Zambia

African Bird Club



Vermiculated Fishing Owl by Glen Valentine

This exciting new tour has been specially developed for the African Bird Club to seek out some of Zambia's rarest, most localised and seldom-seen birds, many of which rank among the most highly sought-after species anywhere in Africa. Travelling well beyond the country's traditional birding circuit, we will explore a wonderful diversity of habitats, from Congo Basin-influenced forests and vast dambos in the far north-west to rich miombo woodland, papyrus swamps, seasonal floodplains and the remote wetlands of northern Zambia. Along the way we will visit a remarkable collection of little-birded and seldom-visited sites, each offering the chance of something truly special.

We begin in the far north-west at Nyachisala, where some of the headline possibilities include the enigmatic Vermiculated Fishing Owl, Thrush Babbler, Spot-breasted Ibis, Fülleborn's and Grimwood's Longclaws, together with a superb selection of Central African forest birds. From here we explore the Chitunta Plain and Cryptosepalum forests around Mwinilunga, searching for such prizes as Bocage's Weaver, Margaret's Batis, and Bar-winged Weaver, before gradually working our way eastwards through a succession of productive miombo sites and on to Kasanka National Park.

The second half of the tour takes us into some of Zambia's most remote and exciting birding country. Around the Bangweulu floodplain and Luapula River Mouth we will target Katanga Masked Weaver and the highly distinctive Zambian population of Papyrus Yellow Warbler, before continuing north in search of the extremely localised White-winged Babbling Starling. Near the Tanzanian border, the Saise River gives us a rare opportunity to look for Tanzania Masked Weaver, while the Uningi Pans may produce Oustalet's Sunbird, Whyte's Barbet, Great Bittern and a host of other northern specials.

The optional extension adds two further outstanding destinations: Mutinondo Wilderness and the Chisamba area. At Mutinondo we will search for the exceptionally elusive Chestnut-headed Flufftail, together with a superb supporting cast of miombo and dambo specials, while Chisamba gives us an excellent chance to connect with Zambia's endemic Chaplin's Barbet and to mop up any remaining central Zambian targets.

With so many difficult and range-restricted birds on offer, and several sites that remain remarkably poorly explored ornithologically, there is a genuine sense of adventure throughout. We are tremendously excited to share this very different side of Zambia and to go in search of some of Africa's most elusive and rewarding birds.

