

Ghana's Highlights

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

Day 1	Depart London and overnight Accra
Day 2/4	Rainforest Lodge, Kakum National Park
Day 5/7	Ankasa Forest
Day 8	Rainforest Lodge, Kakum National Park
Day 9	Picathartes Forest
Day 10/12	Mole National Park
Day 13	Depart Accra
Day 14	Arrive London

Focus

Birds, mammals & other wildlife

Grading

Grade B - Moderate day walks, and some night walks in search of nocturnal mammals. Good general fitness required

Dates and Prices

See website (tour code GHA02) or brochure

Highlights

- Visit a Yellow-headed Picathartes colony
- Africa's highest canopy walkway in Kakum NP
- Rufous-sided Broadbill, Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, White-crested Hornbill & Akun Eagle-Owl possible
- Great Blue Turaco, White-bellied Kingfisher, Hartlaub's Duck & the legendary Nkulengu Rail possible
- Chance of elusive forest mammals including Potto & Long-tailed Pangolin
- Egyptian Plover on the White Volta River



From top: Yellow-headed Picathartes, Egyptian Plover, Lesser Spot-nose Monkey Images courtesy of Lucas Lombardo, Ashanti and Matt Roper



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Introduction

Home to over 750 species of birds, and some of the region's healthiest populations of mammals, Ghana is rapidly becoming West Africa's premiere wildlife destination. This small tropical country - known in the past as the 'Gold Coast' - is now widely recognised as a friendly and safe destination to visit and is blessed with a diverse range of exciting habitats, from the lush tropical rainforest of the south to the more classically African bushveld of the north. This 14-day tour, focusing on birds, mammals and other wildlife, will take you through the best of these habitats, concentrating on the rich Upper Guinea forests of Ghana's south-west, and the savannahs of the vast Mole National Park in the north.



Amongst an exciting range of birdlife in the vicinity of Kakum National Park, which may include Rosy Bee-eater, Congo Serpent Eagle, Black Dwarf Hornbill and the little known Brown Nightjar, we will be looking for the bizarre and elusive Yellow-headed Picathartes (recently re-classified as White-necked Rockfowl). This remarkable bird – one of the world's most sought-after species – was only discovered breeding in Ghana in 2005, but the country is now the best place in the world to see it.

Ankasa Forest, near the border with Ivory Coast, protects some of West Africa's most exciting rainforest birds, including Hartlaub's Duck, White-bellied Kingfisher and Great Blue Turaco, while Ghana is also one of the last strongholds for a variety of threatened mammals, including Potto and the extraordinary Long-tailed Pangolin, although they remain elusive. In the north, Mole National Park is home to West Africa's largest mammal herds – Kob, Waterbuck and African Bush Elephant amongst them – as well as an abundance of savannah birds, including Abyssinian Ground Hornbill, Greyish Eagle-Owl, Standard-winged Nightjar and the sought-after Forbes's Plover. Nearby, the White Volta River supports a population of Egyptian Plover, another of Africa's most desirable birds.

Itinerary

Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

Day 1

Depart London

We depart London's Heathrow airport on an early afternoon British Airways scheduled service to Accra, the capital city of Ghana, arriving mid-evening. After clearing immigration and customs we will meet our local guide and transfer to a comfortable hotel for the night.

Day 2

Rainforest Lodge, Kakum NP

We will begin our holiday early with a visit to the Shai Hills reserve, an interesting expanse of savannah, grassland and woodland. The bird watching here is excellent and we will hope to find African Grey Hornbill, African Hobby, Violet Turaco, White-crowned Cliff Chat, Senegal Parrot, Croaking Cisticola, White-crowned Robin-chat and many more. After a late breakfast, we will visit the nearby Sakumona Lagoon (if water levels are suitable), in search of Black and Green-backed Herons, Reed Cormorant, Garganey, Black-winged Stilt, Collared Pratincole, African Spoonbill and Senegal Thick-knee amongst others. After some leisurely birding here, we will head west, leaving the busy city of Accra far behind. Our destination is the amazing Kakum National Park on the palm-fringed Cape Coast. En route, we will stop at a second grassland reserve and lagoon to look for Zitting and Short-winged Cisticolas, Copper Sunbird, Flappet Lark, Red-winged Prinia, Yellow-Mantled Widowbird, Black-necked Weaver, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Orange-cheeked Waxbill, Moustached Grass Warbler, displaying Black-winged Red Bishops, Black-crowned Tchagra and Black-bellied Bustard.

