



BALE MOUNTAINS
NATIONAL PARK

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A TRAVELLER'S GUIDEBOOK



One Park, Many Worlds

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PREFACE

Ethiopia has a critical role to play in the conservation of biodiversity in Africa. Our central highlands provide habitats for a unique assemblage of Afromontane species, many of which are both endemic and endangered. At the heart of this highland plateau lies one of the jewels of Ethiopia's protected area network, a globally recognized biodiversity hotspot and home to an array of unique and charismatic plants and animals: the Bale Mountains National Park (BMNP), a haven for wildlife in Ethiopia.

The BMNP's wide expanse of Afroalpine habitat is the largest on the continent, and its moist tropical forest is the second largest in Ethiopia. It harbours more endemic mammals than any other similar sized area on this planet, and the largest populations of two of Ethiopia's flagship species – the Ethiopian wolf, and the mountain nyala. However, it is not only for its unique biodiversity, alpine and forest ecosystems and cultural history that the Bale Mountains are important. The water that flows from these mountains supports the livelihoods and is the lifeblood of 10-12 million people and provides hydroelectric power to the region.

The Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority's vision is to be amongst the top five wildlife tourism destinations in Africa, as a mechanism for conserving the unique natural heritage of Ethiopia. Indeed, tourism in the Bale Mountains National Park has the potential to provide the essential income that EWCA needs to conserve the area and finance essential operations. Income generated from the park reflects Bale's international importance for biodiversity conservation and thus an increase will generate broader political and financial support for BMNP from the Ethiopian Government. Furthermore, tourism is a key income-generating mechanism from which benefits can be shared with local communities. Ultimately, we need the support and engagement of these communities as the most important partners for the long-term survival of the park.

Our visitors are therefore warmly welcomed guests and we are very excited to now publish the "Bale Mountains National Park Guidebook". This guidebook will provide guests with extensive information on what to do and see within the park as well as help with practical information such as hiring guides and getting to BMNP. While visiting the park, you need nothing else but this guidebook, a camera and a good pair of trekking shoes!

We hope that this guidebook will improve your experience in Bale, or if you are reading this at home, that it encourages you to spend some time in Bale and allow its natural wonders to draw you to Ethiopia. By choosing to visit the Bale Mountains National Park, you are supporting Ethiopia's extraordinary investment in the future.



Ewnetu Bilata Debela,

Director General of the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority

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Each visitor to the Bale Mountains has an obligation to protect the fragile and sensitive environment. Please consider the impacts of your actions, and let's ensure the pristine nature of the Bale Mountains – that which makes it a truly special destination – can be conserved for future generations. Travel requires foresight: make sure your trip benefits the local people and the environment of Bale while minimizing your impact.

THE BEST OF THE BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK



BEST NATURAL EXPERIENCE: TREKKING

Forget about the hustle and bustle of the city and lose yourself among the wilds of the Bale Mountains National Park. Live like the locals while exploring the awesome terrain on foot or on horseback.



Will Burrard-Lucas

BEST ANIMAL EXPERIENCE: ETHIOPIAN WOLF

Watch as Africa's rarest canid hunts for giant molecrats on the vast Sanetti plateau, its beautiful rufus-coloured coat just visible amongst the lichen-covered rocks. BMNP is home to over 50% of the global population of the Ethiopian wolf.



Vincent Munier

BEST BIRDING EXPERIENCE: BIRDS OF PREY ON THE SANETTI PLATEAU

Stand amongst soaring birds of prey as they search for rodents on the Sanetti plateau. Watch the Golden Eagle (Bale has the most southern resident and breeding population in the world) swoop down and fly off with a meal in its talons.



BEST CRAFTS: BARRE WOMEN'S HANDICRAFT ASSOCIATION

Return home with exquisite and colorful basketry from the Barre Women's Handicraft Association. By supporting their work you will help to diversify income-generating livelihoods in the Bale Mountains, thus reducing the immense pressures on the natural resources of the area.



BEST DRIVE: ONE OF THE HIGHEST ALL-WEATHER ROADS IN AFRICA

Drive amongst the clouds across the Sanetti plateau and experience several distinct and unique habitats as you descend the steep Haremma escarpment on winding roads to the dense, unexplored Haremma forest. Look for lions, leopards, African wild dogs, Bale monkeys, giant forest hogs and olive baboons along the roadside.



BEST FOOD: AMBESHA AND GOMEN

Enjoy the only dish served in the small village of Rira located within the Haremma forest. Ambesha and gomen is a flatbread served with steamed kale, freshly harvested from nearby gardens. It's so much better than it looks!



BEST DRINK: WILD FOREST COFFEE

Sip fresh coffee made from seasonally available ripened beans picked locally in the coffee village of Manyete, in the Haremma forest.

Year round, enjoy “buna bowetet” the coffee specialty of the Bale Mountains: coffee and milk served in swirling layers.

THE NATIONAL PARK AT A GLANCE

You are standing on a land in the air - birds of prey soar high above while the endemic Ethiopian wolf hunts for rodents down below. This is the Sanetti plateau: the largest continuous area of its altitude on the entire continent of Africa. Sitting proudly above the clouds, this plateau is the best place in the world to see Africa's rarest canid: the Ethiopian wolf.

The Sanetti plateau is just one of five distinct and unique habitats of the Bale Mountains National Park (BMNP). To the south, the Hareenna escarpment drops rapidly from 4,000m to 2,000m over a distance of just 8km into the serene and unexplored Hareenna forest. The escarpment contains a patch of tree heath (*Erica sp.*) – a shrub common to the western world that grows to staggering proportions in the Bale Mountains. The Hareenna forest is the second largest forest in Ethiopia and the largest cloud forest in the country, containing stocks of Ethiopia's famous wild forest coffee. Wildlife is elusive here. To the north lies the Gaysay grasslands, as well as the juniper woodlands, home to the endemic and endangered mountain nyala, and many endemic birds.

Nominated in 2009 to UNESCO's World Heritage Site Tentative List, the Bale Mountains are Ethiopia's best-kept secret. Dominating the southeastern edge of the Rift Valley highlands, these mountains encompass the largest expanse of Afroalpine habitat in the world. It has been estimated that if conservation efforts in the Bale Mountains are not successful and people continue to exploit the resources in an unsustainable way, more species of mammal would become extinct than in any other area of equivalent size on the planet.

Ethiopia is one of the top 25 biodiversity-rich countries in the world, and the Bale Mountains have one of the highest incidences of animal endemism of any terrestrial habitat on earth; the park itself holds 26 percent of Ethiopia's endemic species. In addition to a wealth of endemic, unique and endangered mammals, Bale Mountains is home to a wide range of bird species. Rated by the African Bird Club as the number four birding spot in Africa, the Bale Mountains are home to over 300 species of birds – six of which are endemic to Ethiopia and 11 to Ethiopia and neighboring Eritrea.

The Bale Mountains are an area of supreme importance for numerous reasons. They sustain the life of many endemic and endangered species. Additionally, over 12 million people and their livestock – in the southeast region of Ethiopia, northern Kenya and Somalia – rely on the water that originates from the Bale massif.

The Bale Mountains National Park offers opportunities for unsurpassed mountain walking, horse trekking, and scenic driving. It also presents the chance to view many of the endemic mammals that reside within the park, specifically the mountain nyala and Ethiopian wolf, as well as birds such as the wattled crane and bearded vulture.

However, perhaps the primary attraction of the Bale Mountains is the simple escape it offers from city life; into peace, serenity and beauty.

ETHIOPIAN WOLF

(*Canis simensis*)

LOCAL NAMES

Amharic: *Ky Kebero*

Afan Oromo: *Jedella Ferda*



Will Burrard-Lucas

The Ethiopian wolf is the rarest canid in the world, and Africa's most threatened carnivore. The closest living relatives of the Ethiopian wolf are grey wolves and coyotes. The Ethiopian wolf ancestor crossed over from Eurasia during the Pleistocene period less than 100,000 years ago, when sea levels were lower and Africa and the Middle East were connected. At the time, the highlands of Ethiopia were predominately Afroalpine grasslands and heathlands, and these habitats were ideal for many small mammals, particularly grass rats and mole rats. This Afroalpine environment and its abundant rodents drove the Ethiopian wolf evolution morphologically into a specialized rodent hunter with an elongated muzzle, long legs and a distinctive reddish coat, with white markings and a darker tail tip. Male Ethiopian wolves weigh between 14 and 20 kg, while the weight of adult females ranges from 11 to 16 kg.

Ethiopian wolves live in packs of between 2 and 18 animals, which share and defend an exclusive territory. Unlike most social carnivores, Ethiopian wolves forage and feed alone during the day. In Bale they are mostly visible foraging or walking early in the morning and late in the afternoon, and occasionally in small groups, greeting or scent marking along their territory boundaries. Dens are only used during the short breeding season by pups and nursing females. The rest of the pack sleeps in the open but helps protect the den from predators and contributes food to the pups.

The Ethiopian wolf is restricted to just six isolated mountaintop areas of the Ethiopian highlands. With a total world population of between 400 to 520 individuals, it is highly endangered. As a result it is legally protected in the country from any activities that may threaten its survival. Rapidly expanding cattle and crop farming are severe threats, as well as diseases such as rabies and canine distemper transmitted from domestic dog. Diseases transmitted from domestic dogs have recently caused population crashes in the Bale Mountains.

MOUNTAIN NYALA (*Tragelaphus buxtoni*)

LOCAL NAMES

Amharic: *Ye Dega Agazen*

Afan Oromo: *Gadamssa Badaa*



Vincent Munier

The mountain nyala was the last large ungulate to be discovered in Africa. They are found only in Ethiopia, south of the Rift Valley.

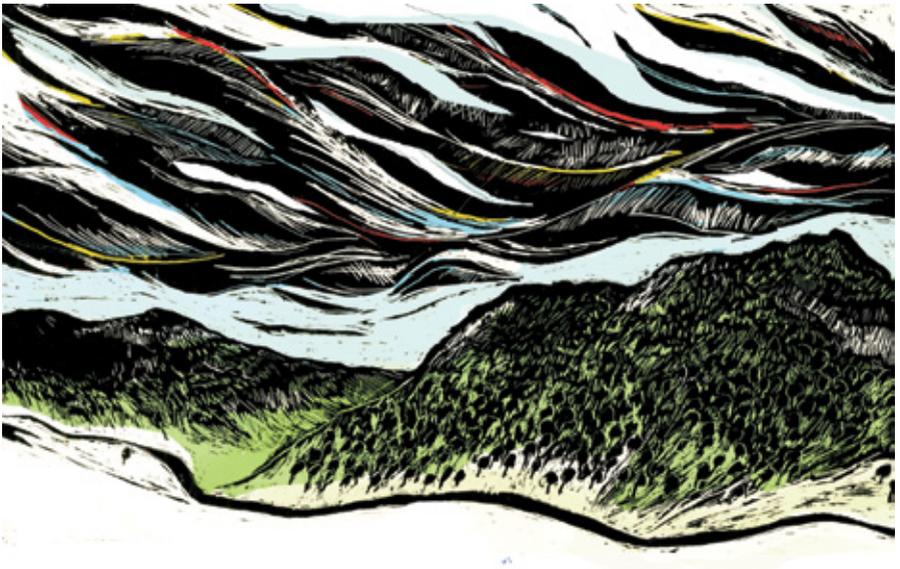
Once widely distributed in the southeast highlands of Ethiopia, their range and population have suffered a dramatic decline over the last several decades due to habitat loss as a result of agricultural expansion and killing. There are approximately 3,700 nyala remaining in the Bale Mountains, 30 – 40 percent

of which are found in the park alone. This is the majority of the population with only very small pockets found in nearby mountain ranges.

Though more prominent in males, mountain nyala have unique white spots and stripes on their sides. Males typically weigh between 180 and 320kg, while females weigh between 150 and 200kg. When mature, males have a mane of erectile hairs along the spine.

Mountain nyala are usually seen in small family groups of females with calves. Calves can be born throughout the year but there is a peak in births between December and March. The calves accompany their mothers for up to two years. At about two years old, females conceive and after a gestation of about nine months, they give birth to a single calf. At the same age, juvenile males develop their secondary sexual characteristics – horns, a dark spinal mane, and the behavior that brings them into conflict with adult males. They usually leave their family group to join ‘bachelor’ groups of other males. They form a dominance hierarchy, maintained between younger males by tussles and in the older males by ritualized, strutting displays. When displaying, their perceived size increases with their erectile hairs. The displays can end in a fierce, brief clash of horns if neither male backs down. With age, male nyala become solitary.

The species has a wide ecological zone that ranges from 1,800m to 3,750m. Size, colour and feeding habits vary slightly with altitudinal difference. Females are mainly grazers when grass is available in the wet season and become browsers in the dry season. Males are mostly browsers throughout the year. Their main foods are *St. John's wort*, *African or wild wormwood (Artemisia afra)*, *Gallium semensis*, *Hagenia abyssinica*, *Cape Gold (Helichrysum splendidum)*, *Discopodium spp.* and *Thistle (Carduus spp.)*. Because grass is not available in the dry season, the mountain nyala move to the woodland regardless of altitudinal difference, in search of food. They rely on the woodland for sustenance, and it is therefore critical for the mountain nyala's survival.

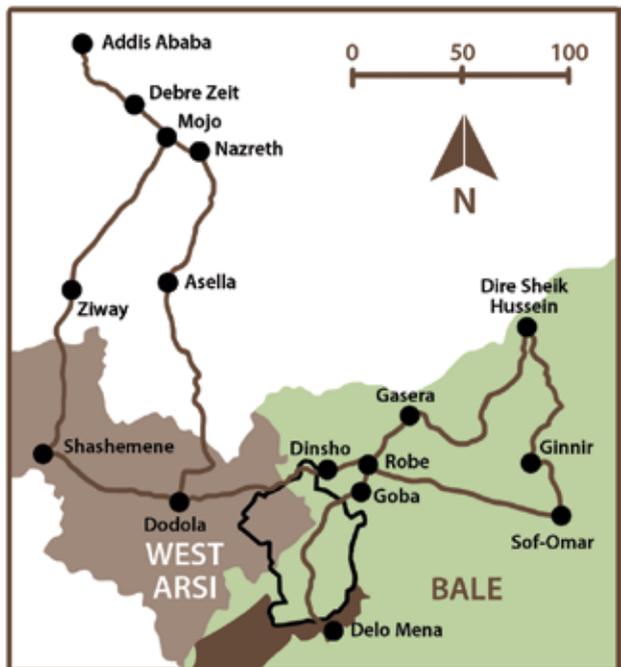


GENERAL INFORMATION

LOCATION IN ETHIOPIA

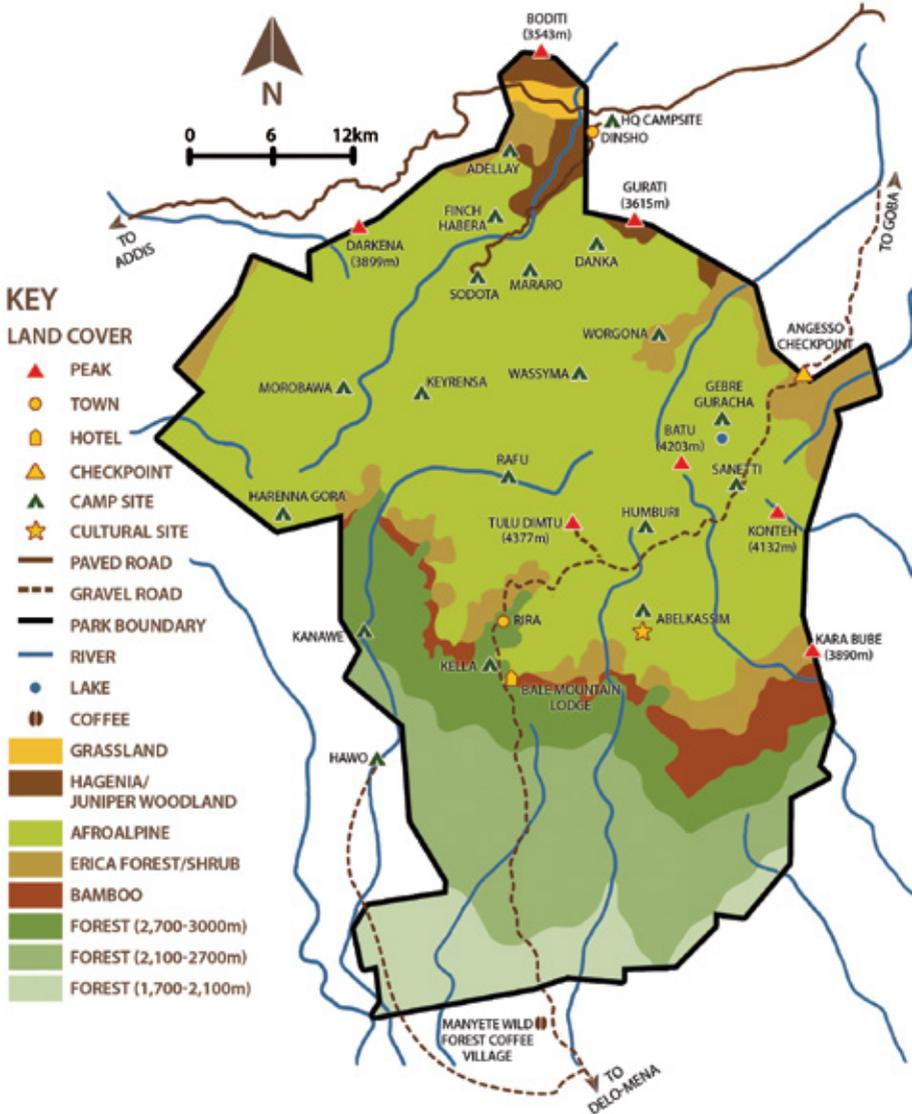
KEY TO MAP

-  BMNP
-  BALE ZONE
-  WEST ARSI ZONE
-  MENA ANGETU REGIONAL FOREST PRIORITY AREA
-  TOWN
-  ROAD



The Bale Mountains National Park is located in southeastern Ethiopia, 400km southeast of Addis Ababa and 150km east of Shashamene in the Oromia Regional National State. It belongs to the Bale-Arsi massif, which forms the western section of the southeastern Ethiopian highlands.

