in and landed in shorter grass quite close to us, and I took a few poor shots of it running around.

An early start to finish the drive to Erigavo (also written Ceerigabo), the capital of Sanaag province (although quite a small town). We had to meet with the provincial Governor, who signed off on our trip, the forestry office and the police chief, who disappointed Abdi (to say the least) by refusing to let us stay in the Daalo forest area. Although they relented the next day, we had to commute back to Erigavo that evening, not the nicest town to stay in, only 20km but a painful drive of more than an hour on a terrible road.

In any case, we resolved to make the best use of the afternoon and drove to the Daalo overlook, a spectacular view from the top of cliffs down towards the coast, and way too vertiginous for me close to the edge of the cliffs. From the barrier at the entrance to the park, you can see the Somali race of Mourning Wheatear (or Abyssinian Black Wheatear, depending on your taxonomic preference), and from there up it is what I think is open box scrub with scattered tall juniper trees and some large open grassy patches. Mostly rocky ground, without much of a real forest soil. We were in positive mood, since we could see large banks of blue-flowering Somalian Mountain Sage, and Abdi normally sees the Warsangli Linnets only when this flower is in bloom. After parking at the overlook, we went for a midday walk of a couple of hours but birdwatching was very slow—one or two Brown-rumped Seedeater and little else. But just before returning to the car, we finally found a single Somali Thrush perched near the top of a rather distant juniper, then flushed a few Warsangli Linnets from a bank of sage near where we had parked the car—unmistakeable and a bit butterfly-like with their black and white wings as they flit between the shrubs.

This is near the edge of Warsangli country, a different clan to the Isaaq that dominate most of Somaliland, so Abdi organizes some extra security from the local clan in this area. We were also accompanied for lunch by a few Fan-tailed Raven and Somali Starlings at the top of the cliffs, and some more Warsangli Linnets came quite close to our lunch spot, allowing close approach and some photos.

Before a disappointingly early return to Erigavo, we decided to drop Zeinab off at a village about 5km down the road towards the coast, so we could meet her early the next morning, then back to a night at the Spartan Sanaag Hotel in Erigavo – basic but clean rooms, but with a variety of arthropods in the shower.

Thursday, 21 June 2012

A 6am start from Erigavo to get to the forest as early as possible, but first a one hour drive through the dry plains north of town, with Hoopoe, White-crowned Starling but little else. After the pass, the road starts descending into a gully and a more open area with large banks of sage. We got out briefly and saw

many Warsangli Linnet, a pair of the Daalo race of Black-crowned Tchagra, and some cisticola with some rufous on the crown, which I suppose must be Desert Cisticola despite the unusual habitat. Daalo must also be one of the few places you can see Somali Tit in a forested area. The road then descends into more open scrub with scattered junipers and lots of dragons blood trees. Just before the settlement Zeinab stayed at is a dry gully with fig trees, which were being attacked by Bruce's Green-Pigeon, Somali Thrush and Somali Starling. Abdi has once seen a Narina Trogon in this gully, but we weren't so lucky. We spend the rest of the morning walking up and down the road, built during the time of the British Somaliland Protectorate and even including an impressive tunnel. In the afternoon, we drove several kilometers down to Acacia scrub at about 1000m to a spot where Abdi often sees Archer's Buzzard, but all we could find were soaring Egyptian Vultures, and Yellow- and Red-billed Hornbills.

Spent the night below the Daalo cliffs at a homestead owned by our local security extras, one of whom was cousin of the police chief and convinced him to let us stay outside town. But we faced the strongest night of wind yet, making sleep impossible.