Around the lagoon, we also hope to see African Swamphen, African Pygmy Goose, Western Reef Egret, Yellow Bishop and Preuss's Cliff Swallow before we arrive at Rainforest Lodge, our base for the next three nights whilst we explore Kakum National Park. Our hotel is a comfortable establishment located near the edge of the forest and only 10 kilometres from the national park. Finally, after a long and exciting day we can retreat to our air-conditioned rooms, and after discussing the day's sightings over dinner, retire to bed.

Days 3 & 4

Rainforest Lodge, Kakum NP



Canopy walkway, Kakum National Park

We will have two full days to explore the wonderful rainforests of Kakum National Park. On one day, we will make an early start in order to arrive at Kakum's world famous canopy walkway in the cool of the early hours. We will then spend the most critical bird-viewing hours 40 metres above the forest floor on the canopy walkway, whose platforms are large enough to support telescopes. The 607-square-kilometre Kakum National Park protects critically endangered primary Upper Guinea tropical rainforest and is

home to a variety of exciting forest birds. Species to look out for include Green Hylia, Violet-backed Hylia, Lemon-bellied Crombec, Little Grey Flycatcher, Grey-headed, White-breasted and Chestnut-breasted Nigrita, Grey Longbill, White-headed and Forest Woodhoopoes, West African

Batis, Western Bluebill, Blue Cuckoo-shrike, Red-billed Helmetshrike, Large-billed Puffback, Sharpe's Apalis, Rufous-crowned Eremomela, Brown-cheeked, Yellow-casqued, Black-casqued, Piping and Black Dwarf Hornbills, beautiful Preuss's Weaver, Red-headed and Red-vented Malimbos, Rosy Bee-eater, Yellow-spotted and Hairy-breasted Barbets, Red-fronted, Brown-necked and Grey Parrots and Velvet-mantled Drongo. Raptors may include Red-necked Buzzard, Palm-nut Vulture, African Cuckoo Hawk, Congo Serpent Eagle, Cassin's Hawk-Eagle and Long-tailed Hawk to mention just a few. Troops of monkeys are sometimes observed here too, including Olive Colobus, Lowe's and Lesser Spot-nosed Monkeys, and can allow intimate eye-level views. In the morning Long-tailed Pangolins are occasionally seen from the walkway as they sun themselves in the canopy – our guides will be keeping a close eye out for this species during our time in Kakum, as this is one of the best places in the world to see this bizarre and highly threatened species. A dusk visit to the canopy walkway could also produce sightings of the amazing Pel's Anomalure – a large, strikingly patterned flying squirrel – or perhaps the poorly known Brown Nightjar. Other possible nocturnal creatures include several owls – Fraser's Eagle-Owl, African Wood Owl, and the near-mythical Akun Eagle-Owl – alongside elusive mammals such as West African Potto, Emin's Forest Giant Pouched Rat, and Western Tree Hyrax (whose repetitive shrieking call is typical of the rainforest night).

While in Kakum, during the heat of mid-afternoon we will have the option of birding around the forest near our hotel or resting alongside the hotel pool and bar. At other times we will concentrate our attention on the many trails within and surrounding the park. During our time here we should be on the lookout for White-tailed Alethe, Grey-headed, Red and Green-tailed Bristlebills, Olive-bellied Sunbird, Blue-headed Wood Dove, Red-rumped Tinkerbird, Black Dwarf and Red-billed Dwarf Hornbills, Finches Flycatcher, Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, Pale-breasted Illadopsis, Forest Robin, Red-chested Goshawk, Yellow-billed and Guinea Turacos, Long-tailed Hawk, Fire-bellied and Gabon Woodpeckers, Black-throated Coucal, Western Black-headed Oriole, Congo Serpent Eagle, African Piculet, Forest Francolin, Forest Scrub-robin and Spotted Honeyguide.