Itinerary & Map

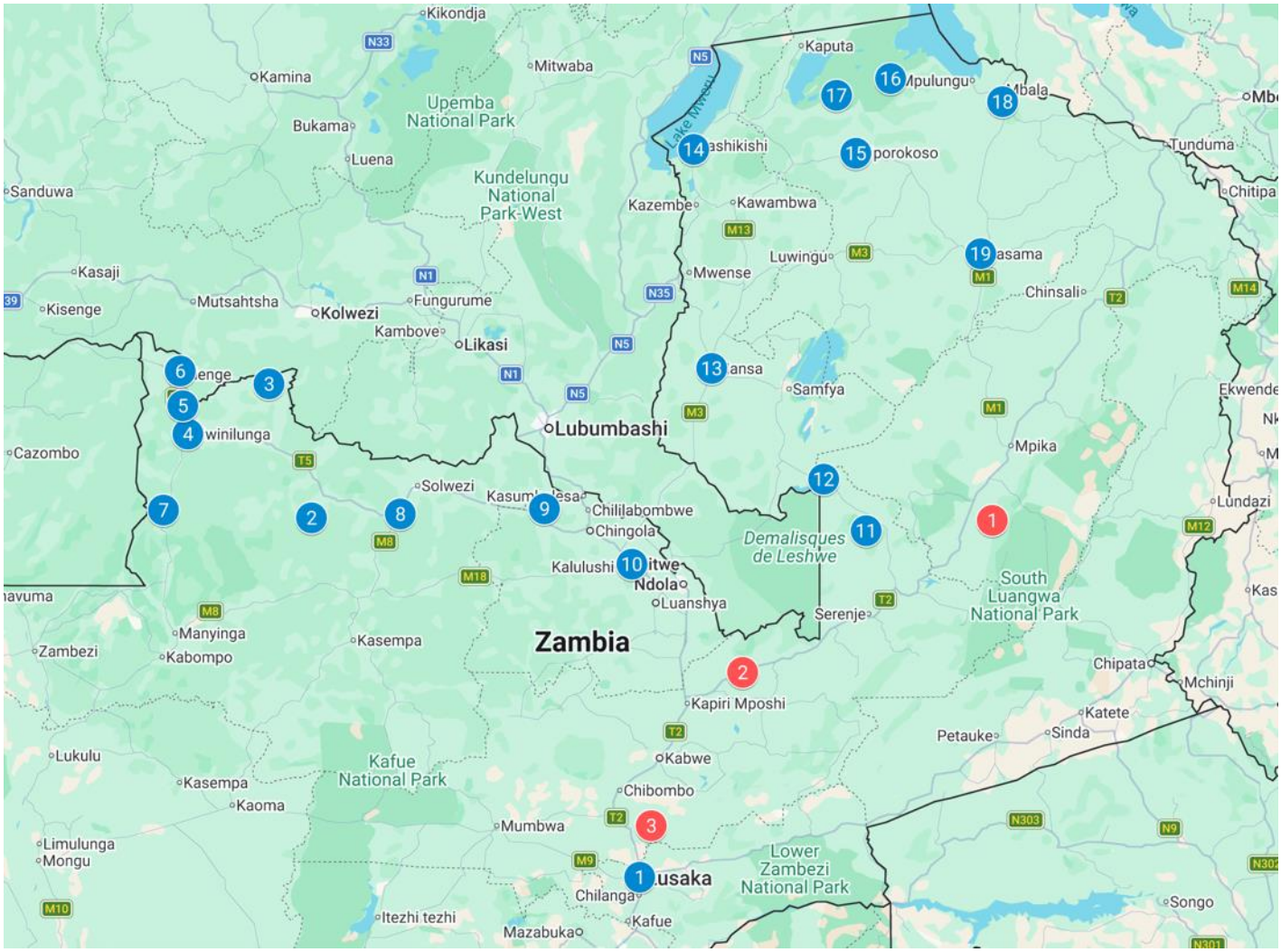
Main tour

Day 1	**Arrival in Lusaka. Fly to Kalumbila and transfer to Nyachisala Bushcamp**
Days 2 & 3	**Explore Nyachisala Forest and Plains**
Day 4	**Nyachisala to Mwinilunga, and visit the Chitunta Plain**
Day 5	**Explore the Cryptosepalum Forest, then continue to Mutanda**
Day 6	**Mutanda to Kitwe via Chimfunshi**
Day 7	**Kitwe to Kasanka via Mwekera Forest and North Swaka Forest Reserve**
Day 8	**Explore Kasanka National Park**
Day 9	**Kasanka National Park to Mansa via the Bangweulu Floodplain at Tuta Bridge**
Day 10	**Mansa to Nchelenge via the Luapula River Mouth**
Day 11	**Explore the Luapula River Mouth, then continue to Mporokoso**
Day 12	**Explore the Nusumbu and Nsama areas**
Day 13	**Full day trip to the Saise River area**
Day 14	**Uningi Pans, then drive to Kasama for afternoon flight to Lusaka. Final departures**

Extension

Day 1	**Full day exploration around Kasama**
Day 2	**Kasama to Mutinondo Wilderness**
Days 3 & 4	**Explore Mutinondo Wilderness**
Day 5	**Mutinondo to Chisamba**

Day 6	**Explore Chisamba**
Day 7	**Chisamba to Lusaka for final departures**



Zambia - African Bird Club - Main

Sequence of numbers

1. Lusaka
2. Kalumbila
3. Nyachisala Bushcamp
4. Mwinilunga
5. Chitunta Plain
6. Zambezi river source
7. Cryptosepalum Forest
8. Mutanda
9. Chimfunshi
10. Kitwe
11. Kasanka National Park
12. Tuta Bridge
13. Mansa
14. Nchelenge
15. Mporokoso
16. Nsumbu National Park
17. Nsama
18. UNINGI PANS
19. Kasama

Zambia - African Bird Club - Exten...

Sequence of numbers

1. Mutinondo Wilderness Lodge...
2. Forest Inn
3. Chisamba

Birding sites in detail

Nyachisala Forest. Situated on the very edge of the vast Congo Basin, Nyachisala protects a fascinating mosaic of lowland forest, miombo woodland, forest edge and open dambos. This is a relatively new birding site and, despite only recently receiving serious attention, it has already produced a remarkable series of discoveries, including several additions to the Zambian bird list. Given its position and the limited amount of ornithological exploration that has taken place here, there remains a very real possibility of further surprises.



