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Uganda Birding Safari

14 DAY/ 13 NIGHT SAFARI

OVERVIEW

Uganda must be one of Africa's best birding destinations and offers fantastic birding, scenery and wildlife. This wonderful birding safari takes you through the Mabamba wetland, Kibale National Park, Queen Elizabeth National Park and Bwindi Impenetrable National Park which is listed as the number one birding spot on the African continent. Other famous birding sites featured in the itinerary include Lake Mburo National Park, Budongo Forest Reserve, Semliki Valley National Park and Murchison Falls National Park. This birding safari tour is structured for an ultimate birding experience featuring wetland, forested and savannah ecosystems. Shoebill, Green-breasted Pitta and Red faced Barbet are just some of the star birds likely to be encountered on this safari.

DAILY SUMMARY

DAY 1	Arrive in Uganda – Entebbe International Airport and transfer to the Hotel
DAY 2	Mabamba Swamp and transfer to Masindi
DAY 3	Birding along the Royal Mile and the top of Murchison Falls
DAY 4	Private birding boat ride to the Delta Area, birding in the Savannah & transfer to Masindi via Kaniyo Pabidi Forest
DAY 5	Transfer to Kibale National Park & afternoon birding in the forest
DAY 6	Full day birding in Kibale National Park. (Optional afternoon Chimpanzee trekking in Kibale National Park)
DAY 7	Semliki National Park and return to Fort Portal
DAY 8	Transfer to Queen Elizabeth National Park, birding in the savannah and evening private boat ride along Kazinga Channel
DAY 9	Transfer to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. Bird en route in Ishasha sector with the chance of spotting tree climbing lions. Evening birding along the park boundaries
DAY 10	Birding in Buhoma Sector (Optional Mountain Gorilla trekking in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park)

DAY 11	Birding to Ruhija via Neck
DAY 12	Birding in the hilly forested landscapes of Ruhija and extension to Umubwindi Swamp
DAY 13	Transfer to Lake Mbuho National Park and birding in the savannah
DAY 14	Private birding boat ride on Lake Mbuho and transfer to Entebbe for flight departure

DETAILED DAILY ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrive in Uganda – Entebbe International Airport and transfer to the Hotel

On arrival at Entebbe International Airport you will be met by our company representative who will warmly welcome and transfer you to your Hotel.

🏠 Accommodation: The Boma Hotel Entebbe (Bed & Breakfast)

DAY 2: Mabamba Swamp and transfer to Masindi

After breakfast, we will embark on the birding journey to Mabamba swamp, a large wetland on the shores of Lake Victoria in the west of Kampala. The magical offering of this destination is the endangered Shoebill, Uganda's most famous avian resident. The canoe paddle along the narrow channels of the swamp will give you chances of sighting other bird species like: Lesser Jacana, Black-winged Kite, Blue Swallow, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, White-winged Warbler, Papyrus Gonolek, Carruther's Cisticola, Swamp Flycatcher, Papyrus Gonolek, Malachite and Pied Kingfishers as well as several species of herons, egrets and waterfowl. We will stop for lunch and then transfer to Masindi town where we will relax, have dinner and stay overnight at our lodge.

🏠 Accommodation: Kabalega Resort (Full Board)

DAY 3: Birding along the Royal Mile and the top of Murchison Falls

After an early breakfast, transfer to the adjacent Budongo forest for amazing bird encounters. Budongo Forest is the largest natural forest area in East Africa. We will take a walk along "The Royal Mile", a premier forest birding road that lies under a lush forest canopy. The forest offers opportunities of spotting birds like Nahan's Francolin, White-thighed Hornbill, Sabine's and Cassin's Spinetails, Blue-throated Roller, Forest Flycatcher, Yellow-browed Camaroptera, Chestnut-capped Flycatcher, Lemon-bellied Crombec, Ituri Batis, Tit Hylia, Forest Robin, Uganda Woodland Warbler, Grey-throated, Yellow-billed,

Yellow-spotted and Hairy-breasted Barbets, Black-billed and Great Blue Turaco, Plain, Spotted, Slender-billed, Little Grey, White-throated and Little Greenbul, Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo, Black-capped Apalis and Red-tailed Bristlebill among other species.

Primate species that may also be spotted are Black-and-white colobus monkeys, Red tailed and blue monkeys. After our walk, we will drive towards the top of the falls where the Nile River displays its beauty. Here the Nile is transformed into explosive foam of thunderous wide water-funnels shaped through a narrow cleft in the Rift valley escarpment offering the most inspiring sight of its kind in east Africa. Here you have chances of viewing birds like the Pel's Fishing-Owl and the Red-winged Grey Warbler. After a wonderful day of birding, we transfer to the lodge for relaxation, dinner and our overnight stay.

