Zimbabwe

Eastern Highlands Extension

Sample Itinerary, typically 6 days



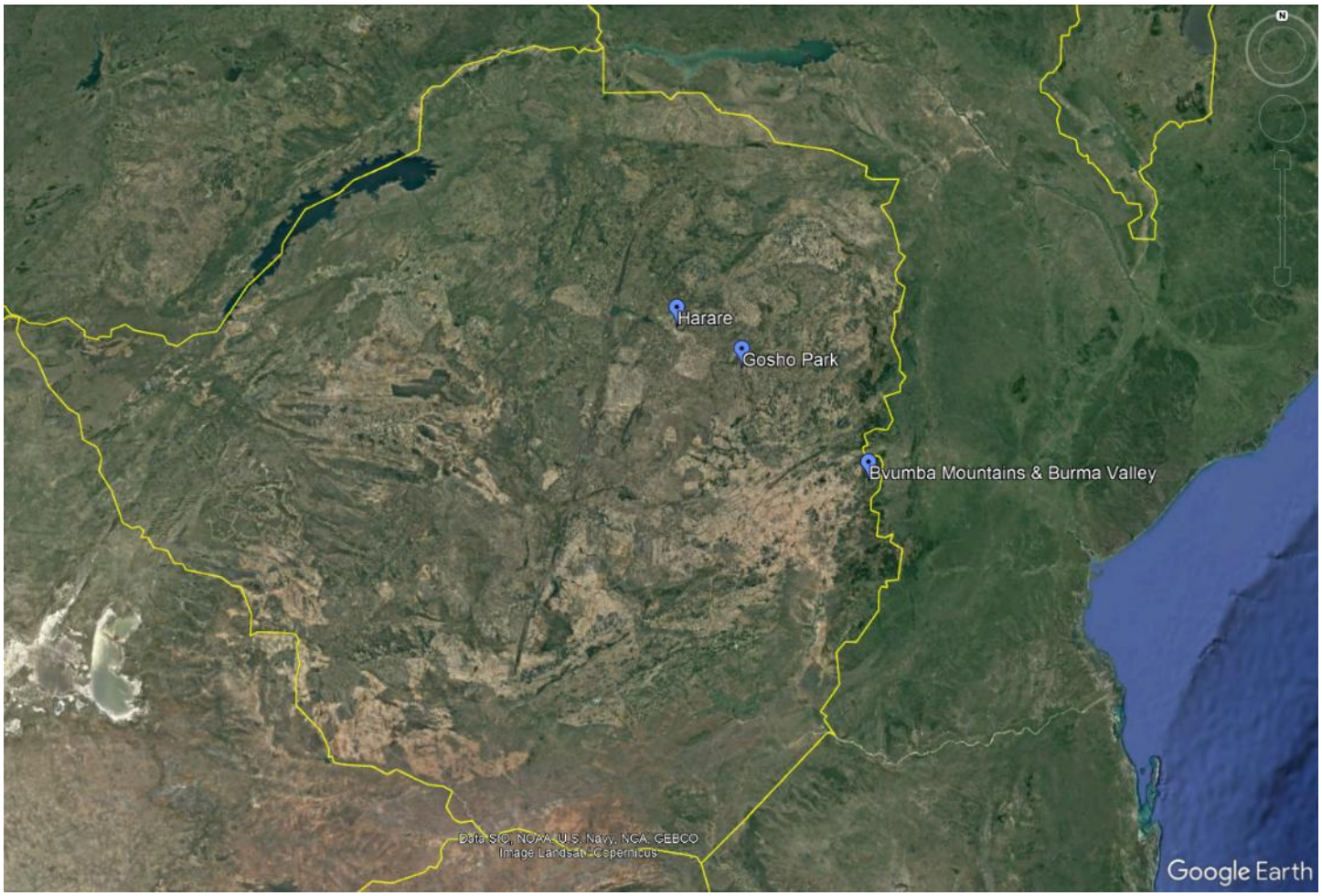
Roberts's Warbler by Daniel Danckwerts

Zimbabwe is justly famous as a superb birding destination that leaves one with a lasting impression of having experienced the real 'wild Africa.' Pristine wilderness areas, spectacular landscapes and an amazing variety of ecosystems make Zimbabwe a natural history paradise.

This short extension to the Eastern Highlands takes in the best of Zimbabwe's montane species including the near endemic Chirinda Apalis, Roberts's Warbler, the delightful Swynnerton's Robin, Bronzy Sunbird, Black-fronted Bushshrike, African Spotted Creeper, Red-faced Crombec, White-breasted Cuckooshrike, Green-capped Eremomela and Cinnamon-breasted Tit.

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Harare, Haka Park**
Day 2	**Harare to Bvumba Mountains via Gosho Park**
Days 3 & 4	**Bvumba Mountains & Burma Valley**
Day 5	**Bvumba Mountains to Harare via Gosho Park**
Day 6	**Final departure**



Birding sites in detail



Whyte's Barbet by Reece Dodd

Haka Park. The small park is dominated by pristine miombo trees, home to a host of mouth-watering miombo specialities. We will specifically target Boulder Chat, Black-eared Seedeater, Western Violet-backed Sunbird, Wood Pipit, African Spotted Creeper, Red-faced Crombec, White-breasted Cuckooshrike, Cinnamon-breasted Tit, Green-capped Eremomela and both Brown and Green-backed Honeybirds.