Thrush-babbler by David Hoddinott

The forest itself supports an exciting suite of species with strong Central African affinities. Among the major prizes is the enigmatic Vermiculated Fishing Owl, a notoriously difficult and highly localised species that has remarkably even been seen from the camp itself on occasion. We will nevertheless make a concerted effort to locate it in suitable forested areas and along waterways. Other important targets include Spot-breasted Ibis which is usually seen flying overhead at dawn and dusk, the extremely skulking Thrush Babbler, and both the Afep and Western Bronze-naped Pigeons, while the canopy may also produce the spectacular Ross's and Schalow's Turacos. Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo is another highly desirable possibility, and damp forest margins and secluded wet patches may hold the secretive White-spotted Flufftail.

We will spend plenty of time working the quieter forest trails and edges, carefully checking mixed feeding flocks. Least and Pallid Honeyguides are both possible, together with Brown-eared Woodpecker. We'll listen for the ringing calls of the striking Red-bellied Paradise-flycatcher and Bamboo Warbler, and check flowering trees for the sought-after Bannerman's and Bates's Sunbirds. Many of these birds can be elusive and densities are often low, so patience and persistence will be required, but the potential rewards are considerable.



Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo by Adamn Riley

The surrounding dambos provide a very different set of targets and will also receive our attention. Depending on water levels and grass conditions, we will search these seasonally wet grasslands for Great Snipe and Blue Quail, while Dambo Cisticola and Black-collared Bulbul are further important possibilities. Particularly exciting are our chances for both Fülleborn's and Grimwood's Longclaws, two striking and highly localised grassland species that can be difficult to see elsewhere.



Fülleborn's Longclaw by Daniel Danckwerts

Nyachisala's location on the fringe of the Congo Basin, combined with its relatively recent emergence as a birding destination, gives the area a genuine sense of exploration. Few sites in Zambia currently offer the same combination of established specials, recent discoveries and the tantalising possibility that something entirely unexpected may yet be found.

Chitunta Plain. Lying near Mwinilunga in Zambia's far north-west, Chitunta Plain is an extensive area of open dambo and seasonally wet grassland surrounded by woodland. The broad, largely treeless plains provide a striking contrast to the forests of the region and support a specialised suite of grassland birds, many of which are highly localised and can be difficult to find elsewhere in the country.

We will spend our time working through the wetter and more intact sections of the plain, where conditions permitting we may encounter Great Snipe and Blue Quail, together with Dambo Cisticola and the distinctive Black-collared Bulbul. Both Fülleborn's and Grimwood's Longclaws are important targets here, while Angola Lark is another characteristic species of these open grasslands.

Chitunta is also an excellent area for several other highly desirable dambo birds. The tiny and often elusive Locustfinch is one of the more exciting possibilities, while Wing-snapping Cisticola occurs here as an isolated population, making this an especially interesting site for the species. Its distinctive aerial display can sometimes be the first indication of its presence as birds rise above the grassland. Black-and-Rufous Swallow is another notable target, often sweeping low over the plains and providing a welcome splash of colour against the open landscape.

Perhaps most intriguing is the possibility of Bocage's Weaver. This poorly known and highly localised species remains a particularly exciting prospect in the region, and any encounter would rank among the standout sightings of the tour. As with many birds of these seasonally inundated plains, occurrence can be strongly influenced by rainfall, water levels and grass condition, so patience and flexibility will be important.



Black-and-Rufous Swallow by Daniel Danckwerts

The openness and scale of Chitunta make birding here feel very different from the nearby forest sites. Much of the interest lies in slowly working the plains, watching for display flights, listening for inconspicuous calls and checking wetter depressions for movement. When conditions are favourable,



Four-coloured 'Perrin's' Bushshrike by Daniel Danckwerts

this can be an exceptionally rewarding site for some of north-western Zambia's most specialised and least frequently encountered grassland birds.

