Uganda

Birds & Gorillas



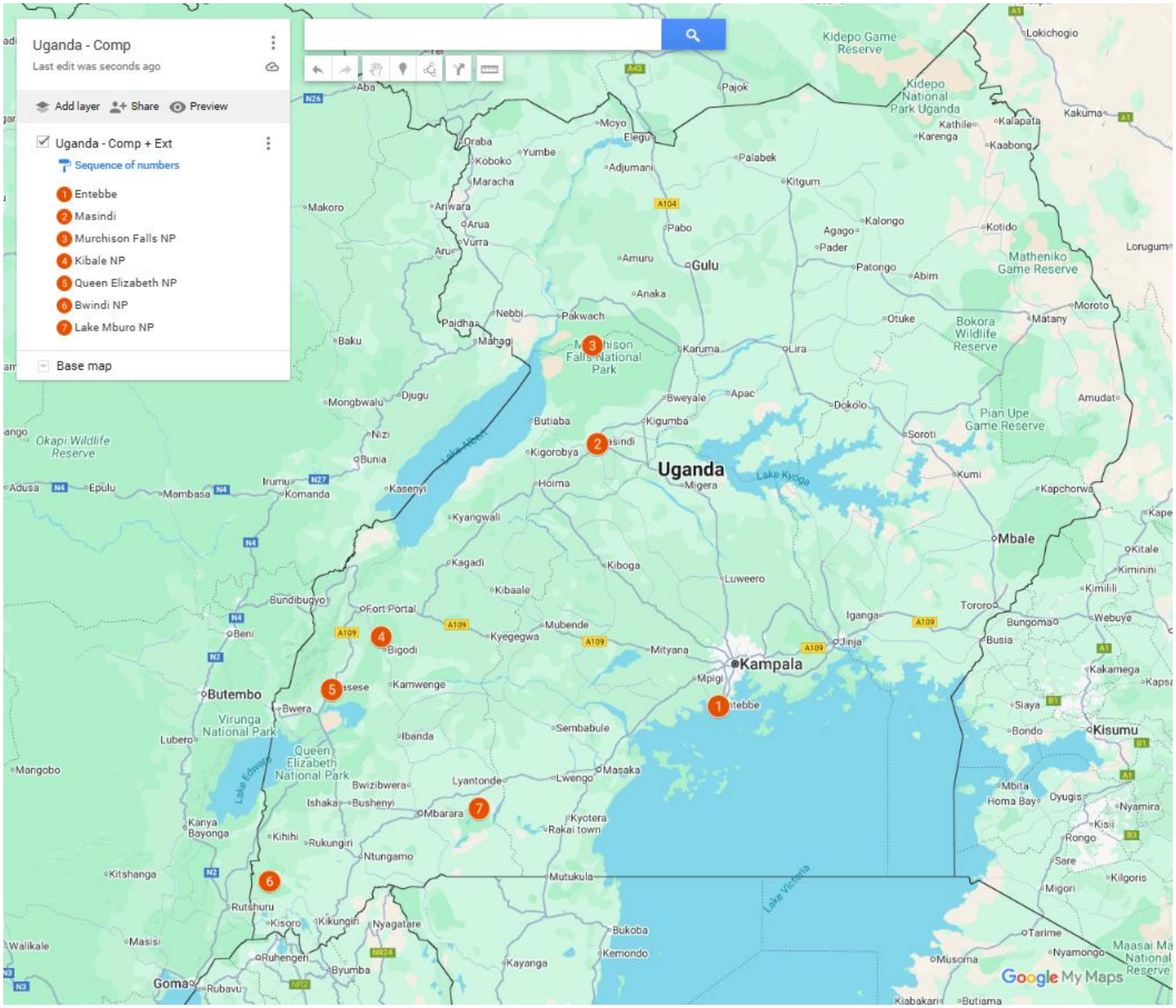
Shoebill by Nigel Redman

From the source of the White Nile on Lake Victoria to the snow-capped Rwenzori Range, the montane forests of the Virunga volcanoes, harbouring some of the last remaining Mountain Gorillas, to the extensive savannas around the awe-inspiring Murchison Falls, Uganda is an equatorial country of astonishing contrasts! No other area in Africa can match its amazing diversity of habitats (in an area approximately the size of Great Britain!), and this richness is reflected in its incredible bird list of over 1,000 species, making it arguably the richest African birding destination. Amongst these are many highly sought-after birds, including the unique Shoebill and the numerous spectacular endemics of the Albertine Rift Mountains. This tour provides a comprehensive coverage of Uganda while staying at some great lodges, and aside from the birds (over 500 species of them!), it offers superb game viewing and the chance to track Mountain Gorillas and Chimpanzees!

