Zambia

Miombo in Summer



Souza's Shrike by Daniel Danckwerts

This exciting tour concentrates on the highlights of one of Africa's most remarkable countries, offering vast areas of pristine wilderness and a great diversity of habitat. The tour visits several incredible sites within the country, and we will dabble in all the most important of habitats including the rich miombo woodlands, mushitus (riverine forest) and dambos (seasonally inundated wetlands). Key sites include the fabulous Victoria Falls – rightly considered one of the seven Natural Wonders of the World.

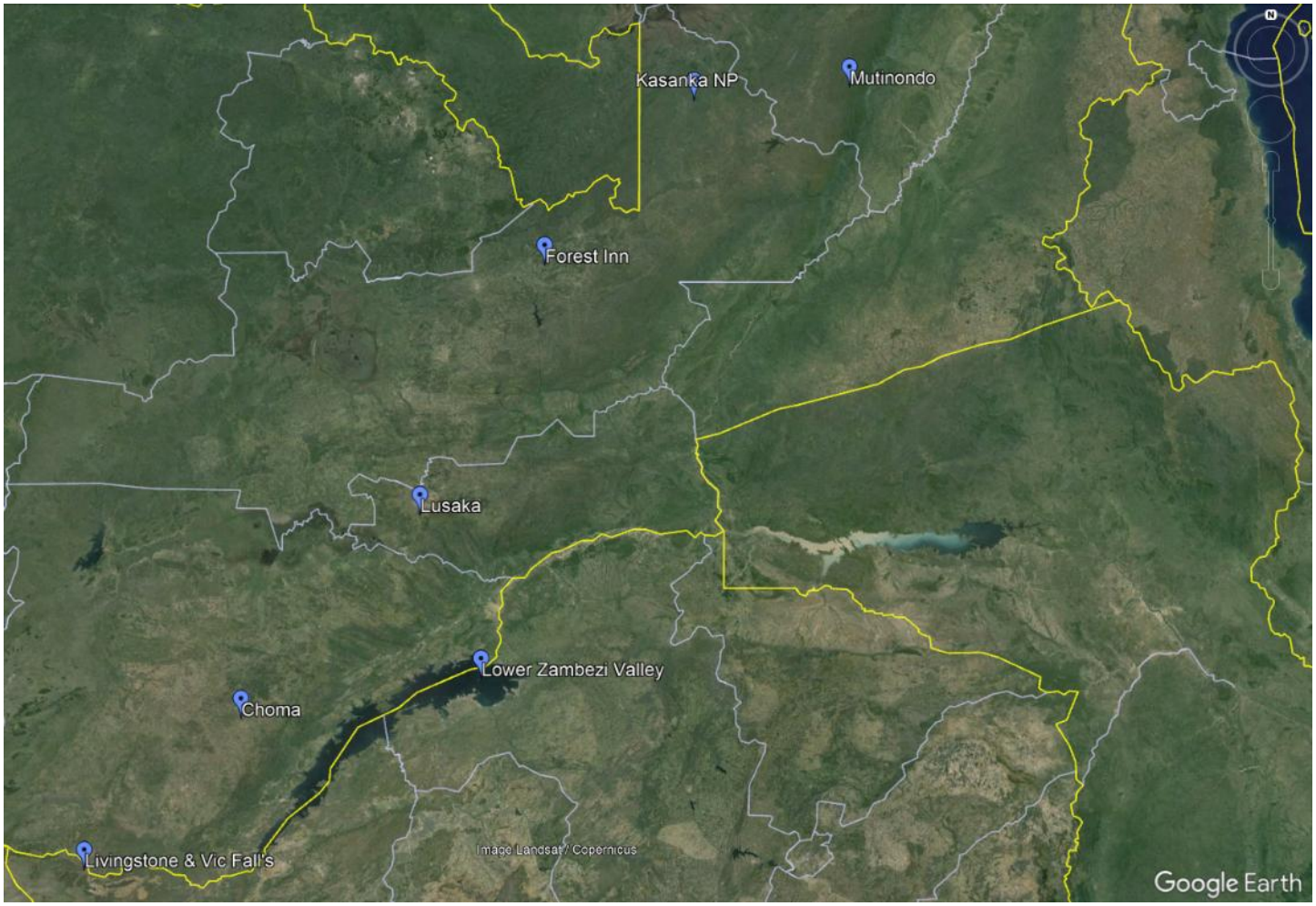
From there, we head to the Choma region where we can expect to enjoy a wonderful selection of birds such as the endemic Chaplin's Barbet together with Racket-tailed Roller, Red-capped Crombec and Fülleborn's Longclaw. Next, we drive to the Zambezi Valley, specifically the thickets along the Mutulanganga and Mbendele Rivers, where the highlights might include Barred Long-tailed and African Emerald Cuckoos, African Pitta, River Warbler, and the endearing Livingstone's Flycatcher.