Friday, 22 June 2012

Walked up the road after dawn, and quite soon lucked into a single Somali Grosbeak perched in tangled branches of a juniper just above the highest hairpin bend. It only stayed for 15 seconds or so before flying off (Abdi saw two birds flying off, but didn't get onto them), and we never refound them. Abdi sees this species slightly down from here, between the hairpin bend and the gully, and they are invariably perched in mature juniper trees. He hasn't seen them further up in the more "forested" areas of juniper above the cliffs, and he also hasn't seen them himself at lower altitudes (despite camping many areas further down the road). This scarce bird is quite a mystery, and many groups miss it. He's only seen good numbers once with a South African group that attracted some in from the canyon in the early morning with a tape of a related species (Arabian Grosbeak, maybe). The altitudes here (about 1800m) are higher than the core altitudinal range in the Horn of Africa field guide, which says Somali Grosbeak inhabits rocky country with thorn bushes and Euphorbia up to at least 1400m. We'd hardly seen a single Euphorbia on our drive to lower altitudes the previous afternoon. I wonder if there's a favourite feeding area somewhere off the road, and the birds roost in the canyon at Daalo and commute?

In the afternoon, decided to drive up to spend a chilly night in the woodland above the viewpoint at Daalo. Strangely, the Warsangli Linnet, which had been abundant two days earlier, were completely absent. A couple of groups have seen Archer's (Orange River) Francolin up here, but we were unsuccessful either this evening or the next morning, although we saw a few of the commoner Yellow-necked Spurfowl. Some African Scops-Owl were also calling in the late afternoon and after dark, before the wind picked up – some observers (more discerning than me) feel the call is different to other populations, and I think they are trying to document this as a separate subspecies.

Saturday, 23 June 2012

After walking around a couple of hours, we packed up for a marathon drive back west, stopping briefly in Erigavo then continuing through the plains without stopping much except for a Somali-race Little Owl perched on rocks by the side of the road about 50km past Erigavo, greasy goat for lunch again at Ceel Afwein, and to chew more fat over sweet tea with camel milk with the elders at the village of Fadhigab (near the spot in the plains we had camped the Monday night). 10km before the local capital of Garadag (also a small place), a car with two men visible aroused the suspicion of our SPU escort, which told Abdi to take a wide detour through the desert off-road while they walked between us and the parked car. Much further along, as it was getting dark, we found two older men and three girls standing next to a small four wheel drive that had flipped over after skidding on the sand into an unfortunate Commiphora bush (now uprooted). Remarkably, none of the passengers was unhurt, but we stayed while Abdi used his tow rop to put the car the right way up. We finally hit the tarmac road well after dark and arrived at the Burao City Plaza lodge at 11pm, with Abdi struggling to stay awake at the wheel. At US\$ 20 a night, with a white UNICEF Landcruiser in the car park, and a huge plate of chicken and rice, it seemed the height of luxury.

Sunday, 24 June 2012

Today's agenda was a drive to the Arori Plains, about 20km west of Burao. The road from Burao west to Hargeisa—the two largest towns in Somaliland—is still a dirt track, but the first part was blocked off, seemingly in preparation for some upgrading work, and we had to work out a confusing detour through the western part of Burao. For the first 10km or so, we travelled through Acacia bush, with flocks of Magpie Starling and the odd Northern Carmine Bee-eater, and stopped at a plot of land owned by a British-Somali family. Namaqua and Laughing Doves were coming to drink at a small pond that was almost dry, and Somali Sparrow, a Shikra, and a small group of Red-billed Quelea were perched in the trees around the edge of the pond. Continuing further west, the country opened up to another huge, open plain, where we spent the day and walked around for an hour or two. The common larks here are Somali Short-toed and Thekla, but we eventually found a rufous Somali Long-billed Lark running along the ground and perching occasionally on the tops of low shrubs. Plenty of Somali Coursers, a few Double-banded Courser (of the more rufous Somali race) and Somali Bee-eaters other good birds in this area. We also found a few Speke's Gazelle – Abdi has also seen Soemmering's Gazelle in this area too, which has reappeared after being hunted out during the war. Abdi said he danced with happiness the first time he saw it!

Evening, including roosting Chestnut and Lesser-Masked Weavers and a disappointing England-Italy soccer game at Euro 2012, at the City Plaza Hotel in Burao.

Monday, 25 June 2012

Used the early morning with a few hours in the Acacia bush west of Burao, where Abdi suffered the indignity of collapsing into an aardvark burrow! Then back through town to drive back over the pass at Shikh village towards Berbera. Abdi has seen Gambaga Flycatcher and Sombre Chat at the pass here, but we didn't stop this time. Arrived back at our Bosti Hills campsite about 2pm, scorching hot, and spent the afternoon trying to stay cool and not move to much, before a walk back to the canyon where we found more Somali Pigeon, a couple of *archeri* race Common Kestrel, and some Rock Martin.