Itinerary & Map

Birds & Gorillas

Day 1	Arrive in Entebbe, drive to Masindi via Mabamba Swamp
Day 2	Royal Mile, Budongo Forest
Day 3	Masindi to Murchison Falls National Park via Kaniyo Pabidi, Budongo Forest
Day 4	Murchison Falls National Park - Delta boat cruise & north bank game drive
Day 5	Murchison Falls to Masindi via Butiaba Escarpment & Busingiro, Budongo Forest
Day 6	Masindi to Kibale National Park
Day 7	Kibale National Park – Optional Chimpanzee tracking & birding
Day 8	Kibale to Queen Elizabeth National Park
Day 9	Queen Elizabeth National Park - Kasenyi Track & Kazinga Channel cruise
Day 10	Ishasha, Queen Elizabeth National Park to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park
Day 11	Bwindi Impenetrable National Park - Buhoma
Day 12	Buhoma to Ruhija via Kitahurira (The Neck)
Day 13	Ruhija - Optional Gorilla tracking & birding
Day 14	Ruhija - Mubwindi Swamp
Day 15	Ruhija to Lake Mburo National Park
Day 16	Lake Mburo - game drive & cruise
Day 17	Lake Mburo to Entebbe & final departure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Sequence of numbers
1 Entebbe
2 Masindi
3 Murchison Falls NP
4 Kibale NP
5 Queen Elizabeth NP
6 Bwindi NP
7 Lake Mburo NP
Base map
Uganda
Kampala
Gulu
Mbale
Kisumu
Butembo
Goma
Google My Maps

Birding sites in detail



Brown Twinspot by Glen Valentine

Mabamba Swamp. We begin our Ugandan adventure in search of a very special bird. Our prime target for today is the legendary Shoebill and we will set off through small rural villages and homesteads to Mabamba, which is a large wetland connected to Lake Victoria. This extensive papyrus swamp is home to several pairs of Shoebill, Uganda's most famous avian resident and the prime attraction to the nation for most birders. This charismatic species, the only representative of its family, is certainly amongst the most highly prized birds in the world! We will commission a boat from the nearby fishing village and search the maze of channels in an attempt to find this special species. Other water birds abound and we should find several species of herons, egrets and waterfowl, the ever-present African Fish Eagle, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, African Marsh Harrier, Purple Swamphen, Long-toed Lapwing, African and the tricky Lesser Jacanas, Malachite Kingfisher, and African Pygmy Goose. The papyrus holds the endearing Swamp Flycatcher, Blue-headed Coucal, Greater and White-winged Swamp Warblers, Grey-capped Warbler, the indescribable Papyrus Gonolek, and the nomadic and unpredictable Weyns's Weaver. If we are exceptionally fortunate, we may also see the rare Sitatunga, a shy swamp-dwelling antelope with splayed hooves.

Thereafter, we will bird the surrounding grasslands, papyrus swamps and farm bush. Here we might expect to see the funky-looking Long-crested Eagle perched atop telephone poles, Wahlberg's Eagle, Palm-nut Vulture, hovering Black-winged Kite, African Harrier-Hawk, Lizard Buzzard, the truly impressive Great Blue Turaco, raucous Eastern Plantain-eater, seemingly awkward Black-and-white Casqued Hornbill and floppy-flighted Crowned and African Pied Hornbills, dazzling-blue Woodland Kingfisher, Broad-billed Roller, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, Angola and the endangered Blue Swallows, Splendid and Rüppell's Starlings, African Thrush, Northern Black Flycatcher, Sooty Chat, gregarious Grey-backed Fiscal, Scarlet-chested, Superb and Red-chested Sunbirds as well as the comical Pin-tailed Whydah. Should we have missed it in the swamps, we have another chance to find the scare and nomadic Weyns's Weaver before we continue onwards to the town of Masindi.



Red-headed Lovebird by David Hoddinott

Mabamba Swamp to Masindi. We unfortunately have to pass through Kampala, Uganda's bustling capital city, en route but once we reach open road it will become evident how birdy this country really is! We will be stopping in any likely looking habitats en route. A small wetland at the roadside often supports the localised (Hartlaub's) Marsh Widowbird in addition to the abundant Yellow-mantled and Fan-tailed

Widowbirds. Further along, as we approach the town of Masindi, the countryside becomes drier and consists of fig-studded grasslands. In this habitat, we hope to encounter the shy but indescribably beautiful White-crested Turaco (often considered the most beautiful representative of this endemic African family), African and Bruce's Green Pigeons, White-headed and Spot-flanked Barbets, the scarce Heuglin's Spurfowl, White-browed Sparrow-weaver, both Black-crowned and Brown-crowned Tchagras, Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird, Yellow-bellied Hyliota, Black Bishop, the aptly named Beautiful Sunbird, and several interesting short-tailed starlings (Lesser Blue-eared, Purple, and Bronze-tailed).