🏠 Accommodation: Murchison River Lodge – thatched Safari tents (Full Board)

DAY 4: Private birding boat ride to the Delta Area, birding in the Savannah & transfer to Masindi via Kaniyo Pabidi Forest

The mixed habitats of Uganda's largest park, Murchison Falls National Park, are the perfect environment for a variety of birds, with 451 species recorded within the Park. The list includes the Shoebill, the Goliath Heron – the largest heron in the world and pairs of elegant Grey Crowned Cranes – the national bird of Uganda. Other species seen on the Nile banks include: Swamp Flycatcher, Blue-headed Coucal, Squacco Heron, Sandpipers, African Jacana, Denham's Bustard, Black-billed Barbet, Abyssinian Ground-Hornbill, Black-headed Gonolek, Eastern Grey Plantain-eater, Weaver Birds, Pied, Giant and Malachite Kingfishers, Piapiac, Silverbird, White-browed Sparrow-Weaver, Red-throated Bee-eater, African Quail-Finch and Speckle-fronted Weaver. The birding in Murchison Falls National Park commences with an early morning boat ride to the Delta Area. This offers another opportunity of exploring the rare species like the Shoebill. This will be followed by extensive birding drives both in the mid-morning and in the evening with possibilities of spotting a range of wild game like Elephants, Rothschild giraffes, Buffaloes, the Jackson's Hartebeest, the Oribi, Uganda Kob, Lions, and Leopards among others. We will then cross with the 4pm ferry and transfer to Masindi. A stop will be made in Kaniyo Pabidi forest en route to look out for the Puvell's Illadopsis.

🏠 Accommodation: Kabalega Resort (Full Board)

DAY 5: Transfer to Kibale National Park & afternoon birding in the forest

After breakfast, we transfer to Kibale National Park. We will be birding en route across low lying water logged environments in Kagadi and Kagorro forest reserve near Kyenjonjo. Upon arriving in Fort Portal Area, we will stop for lunch and proceed to Kibale Forest National Park for afternoon birding. Kibale National Park offers great flora concentration with 351 Species of trees some of which are 200 years old and over 55m tall. The park also supports 70 species of mammals and 13 species of Primates among which include the

common chimpanzee, Black-and-white colobus and Red-tailed monkey. The 375 Species of birds thriving in the park include the impressive Western Green Tinker bird, two species of pittas (African and green-breasted), Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, African Grey Parrot and the endemic ground thrush (*Turdus kibalensis*). Another great birding day comes to an end and we transfer to the lodge to relax, enjoy dinner and stay overnight.

🏠 **Accommodation: Kibale Forest Camp –En suite Safari Tent (Full Board)**

DAY 6: Full day birding in Kibale National Park.

(Optional afternoon Chimpanzee trekking in Kibale National Park)

This day is designed to enable you to explore the birds of Kibale Forest National Park. Birders have a chance of spotting the Green-breasted Pitta along with other species like Afep Pigeon, Crowned Eagle, Red-chested Owlet, White-naped Pigeon, Black Bee-eater, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Western Nicator, Little Greenbul, Blue-breasted Kingfisher, Brown-chested Alethe, African Grey Parrot, Brown Illadopsis, Scaly-breasted Illadopsis, Black-capped Apalis, Collared Apalis, Dusky Crimsonwing, Blue-headed Sunbird, Purple-breasted Sunbird, Red-faced Woodland Warbler, Little Greenbul, Abyssinian Ground-Thrush and Black-eared Ground-Thrush.

Kibale National Park is also known as the Primate capital of the world and presents an amazing opportunity for guests to engage in optional Chimpanzee trekking in the afternoon. Briefing starts at 2pm after which you head to the forest in search of these amazing apes. Upon encountering the chimps, you have an opportunity to see them munch fruit, hunt, patrol, young ones playing, make pant hooting calls among other interesting aspects for one full hour.

After the Chimpanzee trekking we will drive to Fort Portal to relax, enjoy dinner and overnight at the hotel.

