

3 weeks Uganda Bird Watching Tour

Overview

This tour will give a chance to see up to **600 bird species** and over **50 Mammal species**, including **elephants, zebras, lions, leopard, cheetah, hippo, crocodile** etc. The tour covers a multitude of habitats from lush rain-forests, wild savannas, dry acacia forests, to wetlands; some with papyrus reed beds and others with open water - the case of Lake **Opeta** which is a renowned location of Uganda's only endemic bird; the **Fox's Weaver**.

Key sites

EBG, Mabamba, Lake Mburo National Park, Bwindi Impenetrable Gorilla National Park, Queen Elizabeth National Park, Semliki Valley National Park, Nyakasula Hills, Kibale Chimpanzee Forest National Park, Budongo Forest National Park, Murchison Falls National Park, Kidepo Valley National Park, Lake Opeta, Mabira Forest.

Important to know

This tour **can be booked by solo travelers**.

This group tour requires a **maximum of 12 people**.

Rates are **per person** and **exclude the international flight** from/to your home country.

Days for this trip can be customized according to your needs.

Included in price

Park fees (entrances, all park activities including boat trips),

All other activities (unless labeled as optional)

Meals (as specified in the day-by-day section)

All accommodation as listed

Roundtrip airport transfer

A professional driver/guide

All ground transportation

All Taxes including VAT

Excluded

International flights (from/to home)

Tips (tipping guideline US\$10.00 pp per day)

Personal items (souvenirs, travel insurance, visa fees, etc.)

Some extra meals (as specified in the day-by-day)

Drinks (alcoholic and any other soft beverages like sodas)

Itinerary details

Day 1: Arrivals at the Airport

Arrivals on this day; meet your driver and transfer to your nearby hotel in Entebbe for refreshment, dinner and overnight stay. Early arrivals will give a chance to bird the nearby Entebbe Botanical Gardens (EBG). EBG is a beautiful place situated on the northern shores of Lake Victoria, filled with colourful **butterflies**, birds and primates in an area of 40.7 ha. The gardens house a collection of species of plants of the tropical, sub-tropical and temperate zones, besides several shrubs and other plants which regenerated naturally over the years. The habitat has attracted a diverse array of birds – **206 species** (both forest and shorebirds) and monkeys; **Black and White Colobus and Vervet Monkeys**. The bird walk here is more leisurely and relaxed with an introduction to some Afro tropical species of birds. It may take 1 – 2 hours.

Main destination: Entebbe International Airport

Accommodation: or other located in or near Entebbe Airport

Meals & drinks: Breakfast & dinner (Lunch not included) Drinks not included

Day 2: Mabamba Wetland and Lake Mburo onwards

We start early, check out our hotel and drive to Mabamba. Main focus today is **Shoebill**. While at the swamp, we shall aboard a canoe riding through a channel of lagoons into the marsh. We look out for the **shoebill**. Besides the shoebill, there is a selection of common wetland species that we are likely to encounter here including, **Lesser Jacana, African Jacana, Papyrus Gonolek, White-Winged Warbler, Gull-Billed Terns, White-Winged Black Terns, Whiskered Terns, Common Moorhen, Swamp Flycatcher, Goliath and Purple Herons, Spur-Winged and Pygmy Geese, African Snipe, Blue-Headed Coucal, Carruther's Cisticola, Northern Brown-Throated Weavers, Winding Cisticola, White-Faced Whistling Ducks** etc. Boat may take about 2 hours. We shall be here till late morning hours; we continue to L. Mburo National Park stopping over at the Equator for Lunch.