Chimpanzee by Daniel Danckwerts

Piapiac, a small corvid that associated with cattle and wild game, are usually fairly common and are always interesting to watch. If there is time, we will also visit a small area of farm-bush, very near the town of Masindi, where we stand a good chance of finding the tricky Grey-headed Oliveback and Brown Twinspot, in addition to the Black-rumped Waxbill, Black and Northern Red Bishops, and Grey-capped Warbler.

Royal Mile, Budongo Forest. Today will be our first introduction to central African forest birding, and a good portion of the day will be spent in the vast Budongo Forest Reserve – the largest natural forest area in East Africa. We will concentrate much of our attention on the 'Royal Mile', a wide forestry track considered to be the country's premier forest birding locality. Among the numerous specials we hope to find are the Blue Malkoha (a skulking forest coucal), three forest-dwelling kingfishers (Chocolate-backed, Blue-breasted and African Dwarf), White-thighed Hornbill, Yellow-spotted, Hairy-breasted and Yellow-billed Barbets and their diminutive cousins, the tinkerbirds (Speckled, Yellow-throated and Yellow-rumped all being likely), Western Oriole, Green Hylia, the rarely encountered and difficult-to-see Uganda Woodland Warbler, Grey, Buff-throated, Black-throated, and the stunning Black-capped Apalises, Rufous-crowned Eremomela, Green and the elusive Lemon-bellied Crombecs, Fraser's Forest Flycatcher, Chestnut-capped Flycatcher, Purple-headed Starling, Little Green, Grey-chinned, Collared, Olive-bellied and the aberrant Grey-headed Sunbirds, and Crested and Red-headed Malimbes.



Puvell's Illadopsis by Daniel Danckwerts

Greenbuls are abundant, and we will work slowly through any flock that we encounter looking for Little Grey, Yellow-whiskered, Slender-billed, Honeyguide, White-throated, Red-tailed and the striking Spotted Greenbuls. We will search the undergrowth alongside the track for

the numerous understorey skulkers, which may include Pale-breasted Illadopsis, Fire-crested Alethe, Fraser's Rufous Thrush, Red-tailed Ant (Rufous) Thrush, Red-capped and the difficult Blue-shouldered Robin-Chats, Yellow-browed and Olive-green Camaropteras and Grey-throated Tit-Flycatcher.



Papyrus Gonolek by Adam Riley

The beautiful Nahan's Partridge is also sometimes heard, but we will require luck and a lot of patience to see this secretive and near-endemic species. Openings in the forest canopy will be carefully watched as Crowned Eagle, White-throated Bee-eater and Cassin's, Mottled and Sabine's Spinetails are all possible over the tall forest. The Budongo Forest also supports a number of interesting primate species and we may encounter Chimpanzee, Blue Monkey, Olive Baboon, and Guereza during the course of the day.

En route to and from the forest, we will bird some farm bush. Here we stand our best chance at the tricky Brown Twinspot and Grey-headed Oliveback, while also enjoying Marsh Tchagra, Brown Babbler, Red-headed Lovebird, African Yellow Warbler, Holub's Golden and Compact Weavers, Blue-spotted Wood Dove, Heuglin's Spurfowl, Black-bellied and African Firefinches, Red-headed Quelea, and Senegal Coucal while Grey Parrot is sometimes also seen overhead.

Kaniyo Pabidi, Budongo Forest. This morning, we will bird the Kaniyo Pabidi sector of the Budongo Forest, situated within the southern section of the Murchison Falls National Park. This is the only known site in East Africa for Puvel's Illadopsis and we stand a good chance of finding this special bird. Another big target for the morning is Rufous-sided Broadbill, but this species is somewhat tricky to track down. Flocks of Crested Guineafowl, sporting their "punk hairdos" are, however, more regularly encountered. Kaniyo Pabidi is also a good site for White-throated Greenbul, White-tailed and Red-tailed Ant Thrushes, Red-capped Robin-Chat, Fire-crested Alethe, Grey Longbill and Grey-throated Tit-Flycatcher. A healthy Chimpanzee population also survives, though these animals are more often heard than seen here, and the giant Chequered Sengi is fairly commonly encountered on the forest floor, as is the tiny Blue Duiker.



White-thighed Hornbills by Glen Valentine

After birding the Ironwood-dominant rainforest, we will drive further north into the woodland section of the park. Here, Vinaceous Dove, Black-billed Wood Dove, Senegal Coucal, Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat, Whistling Cisticola, Buff-bellied Warbler, the elegant Silverbird, Western Black-headed Batis, Orange-breasted and Grey-headed Bushshrikes, White-

crested Helmetshrike, Western Violet-backed and Beautiful Sunbirds, and Fawn-breasted and Black-rumped Waxbills may be encountered.

