

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

1st to 15th February 2020 (15 days)



ETHIOPIA

from the Rift Valley to the Bale Mountains

NEW
ITINERARY
FOR 2020

Ethiopia is often called *The Roof of Africa*, and is amongst the continent's most exciting wildlife destinations. Our itinerary will take us through a range of habitats, from mountain peaks and forests to desert plains.

The extensive highlands are the largest mountain block in Africa, home to Gelada Baboon, an impressive but gentle primate to be found grazing the escarpment slopes in troops of hundreds of individuals. Other specialities include Mountain Nyala, Giant Mole Rat and around 30 bird species confined to this dramatic region, such as Rouget's Rail, Blue-winged Goose and the handsome Spot-breasted Lapwing. But these scenic mountains are perhaps most famously home to the **Ethiopian Wolf**, probably the world's rarest carnivore with as few as 200 mature animals, of which half are found in the Bale National Park, where we will spend time looking for (and hopefully watching!) these magnificent, and highly endangered animals as they hunt amidst giant lobelias.

The **Great Rift Valley** scythes the highlands down the middle. Dotted with lakes and covered in arid savanna and grasslands rich in wildlife, with 'familiar' East African species combining with the more localised species as well as the influx of European and Central Asian migrants here for the winter, to create not only a distinctive mix, but also a diverse one. In Awash National Park we will look for local specialities such as Northern Gerenuk, Lesser Kudu and Beisa Oryx, Arabian Bustard and Somali Ostrich.

Our time in Ethiopia will be a truly wildlife-filled experience in an unusual country, combining endemic birds, unrivalled scenery, unique mammals and fascinating cultures, a long-awaited trip not to be missed!



Price
£4815

Single Room Supplement
£350

Full board

Day 1 flight to Addis Ababa
Day 2 Suluta Plains
Day 3 Jemmu Valley
Day 4 Melka Ghebdu
Day 5 drive to Belen
Day 6-7 Awash NP & Belen
Day 8 drive thru Rift Valley
Day 9-11 Bale NP & Sanetti
Day 12 Gaysay grasslands transfer to Awassa
Day 13 Awassa area
Day 14 drive to Addis, depart
Day 15 arrive UK

Leaders
Philip Precey
and local guide

Endemic wildlife, from the Rift Valley to the Ethiopian highlands

Wildlife and culture holidays



Our profits are donated to the **Wildlife Trusts**



FOCUS OF INTEREST

This is one of our 'Easy birding and wildlife' trips which means that the itinerary is based mainly on birds and/or other animals (rather than plants or general wildlife) and this also reflects the knowledge of the leaders and guides. However, as with all of our trips, the pace is comfortable with time to enjoy other aspects of the natural history, rather than rushing from one place to another for specific species.



ITINERARY

The exact itinerary will depend upon local conditions, in particular the state of the flood waters and the weather. The itinerary may change at the discretion of the leader or local guides.

Day 1 Our flights take us via Frankfurt to Addis Ababa, arriving in the evening.

Day 2 After an introduction to our trip, and our first introduction to the birdlife of Ethiopia in the gardens of our hotel, where sunbirds feed amongst the flowers, and Wattled Ibis may be the first of many endemics, we will set off north east.

Our route takes us across the grassy highlands of the Sululta Plain, before we arrive at the Jemma Valley escarpment, and hopefully our first encounter with **Gelada Baboons** as they graze the slopes in troops of several hundred animals. o/n Debre Libanos

Day 3 An early start will take us down into the Jemma Valley, part of the **Blue Nile** catchment. The rocky slopes are home to Harwood's Francolin, restricted to this tiny corner of Ethiopia, while the valley will give us our first taste of the **Great Rift**, before we head back up to the plateau, home to the handsome Spot-breasted Lapwing. o/n Debre Birhan

Day 4 This morning we head down from the **Ankober escarpment** to the Melka Ghebdu stream, where we will look for the Yellow-throated Seedeater, a bird only rediscovered in 1989, with a total population of as few as 350 individuals. In the afternoon we climb back up the escarpment to misty Ankober, home to the endemic Ankober Serin. We also hope to spend more time with the gentle Geladas here on the escarpment. o/n Debre Birhan

Day 5 A travel day will take us back to Addis and then eastwards towards the **Awash National Park**. o/n Bilen

Days 6/7 We will spend two days in the Awash area. The National Park is home to a good **variety of 'game'**, including Beisa Oryx, Salt's Dikdik, Soemmering's Gazelle, Lesser Kudu and the long-necked Gerenuk, along with Bat-eared Fox, Grivet Monkey and both Olive and Hamadryas Baboons. Amongst the abundant birdlife we hope to find the lovely blue-necked Somali Ostrich and Arabian Bustard.