Accommodation: rwakobo rock or eagles nest 2 nights

Meals & drinks: All meals included Drinks not included

Day 3: Birding in the park

Morning bird walk in the woods for 2 hours, afternoon boat rides (for 1.5 – 2 hours) and spend the rest of the day on a game drive – birding in the vehicle. L. Mbuuro is the only wooded savannah only NP in Uganda where tourists enjoy freely grazing with wildlife on foot! Most sought-after species here include **tabora cisticola**, **red-faced barbet**, possibilities of the rare **Crested Barbet** which are only known in the remote north-eastern Tanzania, Rwanda and here, **brown-chested lapwing**, **chinspot batis** etc. The boat ride merits for specials like the **white-backed and black-crowned night herons**, **rufous-bellied heron**, **African Finfoot**, **African darter**, **water thicknee**, **kingfishers** etc. You will also encounter pools of **hippos**, **crocodiles**, and **buffalos**. Birding here is a delightful experience, with beautiful scenery and a markedly different fauna from other reserves. This is a great place to see game animals such as **Eland**, **Zebra**, **Topi**, **Impala**, and acacia-associated birds

Day 4: Transfer to Bwindi Impenetrable Forest - Ruhijja Sector

Today, we shall check out our lodge, have an early morning breakfast and drive slowly as we bird on the way to the Ruhijja section of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. We may have lunch in Mbarara or Kabale depending on our pace and later continue to Ruhijja. Early arrivals will give a chance to bird along the main road. Our first encounter with the Albertine **Rift Endemics** begins here. Bwindi is generally at a higher altitude and therefore is cooler. Temperatures range between 10-18°C. Forest birding at Bwindi ranks the best in Uganda and Africa as well. It is home to 23 highly localized **Albertine Rift Endemics**.

Main destination: Bwindi Impenetrable National Park

Accommodation: Bakiga Lodge for 2 nights

Meals & drinks: All meals included Drinks not included

Day 5: Birding in Ruhijja – community road trail. For those who are fit enough can do the mubwindi swamp (optional)

After breakfast, we shall carry our picnic lunch and head for a whole day birding following the famous trail through the forest up to Mubwindi Swamp. The 4km trail to Mubwindi Swamp drops from 2350m to 2050m ASL and is the best place for some of the most difficult to find of all the **Albertine Rift Endemics** including; the rare and localized **Grauer's Rush Warbler**, **African Green Broadbill**, the beautiful **Regal Sunbird**, and **Archer's Robin Chat**. Mubwindi Swamp trail is home to **Dwarf Honeyguide**, **Stripe-breasted Tit**, **Rwenzori Apalis** and **African / Rwenzori Hill Babbler**, and **Carruthers' Cisticola**. Most of these species can equally be seen along the community road trail. Other key species here include **Fraser's Eagle-Owl**, **Purple-breasted Sunbird**, **Blue-headed Sunbird**, **Eastern Mountain-Greenbul**, **Strange Weaver**, **Black-headed Waxbill**, **Bar-tailed Trogon**, **White-headed Wood-hoopoe**, **Waller's Starling**, **Stuhlmann's Starling**, **Ludher's Bush-shrike**, **Handsome Francolin**, **Montane Oriole** and **Montane Nightjar**.

**Day 6: Ruhijja 'NECK' birding and transfer to Buhoma sector of Bwindi impenetrable National park.
Optional Gorilla tracking in the morning for "only those who are physically fit"**

We shall travel to Buhoma sector of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park while birding on the way – we do the popular "NECK" birding in the morning. The neck is a relatively narrow stretch separating the two sections of the Bwindi Impenetrable forest. It is characterized by riverine forest vegetation. Trekking up the hillside to view a family of gorillas nestled in casual, frolicking play is a fascinating, once-in-a-lifetime experience. Some of the species we are likely to see here include; **Mountain Wagtail, Red-tailed and Shelley's Greenbul, Cassin's Flycatcher, Black Duck, Banded Prinia, Grey-throated Barbet, Common Buzzard, Black-billed Turaco, Fine-banded Woodpecker, Dwarf Honeyguide, Red-tailed Greenbul, Black Bee-eater and Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Many-coloured Bush-shrike, Ayres's Hawk-eagle, Bronze-naped Pigeon, Honeyguide Greenbul, Red-throated Alethe, Gray Apalis, African Shrike-flycatcher, Red-headed Malimbe, Dusky Twinspot** etc. Today we shall carry picnic lunch. We arrive at Buhoma late this afternoon. Dinner at Buhoma Haven Lodge