Murchison Fall's National Pal. Murchison Falls is Uganda's largest national park and is famous for its big game and spectacular scenery, as well as the spectacular falls after which the park was named. The vista point at the top of Murchison Falls offers incredible views of the Victoria Nile boiling down the narrow gorge – 45m long and just 9m wide. Bare, rocky islets are favoured perches and breeding sites of Rock Pratincole. We should see good numbers of these attractive waders wheeling in the spray of the falls. Thick riverine forest in this vicinity is home to the magnificent White-crested Turaco, Double-toothed Barbet, Yellow-throated Leaflove, Spotted Palm Thrush, Brown-throated Wattle-eye, the localised Red-winged Grey Warbler and Purple-banded Sunbird.



Marsh Tchagra by Glen Valentine

During our time in the park, we will take a cruise trip along the Victoria Nile down towards the Lake Victoria Delta, where the west-flowing Victoria Nile makes an abrupt turn and becomes the north-flowing Albert Nile. A plethora of waterbirds throng the well-wooded banks of the river and today, we have another opportunity of spotting Shoebill. This species usually stands motionless on the edge of channels waiting for a hapless lungfish and sometimes allows close approach. In the heat of the day, Shoebills may be seen soaring over the Nile – an impressive sight indeed. Other water birds abound and we hope to see African Darter, Intermediate Egret, Goliath and Purple Herons, Woolly-necked and Yellow-billed Storks, Hamerkop, Egyptian and Spur-winged Geese, Osprey, African Fish Eagle, Black Crake, African Swamphen, the regal Grey Crowned Crane (Uganda's national bird), Senegal Thick-knee, Long-toed and Spur-winged Lapwings, African Jacana, Malachite and Giant Kingfishers and the dashing Wire-tailed Swallow. Burrows in the riverbanks represent colonies of either colourful Red-throated Bee-eater or querulous Pied Kingfisher, the latter is particularly abundant here, while elegant, Red-necked Falcon frequent palm trees which line the banks. In addition to the birds, large numbers of huge Nile Crocodile, Common Hippopotamus, African Buffalo, Tantalus Monkey and Olive Baboon are often seen at very close range, and herds of African Elephant sometimes bathe en masse in the willows.



Abyssinian Ground Hornbill by Daniel Danckwerts

The scenic area north of the Nile holds several birds typical of dry savanna. We will search here for Secretarybird, Black-chested



Black Bee-eater by David Hoddinott

Snake Eagle, Tawny and Martial Eagles, Shikra, Dark Chanting Goshawk, Harlequin Quail, Heuglin's Spurfowl, Helmeted Guineafowl, flocks of Collared Pratincole, Black-headed Lapwing, Swallow-tailed and Northern Carmine Bee-eaters, Black Scimitarbill, Short-winged and Black-backed Cisticolas, Speckle-fronted Weaver, Shelley's Sparrow, Bar-breasted Firefinch and Quailfinch. A few birds with their ranges centred on the Sahel reach their southern limits here, and we hope to find the stately Abyssinian Ground Hornbill and White-fronted Black Chat. Mammals are well represented here, and we should see Bushbuck, Giraffe (belonging to the endangered form known as Rothschild's Giraffe), African Buffalo, Uganda Kob, Oribi and Waterbuck. If we are lucky, we may see groups of the shy Patas Monkey, while this is one of the best places in Uganda to find Lion.

The moist, grassy woodlands to the south of the Nile are very different from those of the North bank and support a host of localised birds including Brown-backed Woodpecker, Brown Babbler, Red-winged Prinia, the unusually proportioned Purple Starling, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver, Black-bellied Firefinch, Cabanis's and Brown-rumped Buntings, Green-backed Eremomela, Yellow-bellied Hyliota, Yellow-billed Shrike and if we are very fortunate, Bat Hawk, African Cuckoo-Hawk, White-breasted Cuckooshrike and Red-winged Pytilia. Other species that we will search for here are African Cuckoo, African Grey Hornbill, African Grey Woodpecker, Northern and Red-faced Crombecs, African Paradise Flycatcher (often of the spectacular white morph), Northern Puffback, Black-crowned and Brown-crowned Tchagras, Tropical Boubou and Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu.

We have the option of embarking on a short night drive in the hopes of finding Pennant-winged Nightjar (arguably one of Africa's most spectacular birds), along with the more-common Square-tailed, Swamp and Fiery-necked Nightjars. Verreaux's Eagle-owl, one of Africa's largest owls, is also regular in the park and we will do our best at finding this spectacular species. Nocturnal mammals which we may encounter include Leopard, Serval, White-tailed Mongoose, African Civet, Crested Porcupine, Common Genets and Bunyoro Rabbit.