Source of the Zambezi. Time permitting, we will visit the Source of the Zambezi, where one of Africa's great rivers begins its extraordinary journey southwards towards the Indian Ocean. Aside from its geographical significance, the site protects a fine mixture of forest and open miombo woodland and offers another opportunity to search for several of the north-western specials that occur at Nyachisala.

The forest here supports many of the same species associated with the fringes of the Congo Basin, and our visit will largely be dictated by which targets we may still be missing by this stage of the tour. Possibilities include the Afep and Western Bronze-naped Pigeons, Ross's and Schalow's Turacos, Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, Grey-winged Robin-Chat, Red-tailed Bristlebill, Least and Pallid Honeyguides, Brown-eared Woodpecker, Red-bellied Paradise-flycatcher and both Bannerman's and Bates's Sunbirds. Although we will have better opportunities for many of these birds elsewhere, the Source of the Zambezi provides a useful additional chance to mop up any lingering forest targets.

The more open miombo woodland surrounding the source provides a contrasting selection of birds. Here we will keep an eye out for Black-necked Eremomela and Yellow-bellied Hyliota amongst the feeding flocks, along with a variety of other characteristic miombo species. If our visit extends towards dusk, the spectacular Pennant-winged Nightjar becomes a particularly exciting possibility, with displaying males in full breeding plumage ranking amongst the most memorable nightjars anywhere in Africa.

Cryptosepalum Forest. South of Mwinilunga we will explore one of Zambia's most distinctive and little-known forest types: Cryptosepalum forest, known locally as mavunda. Unlike the wetter forests associated with the edge of the Congo Basin, these are dry evergreen forests growing principally on deep, nutrient-poor Kalahari sands and dominated by *Cryptosepalum exfoliatum*. The result is an unusual habitat of dense, almost continuous canopy with a tangled understorey of shrubs, climbers and saplings, quite unlike the more familiar miombo woodland that covers so much of Zambia. Extensive Cryptosepalum forest is largely restricted to western Zambia and neighbouring parts of Angola and the Congo Basin region, making this a particularly interesting habitat in its own right.



African Broadbill by Daniel Danckwerts

The birding can be challenging, as much of the forest is extremely thick and difficult to penetrate, so our efforts will concentrate on roads, tracks and forest edges where we can



Black-faced Canary by Daniel Danckwerts

listen for calling birds and carefully work through activity in the canopy and mid-storey. Foremost amongst our targets are Black-fronted Bushshrike and the distinctive Perrin's race of Four-colored Bushshrike, both highly desirable birds of these forests. Margaret's Batis is another major prize and one of the signature species of the area, while we will also search for the unusual Bar-winged Weaver, a scarce and localised species that can be surprisingly difficult to pin down in the dense vegetation.

Cryptosepalum forest also occupies a special place in Zambian ornithological history. It was in this broader region that the so-called White-chested Tinkerbird (*Pogoniulus makawai*) was collected in 1964 and subsequently described as a species new to science. Despite repeated searches over many years, no second individual was ever confirmed and the taxon has since been discredited, with subsequent work indicating that the specimen was most likely an aberrant Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird rather than a valid species. Nevertheless, the story has become part of the ornithological folklore of north-western Zambia and adds another layer of intrigue to an already poorly known habitat.

Mutanda. Situated on the Mutanda River, the lodge at Mutanda Falls provides a very pleasant introduction to the birding of north-western Zambia and is particularly convenient as a stop en route to or from the Mwinilunga area. The lodge grounds extend along the river above the falls and rapids, with patches of lush mushitu forest and dense riverine vegetation creating excellent habitat for several difficult forest species. The site has become well known amongst visiting birders for offering relatively accessible chances at birds that can otherwise require considerably more effort elsewhere in the region.

Our main targets in the forest will include Bamboo Warbler, Bocage's Akalat and Cassin's Flycatcher. Bamboo Warbler is notoriously skulking and can be remarkably difficult to see unless calling, but Mutanda has proved to be one of the more reliable sites for this poorly known species. Bocage's Akalat inhabits the dense, shaded undergrowth and can be equally secretive, while Cassin's Flycatcher is closely associated with the river itself and is regularly encountered around the fast-flowing water and rapids.