Tuesday, 26 June 2012

Woke up with African Collared-Dove walking around our campsite, and a pair of Somali Starling perching on Abdi's landcruiser, chattering and peering into his wing mirrors. Still time for one new bird on the drive back to Burao—groups of Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark (which replaces Chestnut-headed in the coastal desert regions). Arriving at the airport, a Yellow-breasted Barbet flew into a hole in the terminal building, right next to the entrance door to Departures, then emerged and sat on a small Acacia nearby.

Still not home and dry... once the plane had taken off, we received the second most dreaded in-flight announcement over the PA... "Welcome to East African Safari Express flight to Nairobi, via Mogadishu". Approaching the city, the plane flies out over the ocean, then banks and descends steeply to land on the coastal airstrip right next to the beach. After a 45 min transit in Mogadishu, the plane then had to make another stop, at the small town of Wajir in north-eastern Kenya, where the Kenyan authorities have organized a separate facility for immigration and security clearance for guests from Somalia. Then finally another long wait in Nairobi airport when they re-check the passenger list and every corner of the bags the passengers are bringing in.

Trip list

- Crested Francolin—5 (Acacia woodland east of Inaafmadobe and west of Burao)
- Yellow-necked Francolin—about 10 (most at Daalo and below, one at Bosti Hills)
- Harlequin Quail—2 (in a drainage line with pools about 25km south of Erigavo)
- 1 distant pelican at Berbera (Abdi says they are Great White here)
- Western Reef-Heron—1 (Berbera)
- Sacred Ibis—about 40 (Berbera)
- Black Kite—2 (Berbera)
- Scissor-tailed Kite—1 (Ban Cade plains)

- Egyptian Vulture—about 25 (Oog village, Ban Cade plains, Erigavo town, Daalo and below)
- Eastern Chanting-Goshawk—3 (near Burao, Ban Cade plains)
- Shikra—1 (Acacia woodland west of Burao)
- Archer's Buzzard—1 (Bosti Hills)
- Verreaux's Eagle—2 (Daalo)
- Secretary-bird—4 (two south of Erigavo, two on Arori plains west of Burao)
- Eurasian Kestrel—3 (two in a canyon at Bosti Hills, one by the roadside en route to Shikh village)
- Greater Kestrel—2 (plains just south of Erigavo)
- Lanner Falcon—1 (Ban Cade plains)
- Barbary Falcon—1 (Daalo)
- Kori Bustard—1 (Arori plains... Abdi was pleased to see this further east than expected)
- Heuglin's Bustard—2 (Ban Cade plains, both males)
- Little Brown Bustard—about 15 (north of Burao, Inaafmadobe, and plains south of Erigavo)
- Buff-crested Bustard—4 (bush country between Burao and our camp spot east of Inaafmadobe)
- Spur-winged Plover—2 (reservoir at the drainage line 25km south of Erigavo)
- Crowned Lapwing—about 12 (Arori plains, Inaafmadobe, Ban Cade plains, plains south of Erigavo)
- Black-bellied Plover—8 (on the beach west of Berbera)
- Somali Courser—about 20 (plains: Arori, Ban Cade to Erigavo)
- Double-banded Courser—4 (Arori and Ban Cade plains)
- White-eyed Gull—2 (Berbera)
- Sooty Gull—8 (Berbera)
- Lesser Crested-Tern—2 (Berbera)
- Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse—about 40 (from Berbera to bush country west of Burao and Ban Cade)
- Somali Pigeon—about 8 (Bosti Hills)
- Speckled Pigeon—about 70