Black-headed Lapwing by Daniel Danckwerts

Murchison Falls National Park to Masindi. We'll make an effort to locate the rare Dusky Babbler, localised White-rumped Seedeater and Cut-throat Finch (a rarity in Uganda that was first discovered here in 2016 and continues to be present in the area)

Butiaba Escarpment. The dry Butiaba Escarpment, at the head of the Albertine Rift Valley is a productive birding site where we'll search for Namaqua Dove, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Black-billed Barbet, White-shouldered Black Tit, Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike, Mocking Cliff Chat, Green-winged Pytilia, Foxy Cisticola, Little Weaver and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting.



African Blue Flycatcher by Glen Valentine

Busingiro, Budongo Forest. We will bird the Busingiro section of this forest where the elusive canopy-dwelling Ituri Batis is a possibility. Busingiro also provides an excellent back-up opportunity for several of Budongo's trickier species such as Chocolate-backed Kingfisher, Jameson's Wattle-eye, Chestnut-capped Flycatcher and Rufous-crowned Eremomela.

Masindi to Kibale National Park. This will be our longest travel day as we head south from Masindi to the expansive Kibale National Park. Our first birding stop will be in an area of rich farm bush where Red-headed Lovebird, African Yellow Warbler, Ross's Turaco, African Blue Flycatcher, Brown-backed Scrub Robin, Compact Weaver, Orange-tufted Sunbird, Orange-breasted Waxbill, Brown Twinspot and the beautiful Grey-headed Oliveback may be found. Further on, papyrus swamps hold the stunning Papyrus Gonolek and skulking White-winged Swamp Warbler; the latter species requiring patience to see.

Sebitole, Kibale National Park. Our target species will include Joyful Greenbul, Lowland Masked Apalis, Dusky Long-tailed and African Emerald Cuckoos (the latter fairly common and conspicuous at this site), Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher, Many-coloured and Lühder's Bushshrikes, Narrow-tailed and Chestnut-winged Starlings, Tiny and Blue-throated Brown Sunbirds and Dark-backed Weaver.



Great Blue Turaco by Daniel Danckwerts

Kibale National Park. The towering Kibale Forest has the highest primate concentration and species diversity of any reserve in East Africa. Primate highlights might include sightings of localised Ugandan Red Colobus, handsome L'Hoest's Monkey and the scruffy Grey-cheeked Mangabey. We have the opportunity for an optional Chimpanzee trek and our chances of finding these, one of our closest

living relatives, are excellent! The birds are typical of the medium-altitude forest, with excellent mixed species flocks and specials such as Afep and the rare and globally threatened White-naped Pigeon, Red-chested Owlet, Blue-throated Roller, Narina Trogon, African Shrike-flycatcher, Scaly-breasted and Brown Illadopsis, Superb and Green-headed Sunbirds, Black-billed Turaco, Plain Greenbul, Chestnut Wattle-eye and Black-and-white Mannikin. The stunning Green-breasted Pitta also occurs in this forest, however, a pre-dawn start, and a good deal of luck and perseverance will be needed to locate this mythical low-density understory inhabitant! At night we may encounter African Wood Owl and Verreaux's Eagle-Owl around our accommodations.



White-collared Oliveback by Glen Valentine

Bigodi Wetland, Kibale National Park. A number of quality species can be seen here, including Yellow-billed Barbet, the rare Speckle-breasted and Buff-spotted Woodpeckers, White-tailed Ant Thrush, Honeyguide and Joyful Greenbuls, White-spotted Flufftail, Shining-blue Kingfisher, Dusky-blue Flycatcher, Red-headed Bluebill, Grey-winged and Snowy-crowned Robin-Chats, Black-crowned Waxbill, Black-and-white Shrike-Flycatcher, Bocage's Bushshrike and if we are extremely fortunate, perhaps even the very rare and elusive White-collared Oliveback.

Queen Elizabeth National Park. After passing beautiful crater lakes and the foothills of the mighty Rwenzori Mountains, we arrive at the famous Queen Elizabeth National Park, formerly known as Kazinga National Park but renamed in the Queen's honour after her visit in 1954.

We will spend a morning birding in the spectacular Crater area in the foothills of the Rwenzori Mountains and the main game-viewing area along the Kasenyi Track. The area can be particularly productive for raptors and species that will be the focus of our search include Rüppell's Vulture, Bateleur (one of Africa's most spectacular raptors), Brown Snake Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, and Grey Kestrel. Queen Elizabeth National Park also offers a wonderful variety of grassland-dominated habitats which hold Red-necked Spurfowl, Harlequin Quail, Common and the rarely encountered Black-rumped Buttonquail, African Crake, Temminck's Courser, Senegal and Crowned Lapwings, the marsh-dwelling Black Coucal, Flappet, Rufous-naped, Red-capped and the scarce White-tailed Larks, Plain-backed Pipit, Fan-tailed Grassbird, Croaking, Red-faced, and Stout Cisticolas, Marsh Tchagra, Southern Red Bishop, flocks of Red-billed



Black-crowned Waxbill by Daniel Danckwerts

Quelea and Quailfinch, while Black-lored Babbler, Greater Honeyguide and Red-billed Firefinch occur in the surrounding woodlands. Mammals will also be a highlight in this area, and we are likely to encounter herds of African Elephant and African Buffalo, Uganda Kob, Bushbuck and Common Warthog, while we'd be very fortunate to see Lion, Leopard, Spotted Hyaena or the impressive Giant Forest Hog, the largest and undeniably ugliest pig on Earth!