🏠 **Accommodation: Mountains of the Moon Hotel (Full Board)**

DAY 7: Semliki National Park and return to Fort Portal

After an early breakfast embark on the transfer to Semliki Forest National Park (about 1 ½ -2 hours' drive). The forest tract of Semliki is an extension of West African jungle that stretches from Equatorial Guinea through Congo forming a habitat for Guinea Congo biome species that do not exist in other areas of East Africa. The encounter in Semliki offers you chances of spotting specialties like Congo Serpent Eagle, Yellow-throated Cuckoo, Bate's Nightjar, Orange-tufted Sunbird, Rufous-sided and Black-winged Broadbills, Black-throated Coucal, Icterine Greenbul, Nkulengu Rail, Spot-breasted Ibis, Long-tailed Hawk, Capuchin Babbler, Northern Bearded Scrub-Robin, Yellow-throated and Western Nicator, Red-chested Owlet, Black-collared Lovebird, Western Bronze-naped Pigeon, Red-rumped Tinkerbird, White-bellied Kingfisher, Zenker's and Lyre-tailed Honey guides, White-throated Blue Swallow,

Crested Malimbe, Swamp Palm Bulbul, Blue-billed Malimbe, Chestnut Bellied and Pale-fronted Negrofinch, Fiery-breasted Bush-shrike, Piping, Black Dwarf, Red-billed Dwarf, White Crested, African Piculet among other bird species. Return back to the hotel for dinner and our overnight stay.

🏠 **Accommodation: Mountains of the Moon Hotel (Full Board)**

DAY 8: Transfer to Queen Elizabeth National Park, birding in the savannah and evening private boat ride along Kazinga Channel

Early morning we will depart for Queen Elizabeth National Park, where we will bird in the savannah and Kazinga Channel exploring some of its 600 bird species including Temminck's Courser, Rupell's Griffon, Martial Eagle, White Headed, Lappet Faced Vultures, Blue Quail, Harlequin Quail, Small (Common) Buttonquail, African Crane, African Skimmer, Black Headed Gonolek, Verreaux's Eagle-Owl, Amur Falcon, Lowland Akalat, Ovambo Sparrowhawk, Greater and Lesser Flamingo among others. The sights of wildlife like Elephants, Buffaloes, Lions, Leopard and Antelopes among others may not be missed. We will embark on a private boat ride at Kazinga Channel at 4pm.

🏠 **Accommodation: Bush Lodge – Bandas (Full Board)**

**DAY 9: Transfer to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. Bird en route in Ishasha sector with the chance of spotting tree climbing lions.
Evening birding along the park boundaries**

After breakfast, we will drive to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. The Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is home to approximately 340 of the world population of 780 Mountain Gorillas. This vast reserve offers arguably some of the most productive montane forest birding in Africa and supports 23 of Uganda's 24 Albertine Rift endemic bird species. We will pass through the landscapes of Ishasha in the south of Queen Elizabeth where by chance you can encounter the tree climbing lions that dwell in the fig trees of Ishasha. We will join a day drive in Ishasha where we have an opportunity to explore the savannah bird species in this sector including the Palm-nut Vulture, Hooded Vulture, African White-backed Vulture, Ruppell's Griffon Vulture, Lappet-faced Vulture, Brown Snake Eagle, Wahlberg's Eagle, Bateleur, Long-created Eagle, Martial Eagle, African Crowned Eagle, Grey Kestrel, Helmeted Guineafowl, African Crane, Black-bellied Bustard, African Wattled Plover, Senegal Plover, African Green Pigeon, Ross's Turaco, Striped Kingfisher, Broad-billed Roller, Double-toothed Barbet, White-headed Barbet, Greater Honeyguide, Grey Woodpecker, White-browed Robin-Chat, Brown-backed Scrub-Robin, Green Crombec, Cisticolas, Grey-backed Fiscal and Yellow-billed Oxpecker. The evening will be spent birding along the Bwindi forest boundaries. Return to lodge for relaxation, dinner and our overnight stay.

🏠 **Accommodation: The Haven Lodge Buhoma (Full Board)**

DAY 10: Birding in Buhoma Sector

(Optional Mountain Gorilla trekking in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park)

In the morning after an early breakfast, we will bird in the forest following the waterfall trail. We will search for birds such as Slender-billed Starling, Kivu Ground-Thrush, White-bellied Robin-Chat, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Mountain Buzzard, Mackinnon's Fiscal, Sooty Boubou, Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo, African Hill-Babbler, Ayre's Hawk-eagle, Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher, Dusky Tit, Ashy Flycatcher, Chin-spot Batis, Rwenzori Batis, Dusky-blue Flycatcher and Doherty's Bush-shrike amongst others.

For those interested in optional Mountain Gorilla trekking, gather at Buhoma Park Headquarters for briefing from the park rangers about the gorilla trekking activity. After the short briefing, you will embark on the challenging trek through the impenetrable jungle of Bwindi with its rugged landscape involving valleys, swamps, steep slopes and rocky areas amidst amazing jungle sounds and bird songs which is an attraction in its self. You will finally come across these endangered apes thriving in their ancient habitat foraging or socializing. You will marvel at the gorillas as they welcome you, interact and finally say goodbye when your one hour with them is used up to minimize stress on these endangered species. The activity ranges between 2 – 8 hours.