- Rameron Pigeon—3 (Daalo)
- African Collared-Dove—about 20 (Bosti Hills)
- Red-eyed Dove—about 10 (Daalo and below)
- Ring-necked Dove—about 200 (between Burao and Erigavo)
- Laughing Dove—about 40 (mostly towns)
- Namaqua Dove—about 100
- Bruce's Green-Pigeon—6 (below Daalo)
- Red-bellied Parrot—heard in Acacia grove east of Inaafmadobe
- White-bellied Go-away-bird—2 east of Inaafmadobe, heard west of Burao and below Daalo
- Dideric Cuckoo—heard west of Burao
- African Scops-Owl—heard at Daalo
- Little Owl—1 about 50km south of Erigavo
- Alpine Swift—about 20 (at Daalo, also seen throughout the plains from Arori to Erigavo)
- Nyanza Swift—about 55 (multiple sites, including in the plains)
- Little Swift—4 (bush country around Inaafmadobe)
- Blue-naped Mousebird—12
- Little Bee-eater—2 (Bosti Hills)
- White-throated Bee-eater—8 (Bosti Hills)
- Somali Bee-eater—8 (near Burao, Arori, Inaafmadobe)
- Northern Carmine Bee-eater—30 (bush country west of Burao east to Oog)
- Rufous-crowned Roller—1 (Daalo)
- Eurasian Hoopoe—about 15 (mostly plains from Arori to Erigavo)
- Black-billed Woodhoopoe—1 (edge of Erigavo town)
- Abyssinian Scimitar-bill—2 (Acacia grove campsite east of Inaafmadobe)
- Northern Red-billed Hornbill—about 10 (east of Inaafmadobe, below Daalo)

- Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill—3 (Bosti Hills, below Daalo)
- Hemprich's Hornbill—1 (Daalo)
- Red-and-yellow Barbet—1 (east of Inaafmadobe)
- Yellow-breasted Barbet—2 (Berbera airport and on the escarpment towards Shikh village)
- Red-fronted Tinkerbird—a few heard at Daalo
- Black-throated Barbet—1 (east of Inaafmadobe)
- Greater Honeyguide—a male below Daalo making a kind of chattering call and, I think, trying to lead us to a beehive
- Grey-headed Batis—5 (bush west of Burao, Acacia woodland south of Erigavo, below Daalo)
- Pygmy Batis—2 (Acacia grove east of Inaafmadobe)
- Brubru—2 (Acacia grove east of Inaafmadobe)
- Black-crowned Tchagra—2 (Daalo)
- Red-naped Bushshrike—1 (Acacia grove east of Inaafmadobe)
- Rosy-patched Bushshrike—heard north of Erigavo
- Southern Grey Shrike—1 (Arori plains)
- Somali Fiscal—about 25
- Fork-tailed Drongo—about 50 (from Burao to Daalo)
- African Paradise-Flycatcher—8 (Daalo and below)
- Somali Crow—about 100 (plains from Arori to Erigavo)
- Fan-tailed Raven—5 (Daalo)
- Somali Long-billed Lark—2 (Arori plains)
- Gillett's Lark—2 (east of Inaafmadobe)
- Greater Hoopoe-Lark—3 (near Berbera)
- Lesser Hoopoe-Lark—about 40 (one Arori plains, the rest at Ban Cade plains)
- Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark—about 10 (south of Berbera)
- Chestnut-headed Sparrow-Lark—about 200 (Arori and Ban Cade plains)

- Desert Lark—6 (Bosti Hills, Inaafmadobe)
- Somali Short-toed Lark—about 40 (Arori and Ban Cade plains)
- Short-tailed Lark—about 15 (Ban Cade plains)
- Thekla Lark—about 40 (Arori and Ban Cade plains)
- Rock Martin—about 20 (Daalo and Bosti Hills)
- Ethiopian Swallow—about 100 (throughout the plains)
- Red-rumped Swallow—4 (Daalo)
- Somali Tit—6 (east of Inaafmadobe, Daalo forest)
- Common Bulbul—about 60
- Northern Crombec—1 (Bosti Hills)
- Short-billed Crombec—2 (east of Inaafmadobe)
- Brown Woodland-Warbler—6 (Daalo and below)
- Yellow-breasted Apalis—2 (Acacia woodland east of Inaafmadobe and south of Erigavo)
- Green-backed Camaroptera—2 and many heard below Daalo
- Red-fronted Warbler—5 (east of Inaafmadobe)
- Grey Wren-Warbler—4 (east of Inaafmadobe)
- Desert Cisticola—4 (Ban Cade plains, Arori and Daalo)
- Red Sea Warbler—4 (Bosti Hills and east of Inaafmadobe)
- Banded Warbler—6 (Acacia woodland east of Inaafmadobe and south of Erigavo)
- White-breasted White-eye—about 60 (mostly Daalo, one at the pass near Shikh village)
- Grayish Flycatcher—2 (Acacia woodland east of Inaafmadobe and west of Burao)
- African Scrub-Robin—2 (Bosti Hills)
- Red-backed Scrub-Robin—8 (Acacia woods west of Burao and east of Inaafmadobe)
- Little Rock-Thrush—about 10 (Daalo and below)
- Blackstart—about 15 (Bosti Hills, and near Erigavo)