Mountain Gorilla by David Hoddinott

One of the undoubted tour highlights will be our afternoon boat trip on the Kazinga Channel that links Lakes George and Edward, allowing a very close approach and intimate encounters with African Buffalo, African Elephant, and Common Hippopotamus, as well as numerous waterbirds. Among many other species, we're likely to encounter large numbers of African Skimmer and Pied Kingfisher, as well as Pink-backed and Great White Pelicans, White-breasted Cormorant, African Openbill, Saddle-billed Stork, Hamerkop, Glossy Ibis, African Wattled and Spur-winged Lapwings, Water Thick-knee, Grey-headed Gull, White-winged and Gull-billed Terns, Malachite Kingfisher, Collared Pratincole, Swamp Flycatcher, Lesser Swamp Warbler, Winding Cisticola and plenty of nesting weavers.

This evening we hope to find Square-tailed Nightjars around dusk.

Ishasha, Queen Elizabeth National Park. If conditions allow, we will drive through the extensive southern Ishasha section of Queen Elizabeth National Park en-route to Bwindi. Savanna bird and mammal species are likely to be seen and we may be fortunate in sighting Ishasha's famous tree-climbing Lions. The elusive Scaly Spurfowl is another species that we hope to find along this route.



Green-breasted Pitta by David Hoddinott

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. The famous Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is a bastion for gorilla conservation and a hotspot for Albertine Rift Endemics. The Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is home to approximately half of the world population of 1 000 Mountain Gorillas. This vast reserve offers arguably some of the most productive montane forest birding in Africa and supports almost the entire suite of Albertine Rift endemic bird species. Once part of a much larger forest that included the Virunga Volcanoes in neighbouring Rwanda, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is now an ecological island within a sea of human cultivation and therefore of immense conservation importance.

Buhoma, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. Buhoma lies in the valley of the Munyaga River at

1 500m above sea level, and is flanked by steep, forested hills. Excellent forest birding, not least the prospect of numerous rare and localised Albertine Rift endemics, makes this a true birding Mecca.



Black-fronted Duiker by Daniel Danckwerts

We will spend our time birding along the famous and bird-rich Buhoma Track that leads into the mid-elevation forest of Bwindi just past the town of Buhoma and our wonderful accommodations at the edge of the forest. Species we will search for include Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo, Bar-tailed Trogon, Dusky Tit, Abyssinian (Kivu) Ground Thrush, White-bellied Robin-Chat, Equatorial Akalat, Red-throated Alethe, White-bellied Crested Flycatcher, White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher, Northern Double-collared Sunbird, Willcocks's and Least Honeyguides, the newly described Willard's Sooty Boubou, Black-billed Weaver and Magpie Mannikin. High exposed perches in the open forest are favoured by African Goshawk, the dazzling Black Bee-eater, Sooty Flycatcher and forest starlings including Waller's, Stuhlmann's and Narrow-tailed. One of Bwindi's star avian attractions is the diminutive, pitta-like Neumann's Warbler, a vocal yet very secretive bird! We will require luck and patience to see this skulker – one of the Albertine Rift endemics. Other understorey birds we hope to see include displaying African Broadbill, Black-faced Prinia and the handsome but shy Black-faced Rufous Warbler. The mid-storey and canopy support Elliot's and Fine-banded Woodpeckers, Cabanis's, Kakamega and Ansorge's Greenbuls, the enigmatic Chapin's Flycatcher and White-browed Crombec. The rare Jameson's Antpecker may also be seen probing under moss on dead branches or gleaning warbler-like in the canopy, though finding this localised species requires immense luck, while Scarce Swifts forage over the forest. Birding at Buhoma is a truly magical experience!



Narrow-tailed Starlings by David Hoddinott

Other wildlife that we may be fortunate enough to find here includes Black-fronted and the huge Yellow-backed Duiker, Guereza Colobus, L'Hoest's, Blue and Red-tailed monkeys, Chimpanzee and several species of squirrels, including Fire-footed Rope, Carruthers' Mountain, Rwenzori Sun and Red-legged Sun Squirrels.