Another productive area is the Antwikwaa section of Kakum National Park, which is a transitional zone between the primary forest and more disturbed open areas. Here, in addition to many of the birds outlined above, we will also be on the lookout for White-throated, Rosy and Black Bee-eaters, Blue-throated Roller, Piping and White-crested Hornbills, Red and Yellow-rumped Tinkerbirds, Kemp's and Grey Longbills, Ussher's and Fraser's Forest Flycatchers, White-spotted Flufftail and Spot-breasted Ibis, while a visit to a nearby river should produce Rock Pratincole and the stunning White-throated Blue Swallow.



Black Bee-eater, by Dick Forsman

Amongst the mammals we hope to see are Long-tailed and Tree Pangolins, West African Potto, Demidoff's Galago, Common Cusimanse (a rainforest mongoose), Pel's and Lord Derby's

Anomalures and Maxwell's Duiker; these efforts will include a good deal of spotlighting, both before dawn and after dusk to maximise our chances of success (optional, and when local conditions allow). Please note that night walks in Kakum can be hard over rough terrain and dense vegetation, but they provide the better mammal viewing opportunities.

Day 5

Ankasa Paradise Lodge, Ankasa Forest

This morning, we will concentrate our time on the farmland scrub, forest edge and forest trails at Abrafo, a section of forest habitat near to Kakum National Park. Here, we will be hoping for a variety of new species, including anything we might have missed thus far. Pale Flycatcher, Black-and-white Mannikin, Brown-crowned Tchagra, Sooty Boubou, Puvel's Illadopsis, Olive-green Camaroptera, Red-faced and Whistling Cisticolas, Lesser Striped Swallow, Fanti Saw-wing, West African Wattle-eye, Naked-faced and Hairy-breasted Barbets, Fraser's and Little Green Sunbirds, Blue Malkoha, Red-cheeked Wattle-eye, Swamp Palm Bulbul, Northern Fiscal, Spotted Greenbul, Finsch's Flycatcher Thrush, Yellow-whiskered and Red-tailed Greenbuls, White-crested Hornbill, African Harrier Hawk and the more sought after difficult species include Long-tailed Hawk, Red-billed Helmetshrike, Rufous-sided Broadbill, Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, Congo Serpent Eagle, and Red-billed Hornbills.

After lunch, we will check out of our hotel and set off westwards for what should prove to be a major highlight of our time in Ghana. Our destination is the Ankasa Forest, Ghana's only wet evergreen rainforest that is in near-pristine condition. It is an exceptional forest in a remote location near the Ivory Coast border, and protects many rare and sought-after West African bird and mammal species.



Akun Eagle Owl, by Arthur Grosset

On our arrival at Ankasa, we will check into a pleasant lodge, situated on the banks of the river that marks the boundary of the forest reserve. This will be our base for three nights while we explore this remarkable forest. We will arrive in late afternoon, and after settling in we will set out for a short night walk, on which we will hope to see Fraser's and Akun Eagle-Owls. Your guide will also be looking (and listening) out for the bizarre and

legendary Nkulengu Rail, a species that was only photographed for the first time in 2011. Nocturnal mammals in Ankasa could include Demidoff's Galago, Western Tree Hyrax, Hammer-headed Fruit Bat, or even a Tree (or White-bellied) Pangolin, while large numbers of Straw-coloured Flying Foxes typically pour overhead at dusk.