Accommodation: Haven Lodge 1night

Meals & drinks: All meals included Drinks not included

Day 7: Birding in the forest in the morning for 2-3hours and later transfer to Queen Elizabeth NP – Ishasha sector

For the others we start birdwatching early after breakfast, carry picnic lunch and begin a whole day birding along the main trail at Buhoma. Key species here in the forest include **Black-faced Rufous Warbler, Black-faced Apalis, Black-throated Apalis, Mountain Masked Apalis, Red-throated Alethe, Yellow-eyed Black Flycatcher, Ashy Flycatcher, Dusky-blue Flycatcher, Chapin's Flycatcher, Chin-spot Batis, Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher, Dusky Tit, Blue-throated Brown Sunbird, Northern Double-collared Sunbird, Sooty Boubou, and Pink-footed Puffback.**

Accommodation: Ishasha Jungle Lodge or other

Meals & drinks: All meals included Drinks not included

Day 8: Birding in the Park.

Birding here is in the vehicle. This sector is famous for the lions that climb up in the trees. Some likely encounters include **red-collared, white-winged widow birds, white-headed barbets, and stout cisticola.** We shall be here for half day, and later drive to the northern sector of the park for a boat ride along the Kazinga Channel. Kazinga Channel is a narrow neck of water body connecting lakes Edward and George. Our Kazinga Channel launch cruise is the most luxurious in the region; plying these waters with comfort, elegance and attentive service, affording superb wildlife viewing from your observation deck, is far much re-assuring!

Main destination: Queen Elizabeth National Park

Accommodation: Twin lakes Safari Lodge of other for 2 nights

Meals & drinks: All meals included Drinks not included

Day 9: Birding in Queen Elizabeth National Park

Start early this morning after breakfast. We do a birding drive in the Savannah area for the whole morning; and in the afternoon, we may drive through another section of the park or do a community birding experience. Following one of the numerous trails in the park on a game / birding drive will produce interesting sightings of such species such as **Harlequin Quail, Blue Quail, Small (Common) Buttonquail, African Crake, Martial Eagle, Stout Cisticola, Black-crowned Tchagra, Trilling Cisticola, Speckle-breasted woodpecker, African Skimmer, Verreaux's Eagle-Owl, Pallid and Montagu's Harriers, African crane, marsh tchagra, black coucal** etc.

Day 10: Travel to Fort - Portal while birding on the way

After an early morning breakfast we check out lodge and travel to Fort-Portal. This afternoon we spend some time birding along the craters in Fort-Portal Nyakasura Hills. The hills are famous for the **singing cisticola**. Along Lake **Kigere**, we look out for the **Great-crested Grebe, little grebe, Giant Kingfisher** etc.

Accommodation: Mountains of the Moon Hotel for 2 nights

Meals & drinks: Lunch & dinner (Breakfast not included) Drinks not included

Day 11: Birding in Semliki National Park along the famous Kirumia trail

We drive for about 1.5 hrs to the park. Semliki forest is one of the richest for lowland forest birds in Uganda and marks the eastern extension of the great Ituri Forest. A large number of Guinea-Congo biome species reach their eastern limits here. We shall start at dawn after an early breakfast and set off with our packed lunch. We spend 2 – 3 hours birding along the Kirumia trail. Key species include **Red-billed, Black-wattled, Black-billed and White-crested Hornbills, African Piculet, Zenkel Honey-guide, Black-chested Cuckoo, Red-rumped Tinkerbird, Rufous-sided Broadbill, Nkurengu Rail, White-bellied, Dwarf, and Pygmy Kingfishers, Piping, White-thighed, and African Pied Hornbills, Fire-crested Alethe, Red-bellied and Blue-billed Malimbe, Swamp Palm Bulbul, Lowland Akalat, Forest Scrub Robin, Green-tailed Bristlebill, Leaf Love, Chestnut-breasted Negrofinches, Black-winged Oriole**, etc.