Buhoma to Ruhija via Kitahurira (The Neck). Although the distance is not large, we will spend an entire day on this route due to the superb birding it provides. In scrubby areas beyond Buhoma, we will search for Ross's Turaco, Red-throated Wryneck, Brown-backed Scrub Robin, Bronzy, Copper and Variable Sunbirds, Baglafecht and Black-necked Weavers, Yellow Bishop, Village Indigobird, Red-headed Bluebill and Black-throated Canary. Further along the road, we will pass through Kitahurira or "The Neck," another well-known birding locality. Here we will search for species that could include Black Sparrowhawk, Western Bronze-naped Pigeon, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Cassin's Honeybird, Petit's Cuckooshrike, White-chinned Prinia, Mountain Wagtail, Pink-footed Puffback,

the rare Tiny Sunbird and the attractive Brown-capped Weaver. If we are incredibly lucky, we may also encounter the rare and little-known Lagden's Bushshrike here!

Even further up the road, cultivated areas provide feeding opportunities for many seedeaters. Our main targets here will be the highly sought-after Dusky Twinspot and Yellow-bellied, Kandt's and Black-crowned Waxbills, African Stonechat, Streaky and Thick-billed Seedeaters, Western Citril and Yellow-crowned Canary. The noisy Chubb's Cisticola will mock us from deep within the bracken, and the beautiful Doherty's Bushshrike can be lured out from the dense vegetation. Mackinnon's Shrikes survey the road from high, exposed perches and will be a regular feature throughout today.



Bar-tailed Trogon by Glen Valentine

Ruhija, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. Ruhija is a seldom-visited higher camp in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. The ranger station at Ruhija is situated at an altitude of 2 250m above sea level, with breath-taking views over steep, forested valleys toward the distant Virunga Volcanoes. Ruhija is likely to be one of the highlights of any trip to Uganda with excellent birding in spectacular surroundings.

Those departing on an optional gorilla trekking adventure will search for a habituated family group of Eastern (Mountain) Gorillas. Spending an hour with these gentle giants is, without a doubt, one of the greatest wildlife experiences on Earth!

Ruhija, Mubwindi Swamp. We will concentrate our birding on the trails to the unique Mubwindi Swamp and along the main access roads. This area is the most accessible site on Earth for the rare and localised Grauer's Broadbill, one of Africa's most sought-after birds. This globally threatened species is only known from two sites in the world, the other being a remote forest in eastern Congo. Carruthers's Cisticola and the localised Grauer's Swamp Warbler are resident in Mubwindi Swamp and if we are very fortunate we will see the shy Red-chested Flufftail and African Rail.



Grauer's Broadbill by David Hoddinott

Today's other target species include Mountain and Augur Buzzards, the scarce Rufous-breasted Sparrowhawk, the furtive Handsome Spurfowl, African Olive Pigeon, Black-billed Turaco, extremely shy and unobtrusive Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo, White-headed Wood Hoopoe, the rare Western Tinkerbird, Olive Woodpecker, Thick-billed and the elusive Dwarf Honeyguides, Black Saw-wing, Grey Cuckooshrike, Olive-breasted and Yellow-streaked Greenbuls, Abyssinian Thrush, White-starred Robin, Archer's Ground Robin, Stripe-breasted Tit, Mountain Illadopsis, Rwenzori Hill Babbler, Mountain

Masked, Rwenzori, and Chestnut-throated Apalises, Cinnamon Bracken, Mountain Yellow, Red-faced Woodland and Grauer's Warblers, White-tailed Blue Flycatcher, Yellow-eyed Black Flycatcher, Rwenzori Batis, the recently split Albertine Sooty Boubou, the rare Lagden's Bushshrike, Sharpe's Starling, Mountain Oriole, Strange Weaver, the rare, local and extremely shy Grey-chested Babbler and the beautiful but uncommon Oriole Finch. Flowering trees attract the incredible Blue-headed, Regal Sunbird and scarce Purple-breasted Sunbirds – all three being beautiful Albertine Rift Endemics. Dusky, Red-faced, Abyssinian and the near-mythical Shelley's Crimsonwings – amongst the most beautiful and sought-after of African seedeaters – are all possible at Ruhija. At night, we stand a chance of seeing Montane Nightjar and African Wood Owl.



Regal Sunbird by Adam Riley

Lake Mburo National Park. We have time to explore the incredible wetland and Acacia savanna sanctuary that hosts some very special species. Raptor watching will be a major feature and potential targets will include African Marsh Harrier, White-backed, Lappet-faced and White-headed Vultures, Brown Snake Eagle and African Hawk-Eagle. Lake Mburo's woodlands are the northern-most example of the southern savanna system and are therefore home to several species at the edge of their range. Most sought-after of these is the elusive and highly-localised Red-faced Barbet, known only from remote north-eastern Tanzania, Rwanda, and here, while other specials include the aptly-named Long-tailed Cisticola and Green-capped Eremomela.