SIZE & ECOLOGICAL BREAKDOWN



PARTS OF THE PARK

The following symbols are used throughout the text:

* *Ethiopian endemic*

** *Abyssinian endemic (Ethiopia and Eritrea)*

The Bale Mountains National Park is 2,150km² and is comprised of five major zones:

NORTHERN GRASSLANDS (GAYSAY GRASSLANDS)

The Northern grasslands, spanning the Web and Danka Rivers, are situated to the south of the Bodeti Mountain and north of Adelay ridge, and northwest of Dinsho. The altitude of the area ranges from 3,000m to 3,500m, pushing the upper limit for tree growth. The land is flat, dominated by swamp grasses and sedges, especially of the *Cyperus* and *Scirpus* genera and becomes muddy during the rainy season. Higher areas are scrubby with African or wild wormwood (*Artemisia afra*) and Cape gold (*Helicbrysum splendidum*), one of more than ten species of everlasting flower found in Bale. Both are important sources of food for the mountain nyala and sources of shelter for other animals. *Hagenia abyssinica* trees flower from November through February; female trees boast an impressive red bloom. Wild fennel also grows here.



Will Burrard-Lucas

The Northern grasslands are the best place for viewing the endemic mountain nyala* – sometimes up to 50 in a herd. Also ever present, bohor reedbeek, play an important role in the ecosystem as they are the only grazers in this area of the park. Other mammals that are commonly seen are warthog, grey duiker, serval, and golden (common) jackal, along with the spotted hyena at night.

Birds that can be seen include the Abyssinian longclaw*, winding cisticola, marsh harrier, Abyssinian ground hornbill, spot-breasted plover*, Rouget's rail**, wattled ibis**, Abyssinian catbird* and many more.



Vincent Munier

ABYSSINIAN GROUND HORNBILL

(*Bucoryus abyssinicus*)

“Luck for a Long Life”

LOCAL NAMES

Amharic: *Erkum*

Afan Oromo: *Humo*



The Abyssinian ground hornbill is a large, turkey-like bird with black feathers, and a large bill with an open-fronted casque sitting atop it. Modified feathers form long eyelashes, which protect their eyes from dust. Males develop red on the inflatable throat pouch; the female's pouch usually remains all blue. Typically they are 1m tall, weighing up to 3kg, with a wingspan of up to almost 2m. The birds are usually found in pairs, trios or quartets with young birds.

They are slow breeders and do not reach sexual maturity until they are about four years old. The female produces two eggs, which she incubates for 37 to 41 days. The eggs are laid three to five days apart and hatch in the same time frame. The older chick usually grows so fast that the younger one cannot compete for food brought to the nest. The surviving chick continues to live in the nest for about three months.

In the Bale Mountains, particularly in the lower section of the Haremma forest, they are commonly spotted in pairs. Called “humo” in Afan Oromo, but widespread throughout all of Ethiopia, it is believed that if one manages to cross between the hornbill pair they will be blessed with a long life.

JUNIPER WOODLANDS (PARK HEADQUARTERS)

The juniper woodlands cover the northern slopes of the Bale massif, reaching from Dodola to Dinsho. These woodlands are under intense pressure from grazing, inhibiting the growth of new trees. *Hagenia abyssinica* and African juniper (*Juniperus procera*) dominate the woodlands. At the upper limit of their distribution, the juniper trees are smaller than in other parts of the park. In contrast, the *Hagenia* trees can grow to be massive, flowering from November to February. St John's wort (*Hypericum revolutum*) is also common in the woodlands, growing as shrubs near the lower edge and reaching a height of 5m in the upper tree line. They are easily recognizable by their bright yellow flowers, which bloom throughout the year and are the major source of nectar for the honey produced in the area. Also present is the only indigenous rose to Africa (*Rosa abyssinica*), which has fragrant, white flowers.



Mountain nyala*, warthog, Menelik's bushbuck*, colobus monkey and olive baboon can be spotted in the area.

Birds to look for include the wattled ibis**, Abyssinian catbird*, white-backed black tit*, Abyssinian ground thrush, gold-mantled woodpecker**, red-breasted wryneck, thick-billed raven** and many more.

AFROALPINE MEADOWS (SANETTI PLATEAU & UPPER WEB VALLEY)

Due to the altitude, plant diversity here is low. However, one of the notable plant species is the giant lobelia found from 3,100m to 4,377m growing to a maximum height of 6m. On the plateau stands Tulu Dimtu at 4,377m. This is the second tallest mountain in Ethiopia, and the tallest in Bale.

Found at staggeringly high densities in Afroalpine meadows (average of 2,500kg per km²) Afroalpine rodents (mice, rats, and molerats) dominate the cold and seemingly barren plateau. Look specifically for the giant molerat* (endemic to the Bale Mountains), rock hyrax and Starck's hare*. The plateau is also home to Ethiopian wolves* and a trip to the plateau all but guarantees a sighting of this charismatic carnivore. The plateau hosts a large number of raptors that feed on the sizeable rodent population. Look for augur buzzards; Verreaux's, tawny and steppe eagles; lanner falcons; kestrels; and the



Delphin Ruche

lammergeyer or bearded vulture. This is also the most southern resident and breeding area in the world for golden eagles. The lakes, rivers and swamps attract many Palearctic waders. Look for the endemic blue-winged goose* (the rarest and most isolated goose in the world); spot-breasted plover*; and ruddy shelduck (like the golden eagle, the ruddy shelduck population is unique and isolated). Additionally, the population of red-billed chough is the most southern population in Africa. Several pairs of wattled crane are also present on the plateau – the northernmost population in Africa.

GIANT LOBELIA (*Lobelia rynchopatum*)

LOCAL NAMES

Amharic: *Jibira*

Afan Oromo: *Taruurra*



Found in high densities on the Sanetti plateau and Web valley, these large plants grow 2m to 3m high before sending up a single cluster of dark blue-purple flowers. The total height of the plant can be a maximum of 6m. Every few years, the lobelias have what is known as a 'mast' year, when – for unknown reasons – a greater proportion of the plants flower. The cluster is hollow and has several thousand flowers, each of which produces several thousand tiny seeds. One inflorescence can, therefore, produce over seven million seeds. Once the plants have flowered, they die – although the dead plant 'skeletons' last for several years and are characteristic of this zone.

Plants growing at the altitudes at which giant lobelias are found in Bale (from 3,100m to 4,377m) face two main challenges that come from the environmental conditions: the high levels of solar irradiation, and the extremes in temperature and wind. To deal with these conditions, the young, sensitive leaves of giant lobelias are protected from the strong sunlight by always being vertical. The older leaves, which have had sufficient time to develop, are filled with NPQ (a bio-chemical molecule to protect them against UV) and are horizontal.

There is a big advantage to being able to grow above the soil level in climatic conditions of high altitudes. At the soil level, daily temperature variation can be up to 50°C. At 2m above the soil surface, the fluctuation reduces to only 12°C. But in order to grow to such a height, giant lobelias need to protect their apical meristem – the part of the plant from which it grows and forms their leaf bud – from the extremes in the environment, particularly the wind that can cool things rapidly.

Young lobelias protect themselves against the extremes in temperatures by forming a 'nightbud' – tightly closing their leaves at night about the meristem. The young, sensitive leaves are also furry which insulates them. The overall anatomy of the leaves – in a circular, rosette form – acts as a reflector for the apical meristem to warm it and increase growth. In older plants, the old leaves hang down to protect the stem which is full of water. The stems also have thick cork layers; another form of insulation to prevent water in the stem from freezing. The older leaves, in turn, can withstand temperatures as low as -6°C.

ROCK HYRAX (*Procavia capensis*)

LOCAL NAMES

Amharic: *Shikoko*

Afan Oromo: *Osolee*



Will Burrard-Lucas

When hyraxes were first classified, they were grouped with rodents because of the superficial resemblance. They were then grouped with elephants because early fossils of both lineages were similar. More recently, these small, dark-colored and tailless animals have been separated to form their own order.

Over 25 million years ago, the 11 hyrax genera were among the most successful herbivores in Africa.

Now, only three genera remain. They have a poor ability to regulate their temperature and have to warm up in the morning before becoming active. Therefore, this is the best time of day to see them. As early morning sunshine hits the cliffs on which colonies are found, they emerge to sun themselves before setting off to forage. Unlike rodents, they use their large incisors for defense and grooming, while using their molars for biting off and chewing food. Rock hyraxes graze, eating only grass. They can bite off and chew such large mouthfuls of vegetation at a time that it only takes two or so feeding bouts to fill their stomachs. Afterwards, they can have long periods of inactivity lasting up to several days to conserve energy and to digest their food.

Uniquely for a mammal their size, hyraxes have a seven-month gestation period; the young are born almost fully developed. They are extremely efficient at conserving water, and during dry periods, their urine is thick and syrupy. Animals in an area use multi-species, communal and extremely pungent 'latrines' that can be millennia old.

ERICA BELT: MOORLANDS AND FOREST



Erica forest, Vincent Munier

Located immediately above the tree line, from 3,400m to 3,800m, is a belt of heather made up of species of the *Erica* and *Phillippa* genera, dominated specifically by *Erica arborea* (tree heath), a shrub common throughout the world that grows to staggering proportions in Bale – up to 5m on the edge of the tree line. These forests are a fairytale wood of giant heather dressed in moss and old man’s beard (a lichen). These trees are highly endangered and quite rare in Ethiopia. The most accessible example of this type of forest is on the road that crosses the Sanetti plateau, 100m above Rira. Mountain nyala*, Menelik’s bushbuck*, and grey duiker live in the area in relatively large numbers, but are hard to spot due to vegetation densities. Klipspringers and hyraxes are also common. The Bale Mountains are the only area where both male and female klipspringers have horns. Look for moorland and chestnut-naped francolins, Alpine chat and Rouget’s rail**.

HARENNA FOREST



Vincent Munier

The southern and largest area of the park consists of the second largest forest in Ethiopia: the Harena forest. Along with the adjacent State- and community-managed forest outside the park, it constitutes an area of over 4,000km². It is also the largest cloud forest in the country. The road from the plateau takes you down the Harena escarpment and into the forest. Mountain bamboo grows within the forest, particularly on steep slopes. *Rubus steuderi*, a member of the blackberry family, grows along the road from April to June.

The upper area of the Harena forest is wet cloud forest with an extensive bamboo belt, while the lower parts are drier mountain forest. At about 2,200m as the slopes

become gentler, larger trees of up to 30m tall appear, and the canopy closes. These include fern pine (*Podocarpus gracilior*) and fig trees (*Ficus spp.*) of massive girth. Branches are covered with dense epiphytes. In the lower areas of the forest, wild forest coffee (*Arabica sp.*) grows.

Because the forest is so dense and clearings are few and far between, the elusive animals of the forest have little trouble staying hidden. Black-and-white colobus monkey, olive baboon, warthog and Menelik's bushbuck* are common. With a little luck and perseverance, you might see a giant forest hog, a bush pig or an endemic Bale monkey*. Clearings are the best places to look for lion, leopard and African wild dog. Genet, civet, porcupine, and hyena are all active at night.

Birds of the Haremma forest are equally elusive. Look for the Abyssinian hill babbler, Abyssinian crimson-wing, Ayre's hawk eagle, silvery-cheeked hornbill, black-winged lovebird**, Abyssinian oriole**, yellow-fronted parrot*, white-cheeked turaco and narina trogon. A wide range of migrant birds can also be spotted, including Palearctic warblers.

BALE MONKEY **(*Cercopithecus djamdjamensis*)**

LOCAL NAMES

Amharic: Ye Bale Tota

Afan Oromo: Qamalee Baalee



Endemic to Ethiopia, the Bale monkey is distinctive for its white chin and cheeks and black face. They were discovered quite recently, in 1902, hence

relatively little is known about their natural history. According to recent findings, the distributional range of the Bale Monkey extends between 2,200m and 3,400m.

*The primary habitat of the Bale monkey is the montane bamboo forest. They are also found in adjacent habitat types such as the Schefflera-Hagenia belt. Bamboo (*Arundinaria alpina*) makes up an astounding 77 percent of their diet, though they also forage on the fruits of other trees. Bale monkeys usually occur in clusters. They remain silent at night, but may produce loud calls during the day, mainly to signify the presence of danger. They spend most of their time hiding in dense cover, as they are quite timid.*

Bale monkeys are thought to be endangered. The main threats to their survival include expansion of settlements and cultivation of land within their range. Thus, there is a concern that such a circumstance may potentially lead to the emergence of conflicts in retaliation for crop raiding. Moreover, fire outbreaks from the adjacent areas (especially heather fire) are a serious threat to neighboring bamboo forests.

GEOLOGY & GLACIATION

The Bale Mountains were formed prior to the creation of the Rift Valley, from lava outpourings, which covered all underlying rock formations between 38 and 7 million years ago. The rocks of the volcanic outpourings are predominantly trachytes, but also include rhyolites, basalts and agglomerates, and tuffs. The Bale highlands area consists of a vast lava plateau with at least six volcanic cones, each more than 4,200m. These cones have been considerably flattened by repeated glaciations.

There have been at least two glacial periods in the history of the mountains. These specific mountains were glaciated as little as 2,000 years ago. During the last ice age, the Bale Mountains were one of the most extensively glaciated areas in Ethiopia, with a total of approximately 180km² of ice. There was a 30km² ice cap around the peak of Tulu Dimtu on the Sanetti plateau and individual glaciers of considerable thickness reached down to 3,200m. As a consequence, the landscape as we see it today is the lava outpourings modified by over 20 million years of erosion by water, wind and ice.



Rock Pinnacles, Delphin Ruche

There are certain geological features that remain an enigma to geologists and glaciologists, such as the striations (or boulder grooves) that appear on shallow hillsides on the Sanetti plateau. Boulder grooves, till ridges and numerous glacial valleys, such as the Togona Valley on the northeastern slopes of the Sanetti plateau, provide evidence of the ice age effects on the landscape of the Bale Mountains National Park. Until the beginning of de-glaciation (13,000 to 14,000 years ago), the snowline was at 3,700m and the upper tree limit in the Bale Mountains was well below 3,000m. Fluctuations in climate over the last historical period, including the last 3,000 years, have dramatically affected vegetation and other biodiversity in the highlands.

HYDROLOGY



Over 12 million people are crucially dependent on water from the Bale massif for four reasons. Firstly, the Bale massif plays a vital role in climate control of the region by attracting large amounts of orographic rainfall (rainfall that occurs when wind encounters a land mass and is forced upward), which has obvious implications for agriculture. Some 600mm to 1,000mm fall annually in the lower altitude areas, while 1,000mm to 1,400mm fall in areas of higher altitudes.

Secondly, a total of 40 rivers rise in the national park area, contributing to five major rivers: the Web, Wabe Shebele, Welmel, Dumal and Ganale. Additionally, the Bale massif is the source for many springs in the lowlands, which are of paramount importance as they are the only source of water year-round. The people of the south are completely dependent on good management of the water resources from the highland areas. If the flow of these rivers is altered in any way - through deforestation, overgrazing and/or over abstraction for irrigation (all of which are occurring at present) - a highland/lowland imbalance results with loss of perennial water in the lowlands. If such a situation arises, the dry season range of the people and their livestock reduces dramatically and they congregate around whatever water source remains. It is widely recognized that such an uneven distribution of people and livestock leads to rapid and lasting degradation. The people are, therefore, likely to become increasingly food-aid dependent if the water catchment areas of the Bale Mountains are insufficiently protected. There is already evidence that over-abstraction of water in the Bale Mountains is occurring.

Thirdly, two rivers originating from Bale – the Wabe Shebele and Yadot (a tributary of the Ganale) – have hydroelectric schemes. The dam on the Yadot River supplies

electricity to Delo-Mena, while the dam on the Wabe Shebele provides electricity to the Bale area.