Bamboo Warbler by Daniel Danckwerts

The mushitu and surrounding riverine growth can also produce a useful supporting cast of forest birds. Schalow's Turaco, Grey-olive Greenbul, Yellow-throated Leaflove, Black-throated Wattle-eye and Brown-headed Apalis have all been recorded around the lodge, while White-chinned Prinia, Moustached Grass Warbler and Black-faced Canary occur in more open or scrubby vegetation nearby. African Black Duck and



Bocage's Akalat by Daniel Danckwerts

Half-collared Kingfisher are further possibilities along the river, and Red-throated Cliff Swallows may be encountered around the nearby bridge.

Chimfunshi. Best known for its chimpanzee sanctuary, Chimfunshi also protects a substantial tract of natural habitat near the upper reaches of the Kafue River. Extensive miombo woodland is interspersed with dambos, wetlands and patches of mushitu forest, but our focus here will be firmly on the woodland, where we will spend time working through mature stands in search of a strong selection of characteristic miombo specials.

One of our principal targets will be Chestnut-backed Sparrow-weaver. Although Chimfunshi is a known site for this distinctive species, it occurs at low density and can require a considerable amount of searching. We will therefore put in a concerted effort, checking suitable mature woodland and listening carefully for any indication of birds moving through the canopy. This is exactly the sort of miombo target that can take time to pin down, but finding a group would be one of the more satisfying successes of our visit.

The surrounding woodland should also provide opportunities for a broader suite of sought-after species. Miombo Wren-Warbler, African Spotted Creeper, Souza's Shrike, Pale-billed Hornbill and Miombo Tit will all be important targets, while Black-necked Eremomela and Yellow-bellied Hyliota are further possibilities. As ever in miombo, much of the birding will revolve around locating mixed feeding parties and then carefully working through them for the scarcer species, with long quiet spells often punctuated by bursts of activity.

Mwekera Forest. Situated just outside Kitwe, Mwekera protects a remnant of miombo woodland and offers a useful opportunity to search for a number of characteristic Copperbelt specials. Although the forest has suffered considerable pressure from surrounding development and woodland exploitation, good patches of mature miombo remain and can still be very productive.

We will work through the woodland for species such as Racket-tailed Roller, Miombo Pied Barbet, Pale-billed Hornbill, Rufous-bellied Tit and White-breasted Cuckooshrike, while Schalow's Turaco and Böhm's Bee-eater are further possibilities.



Souza's Shrike by Daniel Danckwerts

North Swaka Forest Reserve. North of Mkushi lies the extensive and comparatively little-known North Swaka Forest Reserve, a vast area dominated by mature miombo woodland, with dambos at lower elevations and strips of denser forest following the headwaters and gorges of the Lunsemfwa system. The reserve rises considerably in places and includes rocky hills, streams and several impressive waterfalls, giving the area considerably more habitat diversity than its reputation as simply another miombo site might suggest.



Southern Hyliota by Clayton Burne

Our main focus will be the tall miombo, which can hold an excellent selection of the more difficult woodland specials. Bar-winged Weaver is particularly notable here and has been recorded in the reserve, while other possibilities include Chestnut-backed Sparrow-weaver, Miombo Pied Barbet, Black-necked Eremomela, Rufous-bellied and Miombo Tits, Yellow-bellied and Southern Hyliotas, Böhm's Flycatcher, Anchieta's Sunbird and both Wood and Bushveld Pipits. As elsewhere in miombo, locating a productive feeding flock can transform an otherwise quiet stretch of woodland into an extremely busy few minutes.

Kasanka National Park. Situated on the southern edge of the vast Bangweulu Basin, Kasanka National Park protects a remarkably varied mosaic of miombo woodland, dambos, papyrus-lined wetlands, riverine forest and dense mushitu. Although relatively small by Zambian standards, this diversity of habitats makes Kasanka an exceptionally productive birding destination and gives us access to a broad range of woodland, swamp and forest species within a compact area. By this stage of the tour we will also have a good idea of which targets remain outstanding, and our time here can be adjusted accordingly to concentrate on any important species that we may still be missing.

The extensive miombo woodland will receive plenty of attention and can support an excellent selection of characteristic specials. Racket-tailed Roller is one of the more striking possibilities, while Miombo Pied and Anchieta's Barbets, African Spotted Creeper, Miombo Rock-thrush, Miombo Scrub-robin and Trilling Cisticola are all important targets. Black-necked Eremomela, White-tailed Blue Flycatcher and Böhm's Flycatcher may occur in mixed feeding parties, while the more open woodland and edges can produce Black-eared Seedeater, the beautiful Anchieta's Sunbird and Cabanis's Bunting. As ever in miombo, bird activity can be highly localised, and much of our success will depend on locating a good feeding flock and then carefully working through everything accompanying it.