We then start making our way northwards, having an excellent crack at Black-necked Eremomela and Chestnut-backed Sparrow-weaver. Finally, we will visit two sites in the north: the vast Mutinondo Wilderness and Kasanka National Park. Here we hope to find the rare Bar-winged Weaver, Anchieta's Barbet, Anchieta's Sunbird, Bocage's Akalat, Böhm's Flycatcher, Blue Quail, Chestnut-headed Fullftail and Souza's Shrike. Who knows – we

may even see a Shoebill or, should our timing be right, witness the breath-taking sight of approximately 10 million African Straw-colored Fruit Bats leaving their roost in the world's biggest mammal migration! We are excited to share this incredible adventure, though one of Africa's upcoming destinations, with you!

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Livingstone & Victoria Fall's National Park.**
Day 2	**Livingstone to Choma**
Days 3 & 4	**Choma area**
Day 5	**Choma to the lower Zambezi Valley**
Days 6 & 7	**Lower Zambezi Valley**
Day 8	**Lower Zambezi Valley to Forest Inn**
Day 9	**Forest Inn to Mutinondo Wilderness**
Days 10 & 11	**Mutinondo Wilderness**
Day 12	**Mutinondo Wilderness to Kasanka National Park**
Days 13 & 14	**Kasanka National Park**
Day 15	**Kasanka National Park to Chisamba**
Day 16	**Chisamba to Lusaka & final departure**



Birding sites in detail

Victoria Falls. The Victoria Falls have rightly been considered one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, and we will spend some time appreciating the immense spectacle of the Zambezi River plunging 300ft into the gorge below. The spray from the falls has created a verdant rainforest and we will undoubtedly find some interesting birds including Natal Spurfowl, Trumpeter Hornbill, Schalow's Turaco, the attractive African Emerald Cuckoo, Tropical Boubou, Bearded Scrub Robin and Red-winged Starling.



Chaplin's Barbet by David Hoddinott

Above the falls we will scan rocky areas and sandbanks for Rock Pratincole, White-crowned Lapwing, lazing Nile Crocodile and pods of noisy Hippopotamus. We will also visit a site further upstream of the falls where we will search for African Finfoot, Half-collared Kingfisher, the gorgeous Allen's Gallinule, Dickinson's Kestrel, Cut-throat Finch, White-browed Robin-chat, Red-faced Cisticola and Collared Palm Thrush.

Choma area. This region is famous in birding circles for two prime reasons: firstly, because it is the most accessible place to search for the exceptionally localized Chaplin's Barbet and secondly, for once being the holder of the 24-hour world record for the most species seen. There is superb birding to be had here and the reason for the large bird list is directly linked to the habitat being extremely varied.

Top of the list will be finding the endemic Chaplin's Barbet, one of only two endemic bird species to Zambia. Chaplin's Barbet favours a unique habitat of fairly open grassland and low bush, dotted with mature Sycamore fig trees. Other specials of the grasslands include Sooty Chat, Rufous-naped and Flappet Larks, and Croaking Cisticola. Nearby dense thickets and riverine vegetation are where we will search for the beautiful Red-throated Twinspot, Bearded Scrub Robin, Jameson's and Red-billed Firefinches and Green-winged Pytilia. A good deal of our time will also be spent birding the miombo woodlands, which Zambia is so famous for. Highlights of the miombo woodland in this area include the difficult Miombo Pied Barbet,



Racket-tailed Rollers by Clayton Burne

Racket-tailed Roller, Bennett's Woodpecker, Southern Hyliota, Grey Penduline Tit, White-winged Black and Miombo Tits, Broad-tailed Paradise Whydah, Orange-winged Pytilia, Black-eared Seedeater, Shelley's Sunbird and Cabanis's Bunting.