We will also search for Crested and Coqui Francolins, Emerald-spotted Wood Dove, Red-chested, Jacobin, Levaillant's, and African Cuckoos, Blue-naped Mousebird, Lilac-breasted Roller, Striped Kingfisher, Green Wood Hoopoe, Common Scimitarbill, Spot-flanked, Crested and Black-collared Barbets, Bearded and the uncommon Golden-tailed and Bearded Woodpeckers, several swallows including Lesser Striped, Red-breasted, Mosque, Red-rumped and White-headed Saw-wing, Black Cuckooshrike, White-browed Scrub Robin, Trilling Cisticola, the meadowlark-like Yellow-throated Longclaw, Chinspot Batis, Yellow-billed Oxpecker, Grey Penduline Tit, Arrow-marked Babbler, Brubru, Wattled Starling, Greater Blue-eared Starling, Marico Sunbird and Red-headed Weaver.



African Finfoot by David Hoddinott

One of the highlights of our time at Lake Mburo will be the boat trip on the lake where we have excellent chances of finding two of Africa's most attractive, elusive and sought-after species, the African Finfoot and nocturnal White-backed Night Heron. Other

interesting species we may encounter during the trip include Black-crowned Night Heron, Ross's Turaco, the handsome African Fish Eagle and Greater Swamp Warbler among many others.

Mammals are also a feature of Lake Mburo National Park and we stand a good chance of seeing Banded and Common Dwarf Mongooses surveying the world from atop their adopted termite mounds, Plains Zebra, Common Hippopotamus, Common Warthog, Eland (the world's largest antelope), Waterbuck, Bohor Reedbuck, Impala, Oribi, Giraffe and Topi. Just outside the park, we will come across some of the world-famous long-horned Ankole cattle – always a highlight to see.



Ross's Turaco by David Hoddinott

We have the option of embarking a night drive in the hopes of finding several nocturnal mammals such as Leopard, Spotted Hyena, White-tailed Mongoose, Honey Badger, Crested Porcupine and Bushpig, or birds such as African Scops Owl and Verreaux's Eagle-Owl, or a host of nightjars that may include Swamp, Pennant-winged, Square-tailed, and Fiery-necked.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Forest birding is moderate to demanding, some long travel days, long birding days, moderate to difficult trails.
Birding Ease		Forest birding is moderate to demanding, several low-density species that require repeated effort.
Accommodation		Variable. Modern & comfortable at most sites to basic elsewhere.
Walking / Trails		Varies from comfortable boat/4x4 based birding to difficult, narrow and/or steep forest trails (optional)
Vehicles / Roads		4x4 Landcruiser vehicles. Some long drives mostly on mostly sealed roads, prone to having potholes & livestock.
Photography		Average to good. Forest photography has typical lighting challenges. Better lighting in savanna areas. No dedicated hides.
Annoyances		Some moderate altitude accommodation. Large temperature variances & some rain can be expected.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from lunch on day 1 to lunch on day 17 of the Birds & Gorillas tour;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve & site entrance fees;
- All guiding services
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Optional Gorilla tracking permit;
- Optional Chimpanzee tracking permit;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry, and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- Although Uganda is an equatorial nation, much of the country is situated on a plateau at roughly 1000 metres above sea level, and therefore, the climate is relatively mild. In some areas (e.g., Murchison Falls National Park and Lake Mburo National Park) it can be hot to very hot (more than 30°C).
- At times, we may be walking on narrow and/or steep forest trails (entirely optional) to find a few special birds. Our pace will, however, be slow as we bird in the forests.
- Although this Uganda tour does not require a high level of fitness, participants should be in good general health as much of the forest birding will be done on foot and may require walking for several hours at a time. Should you have any physical limitations, please notify us in advance of departure.
- There will be a few lengthy drives and many of the days will be long with early starts.
- The optional gorilla trek at Bwindi Impenetrable Forest generally involves several hours of moderate to strenuous walking on steep slopes, often off-trail. The chance of finding the gorillas is very high, but not guaranteed. New regulations have meant that family group permits will be allocated on the morning of the trek. It is also possible that we well be split up into a few different trekking parties.
- The optional walk down to Mubwindi Swamp entails hiking along a long trail (roughly 10 km return) which is steep and at times muddy. As the pace is often slow, we will be walking for a considerable amount of time on this day. If you have any physical limitations, then it is not recommended that you partake in this activity, however, alternative birding arrangements will be made for you on this day should you opt not to do this walk.
- The vehicles used are comfortable stretched Landcruiser 4X4's with open roof-hatches.

Arrival and Departure Details

Day 1 of the Main Tour begins early, with a full day's birding planned. You are required to arrive in Entebbe a day before the tour starts. The tour will conclude in the afternoon of day 18 at Entebbe International Airport.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Entebbe International Airport, Entebbe (IATA: EBB) is the main port of entry and departure for international flights for this tour and is well serviced by most of the world's major airlines.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.