Days 6 & 7

Ankasa Paradise Lodge, Ankasa Forest

We will have two full days to seek out the wonderful wildlife of Ankasa Forest. Your guide will be up before first light to listen out for the strange call of the Nkulengu Rail, and if he manages to

locate one then he will alert the group. Our lodge's location on the edge of the forest means we can begin birding as soon as we leave; after an early breakfast, we'll venture deeper into the reserve, with some of our main targets being the Upper Guinea endemics Yellow-bearded Greenbul, Rufous-winged Illadopsis and Green-tailed Bristlebill, in addition to Ansorge's, Icterine, Red-tailed and Western-bearded Greenbuls, Pale-breasted and Blackcap Illadopsis, Forest Robin, White-tailed Ant Thrush, White-tailed Alethe, Shining Drongo, Cassin's Flycatcher, Yellow-spotted Barbet, White-throated Bee-eater, Chestnut-breasted Nigrita, Blue-headed Wood Dove, Western Bronze-naped Pigeon, Yellow-billed and Great Blue Turacos, Black-capped Apalis, Grey-headed Bristlebill, Tiny Sunbird and Red-fronted Antpecker. The rare and much sought-after African Pitta has been seen here on a couple of occasions and we will look for this species during our time in the forest.



Some of the most exciting birding in Ankasa centres around a series of small ponds, deep within the forest. As we walk towards them, we will hope to see Crested Guinea fowl on the road (their much rarer relative, the White-breasted Guinea fowl, is a more remote possibility). At the ponds, our target birds will include some of West Africa's most desirable species, including Hartlaub's Duck, Dwarf Bittern, African Finfoot, Shining-blue, White-bellied, Blue-breasted and African Dwarf Kingfishers. A power line runs through the forest nearby, which will give us the opportunity to scan the sky for Crowned Eagle, Square-tailed Saw-wing, and huge Black-casqued and Yellow-casqued Hornbills. Ankasa is home to some more very rare species, and if we are very lucky (which we sometimes are!) we may encounter Spot-breasted Ibis, White-crested Tiger Heron, Grey-throated Rail, Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo, Forest Scrub Robin and Red-chested Owlet. Ankasa also supports a variety of exciting mammals, although most are similarly hard to see, with the possible exception of some of the monkeys and squirrels. We could see evidence of African Forest Elephant activity, including dung and footprints, while other rare residents, such as Bongo and Chimpanzee, have not been seen in a long time. Our evenings in Ankasa will be spent at our accommodation, enjoying the food and discussing the day's wildlife encounters over a cold, refreshing drink.

Day 8

Rainforest Lodge, Kakum NP

We will have a final morning to explore Ankasa, during which we will target any species we may have missed, or of which we would like a better view. We will return to the lodge for lunch and to pack our bags, before heading back towards Cape Coast. During the journey, there will be opportunities to stop for species rarely seen elsewhere in Ghana, including Reichenbach's and Mangrove Sunbirds, White-browed Forest Flycatcher, Orange Weaver, African Pygmy Goose and Little Grebe.

In the late afternoon, before our arrival at the lodge, we'll explore the coastal savannah plains at Brenu Akyinim. This area is home to some special birds such as Marsh Tchagra, Compact Weaver, Double-spurred Francolin, Oriole Warbler, Red-headed Quelea, Black-rumped Waxbill and Orange-breasted Bushshrike, while if we are lucky we may see Yellow-winged Pytilia, Wilson's Indigobird or perhaps a Slender Mongoose. We will arrive at the Rainforest Lodge, where we previously stayed, in time for dinner and our checklist.