Miombo Pied Barbet by Daniel Danckwerts

Our birding will also take us to various wetlands which can be rather productive, typical species on show can often include the likes of Saddle-billed Stork, Glossy Ibis, Little Bittern, White-backed, Knob-billed and African Black Ducks, African Pygmy Goose, Collared Pratincole, Lesser Moorhen, Allen's Gallinule, African Wattled Lapwing, African Snipe and Malachite Kingfisher. If we are very fortunate, and depending on rainfall, we may even find the scarce Lesser Jacana together with a selection of rare crakes and flufftails including the mythical Streaky-breasted Flufftail and Striped Crake.

We will embark on at least one night excursion in the area in the hope of tracking down the remarkable Pennant-winged Nightjar, African Scops Owl and the tricky Three-banded and Bronze-winged Coursers.

Lower Zambezi Valley. We have time to explore the riparian thickets along the Mutulanganga and Mbendele Rivers; an Important Bird Area boasting on of Zambia's most impressive lists. Here we hope to see the rare Barred Long-tailed and African Emerald Cuckoos, Southern Crested Guineafowl, Crowned Eagle, Böhm's and Mottled Spinetails, African Broadbill, Sombre Greenbul, Eastern Nicator, Red-capped Robin-chat, Thrush Nightingale, River Warbler and the endearing Livingstone's Flycatcher.



African Pitta by Adam Riley

We also stand a chance at finding the inexplicably difficult but beautiful African Pitta, though we require very early morning starts in order to see this gorgeous species. We will also venture out by boat, either on Lake Kariba or on the Zambezi River, where we may find Saddle-billed and Yellow-billed Storks, Grey-headed Gull, the rare Ayres's Hawk-eagle, Black Heron, White-crowned Lapwing and (if we are extremely fortunate) Pel's Fishing Owl.

Lower Zambezi Valley to Forest Inn. We stand an excellent chance at finding Southern Crested Guineafowl and Augur Buzzard – two species with limited distributions in Zambia – before reaching the country's busting capital city of Lusaka en route to Forest Inn.

Forest Inn. This property is conveniently situated near the Great North Road (which was originally intended to run from



Anchieta's Sunbird by Daniel Danckwerts

Cape Town through to Cairo), and protects around 160 ha of healthy woodland brimming with miombo species. The tall, closed canopy woodland (which is characterised by trees belonging to the *Brachystegia* genus) is a great place to see Chestnut-backed Sparrow-weaver, Black-necked Eremomela and Böhm's Flycatcher. Both Yellow-bellied and Southern Hyliotas occur making this a great location to compare these similar species side by side. Several other excellent species that can be seen here include the enigmatic African Spotted Creeper, Rufous-bellied Tit, Souza's Shrike, Pale-billed Hornbill and Red-capped Crombec. Time spent here may also yield Miombo Scrub Robin, which can often be seen hopping about on the lawns, while Stierling's Wren-Warbler are regularly heard in the surrounding woodland.

Mutinondo Wilderness. This spectacular private reserve, perched above the Muchinga escarpment, is set in verdant woodland punctuated by monstrous whaleback granite domes. This reserve is covered with dambos (the local term for a seasonally inundated marsh or temporary wetland) and the now well-known miombo woodland. We'll start off birding the lodge grounds for rock-loving species such as Cinnamon-breasted Bunting, Striped Pipit, the recently described Western Miombo Sunbird, and Lazy Cisticola.

The beautiful broad-leaved forests hold an exceptional number of unique and highly desirable species, although bird densities are usually extremely low and much patience and persistence is required to locate the targets. It is worth noting that we will have numerous chances to locate the full suite of miombo woodland birds during the course of the tour.