Lastly, there are numerous natural mineral water springs, called *bora*, which are locally believed to provide an essential source of minerals for livestock. The mineral springs within the park are valued for their high mineral content (sodium, potassium, magnesium, zinc and calcium), drawing people from far away for the benefit of their cattle. Local pastoralists believe that in order to maintain good health and milk production, the livestock must be given *bora* water. They drive their livestock for up to two days to reach the *bora* springs.

HISTORY

In contrast to other parts of Ethiopia, very little was written about the Bale Mountains prior to the 1950s. This is despite the fact that Goba (a central town within the mountains) was connected to Addis Ababa by a telegraph line in 1931; was served with Ethiopian Airlines DC-3 aircrafts prior to the 1950s; and that the brief period of Italian government (1935-1941) reached the region with stations in Goba, Dinsho and Delo-Mena.

As records begin to appear at the beginning of the 20th century, the Bale Mountains were largely uninhabited. The first recorded visit was by the German naturalist and explorer Carlo Von Erlanger, who reached the Bale Mountains between 1899 and 1901, and documented the existence of the giant mole rat. Thereafter, a Frenchman, the Viscompte du Bourg, spent two months in Goba in 1901 hunting elephant to the south and travelling around the mountains. He recorded the existence of elephant and buffalo in the Hareenna forest, and commented on the ivory hunting of the area - primarily by mounted horsemen using guns.

Following these early records, there is no information until the late 1950s, when Finnish geographer Helmer Smels arrived in Bale. He made three journeys to Bale and crossed the area from Goba, through Rira, to Delo-Mena. By the time of his visits, just 50 years after Viscompte du Bourg had noted the presence of elephants; they had disappeared from the Hareenna forest. Smels noted that although the Sanetti plateau was uninhabited, people drove their cattle to the plateau for grazing during the dry season, sometimes for up to three months. Additionally, the mountains were used for their mineral springs, or *boras*, to which the pastoral people also drove their cattle. People stayed overnight in simple, temporary shelters made of split bamboo. The Hareenna forest was for the most part, uninhabited except for small groups of temporary huts that were established throughout land clearings where people grazed their cattle for part of the year. Although not dwelling there permanently, honey gatherers have always been active in the Hareenna forest.

During the same period, a British botanist, Herbert Mooney, visited the Hareenna forest and Sanetti plateau. He noted the growing settlement of Rira within the forest and other hamlets of honey gatherers and pastoral people. Although the Hareenna forest

was probably quite populated in the latter half of the 19th century, the area was depopulated again as a result of a rinderpest epidemic that killed most of the cattle in the early 1890s.

In the 1960s, a Belgian sheep farmer, B.N Weerts, obtained a concession of 400km² of land within the Dinsho area and Gaysay valley. His developments have since become the nucleus for the headquarters of the national park. The impetus for the present national park, however, began with British naturalist, Dr. Leslie Brown, who visited the area in 1963 and again in 1965. Brown was in the area explicitly to assess the status of mountain nyala. The outcome of his visits was to establish a national park within the Bale Mountains to protect its habitat. John Blower, advisor to the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organization – now the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) – and a Peace Corps volunteer, followed through with Dr. Brown’s recommendation by surveying the area and proposed boundaries for the park.

At its inception in late 1969, there were few permanent settlers in the park. However, Brown predicted with unnerving accuracy that the agricultural expansion of the plains surrounding the mountains would permanently push rural people to higher and higher altitudes, and into areas they previously used only on a seasonal basis. This has now happened, and the number of permanent houses within the park has been increasing exponentially. A 2011 study indicated approximately 3,700 households with an average of seven people per house for a total of 25,900 people living within the park. Consequently, cattle density is estimated in areas such as the Web valley, a prime Ethiopian wolf habitat, at 250 per km².

**UKHAHLAMBA
DRAKENSBERG PARK**
**WORLD HERITAGE SITE, SOUTH
AFRICA: BALE MOUNTAINS
NATIONAL PARK SISTER PARK**

uKhabhlamba meaning “barrier of spears” is the highest mountain range in southern Africa. Appointed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2000, the area is known for the diversity of habitats and high level of endemic and globally threatened species. The park is also home to the largest and most concentrated group of rock paintings in Africa south of the Sahara, done by the San people over 4,000 years ago. BMNP signed a sister-park agreement with UDPWHS in 2009. The aim is

to promote international cooperation and support for the mutual benefit of both parks, and to enrich the experience and training of the personnel of both parks through international cooperation.



THE PEOPLE OF BALE

CULTURE AND HISTORY

The Bale Mountains are the ancestral home of the Oromo, the largest, single ethnic group in Africa. Living as pastoralists and farmers, the population grew quickly and expanded to different corners of the country in the beginning of the 16th century.

Little is known about the Oromo people of the area and how they settled here. They are part of the eastern Cushitic people stemming from a branch of the Caucasoid race (which includes Western Asians, Arabs and Europeans), and are distributed from Shoa in Ethiopia's north, to Mombasa in Kenya to the south. Some 3,000 years ago,



Oromo Woman

they passed on practices – such as the initiation ceremony of circumcision and the habit of not eating fish – to the Nilotic peoples in the West. Furthermore, they incorporated ideas of the Gada system and cattle husbandry into their own society. The Gada system is based on the principles of classifying a society into 11 functional grades, each of which has its own special roles and status.

Currently, people subsist mainly on agriculture. They follow a traditional transhumance system known as the Godantu system, a key feature of traditional human use of the Bale Mountains. In this system livestock, particularly cattle, are sent to higher grazing grounds during the months when crops are growing in lower altitudes, or into the forest for shade during the dry season. However, this should not be

confused with the cattle movements that are a consequence of the loss of grazing land outside of the park, thus forcing cattle into the park to graze.

Bale houses are circular in shape and locally referred to as *mana citaa*. Juniper and sometimes eucalyptus are used to make the walls and roofs. The roof is covered with thatched grass cut from *citaa* (tussock grass) or stubble, specifically barley, and supported by a wooden pillar, which stands in the middle of the floor. The house is divided into portions by walls made of bamboo or mud mixed with barley or grass stubble.

POPULATION

The population of the Bale zone is approximately 1.5 million. The town of Robe is about 48,000, Goba 33,000 and the Dinsho *Woreda* (district) 40,000.

The people of the region are predominantly Oromo-speaking farmers and cattle herders. Famed for their equestrian skills, they are often seen galloping atop their horses across the wide-open country – a stirring and romantic spectacle.

LANGUAGE

Afan Oromo is the official language of the Oromo people. It belongs to the Cushitic language family, and serves as a sort of *lingua franca* for over 25 million Oromos. However, most of the people in the Bale Mountains also speak some Amharic.

RELIGION

The predominant religion in the Bale Mountains is Muslim (77 percent), followed by Orthodox Christian (20 percent) and Protestant (one percent).

BIODIVERSITY



ENDEMIC SPECIES

The Bale Mountains are a critically important area for a number of threatened Ethiopian endemic species. The Afroalpine area is home to over half of the global population of Ethiopian wolf, the rarest canid in the world, whereas the northern juniper-*Hagenia* woodlands harbour the largest population of the endemic and similarly endangered mountain nyala.

Less obviously 26% of Ethiopia's endemic species (including one primate, one bovid, one hare, eight species of rodent, and the entire global population of the giant mole rat) can be found in the park. Six of the 18 birds endemic to Ethiopia can be found in Bale Mountains National Park, as well as 11 of the 14 birds endemic to Ethiopia and Eritrea.

There are also several rare and endemic amphibian species found only in Bale, as well as over 1,300 species of flowering plants, 163 of which are endemic to Ethiopia (12 percent), and 23 to Bale alone (14 percent of Ethiopia's endemic plants).

BMNP SPECIES BY NUMBERS

<i>Mammals</i>	78
<i>Reptiles</i>	12
<i>Amphibians</i>	17
<i>Birds</i>	310
<i>Flowering Plants</i>	1,300

These figures represent known species in Bale. It is widely accepted that a significant number of species, in particular amphibian & reptile species, are present in Bale but have yet to be found.

BIRDS ENDEMIC TO ETHIOPIA THAT ARE FOUND IN THE BALE MOUNTAINS

Rated by the African Bird Club as the number four birding site in Africa, the Bale Mountains National Park is home to 310 species of birds. Furthermore, over 170 migratory birds have been recorded within the park. The Bale Mountains are home to almost every highland Abyssinian and Ethiopian endemic.

Over 863 species of birds have been registered in Ethiopia, representing approximately 9.5 percent of the world's birds and 39 percent of the birds in Africa. 18 of these birds are endemic to Ethiopia, while a further 14 are endemic to Ethiopia and neighboring Eritrea.

The Bale Mountains are the best location in

Ethiopia to spot the wattled crane, moorland and chestnut-naped francolins, and spot-breasted plover. There are also relict populations of three primarily Eurasian species that breed nowhere else in sub-saharan Africa: the ruddy shelduck, golden eagle and red-billed chough. Due to the diversity and density of rodents, the Bale Mountains are also an extremely important area for resident as well as wintering and passing raptors.

Bale is an exquisite location for longtime birders as well as inexperienced visitors interested in seeing rare and endemic birds.

ENDEMIC BIRDS TO ETHIOPIA THAT ARE FOUND IN BALE:

Blue-winged goose	<i>Cyanochen cyanoptera</i>
Spot-breasted lapwing/plover	<i>Vanellus melanoccephalus</i>
Yellow-fronted parrot	<i>Poicephalus flavifrons</i>
Abyssinian longclaw	<i>Macronyx flavicollis</i>
Abyssinian catbird	<i>Parophasma galinieri</i>
Ethiopian/Black-headed siskin	<i>Serinus nigriceps</i>



Blue-winged goose, Rebecca Jackrel



Yellow-fronted parrot



Abyssinian longclaw



Abyssinian catbird



Black-headed siskin



Spot-breasted plover

NEAR ENDEMIC BIRDS THAT ARE FOUND IN BALE:

Endemic to the Abyssinian highlands of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Wattled ibis	<i>Bostrychia carunculata</i>
Rouget's rail	<i>Rougetius rougetii</i>
White-collared pigeon	<i>Columba albitorques</i>
Abyssinian slaty flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis chokolatinus</i>
White-backed black tit	<i>Parus leuconotus</i>
Abyssinian black-headed oriole	<i>Oriolus monacha</i>
Thick-billed raven	<i>Corvus crassirostris</i>
Black-winged lovebird	<i>Agapornis taranta</i>
Banded Barbet	<i>Lybius undatus</i>
Gold-mantled Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos abyssinicus</i>
White-billed Starling	<i>Onychognathus albirostris</i>

MAMMALS ENDEMIC TO ETHIOPIA THAT ARE FOUND IN BALE:

^{xx} *Endemic to Bale*

Mahomet's mouse	<i>Mus mahomet</i>
Harsh-furred mouse	<i>Lophuromys flavopunctatus</i>
Black-clawed mouse	<i>Lophuromys melanonyx</i>
White-footed rat	<i>Praomys albipes</i>
White-tailed rat	<i>Stenocephalemys albocaudata</i>
Grey-tailed rat	<i>Stenocephalemys griseicauda</i>
Nikolaus' rat	<i>Megadendromus nikolausi</i>
Blick's grass rat	<i>Arycanthis blicki</i>
Giant molerat ^{xx}	<i>Tachyoryctes macrocephalus</i>
Glass' shrew	<i>Crocidura glassi</i>
Bale shrew ^{xx}	<i>Crocidura lucina</i>
Shrew spp.	<i>Crocidura thalia</i>
Shrew spp.	<i>Crocidura bottegoides</i>
Harensa shrew ^{xx}	<i>Crocidura harensa</i>
Scott's hairy bat	<i>Myotis scotti</i>
Starck's hare ^{xx}	<i>Lepus starcki</i>
Ethiopian wolf ^{xx}	<i>Canis simensis</i>
Mountain nyala ^{xx}	<i>Tragelaphus buxtoni</i>
Bale monkey ^{xx}	<i>Cercopithecus djamdamensis</i>
Menelik's bushbuck ^{xx}	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus meneliki</i>

STARCK'S HARE

(*Lepus starcki*)

LOCAL NAMES

Amharic: *Tinchel*

Afan Oromo: *Hilleessaa*

Endemic to Ethiopia, the Starck's hare is a very important part of the ecosystem in Bale, as well as an important prey for the endangered Ethiopian wolf.

Starck's hare are found on both sides of the Rift Valley from 2,140m to 4,000m in grasslands and Afroalpine moorlands. The density ranges from about 13 per km² in the dry season to about 18 per km² in the wet season. Festuca grass is the most important source of food for Starck's hare.



Will Burrard-Lucas

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES ENDEMIC TO ETHIOPIA THAT ARE FOUND IN BALE:

** *Endemic to Bale*

Amphibians:

Osgood's Ethiopian toad**	<i>Spinophrynoides osgoodi</i>
Ethiopian short-headed frog**	<i>Balebreviceps hillmani</i>
Cooper's grassland frog	<i>Ptychadena cooperi</i>
Erlanger's grassland frog	<i>Ptychadena erlangeri</i>
Bale grassland frog**	<i>Ptychadena harensa</i>
Neumann's grassland frog	<i>Ptychadena neumanni</i>
Bale mountain frog**	<i>Ericabatrachus baleensis</i>
Badditu forest tree frog	<i>Leptopelis gramineus</i>
Shoa forest tree frog	<i>Leptopelis ragazzii</i>
Kouni valley striped frog	<i>Paracassina kounbiensis</i>
Ethiopian banana frog	<i>Africaxalus enseticola</i>



Chameleon



Neumann's grassland frog

Reptiles:

Bale Mountains two-horned chameleon**	<i>Chamaeleo balebicornutus</i>
Bale Mountains heather chameleon**	<i>Chamaeleo harensae</i>
Ethiopian house snake	<i>Lamprophis erlangeri</i>
Ethiopian mountain adder	<i>Bitis parviocula</i>

RODENT COMMUNITY

Almost one third of the 47 mammals found in Bale Mountains National Park are rodents. The rodent community, particularly of the Afroalpine plateau, is a keystone population in the park. They are the natural grazers of the Afroalpine areas, performing important duties of cryoturbation (soil-mixing). At least eight Ethiopian endemic rodent species have been identified within in the park, including the impressive giant molerat.



Grass rats, Will Burrard-Lucas

GIANT MOLERAT (*Tachyoryctes macrocephalus*)

LOCAL NAMES

Amharic: Ye Dega Filfel

Afan Oromo: Tuqaa Gudaa



Will Burrard-Lucas

Living in extremely high altitudes of the Afroalpine ecosystem, the giant molerat is endemic to the Bale Mountains. They reach staggering densities on the Sanetti plateau of as many as 5,000 molerats in 1km². They are most frequently spotted either foraging surreptitiously around the entrances of their burrows, or shoveling soil from a newly excavated hole. Giant molerats are solitary, but their wide-ranging burrow systems overlap with other

individuals. Each burrow system includes tunnels of over 90m, covering an area of up to 400m². There is one functional nest per system, one entrance per nest, and nesting material consisting exclusively of grasses, woven into a hollow ball. In the burrow system, several dead end tunnels are filled with foodstuffs and feces. The systems are often sloped and they use areas on higher ground during the wet season and lower ground during the dry season. The depth of the tunnels controls the temperature and the rodents move around the burrow as a means of thermoregulation.

They spend just over an hour a day on the surface, mostly foraging on shoots of plants. So that they can scan for danger without exposing their bodies, their eyes are perched on the top of the head. They extend their bodies cautiously from their holes, but even with these precautions they frequently end up as a meal; they are an important part of the diet of the Ethiopian wolf. The giant molerats are the architects of the Afroalpine region, building rounded domes and continually turning over the soil as they forage. They have a significant effect on the landscape due to their extensive burrow systems and mounds of vegetable refuse and soil. These practices result in more grass growth, increasing suitable habitats for grass rats, mice and shrews, which provide food for the birds of prey and Ethiopian wolves.

GENETIC STOCKS OF WILD PLANTS

The forests of the Bale Mountains are regarded as the most important site for genetic stocks of wild forest coffee (*Arabica sp.*) and medicinal plants in Ethiopia. Three medicinal plant hotspots have been identified: two in the Gaysay area and one in the Angesu area, spanning the park boundary. The female flowers of *Hagenia* contain anthelmintic, which is used to cure tapeworm. St. John's wort is used to combat depression. A 2006 study estimated the value of the medicinal plants industry to be approximately two billion Ethiopian Birr annually, some 8 percent of Ethiopia's federal budget at the time.

PLANNING YOUR VISIT



GETTING THERE AND AROUND:

Bale Mountains National Park is easily accessible by both private car and public transport on a newly paved road.

By Private Vehicle Direct from Addis Ababa (6-7 hours):

1. Mojo/Shashemene Road:

- Take the Adama road 75km east of Addis to Mojo. Turn right at the junction and head south on the Moyale Road for 170km, passing through Ziway. This route takes you through the Rift Valley, passing several scenic lakes. Take a left at the clearly signposted turn as you enter Shashemene (at the bus station) for the Bale Mountains. Follow this road for 158km through Dodola and Adaba to Dinsho where the park headquarters is located.