Day 9

Picathartes Forest

Today should be a very exciting day, with our visit to the Yellow-headed Picathartes nesting site scheduled for the afternoon. We will check out of our hotel after an early breakfast and set off for Abrafo Forest, where we will be targeting any species we may still require from this habitat. After an excellent morning, we will set off northwards, stopping for lunch en-route and also on the banks of the Praa River, where we might see White-throated Blue Swallow and Rock Pratincole, before arriving at the remote village of Bonkro, which sits adjacent to the rainforest clad hills. These hills are home to more Yellow-headed Picathartes nesting sites than anywhere else in Ghana, and are part of a community forest reserve, rather than a formal protected area. Visitors to the Picathartes



Yellow-headed Picathartes, by Stavros

Forest pay into a conservation fund, which helps to protect the birds and their habitat from illegal hunting and logging activities. Our local agents in Ghana are currently sponsoring 24 community forest committee members to support these conservation activities, and your visit will help to ensure that the Yellow-headed Picathartes (and the many other species that share its home) survives long into

the future. Other projects include the construction of a school, reception centre and tourist accommodation, with all proceeds going directly to a community fund. These efforts seem to have convinced the local people of the forest's value – there has been a dramatic reduction in tree felling in recent years, and the Yellow-headed Picathartes population is happily increasing (see below for more about this).

There are around 13 nesting sites within this remote forest, and we will visit one of the largest colonies. As we leave the village, the forest gradually becomes denser and more mysterious, an experience which should add to the birds mythical reputation. Eventually, we will reach a large cave, where we will seat ourselves quietly on bamboo benches to await the arrival of the birds. As dusk approaches, the Yellow-headed Picathartes should return from a day spent foraging for snails and insects, and before long we will hope to be surrounded by these primeval birds as they hop around

the rocks. Seeing this wonderful bird should be amongst the most memorable of Ghana's highlights.

Of course, during our search we are likely to encounter other bird species, possibly including gems such as Blue Cuckooshrike, Ussher's Flycatcher, Buff-throated Sunbird, Tit-Hylia, Shrike Flycatcher, Superb and Little Green Sunbird, Sabine's Puffback, Lemon-bellied Crombec, and even African Pitta. This forest is also as good a location as any to see Long-tailed and Tree Pangolins.

Once we have enjoyed good views, we will leave the birds in peace and return to the village at a relaxed pace, searching for birds and mammals along the way. We will stay overnight in specially constructed tourist accommodation in Bonkro – spending the night amongst the people who protect the Picathartes should be a wonderful experience.

Day 10

Mole National Park

Today, we will aim to leave at around 0530, setting off towards Mole National Park – this is a long drive that will take most of the day, but we will make stops to see different species of birds as we head northwards, as the habitat changes to the drier broadleaved Guinea woodland and savannah. Your guides will be keeping an eye open for the many raptors we hope to see during our journey, which include Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, Grasshopper Buzzard, Yellow-billed Kite and Shikra amongst others.

After a lunch stop, we will continue our journey and make a detour to see another of Africa's most sought-after birds – the beautiful Egyptian Plover – at a site on the White Volta River. Due to the importance of this species, which has recently been placed in a family of its own, we will dedicate quality time to enjoying and photographing it in flight and walking along the sandy banks of the river. During our time here, we will be looking for any other species that occur before setting off on our final leg of around two hours to Mole National Park, Ghana's (and indeed West Africa's) premier game reserve.



Egyptian Plover

Mole is Ghana's largest national park, covering an area of 4847 square kilometres, and protecting over 330 species of bird and almost 100 species of mammal. We will stay for three nights at the unusually named Mole Motel. Situated on a 250-metre-high escarpment overlooking the park, it offers breathtaking views, as well as a swimming pool. Below the lodge is a series of waterholes, which are inhabited by crocodiles and where herds of African Bush Elephants often come to cool off; other species that are usually on view in the open grassland include Bushbuck, Waterbuck, Kob, Warthog, Green Monkey, Olive Baboon and the attractive Patas Monkey.

After dinner, we will set off with spotlights for the area around the abandoned Mole Airstrip, where we will hope to see the spectacular displays of Standard-winged Nightjars, as well as Greyish Eagle-Owl and Northern White-faced Owl, before retiring for the evening.

Days 11 & 12

Mole National Park

Mole is a real nature lover's paradise, and we will spend the next two days immersing ourselves in the exceptional West African birds and mammals found here. In particular, the more open habitats here should make a welcome change from the dense rainforest of the south, with many species providing much more obliging views.