🏠 **Accommodation: The Haven Lodge Buhoma (Full Board)**

DAY 11: Birding to Ruhija via Neck

Early morning after breakfast we will go birding in the Ruhija area and look out for birds like the Grey-throated Barbet, Red-tailed and Shelley's Greenbul, Common Buzzard, Red-throated Alethe, African Shrike-flycatcher Ayres's Hawk-Eagle, Black Bee-eater and Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater to mention but a few. Transfer to our lodge for dinner and overnight stay.

🏠 **Accommodation: Gorilla Mist Camp (Full Board)**

DAY 12: Birding in the hilly forested landscapes of Ruhija and extension to Umubwindi Swamp

Ruhija sector of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is a true birders' paradise with great bird counts per square Kilometer. The hilly forested landscapes of Ruhija offers sights of birds like Mackinnon's Fiscal, Augar Buzzard, Tropical Boubou, Ayre's Hawk-Eagle, Cassin's Grey Flycatcher, Mountain Buzzard and Wagtail, Western Bronze-naped Pigeon, Barred and Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo, Black-faced Rufous Warbler, White-headed Wood-hoopoe, Ducky Tit, Ludhur's and Lagden's Bush-Shrike, Grey Cuckoo-Shrike, Grey-Green Bush-Shrike, White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher, Chestnut Throated Apalis, Streaky Seedeater, White-starred Robin, Stripe-breasted Tit amongst others. The extension to Umubwindi swamp offers other

impressive birding opportunities including the possibility of spotting the beautiful African Green Broadbill, Olive, Elliot's and Fine-banded Woodpecker, Black-billed Turaco, African Hill-Babbler, Yellow-eyed Black Flycatcher, Mountain Illadopsis, Mountain Greenbul, Red-faced Woodland, Grey Cuckoo-shrike, Chestnut-throated, Collard and Black-throated Apalis, Mountain Yellow Warbler, Stripe-breasted Tit, Mountain, Shelley's and Yellow-streaked Greenbul, Regal Sunbird and Rwenzori Batis among other bird species.

🏠 **Accommodation: Gorilla Mist Camp (Full Board)**

DAY 13: Transfer to Lake Mbuo National Park and birding in the savannah

After breakfast, we will drive to Lake Mbuo National Park (235km). We will pass through the scenic hill sides of south western Uganda, lunch at the lodge and afternoon birding in the savannah. The afternoon birding offers you a chance of spotting a range of acacia associated birds including the Mbuo's endemic Red-faced Barbet and the unique Tabora Cisticola amongst others. The park is also home to Burchell's Zebra, Rothschild giraffe, the Topis, Eland, Waterbuck, Buffalo, Impala and Warthog amongst other species

🏠 **Accommodation: Rwakobo Rock (Full Board)**

DAY 14: Private birding boat ride on Lake Mbuo and transfer to Entebbe for flight departure

Our early morning private boat ride on Lake Mbuo will increase our chances of viewing African Finfoot, a range of Kingfishers and the African Fish Eagle. We will slowly bird through the park as we drive to Entebbe for the flight departure back home. For those with late night flights, a day room in Entebbe can be arranged.

Thank you for choosing Nature Travel Birding.

SAFARI INCLUSIONS

- Full Board Accommodation on Safari
- Transportation in 4X4 Safari Land Cruiser (7 Seater) all with Pop up roof & AC
- Fuel
- A professional English Speaking driver/ bird guide. Any other foreign language speaking guide can be arranged on request at an extra cost
- Entrance fees to the tourist sites including Protected areas mentioned
- Activity fees of the tourist activities mentioned
- Two Bottles (500ml) of Drinking water per person per day while on safari
- Airport Transfers
- Bed & Breakfast Accommodation in Entebbe at the beginning of the safari

SAFARI EXCLUSIONS

- Gorilla Permit Bwindi (\$600pp – subject to change)
- Chimp permit Kibale (\$150pp – subject to change)
- General tips for the driver guide, site guides and service staff at the lodges
- Laundry Services
- Meals at Entebbe Accommodation
- Other Beverages / drinks of personal nature like alcoholic drinks
- International Flights (Flights to arrive and depart from Entebbe International Airport - EBB)
- Domestic Flights
- Visas
- Optional Activity fees
- Other extras not mentioned in the Itinerary