Day 12: Birding to Kibale Forest National park

We start early after an early morning breakfast, check out the hotel, and bird to Kibale forest. Focus species is the **Green-breasted Pitta**. This afternoon we may choose bird in the Bigodi Papyrus Swamp or do Chimp tracking in the forest. Bigodi Wetland Sanctuary is a community owned and managed nature reserve. A 4km trail has been created in the wetland adjacent to the forest. The habitat here consists of a swamp surrounded by low, scrubby secondary forest and cultivation. Key species include among others; **White-spotted flufftail, Green-backed Twinspot, Cabanis's and Joyful Greenbuls, Scaly-**

breasted Illadopsis, Olive-green Camaroptera, White-collared oliveback, white-winged warbler, white-chinned Prinia, Blue-shouldered Robinchat, Lesser honeyguide, Uganda Spotted and speckle-breasted Woodpeckers, White-tailed Ant-thrush, Red-capped Robin Chat, Rufous Flycatcher-Thrush, Great Sparrow-hawk, Red-headed Bluebill, and Luidher's Bush Shrike.

Accommodation: Kibale Forest Camp

Meals & drinks: All meals included Drinks not included

Day 13: Travel to Masindi Town

We wake up this morning; have breakfast and set off for the Budongo area. This is another long journey on a dirt road that may take the whole day with chances of birding on the way. Stopovers will be done at strategic points to provide opportunities for birding, stretching legs and enjoying our picnic lunch. Arrival in Masindi will be late this evening.

Main destination: Masindi

Accommodation: Masindi Hotel for 2nights

Meals & drinks: All meals included Drinks not included

Day 14: Birding in Budongo Forest Reserve along the celebrated "Royal Mile"

We shall have an early morning breakfast and drive to one of "Uganda's bird watching hotspots", the Royal Mile. This is the Uganda's historically known leisure spot for the traditional King of Bunyoro, hence the name "Royal". This forest comprises of very huge mahogany trees. Key species include; **African dwarf and Chocolate-backed kingfisher, Yellow and grey Long bills, Olive-bellied Crombec, Brown-eared Woodpecker, Crowned Eagle, Forest Flycatcher, Yellow-browed Camaropera, African Emerald Cuckoo, Yellow-mantled Weaver, yellow-browed Camaroptera, Green Crombec, Crested and Red-headed Malimbe, red-headed bluebill, White-thighed hornbill, Yellow-spotted and Yellow-billed Barbets, Sabine's and Cassin's Spinetail.**

Day 15: Birding in Murchison Falls National Park

This day we shall have an early morning breakfast, check out the lodge and transfer to Murchison Falls National Park as we bird on the way through the park up to the top of the falls. This afternoon, we shall do a launch cruise along the Nile River up to the bottom of the falls – 3hours. This is Uganda's largest National Conservation area and it is famous for its big game, spectacular scenery and the falls for which the park was named. Abundant **Hippos, Crocodiles, Elephant, Buffalo, Uganda Kob and Waterbuck** can be seen along with occasional **Lions, Leopard and Patas Monkeys.**

Accommodation: Pakuba Lodge for 2nights

Meals & drinks: All meals included, Drinks not included

Day 16: Birding the northern sector of Murchison Falls National Park

Birding the Northern bank of the park for the whole morning in the vehicle. We may choose to do another drive in the afternoon. Amongst a huge variety of widespread African bird species in the wetlands and various dry savanna and open woodland habitats are more special birds: **Stanley's Bustard, Saddle-billed Stork, Rock Pratincole, Little Sparrowhawk, Bruce's Green-Pigeon, Red-necked Falcon, Senegal Thick-knee, Long-toed Plover, Blue-headed Coucal, White-crested Turaco, Heuglin's Francolin, & Abyssinian Ground Horn bill.**

Optional Trip Extension

Optional: Day 17: Travel to Kidepo Valley National Park

We start early after breakfast, check out here and embark on a rather long, teeth-jeering journey to the remote Karamoja area. Nestled in the extreme northeastern corner of Uganda, bordering with Sudan and Kenya, Kidepo Valley National Park is Uganda's wildest and most spectacular conservation area. We shall have lunch in Soroti town and continue driving on the rough roads all the way to park.