We will be setting off after breakfast, walking and driving deeper into this national park, and visiting sites for species including Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu, Scarlet-chested, Beautiful, Pygmy and Western Violet-backed Sunbirds, Lavender and Orange-cheeked Waxbills, Familiar Chat, White-fronted Black Chat, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow Weaver, Red-headed Quelea, Red-billed, Bar-breasted and Black-bellied Firefinch, Fine-spotted, Grey, Golden-tailed and Brown-backed



Woodpeckers, Violet-backed, Long-tailed Glossy, Bronze-tailed Glossy, Lesser Blue-eared and Greater Blue-eared Starlings, Abyssinian Ground, African Grey and Northern Red-billed Hornbills, Stone Partridge, Double-spurred, White-throated and Ahanta Francolins, Senegal Eremomela, Pint-tailed, Exclamatory Paradise and Togo Paradise Whyda's, Bush Petronia, Little, Heuglins Masked, Village and Red-headed Weavers, Melodious and

Willow Warblers, Brubru, Thick-billed, Jacobin, African, Black and Great Spotted Cuckoos, Fork-tailed and Square-tailed Drongos, Northern Puffback, White-shouldered Black Tit, Red-faced, Rufous and the difficult Dort's Cisticolas, Hadada Ibis and Wilsons Indigobird.

Mammals are abundant in Mole, and we will hope to see Kob, Bushbuck, Waterbuck, Hartebeest, African Buffalo and the beautiful Roan, while we may have the opportunity to get within a few metres on foot of African Bush Elephants, which are very tolerant of people here.

During the heat of the midday sun, we will enjoy a siesta or relax around the pool. We will set off for our afternoon excursions around 3pm, and stay after dark for nocturnal species. Birds we will hope to see include Yellow-breasted Apalis, Bearded Barbet, Swamp, African Blue, Lead-coloured, Pied and difficult to see Gambaga Flycatchers, Giant, Shining-blue and Grey-headed Kingfishers, Red-throated Bee-eater, Bruce's Green Pigeon, Senegal Batis, Snowy-crowned and White-crowned Robin-Chats, Flappet and Sun Larks, Orange-breasted and Grey-headed Bushshrikes, African Golden Oriole, Oriole Warbler, Cinnamon-breasted Bunting, Abyssinian, Blue-bellied, Purple and Broad-billed Rollers, Black Scimitarbill and the spectacular Violet Turaco.

Raptors are particularly common here in Mole, including Martial, Booted, Long-crested and Tawny Eagles, White-backed, Hooded and White-headed Vultures, Lizard Buzzard, Gabar and Dark Chanting Goshawks, Western Marsh Harrier, African Fish and Wahlberg's Eagles, Brown and Short-toed Snake Eagles, Osprey and Lanner Falcon to mention a few.

A few local specialities include Forbes's Plover, Pel's Fishing Owl, Spotted Creeper and Rufous-rumped Lark, while our time out at night could turn up African Scops Owl, Long-tailed Nightjar, or mammals including Side-striped Jackal, Large-spotted Genet, Senegal Galago or even a Leopard. The rest of our evenings will be spent at leisure in the camp, which is sometimes visited by inquisitive wildlife such as Warthogs and the occasional Freckled Nightjar.



Day 13

In Flight

We will have time for a final morning's excursion at Mole, during which we will aim to pick up species still needed and to also get better views of birds we only had glimpses of previously. Birds we could add before leaving Mole include Woodchat Shrike, Northern Red Bishop, Pearl-spotted Owllet, Yellow-crowned Gonolek, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Senegal Parrot, Black-billed Wood and Vinaceous Doves, Woolly-necked, Saddle-billed and Black Storks, Yellow-throated Leaflove and Red-headed Lovebird. We will then set off to Tamale for lunch and to catch our internal flight south to Accra, saving us almost two days driving time. On arrival in Accra we will check in to our hotel close to the airport, where we will arrange day rooms for everyone to freshen up. We will enjoy our final evening meal and checklist together, before transferring back to the airport for our evening flight home.