MAP: DRIVING ROUTES TO AND FROM BMNP



- Sights: **Central Rift Valley Lakes:** The lakes of Ziway, Langano, Abiata, Shala and Awassa. Langano is Ethiopia's only lake suitable for swimming. Along the eastern shore of the lake is a rustic forest home to various birds. Lakes Abiata and Shala form the nucleus for the Abiata-Shala National Park where thousands of flamingos can be found. At 260m, Lake Shala is the deepest of the Ethiopian Rift Valley Lakes and is the home to a breeding colony of great white pelicans. **Shashemene:** Best known for its Rastafarian population, this fast-growing city is a key transport hub. In December, the town hosts the popular Reggae in the Rift Valley Festival with performers from Africa and the Caribbean. **Wendo Genet:** Enjoy pools filled with thermal water from nearby sources surrounded by lush vegetation. Hikes through the surrounding mountains can also be arranged with guides who are located at the entrance of the hot spring pools. **Adaba-Dodola Ecotourism:** provides the opportunity for mountain trekking while generating alternative income for forest dwellers in order to conserve the remnants of Afroalpine forests. Spend the days trekking and the nights in mountain huts. See page 52 for more information.

2. Butajira/Ziway Road: More scenic and with less traffic, this route passes through several cultural and archeological sites before connecting with the Ziway Road.

- Follow the Jimma road out of Addis Ababa for 20km to Alem Gena, where the signposted road south to Butajira branches off to the left. From Alem Gena to Butajira is roughly 105km. At Butajira take the road 50km to Ziway. Continue on the Moyale Road for 84km. Take a left at the clearly signposted turn as you enter Shashemene (at the bus station) for the Bale Mountains. Follow this road for 158km through Dodola and Adaba to Dinsho.
- Sights: **Melka Kunture Prehistoric Site:** Located on the south face of the Awash River Gorge (opposite Melka Awash), and regarded as one of the most important Stone Age sites in Ethiopia, this area boasts fossils over one million years old. Downstream in Dubatu is a complex of caves and houses on the cliff-face, dug by the Gurage people. Both this and a disused rock-hewn monastery are abandoned and can be entered by visitors. To get here, turn right 100m after the bridge in Melka Awash. It is signposted. **Adadi Maryam Church:** Dating from between the 12th and 14th centuries, this is the southernmost extant rock-hewn church in Ethiopia. Turn off 5km past Melka Awash at the signpost, then continue 13km to the church. **Tiya Stelae:** A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Tiya is home to 45 stelae over 2m tall marking a mass grave of people who died almost 700 years ago. Other than this, very little is known about the markings or origin. Take the unsignposted turn on your left 40km south of Melka Awash, and about 100m after the Tiya Stelae Hotel. Continue 200m and make a right after a red water tank.

3. Asela Route: Heavy in truck traffic for the first 70km, this route takes you through one of Ethiopia's most famous cities for beef as well as a natural hot spring.

- Drive 113km east of Addis to Adama (also known as Nazret), the capital city of the Oromia region in the middle of the magnificent Rift Valley. Take a right turn at the main junction which, after 75km leads to the agricultural town of Asela. From there, drive onwards to Dodola, which is situated at the junction of the Asela and Shashemene roads. From Dodola continue a further 80km to Dinsho where the Bale Mountains National Park headquarters is located.
- Sights: **Sodere Hot Springs:** Situated at an altitude of 1,700m, and stretching about 1km on the banks of the Awash river, the hot springs are only 5km off the main road that leads to Asela. The hot springs fill a 3m deep swimming pool, surrounded by forests that offer great bird watching. A nominal entrance and picnic fee (should you choose to bring your own food) are both charged upon arrival. **Dera Delfeker Reserve:** A small but important sanctuary that supports greater and lesser kudu, klipspringer and common duiker as well as more than 100 bird species. The sanctuary is situated on the Adama-Asela road on the eastern bounds of the small town of Dera. **Wabe Waterfall:** A tributary of the Wabe Shebele River, this wide, tall waterfall is located on the Asassa-Dodola road. About 7km before reaching Dodola is a bridge; from there, the waterfall is only 500m.

Public Transportation (8 hours):

Buses leave from the Mercato bus station where you are advised to purchase your tickets the day before you plan to travel. Tickets can be purchased from the ticket windows located behind the bus parking lot. To locate the specific ticket window, listen for people calling for either Goba or Robe. Buses are divided into three levels, with Level 1 being the most comfortable, and Level 3 the least. Ticket prices reflect the level, but average around 150 Birr each way.

Buses are scheduled to leave at 6am although they don't always leave on time. You are advised to arrive around an hour before departure. Buses stop for a brief lunch break. If your destination is Dinsho, you must call *nerage* (rhymes with garage) once you have reached town, and the bus driver will stop to let you off. Dinsho is the first substantial town after passing through the mountains. The entrance to the park is at the top of the hill on the outer reaches of town.

MULTI-DAY DRIVING ITINERARIES:

These routes include sites of cultural, historical and natural interest both en-route and nearby the Bale Mountains National Park. All care has been taken to document accurate driving directions, although keep in mind that roads and road conditions may change. Recommended hotels and restaurants can be found in the Bale directory in the back of this book.

Suggested Itinerary #1:

This route takes you through a diverse national park, an undiscovered gorge, an ancient Muslim shrine and a mysterious underground cave en route to the Bale Mountains.

Addis Ababa to Awash National Park (1 night): The drive from Addis Ababa to Awash National Park is 215km. About halfway, you will pass through Adama (Nazret) – an ideal stop for a coffee or tea, and the most famous city for meat in Ethiopia. Driving on towards Meta Hara, you will cross Lake Beseka on a road that seems to hover just above the water. Look for great white pelicans, marabou storks and yellow-billed storks on its shores. Once in Awash National Park, take a short walk through the bushland inhabited by baboons to the Awash River Falls. Continue to the Crocodile Beach and the edge of the spectacular Awash Gorge. The park is known for its diversified bird species including Arabian bustards, secretary birds, rosy-patched shrikes and Abyssinian rollers. Other interesting species include northern carmine bee-eater, chestnut-bellied sandgrouse and chestnut-headed sparrow-lark. Next, drive across the Ilala Sala Plain in search of the easily spotted beisa oryx, greater kudu, Salt's dik-dik, bat-eared jackal and various gazelles. There is a lodge in the park as well as designated camping grounds. See the directory in the back of this book for more information.

Spend the next day exploring the nearby Filwoha hot springs at the northern part of the national park, an oasis encircled by palm trees. Troops of Hamadryas baboon pass nearby. The tall grass plains of Filwoha conceal pygmy falcons, harlequin quails, yellow-breasted barbets and rosy-patched shrikes. The hot springs area features such birds as the Abyssinian scimitarbill, rufus-necked wryneck, black-throated barbet and the gold-mantled woodpecker. This section of the park offers the colorful topography of the Fentale volcano.

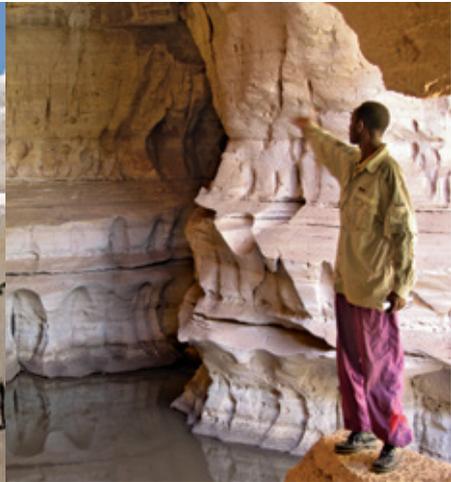
The undiscovered gorges of Wabe Shebele (1 night): Leave Awash and drive 25km to Bordede. Turn right onto a gravel road (in good condition) leading to Mechara. This road will take you through the Agemetu Valley to the scattered villages across the Hararghe plateau, encircled by chat farms and dotted with circular Harar Oromo huts. After 50km you will arrive in Gelemso. Before reaching town, turn right at the junction which will take you to Mechara – the gateway to the undiscovered Wabe Shebele Gorge. Stop in Mechara for lunch where the restaurants are well known for their meat. Then drive onwards through the vast lowlands speckled with termite mounds and typical lowland huts made with red soil. After 67km you will reach the Wabe Gorge, consisting of three smaller gorges; this is arguably the most dramatic gorge in the country. The road takes you from the 1,000m high edge down to the river, through narrow, winding roads. See page 54 for more detailed information. There are good camping grounds around the first and second gorge; it is also possible to camp at the Culture and Tourism Office in nearby Dire Sheik Hussein. To get there, continue on the same road through the gorge 25km past the end of the second gorge. There are no hotels in Dire Sheik Hussein.

Following the pilgrim’s footsteps from the shrine to the holy cave (1 night): The ancient holy shrine of Dire Sheik Hussein, named after the holy muslim Sheik Hussein Bin Malka, stands at the edge of town. Here, one can tour the impressive conical, white “gamo.” See page 52 for more detailed information. From here, a good dirt road offers stunning views of the Gubayeu Mountain on the way to the small town of Jarra. From Jarra, continue 14km towards Delo-Sebro, where the road splits in two. Take a left turn towards Ginnir (an ideal lunch stop) through vast agricultural fields coated with Euphorbia plants. Then, take a right turn to the center of town (near the Gofa Hotel and Ginnir Hospital), and continue driving through the beautiful Ardatere Valley.

At the bridge, turn right and follow the road for 36km until you reach the entrance of Sof-Omar. Keep an eye out on your left for “Sof-Omar” painted in red on a rock, just before the road takes a harsh right turn. The cathedral-like Sof-Omar Caves are the longest network of underground caves in Africa. See page 53 for more detailed information.



Dire Sheik Hussein



Sof-Omar

Bale (3 nights): From Sof-Omar, drive 126km on the road that leads from the caves, to Dinsho, passing through small villages towards the breathtaking Dadimous Mountain.

FROM	TO	DISTANCE (KM)
Addis Ababa	Nazret (Adama)	100
Nazret (Adama)	Beseka Lake	85
Beseka Lake	Meta Hara	3
Meta Hara	Awash National Park Gate	14
Awash National Park Gate	Djbouti Junction	22
Djbouti Junction	Bordede	21
Bordede	Gelemso Junction	6
Bordede	Gelemso & Mechara Junction	50
Gelemso Junction	Mechara	34
Mechara	Diree/Bale Junction	4
Mechara	Start of Wabe Gorge #1	77
Wabe Gorge #1	End of Wabe Gorge #2	43
Wabe Gorge #1	Dire Sheik Hussein	67
Dire Sheik Hussein	Jarra	61
Jarra	Delo-Sebero Ginnir Junction	14
Delo Sebero	Ginnir Town	48
Ginnir	Sof-Omar	36
Sof-Omar	Goro	41
Goro	Robe	55
Robe	Dinsho	30

Suggested Itinerary #2: From the Bale Mountains further south

From the Bale Mountains, head south to Delo-Mena where the earth is red and camels are abundant to Negele-Borena, a lively lowland town. Continue on to the isolated Geralle National Park and the untouched southwestern part of Ethiopia reaching the Yabelo Wildlife Sanctuary en route to the home of Prince Ruspoli's turaco, as you continue to the south or return to Addis.

From Bale to Prince Ruspoli's turaco country (1-3 nights): Leave Dinsho for the Sanetti plateau – see page 42 for Sanetti plateau and Harennna forest driving directions. Leaving behind the moist tropical forest, drive 50km south to Delo-Mena. Delo-Mena is



Prince Ruspoli's turaco

known for its coffee and offers basic accommodation. The next morning, drive through grasslands and the Genale Valley to Negele-Borena, a large, bustling town. Take a right turn at the junction of Haymi Refu village and drive through scrubland to the Geralle National Park; you may encounter dik-diks running along the road on the way. The park headquarters is located in a small village called Oudet. The park was established in 2006 and is about 4,000km². After obtaining your entrance permit, continue on the same road for three to four hours to the entrance. Continue through bush and grassland to Direre Wilderness Campsite, located close to the Dawa River and encircled by large riverbank trees. After a brief rest in the campsite, set off in search of wildlife including kudu, oryx and gerenuk. Keep an eye out for elephants, often seen drinking from the Dawa River.

There are several options for your next destination. **Option 1:** Continue further on the same road to Arero via Wichale Village, considered the best place to see the Prince Ruspoli's turaco – first discovered in 1892 and not seen again until the 1940s. There is a rough road that takes you to Yabelo where you can spend the night; it is advisable to check the road conditions beforehand. **Option 2:** Drive towards Yabelo and en route explore the village of El Sod. Known as the “House of Salt,” El Sod is famous for its deep crater lake, out of which muddy, black salt has been extracted for centuries. Continue to Yabelo, home of the Streseman's bush crow and the white-tailed swallow. The Streseman's bush crow is found in groups of up to 30 birds and is considered to be quite enigmatic. The

acacia bush areas around Yabelo feature many birds which are near endemic to northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia. Yabelo is the largest town between Dilla and the Kenya border town Moyale. It is one of the country's premier birding sites due to high diversity and endemism that combine to offer a superb birding experience.

The 272km asphalt road from Yabelo to the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region capital Awassa takes you through the acacia scrub of the southern Rift Valley and fertile highlands. The road then takes you towards Yirga Chaffe, where some of the best coffee in the world originates. From there, continue to Dilla, where traditional stelae have been erected in Ethiopia. The site of Tutu Fella features around 80 of these carved stones. The drive then continues on to Yirgalem, the gateway to the newly established Loka Abaya National Park and the Aregash Lodge, one of the best lodges in the country built using local materials in the style of a traditional Sidama village. See the directory for more information. The Loka Abaya National park is located on the northeastern side of Lake Abaya about 50km southwest of Awassa. It covers an estimated area of 500km². At present the main attractions of the park are the views of Lake Abaya and the riverine forests. The park is also reputed to have a population of African wild dogs. Here, you can camp at a temporary campsite at the park headquarters.

From Yirgalem it is only 40km to Awassa on good asphalt road. Fresh pineapples and colorful *sidama* basketry – made of papyrus grass - can be found along the roadside. One of Ethiopia's most attractive cities, Awassa is known for its scenic lake. Continue further north among the central Rift Valley lakes to Addis passing through Shashemene, best known for its Rastafarian population. Past Shashemene is Lake Langano, Ethiopia's most developed lake destination with a number of quality lodges and lakeside resorts. Drive further through the small and bustling town of Ziway, known for a lake of the same name with five little volcanic islands. Many white pelicans and yellow-billed storks dwell on its shores. From Langano you can continue on to Mojo where you make a left turn towards Addis; a four hour drive.

GETTING AROUND

Minibuses leave Dinsho from the center of the main road in town (unless it is a market day when larger buses pass through). There may be a wait, and a "broker" may put you on a list for when the minibus arrives to guarantee you a seat. They may ask for payment in return; 5 Birr is sufficient. Buses go to the Robe bus station, and from there other buses leave for Goba, Shashemene, Adaba, Agarfa, Dodola and further afield. Bus destinations are identified by attendants who call out names of towns and cities. Travel time between Robe and Dinsho is about 40 minutes, and between Robe and Goba only about 15 minutes.

If you are travelling with a lot of bags or large bags, they may be tied to the top of the vehicle and you may be charged a fee of 2-5 Birr per bag. When taking public transportation, it is strongly advised to start early in the day as schedules are highly unpredictable. Travel on large market days is usually much smoother as more buses are traveling between towns. Hitchhiking is not recommended.

FROM	TO	DISTANCE (KM)
Rira	Manyete	24
Manyete	Delo-Mena	15
Delo-Mena	Melka-Amana	21
Delo-Mena	Bidre	70
Delo-Mena	Bitata-Junction	141
Delo-Mena	Negele-Borena	161
Negele-Borena	Yabelo Junction	13
Negele-Borena	Bulbul	54
Negele-Borena	Melka-Guba	87
Negele-Borena	Oudet (Geralle NP HQ)	102
Negele-Borena	Wichile	134
Negele-Borena	Chew-Bet	223
Chew-bet	Yabelo Junction	13
Yabelo Junction	Yabelo	86
Yabelo	Yabelo Sanctuary Gate	10
Yabelo	Hager Mariam	93
Yabelo	Yirga Chaffe	161
Yabelo	Dilla	196
Dilla	Yirgalem Junction	35
Yirgalem Junction	Yirgalem Town	13
Yirgalem Junction	Awassa	40
Awassa	Shashemene	26
Awassa	Ziway	110
Awassa	Mojo-junction	197
Awassa	Debre-Zeit	219
Debre-Zeit	Addis	47

TAILORING YOUR TRIP WITHIN BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Arrangements can be made with locally registered and approved guides associations. You are free to decide whether to travel on foot or horseback. However, it is recommended to take a packhorse. No prior riding experience is required. The mountain campsites are set between 17km and 22km apart at between 3,000m and 4,100m altitude. Walking or riding from one camp to the next takes 6-8 hours, allowing you to spend each night at a different site. Each campsite has its own distinctive features and spectacular views.

TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

Traveling with children in the Bale Mountains can be a rewarding experience for both parents and children. Trekking itineraries can easily be adapted for a child's endurance and interests. They can experience the wilderness of the Bale Mountains from atop a gentle, child-friendly horse, with or without a guide to lead the horse.

A recent visitor to Bale had this to share about his experience:

"I visited Bale Mountains National Park with my mother (70 years old) and my two kids (six and eight years old). We had a lovely trek spending one night on the massif camping. The vistas and landscape in Bale are staggering and we were lucky enough to see a number of wolves. The whole Bale ecosystem is a special place and very interesting to visit. Kids will take lessons back to the schoolroom about the environment and the world around them."



TRIP ITINERARIES

The itineraries and tours listed below are samples. Locally registered guide associations, as well as Addis based tourism companies, can organize tours tailored to meet your interest, needs and time.

BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK BY CAR:

2 night/3 day Self-Guided Drive of the Bale Mountains National Park

This itinerary takes you from the Bale Mountains National Park headquarters at Dinsho, through the Gaysay grasslands over the Sanetti plateau and into Harenna forest. See page 10 for a detailed map of the park.

FROM	TO	DISTANCE (KM)
Dodola	Dinsho	80
Adaba	Dinsho	55
Dinsho	Robe	30
Robe	Goba	12
Goba	Start of Sanetti plateau (Angeso)	12
Angeso	Tulu Dimtu Mountain	25
Tulu Dimtu Mountain	Harenna escarpment	8
Harenna escarpment	Rira	11
Rira	Manyete	35

Web Valley Drive: The road through the Web valley starts at the park headquarters. It is signposted near the base of the hill where the lodge is located. It is a rough dirt track, easily navigable with a 4WD vehicle during the dry season, but impassable after heavy rains (ask locally). The first 8km or so pass through farmland along the edge of the park. Local people are generally friendly. You then enter the park, and settlements and crops begin to thin out. From May through July, vast fields of red-hot pokers glow amongst the lush green background with their distinctive red and yellow flowers. 12km beyond the headquarters, the road travels parallel to



Web Valley, Rebecca Jackrel

MENELIK'S BUSHBUCK (*Tragelaphus scriptus meneliki*)

LOCAL NAMES

Amharic: Ye Menelik Dekula

Afan Oromo: Boroffa

Menelik's bushbuck is an endemic sub-species of bushbuck. The male Menelik's bushbuck is much darker than the male common bushbuck. Menelik's bushbuck are most often seen alone, except when adult females are accompanied by their offspring for up to one year after birth. They are not territorial. Like the mountain nyala, the males carry out elaborate strutting displays to establish hierarchies.

They have small home ranges of up to 3km². They

are most often found in thick woodlands or heather moorlands. They are browsers, feeding selectively off the leaves of herbs and shrubs in woodlands or on moorlands.



the Web River, skirting an impressive gorge where rock hyraxes are often seen. Leopards, black eagles and giant eagle owls are occasionally seen along the edges of this gorge as well. At the top of the gorge the road crosses a stone bridge over the river, and then rises steeply. At the top of the rise, 200m further along, you will again cross the Web River. Here, the road enters the Afroalpine habitat, and it is here that the Bale landscape magnificently presents itself. This is also where one begins to look for Ethiopian wolves and hunting raptors. 50m after crossing the Web River again you will see the Finch Habera waterfall (“woman’s urine” in local language!) – an excellent place to stop for a picnic or camp overnight. The Web valley road continues across the open Afroalpine plain and ends 18km after leaving the headquarters.

Gaysay Grasslands: Turn left from the park headquarters and drive 7km to the Gaysay grasslands. You are likely to see warthogs and the endemic mountain nyala from the road, and a short walk through the waist-high grasses and wildflowers will give you a chance to spot the endemic Menelik’s bushbuck, grey duiker, bohor reedbuck, and many others. Back in the vehicle, take the dirt road on your right at the disused ticket station and continue for one kilometer, until you reach the guardhouses, just before crossing the Gaysay river, where you can park. It is possible to approach within a few meters of the mountain nyala (as well as many other mammals). Further exploration will take you to the woodlands where elusive animals such as the serval, spotted hyena and golden (common) jackal reside – the latter is commonly heard calling in early evening. Make sure to also listen for the finest songbird in Africa – the Abyssinian catbird. Before returning to your car, follow the trail to the Web River waterfall, easily reached by foot in under an hour from the main road. Finally, return to the headquarters or continue on to Goba or Robe.

Sanetti Plateau to the Harennna Forest: Early the following morning, head to the Sanetti plateau. From the park headquarters, turn right and follow the main road through Goba and Robe to the plateau. As the sun rises, the most endangered canid in the world – the Ethiopian wolf – begins to hunt. The Sanetti plateau is the best place in Ethiopia to see this elegant animal, and the winding road atop the plateau, one of the highest all-weather roads in Africa, is an ideal spot for viewings. The plateau is crawling with rodents, the largest being the giant molerat, found only in the Bale Mountains. Explore the area on foot, marveling at the lichen-clad rocks, indicators of pure air. Look to the sky for soaring birds of prey: golden, tawny and Verreaux’s eagles as well as the bearded vulture (lammergeyer), lanner falcon, and augur buzzard. Continuing again by car, you will pass Tulu Dimtu or “the Red Mountain” just 4km off the main road. This is the second highest mountain in Ethiopia at 4,377m. The summit is reachable by car or by foot in under an hour. As you reach the end of the plateau, you enter the Harennna escarpment, plunging more than 2,000m towards a vast tropical forest in just 8km. Driving down switchback roads, you’ll be treated to magnificent views. After passing through stands of giant heather the road takes you to the small village of Rira. Stop for lunch and enjoy the local dish of *ambesha* and *gomen* (flatbread and steamed kale) at one of the two restaurants (see directory for more information). Found at the base of the Harennna escarpment, Rira is the center for a bamboo forest walk and short waterfall hike into the stunning Harennna forest. See page 49 for further details. Additionally, at the right time of year, you can help the locals harvest honey. Continue on the same road from Rira and drive towards Delo-Mena. You can camp at a designated camping ground or stay at the Bale Mountain Lodge (by far the nicest lodging in the Bale area). There is a gravel turnoff 7km from Rira that is clearly signposted on your left for the lodge. Otherwise, spend the evening at the Harennna Forest Hotel and Cultural Lodge in Rira. Alternatively you can drive 50km south to Delo-Mena, which is known for its coffee and offers basic accommodation, or return to Goba, Robe or Dinsho for the night.

Harennna Forest: Hike the Gushuralle Peak Forest Trail (see page 51 for details) which leads to the apex of the Gushuralle Mountain, rendering panoramic views of primary forest through dense stands of mountain bamboo. With some luck, you may encounter the elusive bamboo specialist endemic to the Bale Mountains: the Bale monkey. Located within this forest is the wild forest coffee village of Manyete, where you can learn the traditional ways of harvesting coffee. Spend the night camping or at the Bale Mountain Lodge, and in the morning drive to Goba, Robe, Dinsho or Delo-Mena to the south. If you pass through the plateau during early morning or late evening, you may encounter Ethiopian wolves as they gather for social occasions and patrol their territory before they retire to sleep. Additionally, an early morning drive south towards Delo-Mena is an ideal time to spot lions on the road.

HARVESTING ORGANIC FOREST HONEY: FROM THE HIVE TO THE SPOON



Honey collector in Rira

Ethiopia is the leading producer of honey in Africa, and the tenth largest producer in the world. Traditional beekeeping has been practiced for thousands of years in Ethiopia. The Harenna forest is known for its

production of organic forest honey. The indigenous people of the area possess extensive knowledge of tree species and their value for beekeeping. The Harenna forest is endowed with various tree species that make excellent hives, which are made from hollowed out tree trunks. Trees are assessed for durability of the timber, ease of production, and availability and attractiveness of wood to the bees. Bees are picky and each beekeeper has a preferred method of attracting bees. Between 10 and 20 hives can be made from a single tree. Each beekeeper owns numerous suspended hives, which have been passed from generation to generation. Trees are marked as to signify use of a hive, and tall trees with bare trunks are preferred as this acts as a defense against climbing honey badgers.

At the end of the dry season (late May to early July, and again in late November), honey is harvested. Honey is harvested at night when the bees are less active. Wearing no protective clothing, and consequently enduring many stings, the beekeeper climbs the trunk with incredible speed using only a single rope. Smoke from bound lichen is used to subdue the bees as honey is placed into a hardened leather bag. If the time of year is right, you can be a part of this process and taste the fresh honey as it is harvested. This is best done from the village of Rira, found at the base of the Harenna escarpment.

It is highly recommended to make a booking at least two weeks in advance so that beekeepers can identify and arrange available hives. This can also be organized through the Bale Mountain Lodge. For contact information see the Bale Directory.

MANYETE WILD FOREST COFFEE VILLAGE: FROM THE FOREST TO THE CUP



Manyete is a small village found at the edge of the Hareenna forest, located at altitude of 2,200m, just 35km from the village of Rira. The area is known for larger trees, now rare in Ethiopia. These include fern pines (podocarpus graciliar) and fig trees (ficus spp.) of massive girth. The trees are often over 30m tall, and the branches of most are covered with dense epiphytes. In the shade of these trees grows wild forest coffee (Arabica sp.).

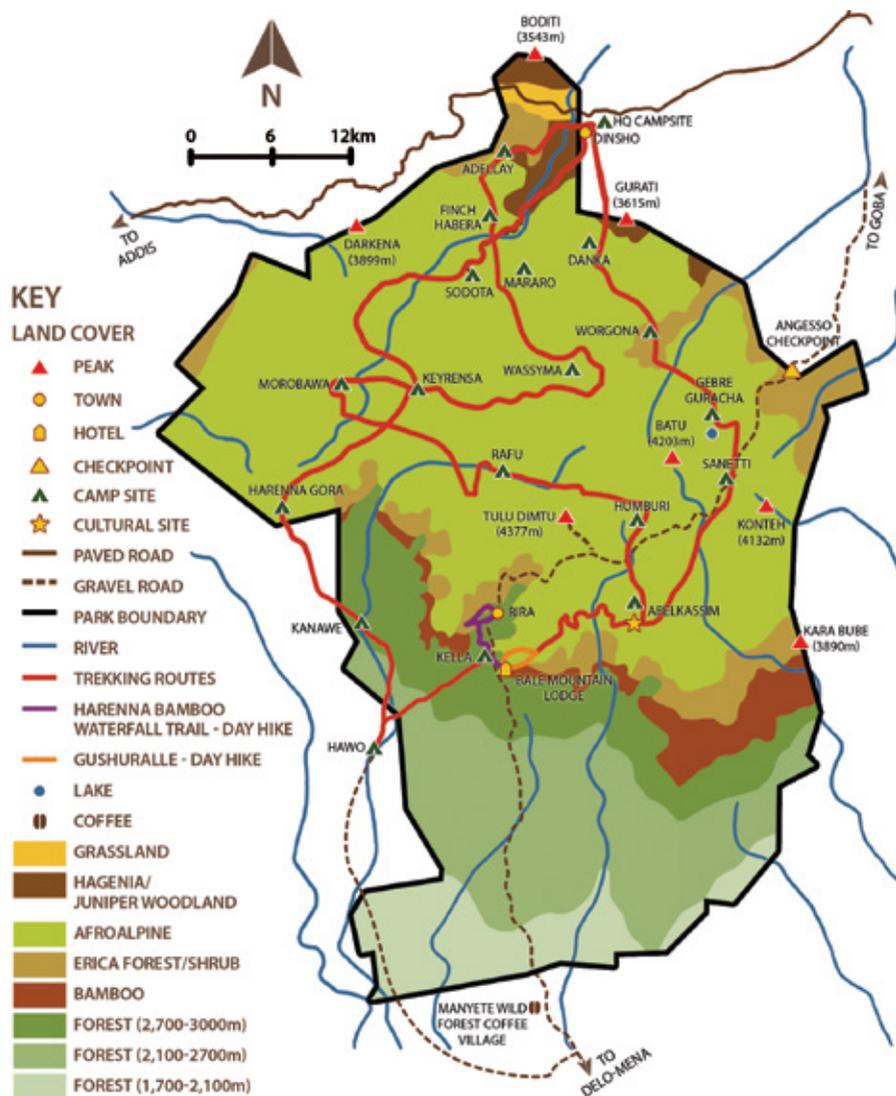
Be a part of this unique and natural experience by helping to harvest coffee, and enjoy the fruits of your labor in a traditional coffee ceremony. Equipped with a traditional basket, fill it with ripe coffee beans as you move from tree to tree. Coffee beans grow in clusters on extended branches and as they ripen, they turn from green to red. Once your basket is full, sit with the locals and remove the meaty outside, revealing a green, slimy coffee bean. These beans are then dried and roasted and ground to make coffee. As the beans are roasted, you may be offered a whiff – waft the air towards you as the roasting beans are held out in front of you.

For contact information see the directory.

BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK TREKKING

Trekking itineraries vary from two to eleven days. A typical day of trekking consists of anywhere from three to eight hours of hiking. Treks range from 3,000m to above 4,000m altitude. Explore all habitats of the Bale Mountains National Park as you trek across the home of the Ethiopian wolf, mountain nyala, giant molerat and Bale monkey. Experience stunning Afroalpine mountains and natural scenery while heading deep into the heart of the Sanetti plateau – a floating land. Explore vast moorland and discover Afroalpine plants as you camp in the wilderness. Hike amongst rock pinnacles etched out of the lava flows by millions of years of ice and winds, and pass waterfalls and alpine lakes. Camping in the Hareenna forest may reward you with a sighting of the elusive animals that live there. Wildlife that can be seen along the way includes the olive baboon, warthog, rock hyrax, Starck's hare, klipspringer, grey duiker, African wild dog, giant forest hog, leopard, lion and birds of prey. All trips can be tailored to fit time restraints and interests, and can be done on foot or horseback.

TREKKING ROUTES





Will Burrard-Lucas



Bearded vulture, Vincent Munier

BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK BIRDING TREKKING ROUTE

Rated as the fourth best birding spot on the continent by the African Bird Club, the Bale Mountains are an exquisite location for birding. Explore all five major areas of the Park; from the antelope filled Gaysay grasslands, to the Sanetti plateau, to the Haremma forest.

The Bale Mountains offer abundant birdlife with over 300 species recorded. Of that, six species are endemic to Ethiopia, and 11 are endemic to Ethiopia and Eritrea. As with all itineraries, the birding tour can be tailored to your time and interests, and carried out on foot or horseback.

For detailed information, see the Bale Birding Booklet or visit: www.balemountains.org.

WATTLED CRANE (*Buggeranus carunculatus*)



Delphin Ruche

The largest and rarest of the six species of crane in Africa, the wattled crane has been listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List since 1994. Historically ranging across southern Africa, the species range has been declining over the last several decades. The population in Ethiopia is the northernmost in Africa. Of all of Africa's cranes,

the wattled crane is most dependent on wetlands, although in Ethiopia they are less so, making use of the montane grasslands, savannahs, wet meadows, streams and small lakes of the Sanetti plateau. Typically seen in pairs, they breed at the beginning of the wet season in May and June. They have the longest incubation period as well as fledging period of any crane – up to 36 days and 130 days respectively - rendering the chicks to particular risk of predation. They feed on aquatic plants, but will also eat seeds, spilled grain, insects and small vertebrates in drier habitats. Their name is derived from the long wattles hanging below their heads that become elongated when the bird is aggressive and shrink when it is threatened. Their call is a high-pitched and far-reaching “kwaamk.” They are non-migratory but may move locally due to the availability of water. Faced with loss and degradation of wetland habitats caused by human factors – agriculture expansion, industrialization and its effects – the habitat of the wattled crane is ever declining.

ADABA-DODOLA TO BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK BY HORSE

Discover the Bale Mountains and surrounding areas on horseback by riding in traditional style on local horses. Begin your journey at 2,400m through various ecosystems and dramatic scenery to the Tulu Dimtu Mountain, the second highest peak in Ethiopia (4,377m). The vegetation changes gradually as you leave the scattered traditional villages of the Adaba-Dodola Ecotourism Sites and enter the Bale Mountains National Park. Wildlife that can be seen along the way includes black-and-white colobus monkey, Ethiopian wolf, an abundance of rodents, Starck's hare, and birds of prey. An average day of trekking is roughly five to seven hours.

The first campsite, Changiti, is located on the forest's edge, 15km from Dodola. Here you will pick up the horses for the first leg of your trip. Both riding and packhorses are changed at every destination in order to distribute income to local residents.

The route can be tailored to the time restrictions, needs and interests of our visitors. Be aware that in all cases arrangements must be made in advance with registered guides. Information for the Adaba-Dodola tour guide office can be found in the directory.

BARRE WOMEN'S HANDICRAFT ASSOCIATION: CONSERVATION THROUGH LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT



The Barre Women's Handicraft Association was established in 2010 by six women skilled in craft production, with an aim to create economic empowerment of women based on their skills. Subsequently, traditional craft production has become

another important source of income for women to support their households.