- Somali Wheatear—about 15 (rocky areas from Inaafmadobe to Erigavo)
- Mourning Wheatear—about 15 (Daalo)
- Somali Thrush—about 15 (Daalo and below)
- Golden-breasted Starling—about 30 (between Burao and Oog)
- Superb Starling—about 30 (from Arori plains to Inaafmadobe)
- White-crowned Starling—about 70 (mostly towns and houses, from Arori to north of Erigavo)
- Somali Starling—about 85
- Magpie Starling—about 70 (bush country from west of Burao to Erigavo)
- Red-billed Oxpecker—3
- Nile Valley Sunbird—about 10 (Berbera and Bosti Hills)
- Shining Sunbird—about 85 (throughout)
- Variable Sunbird (white bellied race)—2 (Inaafmadobe, west of Burao)
- African Pipit—about 8 (Arori and Ban Cade plains)
- Long-billed Pipit—about 5 (Daalo)
- House Bunting—3 (Ban Cade plains)
- Cinnamon-breasted Bunting—6 (Acacia woodland south of Erigavo)
- Somali Bunting—4 (Acacia woodland east of Inaafmadobe)
- Warsangli Linnet—about 35 (Daalo and below)—they all looked exactly the same (“male type”)
- White-bellied Canary—1 (Acacia woodland south of Erigavo)
- Brown-rumped Seedeater—about 20 (Daalo)
- Somali Grosbeak—1 below Daalo (presumably a female: black face only, but with the conspicuous golden stripe down its wing)
- Somali Sparrow—4 (west of Burao, Ban Cade plains)
- Swainson’s Sparrow—about 5 (around Erigavo)
- Yellow-throated Petronia—2 (Acacia woodland east of Inaafmadobe)
- Red-billed Buffalo-Weaver—4 (Oog)

- White-headed Buffalo-Weaver—about 35 (west of Burao to Ban Cade plains)
- Lesser Masked-Weaver—about 10 (Burao City Plaza Hotel)
- Vitelline Masked-Weaver—4 (Acacia woodland east of Inaafmadobe)
- Chestnut Weaver—about 150 (Burao City Plaza Hotel)
- Red-billed Quelea—8 (west of Burao)
- Red-rumped Waxbill—3 (east of Inaafmadobe)
- Green-winged Pytilia—3 (Acacia east of Inaadmaobe, one below Daalo)
- Cut-throat—1 (Acacia woodland south of Erigavo)
- Eastern Paradise-Whydah—2 males (west of Burao)
- Hamadryas Baboon—about 30
- Unstriped Ground-Squirrel—about 15
- Speke's Pectinator—about 10 (most at Daalo, one at Bosti Hills)
- Cape Hare—about 10
- Golden Jackal—1 (Ban Cade plains) +my possible nocturnal companion and one other Abdi saw south of Erigavo
- Banded Mongoose—1 (Daalo)
- Desert Warthog—about 15
- Dorcas Gazelle—1 (Bosti Hills)
- Speke's Gazelle—about 50 (open plains: Arori, Ban Cade, south of Erigavo)
- Salt's Dik-Dik—about 20
- Rock Hyrax—1 (Daalo)
- Leopard Tortoise—2
- Savanna Monitor—3