Day 14

Arrive London

We will arrive back at London Heathrow this morning, sadly bringing our tour to an end.

Tour grading

We have graded this tour B - easy to moderately difficult at times. There is no major trekking on tour, but there will be plenty of walks (both during the day and at night) in a variety of habitats, including dense forest. All walks are optional and taken at a leisurely pace, but they will often be on narrow forest trails over hilly and forested terrain, and in hot, humid conditions. The walk to the Yellow-headed Picathartes generally takes around an hour at an easy pace, most of which inclines gently uphill although the last five minutes to the rocks themselves are relatively steep and slippery (especially on the return and if wet). As such, the tropical climate coupled with the basic nature of the local infrastructure and some of the accommodation (which is especially basic, although still comfortable, in Bonkro village), demand at least a good level of fitness and an adventurous spirit! There are also some longer road journeys during the tour, and early starts and late finishes are the norm, in order to maximise our time in the parks and reserves.

You will need to appreciate that mammals are largely shy and retiring, present in low densities and often crepuscular or nocturnal in nature. Although this tour spends time and effort in looking for exciting and iconic mammal species mentioned in the itinerary, potential participants should be aware that the best chance for mammal sightings are in the early morning or evening. Your guides will offer excursions at these times during the trip, but are subject to weather conditions and the level of moonlight. Anybody wishing for and expecting a safari-type experience full of animals should consider carefully whether this is the holiday for them. Time between mammal encounters will be spent largely birdwatching (alert to mammals at all times of course), as birds are the most conspicuous members of the local fauna.

NB If you would like a mammal (or photography) focused holiday in Ghana with little or no focus on birds, then a tailor-made holiday could be right for you. Contact us for details – we'd be delighted to help.

How does this tour benefit the local community and wildlife?

We have worked with our agents in Ghana for decades now, and are very pleased to be supporting their efforts to conserve precious habitat and wildlife in the country, as well as train brilliant local guides and support local communities. One such project is at Picathartes Forest, where we visit to see this enigmatic bird. Our partners built the accommodation in Bonkro where we stay on this tour, which is now managed by locals, with profits being shared amongst the community here. As a direct result of tourists visiting the forest and staying locally, deforestation that was a problem here not that long ago has stopped, and work is underway to reforest and make this habitat larger still. Villagers accompany our groups on their visit into the forest with the aim of training quality local wildlife guides, and two schools have been built in the vicinity as well. Of course the wildlife has benefitted hugely from this, with Picathartes numbers growing and this now being the best and most reliable place in Ghana to see pangolin. The hope is that one day soon this forest will receive official protection in the form of being designated a National Park.

Weather

Ghana's climate is equatorial and tropical with hot and humid conditions prevailing throughout the year. Temperatures typically average around 22°C in the morning climbing to around 32°C in the afternoon with a high humidity. In February and November you should expect, and pack for, the occasional afternoon cloudburst. The north of the country (i.e. Mole National Park) and coastal strip tend to be drier and hotter.

Food & accommodation included in the price

All food and accommodation is included in the cost of the holiday along with park entrance fees, an unlimited supply of mineral water and morning pre-birding tea/coffee and biscuits. Accommodation is in comfortable, but simple, guesthouses, hotels and community lodging in Bonkro. Single rooms are available at a supplement. All rooms have private facilities.

Extra expenses

Please note that the following expenses are excluded from the cost of the holiday and are paid locally. Any necessary visas (£60 for UK citizens as of January 2023), drinks, tips and all items of a personal nature.

Your safety & security

You have chosen to travel to Ghana. Risks to your safety and security are an unavoidable aspect of all travel and the best current advice on such risks is provided for you by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination, it is essential that you refer to the Foreign Office website (www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/ghana) regularly prior to travel.

How to book your place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at www.naturetrek.co.uk, or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website.