Pale-billed Hornbill by Daniel Danckwerts

In the surrounding woodlands we hope to find the uncommon Thick-billed Cuckoo, Green-capped Eremomela, Cabanis's Bunting, Green-backed Woodpecker, Anchieta's Barbet, Scaly-throated Honeyguide, Green-backed Honeybird, Long-tailed Cisticola, scarce Souza's Shrike, nondescript Wood and Bushveld Pipits, Western Violet-backed, Anchieta's and Eastern Miombo Sunbirds, Reichard's Seedeater and Orange-winged Pytilia. Mutinondo is also one of the best areas to find the elusive Bar-winged Weaver; a strange species that creeps slowly in search of insects along moss-covered branches.

There is also an easily accessible patch of mushitu (gallery forest) on the property, which we will explore in search of the shy and secretive Bocage's Akalat, the noisy Grey-olive and Cabanis's Greenbuls, Laura's Woodland and Evergreen Forest Warblers, Black-throated Wattle-Eye, Green Twinspot, White-tailed Crested Flycatcher and the indescribable Ross's Turaco. The secondary growth and bracken briar supports both Moustached Grass Warbler and Marsh (Anchieta's) Tchagra, while stunted woodland nearby could deliver the incredible and always busy White-tailed Blue Flycatcher.



Bar-winged Weaver by Daniel Danckwerts

Some of our time will be devoted to the waterlogged grasslands in the southern part of the reserve. Here our quarry is the extremely secretive and little-known Chestnut-headed Flufftail; one of Africa's rarest and least-known birds. This species is notoriously difficult to pin down and we will have to be extremely lucky to obtain a sighting. A host of other specials are also possible and we have decent chances of finding sought-after species such as Blue Quail, Fan-tailed Grassbird, Stout Cisticola, Marsh Widowbird, Fawn-breasted Waxbill and the tricky Locustfinch. A good deal of walking, effort and perseverance will be required to get views of these marsh species, however if the conditions are good then so too are our chances of success.



Böhm's Bee-eater by David Hoddinott

Kasanka National Park. Kasanka is situated on the southern edge of the expansive Bangwelu Basin and provides access to a number of other key specials in a great selection of miombo, swamp and mushitu habitats. During our time here, we will prioritise any target species that we may have missed so far.

The miombo woodlands are worth checking for Racket-tailed Roller, Miombo Pied and Anchieta's Barbets, African Spotted Creeper, Miombo Rock-thrush, Miombo Scrub-robin, Black-necked Eremomela, White-tailed Blue and Böhm's Flycatchers, Trilling Cisticola, Black-eared Seedeater, the beautiful Anchieta's Sunbird and Cabanis's Bunting.

Secondary habitats nearer the swamp support Moustached Grass Warbler, Short-winged Cisticola, Black-bellied Seedcracker and Böhm's Bee-eater while the mushitus hosts Ross's Turaco, African Crowned Eagle, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Red-throated Twinspot, Grey Waxbill, Red-backed Mannikin, Black-backed Barbet, Purple-throated Cuckooshrike, Cabanis's Greenbul, Bocage's Akalat, African Thrush, Grey Apalis, and Green-headed Sunbird. Shoebill has also been seen on occasion, but we would have to be

exceptionally lucky to encounter this species here. Kasanka is also one of the best places on Earth to see the mythical Sitatunga – a rare swamp dwelling antelope – and we'll put in a concerted effort to find this incredible species.



Sitatunga bull by Daniel Danckwerts

Should our timing be right, we may also witness the incredible spectacle of the migration of an estimated 10 million African Straw-coloured Fruit Bats – one of Africa's best kept wildlife secrets and the greatest migration of land mammals anywhere on Earth.

Chisamba. Time permitting, we may be able to seach for Zambezi Indigobird and have further sightings of Chaplin's Barbet, Shelley's Francolin, Collared Palm Thrush or several species of vulture.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Moderate. Some very long travel days combined with several low-density target species. Not suitable for dedicated photographers; inexperienced birders; or anyone with mobility or health challenges.
Birding Ease		Moderate to demanding. Some species density is low, particularly in miombo woodland, forest birding present typical challenges.
Accommodation		Comfortable, some safari tented camps.
Walking / Trails		Restricted to vehicles in megafauna reserves. Roadside birding, lodge gardens, woodland trails, of trail & marsh/grassland walking.
Vehicles / Roads		Comfortable 4x4 vehicles. Sealed roads between major towns, dirt roads within most wildlife areas. Road conditions can be variable during the wet season. Sealed roads are generally heavily potholed. Heavy traffic on some main arterial roads. Several very long drives.
Photography		Worthwhile to good but limited by time constraints. No dedicated hides or feeders.
Annoyances		Can be bright & hot with humidity on the coast. Biting Tsetse fly may be encountered. One morning at high altitude (3 650m) in very cold conditions (freezing).