The majority of the population of the Bale Mountains is dependent upon harvesting precious natural resources of the area to sustain their families. By supporting the Barre Women's Handicraft Association, you can help to diversify income-generating livelihoods and in turn help to reduce pressure on the natural resources of the area. Furthermore, this greatly contributes to the empowerment of women in an otherwise male-dominated society.

The establishment of the Barre Women's Handicraft Association resulted from a movement to increase the participation of women in the ongoing tourism development and conservation of the Bale Mountains National Park. The Frankfurt Zoological Society facilitated the establishment of the association by building a craft shop within the park where the women can sell their goods, as well as providing training in several areas including developing environmentally friendly and marketable products for visitors to the park.

The Barre women produce various baskets for local markets as a way to generate income. However, with the exception of wedding season, there is not much of a market for these baskets in the Bale area.

Their handicrafts are available for sale at the entrance gate to the park headquarters.

OTHER EXCURSIONS WITHIN BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Trout Fishing: The Bale Mountains are an ideal place for wilderness fishing. Nine rivers and streams between Adaba and Goba were stocked with trout in the early 1970s; these have thrived and are now available for anglers.

Rainbow and brown trout can be fished on a short stretch of the Web River near Dinsho as well as in the Shaya River and Danka stream. Fishing conditions vary from cascading waterfalls to deep, still pools and the narrow, clear Danka stream. Information, guides and permits can be obtained in the Dinsho Rural and Agriculture Offices located in the town of Dinsho (see directory). Anglers must bring all fishing gear (unless they are staying at the Bale Mountain Lodge where gear can be rented and a guide can be hired).



Trout fishing in the Web River

Harena Bamboo and Waterfall Trail: Less than an hour's walk from the center of Rira (in the Harena forest) are two waterfalls, stacked almost on top of each other, tucked away in a narrow canyon filled with bamboo. The trail can either begin or end at the park sub-headquarters, located 1.5km south of the village center or at the Bale Mountain Lodge. Beginning and ending at the park sub-HQ, the round trip hike takes 2 hours. One way from the Bale Mountain Lodge to the waterfall (or opposite direction) takes 5-6 hours.



The hike takes you through mountain forests, descends steeply into the open range and then into the bamboo-filled canyon. The trail crosses the river on a natural land bridge, giving you a perfect view of the first, shorter waterfall. Following the trail to the left of the waterfall basin, you will climb up around the falls to the second waterfall. A large pool at the base of the second waterfall is a great spot for photos and offers a chance to soak your feet. Although chilly, the water is clean and ideal for a dip. Afterwards, continue up the loop trail out of the canyon for a birds-eye view of the falls as well as sweeping views to the south. Continue along the trail past a

pair of inhabited huts and then cross a footbridge over the river and continue up to the sub-headquarters and the trailhead. Keep your eyes peeled for the black-and-white colobus monkey and the elusive Bale monkey as well as Menelik's bushbuck. Birds in the area include the grey cuckoo shrike, Abyssinian catbird, Ruppell's robin-chat, Abyssinian ground thrush, white-cheeked turaco and many more.

Web Valley Walks: The Web valley hike starts from the park headquarters and takes about three and a half to four hours one-way. You'll pass a waterfall (next to which there is a campsite) that flows heavily from June to November, and less so throughout the rest of the year. Wildlife along this route includes warthog, mountain nyala, Menelik's bushbuck, bohor reedbuck, grey duiker, serval, spotted hyena, golden (common) jackal, black-and-white colobus monkey, rock hyrax and Starck's hare. Bird species include the black-winged lovebird, white-collared pigeon, Abyssinian longclaw, Tacazze sunbird, tawny and steppe eagles, African rook, black-headed siskin, thekla lark, streaky seedeater and many others.

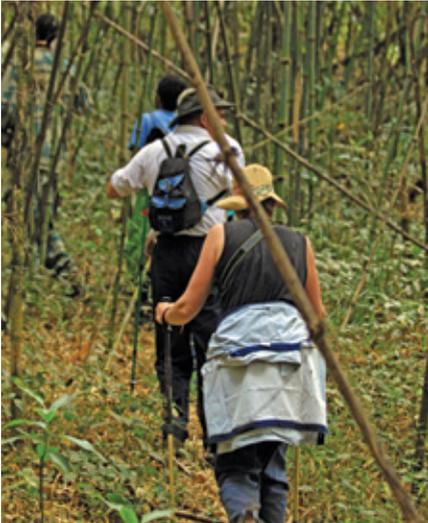


Finch Habera



Delphin Ruche

Park Headquarters Walks: The headquarters has a main loop trail that is easy to follow and will take you through the *Hagenia* and juniper forest. The trail begins at a small footbridge on the road between the entrance gate and the lodge. This is a gravel laid trail that leads you uphill and comes out at the main campsite. You can then follow the main road down from the campsite to the Dinsho lodge. Warthog, mountain nyala, Menelik's bushbuck, and bohor reedbuck are very common within the area as are many Ethiopian and Abyssinian endemic birds.



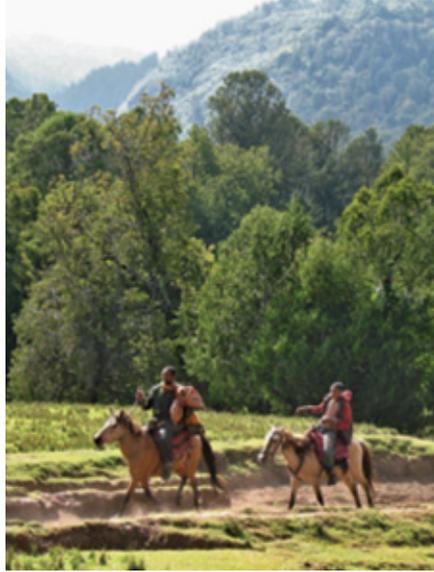
Gushuralle Peak Forest Trail: Beginning at the Bale Mountain Lodge in the Katcha clearing, 7km south of Rira, this trail takes you through dense bamboo forest. Wildlife you may come across includes Bale monkey, Menelik's bushbuck, warthog, colobus monkey, mountain nyala and giant forest hog. Although sightings are rarer, keep your eyes peeled for leopard and lion. The summit of Gushuralle provides spectacular views across the Harennna forest. It takes about 2-3 hours to reach the apex of Gushuralle from Katcha and return.

Gasuray Gorge: Gasuray is a prominent feature in the Dinsho landscape, located southwest of the town. A hill, recognized by its cone like shape and position on the Web River, stands between cultivated fields and the ridge running along the western edge of the Web valley. At its base, the Web River has cut through the rock to expose unique geological features and create beautiful scenery.

The Gasuray gorge can be reached either from the Web valley road that leaves from the park headquarters or from the main road that goes through the town of Dinsho.

NEARBY TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Adaba-Dodola Trekking and Ecotourism: Dodola and Adaba are gateway towns to the Bale Mountains allowing visitors to experience the “other” side of Ethiopia. This area is very peaceful, scenic and off the beaten track. The lush mountain forests, pristine streams, accommodating guides, welcoming hosts and authentic customs of the Bale Mountains create a unique and unsurpassable experience. Moreover, trekking in the Adaba-Dodola Mountains offers not only a great opportunity to connect with nature, but is also a living example of sustainable tourism run by local communities.



The starting point for all tours is Dodola, five hours by car from Addis Ababa. As you arrive, look for a signpost for the Adaba-Dodola tour office.

Adaba-Dodola Ecotourism trekking and BMNP are both located within the same chain of mountains. The mountain huts in Adaba-Dodola stretch from Changiti (south of Dodola) to Duro (several kilometres from the Hareenna escarpment). Therefore, it is possible to arrange a combined trekking route in either direction. All trekking arrangements must be made in advance with locally registered guides or the Adaba-Dodola Tour Guides office in Dodola. (See directory for more information).

Dire Sheik Hussein: The holy shrine of Sheik Hussein is located in the northeastern part of Bale on the edge of the Wabe Shebele River, 180km from the Bale Mountains National Park headquarters. The shrine of Sheik Hussein is named after a Muslim holy man called Sheik Hussein Bin Malka, who was respected for his religious teaching, high devotion and miraculous deeds. According to local legends, he was born in the 12th century and lived for 250 years, 70 of which he spent in the shrine. Pilgrims from all over the country come on foot, horseback and by mule from up to 1,000km away to pay homage and to



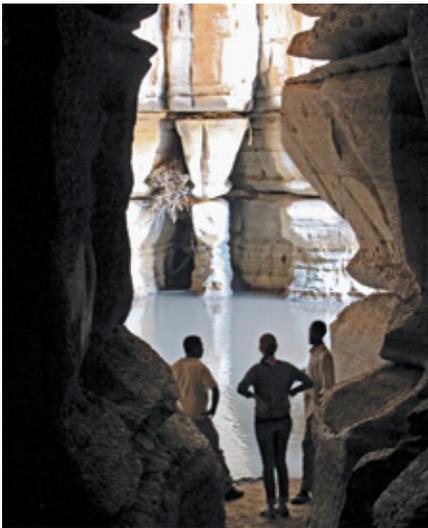
Dire Sheik Hussein

partake in a ceremony organized in memory of their religious leader. The pilgrimage takes place twice a year: in June to commemorate the anniversary of the death of Sheik Hussein and in October to celebrate the birth of the prophet Mohammed. The pilgrimage depends on the lunar calendar, so the exact date varies each year.

The shrine is located at the end of town and is surrounded by whitewashed walls. Tucked behind the shrine is *Zemzemdure*, a lime green, algae-covered pond where local people gather holy water to cure ailments. Buried within the shrine are Sheik Hussein's daughter and son. *Jewara*, dust from the ground in the burial rooms, is rubbed on foreheads and necks as a blessing.

Guides are mandatory and can be found outside the main gate; prices should be agreed upon before entering. Shoes are removed and left outside; long pants and long-sleeved shirts should be worn. Women should wrap shawls around their waists. See directory for further information.

After the celebration, some of the pilgrims continue on to the holy cave of Sof-Omar, located 164km from the shrine.



Sof-Omar Cave: The caves of Sof-Omar are located about 115km from the Bale Mountains National Park headquarters and 95km from the zone's capital of Robe. It is one of the longest underground caves in Africa, with a total length of over 1.5km. The meandering Web River lies in an entrenched gorge, 150m below a level basalt plateau. The river gorge is spectacular for its depth and for the limestone cliffs that line it. The caves were carved out of the limestone by the Web River, which has changed course over time, creating an accessible passage and carving out ornate and immense pillars, domes and chambers. Fossilized mollusks can be found within the large limestone blocks.

The full walk through the caves is 1.7km and takes three to four hours. From December to May, the river is low enough to cross, although water can be waist-deep in some places. Look out for the bats that hang overhead and the eels that live below.

The name Sof-Omar is derived from a Muslim holy man who lived in the cave with his daughter. It is a place of worship for Ethiopian Muslims: two holidays are celebrated each year where around 1,000 people gather. The first occurs for 15 days in May and the second soon after in June. Because they depend on the moon, exact dates vary each year.

Vervet monkeys frequently pass close to the cave and are likely to steal any food left unattended. The countryside around the Sof-Omar caves abounds with wildlife such as dik-diks, lesser kudus, leopard tortoises, rock hyraxes, as well as more than 50 species of birds, including the endemic and elusive Salvadori's seedeater. See directory for further information.

Wabe Shebele Gorge: Arguably one of the most dramatic gorges in Ethiopia, the views of the Wabe Shebele Gorge are breathtaking. When passing through the gorge on this little travelled road, it may be hours before another car is seen. The gorge winds into a vast uninhabited lowland. Reaching the brink of the gorge, a gigantic canyon-like formation slithers 1,000m below. The road snakes through the gorges, providing fantastic views, then twists down through a second and third gorge until it reaches the Wabe Shebele Bridge. The three sections each have their own distinctive flora and fauna. Wildlife sightings may include rock hyrax, klipspringer and leopard. There are places to camp around the first and second gorge.



Gasera Gorge: The Gasera gorge is located 4km from the town of Gasera. If traveling from Dinsho, the Bale Mountains National Park headquarters, take a right as you are leaving and head towards Robe. 6km before Robe, take a left turn just before the Shaya River. At the first small town you reach (Ali) take a right turn at the market place and follow the new gravel road to the gorge.

The gorge was carved several million years ago by the Wabe Shebele River, one of the longest rivers in southeast Ethiopia, which flows towards Somalia and eventually sinks into the vast sands of the Somalia plain. However, before leaving Ethiopia, these fast moving waters created two of the most beautiful gorges in the Bale region: Gasera and

Wabe. In addition to beautiful surroundings, lammergeyer (bearded vultures) can be seen at fairly close range as they float over the gorges. It is also possible to meet the Werdube tribes who specialize in swimming and planting fruits along the river edge. The most popular way to explore the Gasera gorge is to drive on the new gravel road from Gasera town to Endeto on the way to Addis.



LOGISTICS

FACILITIES

Built on the remains of a Belgian sheep farmer's farmhouse, the Dinsho Self-Help Lodge is the best accommodation in Dinsho and is located within the park headquarters. The lodge can accommodate up to 30 people and has a sparsely equipped communal kitchen, toilets, showers, sauna and a large common area with a log fire. A variety of dorms are available with bunk beds as well as several rooms with double beds. There is also a designated campsite on the hilltop above the lodge, which offers panoramic views of several peaks and valleys around Dinsho. Whether staying in the lodge or at the campsites, you have full access to the kitchen. There are several other wilderness campsites in the juniper woodlands, Web valley, Sanetti plateau and Harena forest.

Prices for facilities as well as for guides and other service providers can be found on our website: www.balemountains.org.

WHAT TO BRING

Very basic camping items can be rented in Dinsho. Only basic foodstuffs such as pasta and tomato paste can be purchased in Dinsho, so it is essential to bring other foods if desired. Fruit, vegetables and eggs are available on market days (Tuesday and Saturday) – your guide can assist you with shopping in Dinsho. It is also possible to have a goat or sheep slaughtered within the town of Dinsho and at several campsites. The nearby towns of Robe and Goba offer a wider variety of foods, which can be carried on a packhorse. Water is available in the park but should be treated (purification treatment not available in Bale). During the dry season, although days can be cool, a hat and high SPF sunscreen are still essential to avoid sunburn. Temperatures can drop dramatically in the evenings so pack warm clothes. During the heavy rainy season between June and October trails can be wet and muddy so proper trekking shoes are essential.

FIREWOOD

Please be aware that almost all firewood on sale in and around the Bale Mountains National Park comes from slow-growing native trees (juniper & Hagenia) that are threatened by unsustainable exploitation. Land covered by native woodland is decreasing at an ever-increasing rate, directly endangering local biological diversity.

During your stay in the Bale Mountains National Park, both at the headquarters and while camping,

we ask that you do not buy firewood locally and that you do not collect, or ask anyone to collect on your behalf, firewood from inside the National Park. Eucalyptus should be the only firewood used. Sustainable firewood can be purchased at the park headquarters from the Walin Jirana Wood Sellers Association at the park entrance gate; for Rira and the Hareenna forest firewood can be obtained at cost price (not for profit) at the Bale Mountain Lodge.

WHEN TO VISIT

Temperatures vary widely throughout BMNP: on the plateau, daytime temperatures hover around 5°C (41°F) although winds are relentless, and can drop below zero at night. The northern part of the park and the Hareenna forest are generally a few degrees warmer, but nighttime temperatures can still reach freezing. However, weather changes frequently and sometimes drastically, and with increasing altitude, the climate gets colder and wetter. In elevations over 3,000m night frosts are common. Rain falls most days from May until September and the mountains are dramatically cloaked in mist and cloud. However, May through July is a pleasant time to visit and despite the frequent afternoon showers, the days are warm and sunny. From October to April, days are sunny and night skies are filled with stars. June is the best time for spring flowers; red-hot pokers cover the hillside with their flame-colored vegetation. The best time for trekking is from October to April.



Bobor reedbuck in a field of red-hot poker, Vincent Munier

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Altitude Sickness: Because most people coming to the Bale Mountains first spend time in Addis, few, if any, suffer from altitude sickness (Acute Mountain Sickness, AMS). Acclimatization is the only way to prevent it, starting at an altitude of about 1,500m. Cold, wind, dehydration, strenuous exercise while dehydrated and common colds predispose people to AMS. Many people, however fit, sometimes feel unwell when arriving at high altitudes. Symptoms include headaches, lightheadedness and fatigue, but staying hydrated can help to alleviate these. If there is no change in symptoms, the cure to AMS is simple: rapidly descend to lower altitudes.

Malaria: Bale Mountains National Park is malaria free, so medication is not necessary. However, you may pass through areas with malaria en route to the park or at other nearby attractions.

Petty crime: Take the same precautions you would while travelling anywhere; petty crime is rare, but does sometimes occur, within the Bale Mountains.

Other dangers: There are no venomous spiders or snakes in the Bale Mountains.

Rabies exists within the domestic dog population of the Bale Mountains and dogs sometimes attack people. Maintain a safe distance from all dogs, and if approached by a dog, stand your ground and pretend to throw a rock; this should scare it away.