Day 8 Back on the road, this time heading southwards, via a series of **Rift Valley lakes**, where we will look for various waterbirds, as well as the uninspiringly-named Sombre Rock Chat on an area of impressive lava flows. o/n Lake Langano

Days 9-11 After some morning birding around the lodge grounds, where we may find Clapperton's Francolin, Red-throated Wryneck and Northern White-faced Owl amongst others, we will set off towards the **Bale Mountains National Park** and the Sanetti Plateau. Here the Hagenia forests support Abyssinian Owl and Abyssinian Catbird, while the open grasslands of the high plateau, dotted with Giant Lobelias, are home to Blue-winged Goose, Rouget's Rail and Thick-billed Raven, along with Mountain Nyala, Ethiopian Klipspringer, Starck's Hare and the rare Bale Monkey. However, chief amongst our targets here is surely the elegant (and Critically Endangered) **Ethiopian Wolf**. The Park is home to around 100 of these beautiful canids, half the world's total population, and we will put the effort in to catch up with them as they hunt Giant Mole Rats on the plateau grasslands. o/n Goba

Day 12 After some morning birding, enjoying the high-altitude scenery and hoping perhaps for that one last sighting of a Wolf, we set off, travelling via the Gaysay Grasslands, home to abundant Bohor Reedbuck, Menelik Bushbuck, Serval and Warthogs, to our next hotel, on the shores of Lake Awassa. o/n Awassa

Day 13 The grounds of our hotel are rich in birdlife, with African Spotted Creeper and Northern Carmine Bee-eater amongst the hoped-for species, while families of Guereza Colobus can be found in the trees. The nearby Lake Awassa supports a **plethora of wetland birds**, including various herons, ducks, pelicans and waders, as well as African Fish Eagle and Hippopotamus.

Local conditions permitting, we also hope to visit the nearby Senkelle Sanctuary, where we will look for **Swayne's Hartebeest**, another Critically Endangered endemic, with a world population of around 500 animals, along with the delicate Sudan Oribi. o/n Awassa

Day 14 Our time is almost up, and today we spend the day heading northwards back along the Rift Valley, making a few stops along the way, before arriving back in Addis Ababa, with time for one last delicious Ethiopian dinner before our flights home, via Frankfurt, arriving back in the UK early on **Day 15**.

Visas

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months from the date of entry into Ethiopia, with at least two blank pages. UK passport holders can obtain a tourist visa for Ethiopia on arrival at Addis Ababa airport, at a cost of \$50 USD, together with a recent passport-sized photograph. Alternatively you can obtain your visa prior to travelling by visiting <https://www.evisa.gov.et>

If you hold a non UK passport, please check with the appropriate embassy or consulate.

Health and Fitness

You should consult your GP for advice on travel health as soon as possible, at least 8 weeks before the trip.

Travellers should be up to date on the routine vaccinations as recommended in the UK, including MMR, tetanus, diphtheria and polio. Vaccinations for hepatitis A and typhoid are recommended for most travellers visiting Ethiopia, and you may also want to consider vaccinations for cholera, hepatitis B, rabies and meningococcal meningitis. **We will be visiting areas where both malaria and yellow fever are present.**

This holiday does not involve any strenuous walking.

We will be visiting **high altitudes**, mostly around 2500-3000m but up to around **4100m** on Sanetti Plateau. Our accommodation is all lower than 3000m. If you have any reason to believe that you will be adversely affected at altitude, please consult your doctor prior to booking.

Please see the General Information leaflet for health and fitness requirements.

Travel

We travel by comfortable coaster minibus, well suited to wildlife spotting, with big windows and plenty of space to move about. The maximum group size will be 12 people.



Leaders and guides

Philip Precey is a Director of Wildlife Travel and has led many of our trips including previous African trips to South Africa, Botswana, Madagascar, Tanzania and Morocco. Never far from his binoculars, Philip will ensure you enjoy all aspects of the wildlife we encounter. We will be accompanied by one of Ethiopia's best local wildlife guides throughout the trip.

Flights

The group flights are with Lufthansa from London Heathrow.

1st February	LH925	depart London Heathrow 07.30, arrive Frankfurt 10.05
	LH598	depart Frankfurt 13.00, arrive Addis Ababa 21.45
14th February	LH599	depart Addis Ababa 23.45, arrive Frankfurt 05.25 (15th)
15th February	LH924	depart Frankfurt 07.00, arrive London Heathrow 07.45

It is also possible to fly from Manchester, joining the group flights in Frankfurt.

Ethiopia is 3 hours ahead of GMT: Germany is one hour ahead of GMT.

Weather

We will be travelling during the dry season, although there is always a chance of some rain. We can expect hot days (c30 degrees) in the lowlands, and cooler conditions in the highlands, where we spend most of our time. Nights and early mornings can be surprisingly cold.

Accommodation

Accommodation in Ethiopia has improved greatly in recent years. All our hotels will be clean and comfortable, if at times a little basic, with private facilities. We are catered on a 'full board' basis, with a mixture of international and local cuisine.



TO BOOK

Contact us to check availability and reserve a place. Complete the Booking Form and send to Sunvil Holidays (CAA-ATOL Licence 808, ABTA V6218), our tour operator, with your deposit. All details about booking are given in the Booking Pack.

**DEPOSIT PER PERSON £1500, SECOND INSTALLMENT ON
CONFIRMATION OF HOLIDAY £1000.
BALANCE DUE BY 2nd November 2019**

INCLUDED: Return flights from the UK, including airport taxes. Local transport as specified in itinerary. 12 night's accommodation, full board basis. Services of leaders and local guides.

NOT INCLUDED: Visa for entry into Ethiopia (c\$50 US). Drinks with evening meals and refreshments (although most lodges are all inclusive). Gratuities. Travel insurance.

WILDLIFE TRAVEL

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Photos courtesy Birding Africa, except Sudan Oribe (Philip Precey) and Bale Mountains National Park courtesy Flickr user Ron Knight (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/sussexbirder/>)