Closer to the wetlands, the bird community changes rapidly. Rank grass, reedbeds and secondary growth can support Moustached Grass Warbler and Short-winged Cisticola, while Black-bellied Seedcracker and Böhm's Bee-eater are further highly desirable possibilities. These transitional habitats can be particularly rewarding in the early morning, when many of the more skulking birds are at their most vocal and activity levels are at their highest.



Wattled Crane by Daniel Danckwerts

Kasanka's mushitu forests add yet another dimension to the birding. These dense evergreen forest patches can hold Ross's Turaco, African Crowned Eagle, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Black-backed Barbet and



Kasanka Bat Migration by Daniel Danckwerts

Purple-throated Cuckooshrike, while the understorey and forest edges may yield Cabanis's Greenbul, Bocage's Akalat, African Thrush and Grey Apalis. Red-throated Twinspot, Grey Waxbill and Red-backed Mannikin are all possibilities in suitable cover, and Green-headed Sunbird can occur around flowering trees and forest margins. Birding in the mushitu can be slow and patient work, but the quality of the species makes these patches particularly worthwhile.

The park's wetlands also hold the tantalising possibility of Shoebill. Kasanka is certainly not one of the more dependable sites for this extraordinary bird and any encounter would require a considerable degree of luck, but it has been recorded here, and we will remain alert to the possibility whenever we are in suitable swamp habitat.

Kasanka is equally famous for its mammals, and one of our principal non-avian targets will be the mythical Sitatunga. This shy, swamp-dwelling antelope is notoriously difficult to see across much of its range, but Kasanka is one of the best places anywhere in Africa to search for it. We will spend time scanning the edges of the wetlands and marshy clearings in the hope of finding one of these remarkable animals moving quietly through the papyrus and reedbeds.

Should our timing coincide with the annual fruit-bat gathering, Kasanka can deliver one of Africa's most extraordinary wildlife spectacles. Millions of African Straw-coloured Fruit Bats converge on a tiny area of mushitu forest, and at dusk the sky can fill with bats leaving their roosts to feed across the surrounding countryside. The sheer scale of the event is difficult to comprehend and represents the largest known mammal migration by numbers on Earth. Even on a tour primarily focused on birds, witnessing this immense movement of wildlife would rank among the most memorable experiences of the journey.



Katanga Masked Weaver by Daniel Danckwerts

Bangweulu Floodplain at Tuta Bridge. At the south-western edge of the immense Bangweulu wetland system, Tuta Bridge gives us access to broad seasonally flooded grasslands, reedbeds and the Luapula River. Our principal target here will be the highly localised Katanga Masked Weaver, a species with a very restricted global range centred on north-eastern Zambia and adjacent parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The



Lechwe by Daniel Danckwerts

reedbeds and wetland vegetation around the bridge provide one of the better-known places in Zambia to search for it.

The surrounding floodplain can also be very rewarding. Blue-breasted Bee-eater, Wattled Crane, Luapula Cisticola and the spectacular Long-tailed Widowbird are all possible, along with a broad assortment of waterbirds and other grassland species. The open plains are also an excellent place to see Black Lechwe, one of the characteristic mammals of the Bangweulu system, and we should have good opportunities to watch these striking antelope out on the floodplain.

Shoebill is very much a long-shot possibility rather than a realistic target here. Radio-tracking studies have shown that birds from the wider Bangweulu population do move into this part of the wetland system, so we will certainly keep an eye on the more distant marshes and floodplain. Nevertheless, the chances of encountering one at Tuta Bridge are low, and any sighting would be a considerable bonus.

Luapula River Mouth. Where the Luapula River enters Lake Mweru, extensive papyrus swamps and channels create one of Zambia's most specialised wetland birding sites. Our main target here will be the highly localised Zambian race of Papyrus Yellow Warbler, (*Calamonastides gracilirostris bensoni*), which is restricted to the papyrus swamps around the mouth of the Luapula. This population is particularly distinctive, including its striking pale eye, and has long been regarded as a potentially interesting taxon that may warrant separate status in future.