Main destination: Kidepo Valley National Park

Accommodation: Savanah Lodge for 2 nights

Meals & drinks: All meals included Drinks not included

Day 18: Game drive / birding in Kidepo Valley NP

The park is famed for protecting remarkable wildlife that is not represented in any other Ugandan protected area. Much of the flora and fauna in the park is typical of northern Kenya. The birdlife is rich with a recorded bird list of 468. There over 60 bird species listed here and have not been recorded in any other Ugandan National Park. The park is outstanding for its birds of prey. Of 58 species recorded 14 are believed to be endemic to the region. Among those are **Verreaux's eagle, Egyptian vulture, lesser Kestrel and pygmy falcon.** Other interesting species include birds like the **karamoja apalis, kori bustard, red-billed hornbill, yellow-billed and Jackson's hornbill, heuglin's weaver, cut-throat finch, sand grouses etc.** Various and unique antelopes like **greater kudu, lesser kudu, Guenther's dik-dik and mountain reedbeek** are found nowhere else in Uganda. Primates like the localized **Patas monkeys** are abundant and five species have been recorded.

Day 19: Travel to Soroti

We shall check out Kidepo and drive to Soroti with some limited birding on the way. This is such a very long journey that may take most of our time in the day. The route we shall take will entirely depend on reliable information about the nature of the road.

Main destination: Soroti

Accommodation: Hursey Resort

Meals & drinks: All meals included Drinks not included

Day 20: Birding in Opeta the whole morning

Today we shall start early, have breakfast and drive to Lake **Opeta**. We shall take a canoe - - depending on reliable information from our local site guides. The special trip today is to look for Uganda's only endemic, **the Fox's Weaver**. Other species that may be of interest include; **the Knob-billed Coot, lesser Jacana, Northern Brown-throated weaver, occasional shoebill, papyrus canary, white-winged warbler, papyrus gonolek, carruther's cisticola, purple swamphen**

Later travel to Jinja – stay at the Haven Lodge

Day 21: Morning birding in Mabira Forest Reserve for a couple of hours and afternoon transfer to Entebbe Airport for your flight

This is the only semi-deciduous tropical rainforest remaining in central Uganda protecting a big chunk of the lowland forest species. The forest is just 25km from Jinja Town. Key species here include among others **Nahan's francolin, Cassin's hawk eagle, Green tailed bristlebill, Grey longbill, Leaf love, Paradise flycatcher, Sooty boubou, sooty flycatcher, yellow-breasted, buff-throated and black-throated Apalis, Purple-throated cuckoo shrike, Red-headed bluebill, black-bellied seedcracker, speckle –breasted woodpecker, African blue Flycatcher and Grey-crowned Negrofinch, Forest Robin, Snowy-headed Robin-Chat, Grey-capped warbler, Black-and-white Flycatcher, Dusky Tit, common Wattle Eye, African emerald cuckoo, olive green camaroptera, tit hylia, western-violet backed sunbird, black and white shrike flycatcher, dusky blue flycatcher, Jameson's wattle-eye, hairy-breasted barbet, dusky long-tailed and red-chested cuckoo, yellowbill, blue-shouldered robinchat etc.**

Main destination: Entebbe

Accommodation: End of tour (*no accommodation*)

Meals & drinks: Breakfast & lunch (Dinner not included) Drinks not included

End of tour