VISITORS CODE OF CONDUCT:

GOLDEN RULES OF TOURISM IN THE BALE MOUNTAINS

These Golden Rules are designed to minimize your impact on the park and communities, as well as to enhance your safety and enjoyment.

Remember that everyone in the park, including you, has a responsibility to adhere to and enforce these Golden Rules. Don't be afraid to gently remind other park visitors.

- **Be safe:** *Do not take risks with your personal safety by climbing or walking in dangerous areas. Follow the advice of your guide and stay in designated areas.*
- **Respect other park users:** *Other people have a right to use BMNP, whether scientists, local inhabitants or other visitors. Please ensure that your interactions with other people are respectful of their work and culture.*
- **Don't forget to pay your park fees:** *These help park management conserve this unique place. Make sure you pay only at officially designated sites and provide all required information to help with record keeping and your safety. Accept only officially stamped and numbered receipts.*
- **Drive carefully:** *If viewing wildlife from a vehicle, keep to tracks, drive slowly and do not drive when the ground is very wet. Wild animals always have right of way.*
- **Allow animals to behave naturally without disturbance:** *Many wild animals become distressed when approached too closely by people or vehicles. Keep noise to a minimum and never try to attract an animals' attention.*
- **Do not bring any domestic or exotic animals or plants into the park:** *Ensure that you do not bring any exotic plants or their seeds into the park. Non-native species are a major threat to the environment.*
- **Do not consume wildlife or purchase wildlife products** *when in the park or in park-associated communities.*
- **Make sure your environmental impact is minimal:** *Do not damage any vegetation or animals and do not collect any native plants or animals. Stay on trails at all times.*
- **Remember to take out all litter that you produce:** *Litter can harm both animals and people, and is also unsightly. This is especially true of cigarette butts, which often kill birds that mistake them for food. Please dispose of rubbish at your accommodation or at designated collection points.*
- **Camp only in designated areas.**
- **Take care with fire:** *Be very careful with cigarettes and matches, or when lighting fires. Accidental fires are a major threat to much of the Bale Mountains vegetation. Campfires are only permitted at authorized campsites.*
- **Do not use non-biodegradable soaps or detergents in the natural water bodies.**
- **Use toilets where provided or bury waste at least 50m from water.**

- **Do not hand out water bottles or other items including expensive gifts or money to individuals.** *This will encourage begging, may cause local conflict and will encourage negative interactions with future visitors. If you wish to make a donation please see www.balemountains.org for up to date information.*
- **Please follow set prices for services such as horse hire:** *Negotiation will create uncertainty and unpleasant relations. Prices can be obtained from the park office or at www.balemountains.org.*
- **Ask permission before you take photographs:** *Please do not pay for photographs as this encourages begging.*
- **Only buy everyday handicrafts such as baskets, mats, and spoons:** *Do not buy family heirlooms as these are an important part of the cultural heritage and are sometimes stolen to be sold to tourists.*



Will Burrard-Lucas

TIPPING

For taxi, bajaj or gari drivers, it is best to agree on a price in advance. Tips are not mandatory but 5 birr is appreciated. Keep in mind that money goes a lot further in rural areas.

For guides in the national park, if you feel that their service was satisfactory, a tip is appreciated. If you feel that they've gone above and beyond feel

free tip more generously. The amount of the tip should depend both on the level of service and on the number of days they have spent with you. A rough guideline is anywhere from 10 to 40 percent.

However, please do not hand out things such as money, empty water bottles, pens or other objects, as this will encourage begging.

TOURISM DIRECTORY

Though all concern has been taken in obtaining up-to-date information, information contained in the directory will certainly change. Please do not hesitate to inform us of any incorrect or out of date information at info@balemountains.org.

* *Biggest market of the week*

ADABA-DODOLA

Tourist Information

- Adaba-Dodola Ecotourism Office: Located in Dodola town in the compound of the Oromia Wildlife and Forest Enterprise. Tel: +251 (0) 226660700.

AWASH NATIONAL PARK

Accommodation

- Awash Waterfall Lodge: Single, double, twin and triple rooms available. Singles cost 70 USD, doubles \$80 US, twin \$100 US, and triple \$110 US. Food ranges from 80 to 150 Birr excluding VAT and service charge. Advanced booking is required a suggested one month prior. Tel: +251 (0) 116530245, +251 (0)930096789.
- There are also two campgrounds. Camping fees are the same as in BMNP.
- Accommodations on a basic level can be found in the town of Awash, 15km from the park.

BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Accommodation

- Bale Mountain Lodge: In the Katcha clearing of the Haremma forest is the Bale Mountain Lodge, undoubtedly the best accommodation in the Bale area. The lodge boasts 15 double rooms and offers activities in and around the clearing related to the forest flora and fauna. A resident naturalist is on hand to provide advice and information and the lodge is an excellent place from which to explore the plateau, forest and valley from the comfort of a modern and welcoming lodge. Booking is required in advance as the lodge is often full. Website: www.balemountainlodge.com, Tel: +251 (0) 912790802.
- Dinsho Self-Help Lodge: this is a basic lodge located within the park headquarters. See 'Logistics' on page 55 for more information.
- Kessan Lodge: This tukul-style lodge plans to begin construction in early 2014.
- Bale Mountains National Park Headquarters: Tel: +251 (0) 221190758.

DELO-MENA

Restaurants

- Café Central (Kaaffee Seentiraal): Serves breakfast foods including scrambled eggs and omelets as well as coffee, tea and soft drinks throughout the day. Tel: +251 (0) 226680031.

- See also hotels

Accommodation

- Ganale Hotel: For 40-50 Birr you can spend the evening in a quiet, clean but basic hotel with a shared shower and toilet. Attached, there is a restaurant that serves Ethiopian food. 7 rooms; Tel: +251 (0) 912106523.
- Hotel Ganat: Located in the center of town, 40-50 Birr will provide you a clean room with mosquito netting and a window facing a restaurant serving Ethiopian food. Showers are shared. 12 rooms; Tel: +251 (0) 226680059.
- Café Central (Kaaffee Seentiraal): 40-50 Birr for a double bed with shared showers. 7 rooms Tel: +251 (0) 226680031.

Other

- Culture and Tourism Office: +251 (0) 226680248
- Police: +251 (0) 226680007; +251 (0)226680124
- Administration: +251 (0) 226680005; +251 (0) 226680023
- Markets: Wednesday, Saturday*
- Bus Station: Located on a side street across from the Ganat Hotel on the left. Buses leave early morning on Sunday and Thursday to Negele-Borena. It is recommended to buy your tickets the day before.
- EVDO & CDMA access not available.

DILLA

Dilla is a larger, bustling town with wide cobblestone streets. It has an Awash International Bank, Bank of Abyssinia, Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and Dashen Bank with an ATM, as well as several fuel stations. There are also several attractions to explore from Dilla.

Other

- Culture and Tourism Office: +251 (0) 463312693
- Police: +251 (0) 463314414
- Sights: Manchiti (Shappe) Rock Engravings: 8km from town is a partially collapsed frieze depicting about 50 cattle, thought to be at least 3,000 years old. Tutu Fela Stelae Field: This field of 300 densely clustered stelae is about 20km south of Dilla in a small village. Tututi Stelae Field: 8km south of the Tutu Fela Stelae turnoff lies 1,200 stelae founded some 1,000 years ago. Most have fallen over; although several that measure over 6m in height still stand. (You are better off finding a local guide, as the sights are tricky to find.)
- EVDO & CDMA access available.
- Markets: Monday through Sunday

DINSHO

Restaurants

- Mana Nyaata Kaaffee Immish: This restaurant regularly serves fresh *bayaynet* (vegetable fasting dish) as well as great *buna bowetet* (coffee with milk) and tea. Coming from the park headquarters, turn right at the dirt road junction, the restaurant is on the left. 20 Birr per dish. Tel: +251 (0)911330354
- Wolf's Den Café: Known for coffee, tea and baked goods, the Wolf's Den Café also serves fool (bean stew) for breakfast and *bayaynet* (vegetable dish) throughout the day. 20-30 Birr per dish. Tel: +251 (0) 911064898
- Mana Nyaata If'naan: Serves fresh meat from an attached butcher shop, as well as coffee for reasonable prices. 20-50 Birr per dish.
- Mana Nyaata Muslimaa: Located next to Mana Nyaata If'naan, this restaurant also serves fresh meat from an attached butcher shop with similar prices.
- See also Hotels.

Accommodation

- Genet Hotel: Located in the center of town on the main road, this hotel has basic rooms with a shared toilet for 40-50 Birr. There are no showers. The restaurant serves good food for 10 – 20 birr. 12 rooms. Tel: +251 (0) 913348903
- See also Dinsho Self-Help Lodge

Other

- Administration: +251 (0) 221191139
- Police: +251 (0) 221190980
- Commercial Bank of Ethiopia: Exchanges US Dollars, Euros, and British Pounds. Tel: +251 (0) 221191310, 311, 312.
- Agriculture and Rural Development Office: Located on the left side of the main paved road when heading into town from the park headquarters. Fishing permits can be obtained from here. Open Monday-Friday. Tel: +251 (0) 221191022.
- Markets: Tuesday* and Saturday.
- EVDO & CDMA access not available.

DIRE SHEIK HUSSEIN

Restaurants

- Wessen Restaurant: Located on the left side of the main road when coming into town, the Wessen Restaurant is the only building with a sign. They serve breakfast, lunch and dinner as well as soft drinks and tea. The food is freshly cooked. Pasta and chicken are available upon request. Dishes range from 10-20 Birr. Tel: +251 (0) 924571886, 87

Other

- Culture and Tourism Office: Follow the main road and take the last road on the right before the shrine. They provide a free campsite as well as a bathroom. Check with the Culture and Tourism Office for exact dates of the pilgrimage as the dates of the festival rely on the lunar calendar. Tel: +251 (0) 923268412
- Markets: Thursday
- EVDO & CDMA access not available.

ETHIOPIAN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (EWCA)

- Tel: +251 (0) 115514389; +251 (0) 115151426; +251 (0)115546810; +251 (0)115502480.
- Website: www.ewca.gov.et
- Email: e.w.c.o@ethionet.et; info@ewca.gov.et

GERALLE NATIONAL PARK

- 102km from Negele-Borena.
- Park Warden – Mamo Alemu. Tel: +251 (0) 912922003

GOBA

Restaurants

- Orion Café and Restaurant: Located on the first floor of the Amara building on the right side of the main road from Robe. Serving great Ethiopian food in a lively, local setting. Tel: +251 (0) 922505031
- Internet Café: Coming from Robe, make a left onto the side street across from the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, shortly after you will find it on your right side, next to the Flamingo Cafe. A bit of a misnomer, it does not have Internet, but serves excellent *fool* (bean stew with scrambled eggs) breakfast and is able to make coffee when the power is out!
- Salem Café: Located on the left side of the main road coming from Robe, Salem Café was recently renovated and upgraded. They boast the best pastries in town as well as great coffee and tea.
- Turetogonech Tej House: Drink *tej* (local honey wine) with local and retired military men. A bit hard to find, located by the roundabout behind a lot of trees.

Accommodation

- Orion Café: For 60 Birr you can spend the night in a single room with a shower above the Orion Café. Inquire and pay in the restaurant. 13 rooms. Tel: +251 (0) 922505031.
- Bekele Hotel: A quieter hotel off the main road with attached butcher shop offering Ethiopian dishes. A double room with a common shower is 40 Birr for Ethiopians and 70 Birr for foreign visitors. 11 rooms; Tel: +251 (0) 226610610.

- **Baltena Hotel:** Also with an attached butcher shop cooking up Ethiopian dishes, this hotel costs 20-35 Birr for a room with 6 Birr communal shower. 20 rooms. Tel: +251 (0) 226611189.
- **Wabe Shebele Hotel:** Located 2km down the main road towards Robe, this is the nicest hotel in the Goba. Rooms are large and clean with hot showers. The attached restaurant serves both Ethiopian and International dishes, lunch and dinner costs 88 Birr for a three-course meal. Single rooms costs 404 Birr for foreign visitors and 253 Birr for Ethiopian visitors. Doubles are 455 Birr for foreigners and 363 Birr for Ethiopians. Breakfast is included in all room rates. 47 rooms; Tel: +251 (0) 226610041, 262

Other

- **Culture and Tourism Office:** Located on the hill past the roundabout. Tel: +251 (0) 226612394.
- **Police:** Located by the bus station. Tel: +251 (0) 226612008.
- **Markets:** Monday, Wednesday*, Friday and Saturday.
- **Bus Station:** Buses to Addis (two per day) and Shashemene (one per day) leave early in the morning. It is recommended to buy a ticket a day ahead.
- **Banks:** Commercial Bank of Ethiopia is located on right side of main road from Robe in the middle of town. They will exchange American currency above 10 USD.
- **Bale Art Gallery:** Artisan and owner, Ibrahim Safi, creates wonderful and unique works of art including paper mache, leather goods and curtains. Located near the Wabe Shebele Hotel, behind the Red Cross. Tel: +251 (0) 226611777
- **Bale Beauty Nature Club:** Origin of much of the beautiful artwork seen in the Bale area, the Bale Beauty Nature Club is home to a large Environmental Library and Resource Center. They also have a riverside campsite, tree nursery and nature trail. Library Tel: +251 (0) 958402361.
- There are fuel stations as well as a hospital.
- EVDO & CDMA access available.

GINNER

Restaurants

- **Mana Fooni Marab:** Located on the right side of the main road, they serve meat from the attached butcher as well as soft drinks and beer from the bar in the back. Food is good and very reasonably priced.
- **Alem Bar and Restaurant:** Serves excellent and reasonably priced *shiro* and *bayaynet*. Located across from Mana Fooni Marab, adjacent to the Ayele Hotel.
- **Kurru Café:** Located on the left side of the road, noticeable by the big, pointed red tent, is a popular spot serving the best coffee and tea in town.

Accommodation

- Bale Tourist Hotel: Located on the left side of the main road when coming into town from Jarra. Rooms costs 60 -70 Birr and are basic and clean with hot showers included. Attached is a butcher and restaurant serving Ethiopian dishes as well as pasta. Tel: +251 (0) 226640104
- Goofa Hotel: Newly constructed, this hotel is located in the center of town on the way to Sof Omar. Rooms are clean and cost 60-80 Birr. 26 rooms; Tel: +251 (0) 226640464

Other

- Police: +251 (0) 226640027
- Markets: Saturday* and Thursday
- Banks: Oromia International Bank, Awash Bank, Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Cooperative Bank of Oromia.
- There is a hospital and fuel station.
- EVDO & CDMA access not available.

GORO

A quaint town, serving as a stop over point from Sof-Omar to Robe, has a lively open-air market on Mondays and Thursdays and is known for its spices.*

Accommodation

- Beza hotel, located across from the Holy Savior Church (Medhanialem) has decent rooms in a quiet compound for reasonable prices.
- Central Hotel, in the center of town also serves Ethiopian dishes as well as pasta. Tel: +251 (0) 224470043.

Other

- There is also a Commercial Bank of Ethiopia in town.

HAGER MARIAM

- The town has several banks, including Awash International Bank, Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, and Abyssinia Bank. There is also a fuel station.
- Hager Mariam Hotel: Pleasant outdoor seating centered around a fountain with mini tukols (traditional Ethiopian huts) and an outdoor coffee ceremony station. Rooms with twin beds cost 180 Birr for Ethiopians and 360 Birr for foreigners. Rooms with double beds cost 200 Birr for Ethiopians and 400 Birr for foreigners. 37 rooms; Tel: +251 (0) 464430221
- Market: Wednesday*
- EVDO & CDMA access available.

JARRA

A good town to stop for a hot coffee, Jarra also has a Commerical Bank of Ethiopia.

NEGELE-BORENA

Restaurants

- Tekle Salem Grocery: This large restaurant specializes in meat. Place your order with the butcher in the front and take your number to your seat. There are two well-equipped bars, coffee ceremony room, as well as indoor and outdoor seating. 70 Birr per kilo of meat. Call in advance to arrange a coffee ceremony. Tel: +251 (0) 913414903.
- See also hotels.

Accommodation

- Ethiopia Hotel: Currently under renovation, this two-story hotel with an open courtyard charges 70 Birr for a clean room with a common shower. 19 rooms; Tel: +251 (0) 464450607.
- Nyaali Hotel: Located across from Tekle Selam, there is an attached restaurant serving Ethiopian food as well as simple European dishes. Rooms costs 70-100 Birr with a private shower and common toilet. 16 singles. Tel: +251 (0) 464451582
- Giroosarii Tsagaa: A courtyard style hotel, a bit off the main road, charging 50 - 60 Birr for a quiet room with a shower and shared toilet. There is an attached restaurant serving Ethiopian food, though European meals are available upon request. 10 rooms; Tel: +251 (0) 464451223.
- Green Hotel: A clean and popular hotel with tourists and a restaurant attached serving good local dishes and simple European dishes. Rooms with a shared toilet and private shower costs 120 – 140 birr for foreign visitors and 60 – 70 Birr for Ethiopian visitors. Rooms with communal shower and toilet cost 80 Birr for foreign visitors and 50 Birr for Ethiopian visitors. 20 rooms; Tel: +251 (0) 464450374

Other

- Police: +251 (0) 464451344
- Culture and Tourism Office: +251 (0) 464452425
- Markets: Tuesday*, Saturday*
- Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Oromia International Bank, fuel station and a hospital.
- EVDO & CDMA access available.