Finding these birds can require patience, as they often remain deep within the papyrus and may only reveal themselves briefly when calling or moving between stems. We will therefore spend time carefully working the accessible swamp edges and listening for activity from within the dense vegetation. Another important target will be White-winged Swamp Warbler, a scarce and very localised Zambian bird that also occurs in these papyrus wetlands and is similarly adept at remaining hidden in thick cover.



White-winged Swamp Warbler by Glen Valentiune

The swamp supports a useful supporting cast as well, with possibilities including Great Swamp Warbler, African Rail, Anchieta's Tchagra and Katanga Masked Weaver. However, it is the exceptionally restricted Papyrus Yellow Warbler population that gives the Luapula River Mouth its particular significance. Few places on the itinerary offer such a geographically concentrated target, making this an important stop for one of Zambia's most distinctive and intriguing wetland birds.



Chestnut-backed Sparrow-weaver by Daniel Danckwerts

Nsumbu and Nsama Areas. Our time in Zambia's far north will take us through the Nsama and Nsumbu region, an attractive and comparatively little-birded area of extensive miombo woodland, wooded escarpments and, nearer Lake Tanganyika, increasingly rugged country. Much of our birding will be done from the roads, stopping wherever promising woodland or feeding activity warrants closer attention.

Our principal target will be the highly localised White-winged Babbling Starling, which occurs in Zambia only in a restricted part of the far north and is known from the escarpment country around Nsama. This distinctive and much sought-after species will be a major focus of our time here. Chestnut-backed Sparrow-weaver is another important possibility, and the extensive miombo should also provide further chances for a broad selection of woodland specials that we may still require by this stage of the tour.

Depending on the rains and the condition of the access roads, we may also be able to venture into Nsumbu National Park on the southern shores of Lake Tanganyika. The park encompasses more than 2,000 km² of rugged hills, valleys, woodland, thicket and wetlands and supports an impressive recovering large-mammal community. Sable and Roan are both present, while the extensive wetlands also hold the shy Sitatunga.

Access during the rains can, however, be extremely difficult, with sections of the terrestrial park becoming effectively inaccessible once flooding and tall grass set in. We will therefore treat a visit to Nsumbu itself as a bonus rather than an essential part of the itinerary. More likely, we will devote our time to productive roadside birding around Nsama and the approaches to the park, concentrating on White-winged Babbling Starling, Chestnut-backed Sparrow-weaver and whatever other miombo specials the northern woodlands may produce.

Saise River. Close to the Tanzanian border, the Saise River and its associated wetlands form another highly localised birding site in Zambia's far north. The river flows eastwards towards Tanzania and ultimately into the Lake Rukwa system, and its marshes, floodplain vegetation and surrounding woodland support a number of species that are far more widespread across the border than they are in Zambia.



Bar-winged Weaver by Daniel Danckwerts

Our principal target will be Tanzania Masked Weaver, a very scarce and range-restricted Zambian bird associated with swampy wetlands in this extreme north-eastern corner of the country. Saise is one of the key sites for the species, and we will concentrate on suitable reedbeds and marsh vegetation along the river in the hope of locating feeding or nesting birds.



Tanzania Masked Weaver by David Hoddinott

The wider area can also produce an excellent assortment of northern specials, including Bare-faced Go-away-bird, Spot-flanked Barbet, Chirping Cisticola, Hartlaub's Babbler, Brown Firefinch and Fülleborn's Longclaw, together with a good variety of wetland birds such as Black Crake, Lesser Jacana and African Jacana. Several species occur only marginally in this region of Zambia, giving the birding here a distinctly East African flavour.

Uningi Pans. The remote Uningi Pans in Zambia's far north-east comprise a series of shallow seasonal wetlands, damp grasslands and surrounding woodland, and offer one of the more unusual birding stops on the itinerary. Their isolation and proximity to the Tanzanian highlands give the area a distinctly northern flavour, with several scarce or highly localised species occurring here at the edge of their Zambian range.

One of our key targets will be Oustalet's Sunbird, a particularly desirable species with a very restricted distribution in Zambia. We will also search the surrounding woodland and wooded margins for Whyte's Barbet and the distinctive *sharpii* race of Baglafecht Weaver, another very localised form that is seldom encountered elsewhere in the country.