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.**

- It is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg (44lb) for check-in luggage and 8kg (18lb) for hand luggage.
- Some of the roads can vary considerably from season to season. We expect several roads to be potholed, which can lengthen our overall travel time between destinations. Some of the gravel roads can also deteriorate quite rapidly and can be in poor condition if they haven't been recently graded.
- Fitness: This Zambia tour does not require a high level of fitness, but participants should be in good general health as most of the birding will be done on foot and may require walking for several hours at a time.
- Some off-trail birding especially in the miombo woodlands may be required. Should you have any physical limitations, please notify us in advance.
- Accommodation throughout the trip is of a generally comfortable standard.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour begins in Livingstone in the early afternoon of day 1 with a visit to Victoria Fall's. The tour concludes in Lusaka in the mid-morning of day 16.

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.

Harry Mwanga Nkumbula International Airport, Livingstone (IATA: LVI) and Kenneth Kaunda International Airport, Lusaka (IATA: LUN) are the main ports of entry and exit for this tour.

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.

South Luangwa National Park Extension

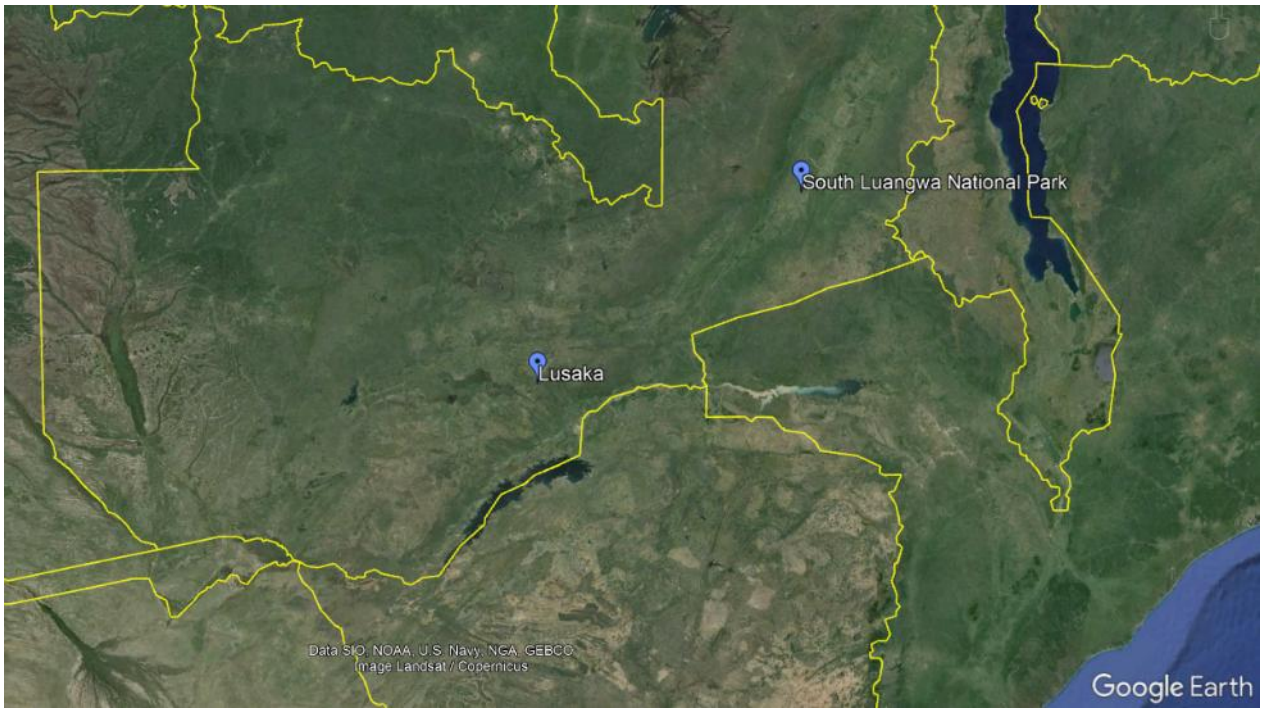


African Wild Dogs by Adam Riley

This short extension visits the teeming reserve of South Luangwa National Park in eastern Zambia, famous for its magnificent game diversity and incredibly rich birdlife. We will spend several nights in this magnificent park, working the network of roads, by means of a custom-designed open-back safari vehicle to locate as many of the mammals and birds that inhabit this vast wilderness. Should it tickle your fancy, Luangwa National Park also offers some of the best guided walking safaris in the world allowing a far more intimate safari experience with on-foot interactions with wild Arican Elephants and other megafauna.

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Lusaka**
Day 2	**Lusaka to South Luangwa National Park**
Days 3 & 4	**South Luangwa National Park**
Day 5	**South Luangwa National Park to Lusaka & final departure**



Birding sites in detail

South Luangwa National Park. This prolific reserve is one of Africa's greatest wildlife destinations, supporting 4 of the "Big 5" as well as one of the highest concentrations of Leopard anywhere in the world.



Leopard by David Hoddinott

Waking up and smelling the crisp, clean air is always a great sensation and, when awakening in the South Luangwa National Park, one simply cannot escape the sense of how very special this place is! Africa's most iconic big game animals, including African Elephant and Hippopotamus, are often in the vicinity of the lodge itself while many sought-after bird species form part of the daily dawn chorus. Thus, some of our time will be spent wandering through the lodge gardens but we also have two full days to explore the further reaches of this incredible reserve, by means of an open-back safari vehicle with the option of an additional guided walking safari, in search of the rarer targets.