Gosho Park. Located near Marondera, this is another pristine patch of miombo woodland. This is one of the strongholds of the dainty African Spotted Creeper, and good views should be had whilst it characteristically clambers upwards from the base of these tall, straight trees. Copper, Variable and Western Violet-backed Sunbirds, Shelley's and Coqui Francolins, as well as Boulder Chat will also be sought.

Bvumba Mountains. The Bvumba (Vumba) Mountains, or 'mountains of the mist' are situated to the south-east of the large city of Mutare. As we make our way up the Bvumba Road, we may stop at several likely sites. Dense scrubby foliage and bracken covered forest edges host Cape Grassbird, Cape Robin-Chat, Roberts's Warbler and Singing Cisticola, whilst introduced bottlebrush trees may produce Bronzy, Variable, Eastern Miombo and even Western Violet-backed Sunbirds.

Lush Afromontane forest drape the majority of the mountains producing excellent opportunities for Livingstone's Turaco, Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, African Emerald Cuckoo, White-eared Barbet and African Olive Pigeon clamber around the forest canopy, while Lemon and Tambourine Doves, Buff-spotted Flufftail and Barratt's Warbler inhabit the forest understory.

Mixed species flocks are a feature of these forests and could reveal the presence of Cape Batis, Black-fronted and Olive Bushshrikes, Yellow-streaked and Stripe-cheeked Greenbuls, Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler, the shy and brilliant Orange Ground Thrush, Chirinda and Bar-throated Apalises, Dark-backed Weaver, Grey Cuckooshrike, White-tailed Crested and Blue-mantled Crested Flycatchers.



Chirinda Apalis by Reece Dodd

With stealth, careful listening and watching should hopefully reveal the extremely localised and stunning Swynnerton's Robin, which is restricted to a few Afro-montane forests in



Swynnerton's Robin by Reece Dodd

south-eastern and eastern Africa. We should require so such luck to find the morphologically similar White-starred Robin, which is rather unusually comfortable showing itself off at the forest edge.

The nearby Vumba Botanical Gardens provide good birding in more open surrounds. Birding here is particularly enjoyable, and a leisurely stroll should produce many of the same species as above but is arguably better for several forest edge specialists like the elusive Red-faced Crimsonwing, brilliant Red-throated and Green Twinspots, Yellow-bellied Waxbill, African Firefinch and an array of exquisite sunbirds that include Bronzy, Collared, Variable and Olive Sunbirds. Both Roberts's Warbler and Chirinda Apalis are commonly found; both species only occurring in these highlands and in the rather inaccessible adjacent highlands in neighbouring Mozambique.

We'll also pay special attention to the large raptors in the region. These include Crowned and Long-crested Eagles as well as an isolated population of Augur Buzzard. Several species of mammal also occur in this area and include Bushbuck, the diminutive Blue Duiker, adorable Blue Monkeys and Mutable Sun Squirrel. The rare (practically never seen) African Palm Civet occurs in low numbers, this being the only place it can be found in the southern African sub-region.

Burma Valley. We plan to spend a morning birding down the Burma Valley in search of the rarely seen Zambezi Indigobird, whilst also being in position to find Miombo Rock Thrush, both Miombo and Cinnamon-breasted Tits, as well as specialist aerial feeders such as Scarce and Mottled Swifts.

Nyanga. Host to an extensive part of the Eastern Highlands, including Mount Nyangani, the highest point in Zimbabwe at 2 592m. Whilst the habitat is varied, we'll be paying special attention to the montane grasslands for Wattled Crane and the increasingly vulnerable Blue Swallow that breeds in old Aardvark burrows.

We'll also keep an eye overhead for Scarce, African Black and Mottled Swifts, Augur Buzzard and Verreaux's Eagle. Flowering trees and garden plants often produce Bronzy and Malachite Sunbirds as well as the possibility of Gurney's Sugarbird.



Eastern Miombo Sunbird by Reece Dodd

Cecil Kop. Situated at the high point of Christmas Pass overlooking Mutare, this patch of miombo woodland is easily accessed by a road leading higher up the mountains to a radio mast. The tall woodland and miombo

offer up Cabanis's Bunting, Green-capped Eremomela, Whyte's Barbet, Miombo Rock Thrush, Pallid and Greater Honeyguides, Miombo Tit and Violet-backed Starlings.



Boulder Chat by Reece Dodd

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Moderate to easy tour for the keen to serious birder. Not suitable for anyone with mobility or significant health & fitness challenges.
Birding Ease		Moderate. Forest birding is somewhat challenging, Miombo birding can be difficult depending on time of year. Several low-density target species
Accommodation		Good to comfortable lodges, some are simple and may require shared facilities.
Walking / Trails		Mostly roadside birding. Some trails, a few may be steep.
Vehicles / Roads		Comfortable minibus or midibus style vehicles. Mostly flat sealed roads between major towns, some are bumpy and potholed.
Photography		Forest photography is challenging. No dedicated hides.
Annoyances		None of note.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

This tour is made available through our Tailor-made tours department. To explore this offering further for pricing, precise day to day itinerary, inclusions & exclusions, or to tailor the tour to your personal requirements, please contact our Tailor-made team on tailormade@rockjumper.com

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.

- **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.**

- To ensure your comfort and that of your companions, please limit yourself to one medium-sized suitcase or duffel bag (20 kg / 44 lb) and one carry-on bag, as space in the vehicles is limited.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour starts with afternoon birding near to Harare on day 1. The tour will conclude in Harare after breakfast on day 6.

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.

Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport, Harare (IATA: HRE) is the main port of entry and departure.

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.