The pans and wet grasslands themselves can be exceptionally productive when conditions are favourable. Great Bittern is a major prize and one of the more difficult birds we could hope to encounter here, while Rufous-bellied Heron is another excellent wetland special. We will also work suitable flooded grassland and damp margins for Great Snipe and Blue Quail, both of which can be highly seasonal and dependent on water levels and grass condition.



Oustalet's Sunbird by Markus Lilje

As with many of Zambia's seasonal wetlands, the quality of the birding at Uningi can vary considerably with the rains. When the pans are holding water and the surrounding grasslands are in good condition, however, the site can deliver an exceptional combination of scarce wetland birds and highly localised northern specials, making it a particularly exciting final addition to our time in this remote corner of the country.

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



Eastern Miombo Sunbird by Daniel Danckwerts

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.

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.

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.



Bohm's Flycatcher by Daniel Danckwerts

Forest Inn. This property is conveniently situated near the Great North Road (which was originally intended to run from Cape Town through to Cairo), and protects around 160 ha of healthy woodland brimming with



Chaplin's Barbet by Daniel Danckwerts

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.

Chisamba. We will have a full day to explore the Chisamba area, which will serve as an important clean-up location for any central Zambian targets that may still be outstanding. The landscape here is a varied mixture of open farmland, grassland, dambos, scattered miombo and palm-dotted country, allowing us to shift our focus between habitats depending on what we still need by this stage of the tour.



Red-throated Twinspot by Daniel Danckwerts

Our principal target will be Chaplin's Barbet, one of Zambia's two endemic birds. This distinctive species is closely associated with open woodland and farmland containing mature fig trees, and we will spend time checking suitable areas for feeding or calling birds. Chisamba offers an excellent opportunity to obtain further views of this highly sought-after endemic and to appreciate the specialised habitat on which it depends.

Beyond the barbet, our birding will be deliberately flexible. If miombo targets

remain outstanding, we can concentrate on suitable woodland, while nearby dambos provide another chance for a range of wet-grassland species. Shelley's Francolin, Collared Palm Thrush and Zambezi Indigobird are all possibilities, and the open agricultural country can also be productive for vultures and other large raptors.

With a full day available, Chisamba gives us valuable flexibility near the end of the tour. Rather than chasing a fixed list, we will use the area strategically, concentrating on whichever miombo, dambo or open-country specials remain unresolved while keeping Chaplin's Barbet firmly at the top of the agenda.



Racket-tailed Roller by Daniel Danckwerts

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

The price for the **14-day main tour of Zambia** is broken down as follows:

US$9,395.00 for each of **four guests** on a twin/sharing basis throughout;

US$8,895.00 for each of **five guests** on a twin/sharing basis throughout;

US$8,595.00 for each of **six guests** on a twin/sharing basis throughout;

Single supplement: TBC

Internal flight costs: US$1,060.00 per person

The price for the **7-day extension** is broken down as follows:

US$3,995.00 for each of **four guests** on a twin/sharing basis throughout;

US$3,795.00 for each of **five guests** on a twin/sharing basis throughout;

US$3,695.00 for each of **six guests** on a twin/sharing basis throughout;

Single supplement: TBC

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 14 of the main tour;
- All meals from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 7 of the extension;
- All lodgings;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services;
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services; &
- A US$300 donation per booking to the African Bird Club for the main tour;
- A US$200 donation per booking to the African Bird Club for the Extension;

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- 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.**

- 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 main tour begins in Lusaka on Day 1. Guests will arrive at Kenneth Kaunda International Airport before taking an internal flight to Kalumbila, followed by a road transfer to Nyachisala Bushcamp. The main tour concludes on Day 14 with an afternoon flight from Kasama to Lusaka, after which guests will make their final departures.

Guests joining the extension will remain in Kasama following the main tour and begin the extension with a full day of exploration around Kasama. The extension concludes on Day 7 with a transfer from Chisamba to Lusaka for final departures.

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.

Kenneth Kaunda International Airport, Lusaka (IATA: LUN) is the main international port of entry and exit for this tour. The required internal flights, including Lusaka to Kalumbila and Kasama to Lusaka for guests completing the main tour, will be booked on guests' behalf by Rockjumper. Guests joining the extension will continue overland from Kasama and return to Lusaka at the end of the extension.

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.