Concerning the mammals, the two most abundant species in the park are the Impala and Puku though there are many rarer and much-more localised residents. This includes an endemic subspecies of each of the African (Thornicroft's) Giraffe, Blue (Cookson's) Wildebeest, and Plain's (Crawshay's) Zebra. Other key species we hope to encounter include the Common Bushbuck, Common Waterbuck, Eland, Greater Kudu, Common Reedbuck, (Lichtenstein's) Hartebeest, Sable Antelope, Roan Antelope, and the diminutive Sharpe's Grysbok. Hippopotamus and Crocodile are also extremely common in the Luangwa River, while massive herds of both African Buffalo and African Elephant are never far off. Luangwa also supports incredible predator populations including Lion, Leopard, Spotted Hyena and African Wild Dog.



Lilian's Lovebirds by Marius Coetzee

Bird diversity is also extremely high throughout the park, especially in the riverine woodlands along the banks of the Luangwa River. The delightful little Red-throated Twinspot is regular in these habitats, often even within the lodge grounds, together with the spectacular Broad-tailed Paradise-whydah, Livingstone's Flycatcher, White-tailed Blue Flycatcher, Orange-breasted Bushshrike, Tropical Boubou, Retz's and White-crested Helmetshrikes, and Meyer's Parrot. If we are extremely lucky, we may also hear the highly sought-after African Pitta or Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo – both summer visitors – though we would be extremely lucky to actually see either here. Mopane woodland is also well represented throughout the park and, although bird numbers are generally quite low, the mopane-specialist Lilian's Lovebird can often be heard screeching as they dash overhead. Large flocks of these jewel-like birds are also readily seen at drinking pools throughout the day! Meves's Starling and White-browed Sparrow-Weaver are conspicuous, Southern Ground

Hornbills are commonly seen patrolling, and the comical Southern Red-billed and African Grey Hornbills are an almost constant feature.

The Luangwa River itself is also known for its massive breeding colonies of Yellow-billed Stork, Southern Carmine, and White-fronted Bee-eaters and Horus Swifts. Many other birds are associated with the river including good numbers of African Skimmer, African Spoonbill and various kingfishers, ducks, lapwings, storks, herons, and egrets. Large flocks of the stately Grey Crowned Crane are also sometimes in attendance, dancing to each other in peculiar fashion. Finally, the massive trees overhanging the rivers' quiet backwaters are the haunts of the ever popular and desirable, while African Finfoot is sometimes seen skulking in the shadows.



Pel's Fishing Owl by David Hoddinott

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