MECHARRA

Restaurants

- Lamarot Hotel: Although not a hotel, this restaurant is located on the main road on the right hand side when entering town from Nazret. An attached butcher shop sits in the outdoor seating area from where they serve good meat dishes. They also sometimes provide fasting dishes (vegan) on Wednesdays and Fridays. Meat is 80 Birr per kilo. International dishes can be made upon prior request. Tel: +251 (0) 255570117

Accommodation

- Jebenga Hotel: A peaceful, adequate hotel located near the bus station, rooms with a communal shower cost 40 - 60 Birr.

Other

- Police: +251 (0) 255455394
- Markets: Saturday*
- There is a fuel station, post office, Awash Bank and Oromia International Bank.
- EVDO & CDMA access not available.

RIRA

Rira is a small village located within the Haremma forest in the Bale Mountains National Park. There is no running water or electricity; quiet nights are broken only by the occasional call of owls or hyenas.

Restaurants

- Mana Nyaata Aman: One of only two restaurants in town, located on the right hand side of the road coming from the Sanetti plateau, serving only ambesha and gomen – a flat bread with steamed kale for 10 Birr. Dine either in a dining room, outdoors with the chickens or in the tukol where the food is cooked. Also serves delicious tea spiced with wild thyme.

Accommodation

- Haremma Forest Hotel and Cultural Lodge: Located across the street from Mana Nyaata Aman restaurant, where a small selection of traditional Bale Oromo food and simple international dishes are available. Crafts handmade within the village are also available for purchase. Rooms cost 100-150 Birr. There is also a designated camping ground for 30-50 Birr per tent. No showers. It is advised to bring your own sleeping bag. There are 9 rooms. Tel: +251 (0) 912740350
- *See also Bale Mountain Lodge on page 60*

Other:

- Honey & Coffee Harvesting: contact the Bale Mountain Lodge
- Markets: Tuesday, Friday*
- EVDO & CMDA access not available.

ROBE

Restaurants:

- Haani Café: Serves good coffee and breakfast foods (*fool*, omelet, *firfir*) as well as lunch and dinner foods including some international dishes such as burgers and club sandwiches in a pleasantly bustling outdoor seating area. Service is particularly fast and friendly. Located on the main paved road near the roundabout.
- Mana Nyata Jiddaa: A Muslim restaurant known for meat dishes, mainly a Yemeni dish called hanid, of roasted goat or lamb thigh and rice. Coming into town from Dinsho, it is located on the main paved road on the right hand side about a kilometer into town.
- Shamshat Café: Serves excellent coffee and breakfast foods as well as lunch and dinner including some international dishes such as spaghetti and rice with vegetables. Located 200m from the main road across the Waqo Gutu roundabout on the gravel road to Sof-Omar. Tel: +251 (0) 226650868
- Gojo Traditional Bar and Restaurant: The only traditional restaurant in Robe known for Ethiopian traditional dishes. They also provide European dishes upon request. Located across the Waqo Gutu roundabout on the road to Sof-Omar near the Venus Pension.

Hotels:

- Grum Guest House: Located in the Total fuel station on the dirt road leading to Sof-Omar, this two-story hotel has rooms with basic essentials and is clean. All rooms (except one) are singles, and hot showers are included in all rooms. Rooms cost 160 Birr for foreign visitors and 100 Birr for Ethiopians. An attached restaurant is to open soon and will serve local dishes as well as basic European dishes. 20 rooms; Tel: +251 (0) 226650617
- Abadama Hotel: Located on the main paved road towards Goba, this hotel is peaceful and surrounded by gardens. Rooms cost 90 – 130 Birr for Ethiopian visitors and 250 Birr for foreign visitors. They are spacious and clean and include a hot shower. 19 rooms. Tel: +251 (0) 228650260/920202543
- Venus Pension: Located off the main paved road 200m from the Waqo Gutu roundabout on the road to Sof-Omar, this peaceful pension is surrounded by gardens. Rooms cost 92 – 150 Birr. The rooms are clean and include a hot shower. 14 rooms; Tel: +251 (0) 226652141

Other:

- Police: +251 (0) 226610227
- Culture and Tourism Office: +251 (0) 226651066
- Administration: +251 (0) 226651532/31/25; +251-(0)226650060
- Bus Station: Several buses leave daily early in the morning for Addis, minibuses leave throughout the day Goba and Dinsho.

- Markets: Thursday*
- Car rent: it is possible to hire a minibus or 4WD for day excursion trips around Bale from the Shamshat Café. Contact Babe Oumr: Tel: +251 (0) 226650868.
- Banks: Awash International Bank, Commerical Bank of Ethiopia, Oromia International Bank, Business and Construction Bank.
- EVDO & CDMA access available.

SOF-OMAR

- Entrance fee: 150 Birr for foreign visitors and 50 Birr for Ethiopian visitors; a guide is mandatory and costs 50 Birr. For 20 Birr, camping is permitted anywhere and firewood can be acquired for around 30 Birr. All of this can be arranged at the first hut on the right after you make the turn off from the main road. Bring a flashlight. For information contact the guide association head, Abdul Jabar Ahmed: +251 (0)924601614.
- Accessibility by public transport: Buses leave from Robe to Goro (55km), from Goro you can take a bus to Sof Omar (41km). Buses are much more frequent on market days.
- Markets: Saturday

YABELO

Hotels:

- Yabelo Motel: Located on the main road junction from Negele-Borena 2.5km outside of town, this large hotel is a pleasant place to spend the night. The restaurant serves both Ethiopian and international dishes in an outdoor garden and covered veranda. They also have an Internet café. Twin rooms cost 50 USD (foreign visitors), or 300 Birr (Ethiopians); newly renovated single rooms cost 35 USD (foreign visitors) or 225 Birr (Ethiopians); older single rooms cost 30 USD (foreign visitors) or 150 Birr (Ethiopians); a family room costs 100 USD (foreign visitors) or 500 Birr (Ethiopians). 35 rooms; Tel: +251 (0) 464460785, 86, 88.
- Borena Lodge: Located 5km before the junction from Negele-Borena and 2.3km isolated off the main road; the sophisticated and chic Borena Lodge consisting of ten private bungalows draped in bougainvillea with large covered balconies. The rooms and bathrooms are spacious and impeccably clean, each outfitted with a desk and stocked mini-fridge. Rooms cost 110 USD for two beds. They also have rooms with three beds. Tel: +251 (0) 916984370; +251 (0) 913388983.
- Yabelo Hawi Hotel: Down the road from the Yabelo Motel on the left side of the street, Hawi Hotel charges 300 Birr for a double room with shower and toilet. They also have a restaurant, which serves both Ethiopian and international dishes. 15 rooms; Tel: +251 (0) 464461114; +251 (0) 916023674.
- There are also many budget options in town, all of similar quality.

Other:

- Culture and Tourism Office: +251 (0) 464460195
- Police: +251 (0) 464460152
- Markets: Tuesday*
- There are several fuel stations. Banks include the Oromia International Bank and Commercial Bank of Ethiopia.
- EVDO & CDMA access not available.

YABELO WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

- Located 10km from the Yabelo Junction, the sanctuary has more than 38 species of mammals, the most abundant being Burchell's zebra.
- Park office: +251 (0) 464460087

YIRGA CHAFFE

Generally visited only for a quick stopover, Yirga Chaffe is a small, subdued town, known for its phenomenal Yirga Chaffe coffee grown at high altitudes. There is a Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and fuel station.

- Lewison Hotel serves good food and coffee, and also has a buffet. Tel: +251 (0) 46320154
- EVDO & CDMA access available.

YIRGALEM

- Aregash Lodge: Clearly signposted on the road to Shashemene, the lodge is 8km off the main road. Aregash Lodge is a collection of stylish private *tukols* (traditional Ethiopian huts). An excellent restaurant serving both Italian and Ethiopian dishes is supplied with ingredients fresh from the garden. A tukol for 1-2 people costs 60 USD, while a tukol for 3-4 people costs 90 USD. Lunch is a standard 150 Birr for adults and 68 Birr for kids; dinner is 170 Birr for adults and 80 Birr for kids. The lodge offers many excursions in the area. Tel: +251 (0) 115514254/82/90; email: alltour@ethionet.et

GLOSSARY

- **Afroalpine:** a montane vegetation zone situated above the upper limits of ericaceous heath. In BMNP the Afroalpine belt mostly occurs above 4,000m.
- **Basalt:** a common extrusive volcanic rock. It is usually grey to black and fine-grained due to fast cooling of lava at the surface.
- **Cryoturbation:** the mixing of materials from varying levels of soil due to the process of freezing and thawing; simply put as frost churning.
- **Endemic:** native; the ecological state of being unique to a defined geographic location.
- **Montane:** of or inhabiting mountainous country.
- **Rhyolite:** an igneous, volcanic rock rich in silica.
- **Solar irradiation:** the amount of sunlight that penetrates the earth's atmosphere and reaches the earth's surface.
- **Transhumance:** the action or practice of moving livestock from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle, typically to lowlands in winter and highlands in summer.
- **Trachyte:** an igneous volcanic rock.
- **Tuff:** a type of rock made of consolidated volcanic ash ejected from vents during a volcanic eruption.
- **Ungulates:** include several groups of mammals, most of which use the tips of their toes, usually hooved, to sustain their whole body weight while moving. The term means, roughly "being hooved."

PARTNERS

PARTNERS IN CONSERVING THE UNIQUE HERITAGE OF THE BALE MOUNTAINS:



The Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) is a government organization under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism given the authority to undertake conservation and sustainable utilization of wildlife in Ethiopia. Currently, they manage 13 national parks. EWCA works closely with national and international stakeholders on wildlife conservation. Their mission is to scientifically conserve and manage Ethiopian wildlife and its habitats in collaboration with communities and stakeholders for the ecological, economical and social benefits of the present generation, and pass to the next generation as a heritage. Their vision is by 2020 to be one of the top five countries in wildlife tourism in Africa.



**FRANKFURT
ZOOLOGICAL
SOCIETY**

FZS-BMCP was set up in 2005, to provide support to the Bale Mountains National Park in all aspects of Park management - from eco-tourism development to outreach, sustainable natural resource use, Park operations and ecological management. In March of 2007 a 10-year General Management Plan for the Park was ratified by the president of the Oromia region. FZS-BMCP is currently

working in partnership with BMNP and other authorities towards implementing this GMP.

FZS-BMCP's goals are: (i) to see BMNP gazetted and listed as a natural world heritage site; (ii) to ensure all the tools are in place enabling the efficient management of the Park; and (iii) to ensure the long term conservation of the unique biodiversity and beauty of the Park, while also addressing the needs of communities.

In Ethiopia FZS currently has two projects: the Bale Mountains Conservation Project (FZS-BMCP) and the Afroalpine Ecosystem Conservation Project (FZS-AECP). Both projects work to conserve Afroalpine ecosystems and their important inhabitants together with Ethiopian partners. These projects support protected area management, develop community conservation areas, assist in sustainable livelihood and tourism development; and foster local and international research. FZS is committed to working

in close cooperation with local organizations and communities, including governmental and non-governmental bodies.



The European Union is currently funding the Afromontane Conservation in Ethiopia (ACE) project, of which Bale is a part. Without their commitment and ongoing support many of the Park's recent successes would not have been possible.



The Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme (EWCP) is a WildCRU (University of Oxford) endeavour, working closely with local government partners to protect the endangered Ethiopian wolves. Founded in 1995, the goal of EWCP is to conserve the wolves

and their Afroalpine habitats by addressing the most serious threats to their survival. EWCP promotes the wolves as a flagship species for the protection of Ethiopia's Afroalpine ecosystem, home to a rich endemic fauna and flora that are vital to human livelihoods. To learn more about the programme, please visit www.ethiopianwolf.org.

To find out more about these and other FZS projects, please visit www.fzs.org and www.balemountains.org.



Darwin Initiative



MELCA



Farm Africa/SOS Sahel jointly implemented BERSMP



Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise



Sustainable Development of the Protected Area System of Ethiopia

LARGE OR COMMONLY SEEN MAMMALS OF BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

* = Endemic to Ethiopia



Mountain Nyala*

Tragelaphus buxtoni

Amharic:

Ye Dega Agazen

Afan Oromo:

Gadamsaa Badaa



Warthog

Phacochoerus aethiopicus

Amharic: Karkero

Afan Oromo: Goljaa



Menelik's

Bushbuck*

Tragelaphus scriptus meneliki

Amharic: Ye Menelik

Dekula

Afan Oromo:

Boroffa



Golden/Common

Jackal

Canis aureus

Amharic: Kebero

Afan Oromo: Tera

Kebero



Bohor Reedbuck

Redunca redunca

Amharic: Bihor

Afan Oromo: Godaa



Ethiopian Wolf*

Canis simensis

Amharic: Ky Kebero

Afan Oromo: Jedalla

Farda

Delphin Ruche



Klipspringer

Oreotragus oreotragus

Amharic: Saas

Afan Oromo:

Borottee



Spotted Hyena

Crocuta crocuta

Amharic: Tera Jib

Afan Oromo:

Worabessa



Grey Duiker

Sylvicapra grimmia

Amharic: Medakoa

Afan Oromo:

Kuruphee



Serval

Felis serval

Amharic: Aner

Afan Oromo:

Deeroo



Vincent Mumier

Starck's Hare*

Lepus starckii

Amharic: Tinchel

Afan Oromo:

Hilleessaa



Bale Monkey*

Cercopithecus (a.)

djamdjamensis

Amharic: Ye Bale

Tota

Afan Oromo:

Qamalee Baalee



Olive Baboon

Papio anubis

Amharic: Tikur

Zingero

Afan Oromo:

Jaldessa



Giant Forest Hog

Hylochoerus

meinertzhageni

Amharic: Tiliku

Yedur Asama

Afan Oromo:

Derrucha



Vincent Mumier

Giant Molerat*

Tachyoryctes

macrocephalus

Amharic: Ye Dega

Filfel

Afan Oromo:

Tuqaa Gudaa



African Wild Dog

Lycan pictus

Amharic: Tekula

Afan Oromo: Yayee



Vincent Mumier

Rock Hyrax

Procavia capensis

capillosa

Amharic: Shikoko

Afan Oromo: Osolee



Lion

Panthera leo

Amharic: Ambessa

Afan Oromo:

Lencha



Black-and-White Colobus monkey

Colobus abyssinicus

Amharic: Guereza

Afan Oromo: Wenny



Delphin Ruche

Leopard

Panthera pardus

Amharic: Nebir

Afan Oromo:

Qerensa

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BALE MOUNTAINS TOURISM SERVICE PROVIDERS

There are a number of community associations in the Bale Mountains National Park that provide services to tourists. The following associations are accredited to work inside the park. Members of each of these associations are from the local community, being brought up in and around the national park. Visitors should hire only certified association members to ensure that benefits are directed into the community.

Nyala Guides Association: Named after the mountain nyala which is unique to Bale, this association was established in 2006. Guides work on a rotational basis. All members have participated in English language classes, bird and wildlife identification courses, mountain guiding technique training, as well as customer service training. Guides can be hired at the reception gate of the park in Dinsho.

Walin Jirana Wood Sellers Association was re-established in 2013 and is accredited to sell dry, neatly-packaged firewood sourced from privately-grown Eucalyptus trees. During your stay in the Bale Mountains National Park, both at the headquarters and while camping, you are only permitted to use the non-native, purpose grown firewood. Firewood can be purchased from the Walin Jirana group at the reception gate of the park in Dinsho.

Keyrensa Horse Providers Association: The Keyrensa (Oromifa for leopard) Horse Providers Association was founded in 2007. Its members provide pack horses and well-conditioned riding horses to visitors for a daily fee. Members of the association have participated in horse care training and customer service training. Horses are hired through the association with the assistance of a Nyala Guide.

Borofa Porters Association: Named after the Oromifa word for Menelik's bushbuck, this association was established in 2007. Members of the association assist with loading and unloading horses, watering and feeding horses, as well as protecting horses from wildlife (hyena & leopard) on overnight treks, providing and maintaining horse-related equipment. They have also participated in horse care and horse use training as well as customer service training. Porters can be arranged with the help of a Nyala Guide.

Key Kebero Cook Association: Named after the Amharic word for Ethiopian wolf, this association was established in 2011. All members have received cooking and food safety training. Members of this association can be hired as cooks, both for camping in the park headquarters and while trekking in the mountains. A cook can be arranged with the help of a Nyala Guide.

The Barre Women's Handicraft Association: Established in 2010 by women from the local community, they have participated in product development and market readiness training. Their products are on sale at the park headquarters in Dinsho.



BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Website: www.balemountains.org

Email: info@balemountains.org

Park headquarters phone: 0221190758

ETHIOPIAN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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Website: www.ewca.gov.et

Email: e.w.c.o@ethionet.et; info@ewca.gov.et



www.fzs.org