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Zambia Birding Safari

11 DAY/ 12 NIGHT SAFARI

OVERVIEW

This wonderful 11 Day birding trip through Western Zambia will start in Livingstone, home of the Victoria Falls, where we will look for the localised Black-cheeked Lovebird, make our way north via the bird rich Choma area for the Zambian Barbet and then a full 5 days in the remote Mwinilunga District where we focus on the Congo-Guinean Forest specials difficult to find elsewhere on the continent. This is one birding trip that is tailor-made for the adventurous birder.

DAILY SUMMARY

DAY 1	Livingstone and the Zambezi River
DAY 2	Black-cheeked Lovebirds
DAY 3 &4	Masuku Lodge and the Nkanga River Conservancy
DAY 5	Off to Solwezi
DAY 6-10	Mwinilunga
DAY 11	Departure

DETAILED DAILY ITINERARY

DAY 1: Livingstone and the Zambezi River

On arrival at Livingstone International Airport you will be transferred to Waterberry Lodge situated about 20km outside of town on the banks of the mighty Zambezi River. After settling in and relaxing after your long flight we will start birding with an afternoon boat cruise on the Zambezi River. Our main target species here include African Finfoot, Bat Hawk, African Skimmer, Rock Pratincole, Half-collared Kingfisher and general Zambezi birds that include Southern Carmine Bee-eater (one of 5 possible Bee-eaters), Giant, Pied, Malachite and Brown-hooded Kingfishers, African Emerald Cuckoo, Tropical Boubou, Terrestrial Brownbul, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, Rufous-bellied Heron, African Openbill, Yellow-billed Stork, Green-backed Heron, Black-crowned Night-heron with White-backed Night-heron a distinct possibility. African Wood-owl is resident around the lodge.

🏠 Accommodation: Waterberry Lodge

DAY 2: Black-cheeked Lovebirds

We will be up very early and after a cup of coffee we will be on the road further west and then northwards into the isolated Muchile Important Bird Area which is the main stronghold for the much localised Black-cheeked Lovebird, one of the most sought after specials in Africa. Besides this very special bird we will look for Acacia specials that is difficult to find elsewhere in Zambia like Meve's Starling, Red-billed Buffalo Weaver, Black-cheeked Waxbill, Violet-eared Waxbill, Scaly-feathered Finch, Three-banded Courser, Dickenson's Kestrel, Burnt-necked Eremomela, Southern and Northern Grey-headed Sparrow, Marico Flycatcher, Shaft-tailed Whydah, Crimson-breasted Shrike and Acacia Pied Barbet.

We will take both a packed breakfast and lunch with us as we do not know how long we need to search for the lovebirds. By mid-afternoon we hope to be back in Livingstone where if time allows we will stop for coffee or tea at Taita Falcon Lodge where we might see Mocking Cliff-chat, Red-winged Starling, Verreaux's Eagle, Augur Buzzard, Cinnamon-breasted Bunting, Striped Pipit and possibly Taita Falcon. From here we have another couple of hours to drive to the beautiful Masuku Lodge where we will spend the next three nights.

🏠 Accommodation: Masuku Lodge

DAY 3 & 4: Masuku Lodge and the Nkanga River Conservancy

We will spend the next two days birding in the Nkanga River Conservancy with a variety of birding habitats. A birding walk around the lodge can produce Arnott's Chat, Red-throated Twinspot, Lesser Blue-eared Starling, Cabanis's Bunting, Orange-winged Pytilia, Yellow-throated Petronia, African Paradise Flycatcher, Broad-billed Roller and a number of Sunbird species that include Copper, Marico, Scarlet-chested, Purple-banded, Amethyst, Collared and White-bellied. We will do a mixture of birding walks and drives to ensure that we spend enough time in each of the birding habitats.

This conservancy is best known for seeing the Zambian or Chaplin's Barbet, a Zambian endemic. These beautiful Barbets frequent the Sycamore Fig Trees where they compete with Black-collared Barbets. This area is also good for Sooty Chat and a variety of raptors that include Martial, Tawny, Crowned and Long-crested Eagles, Black-chested and Brown Snake-eagles, Black Sparrowhawk, African Goshawk, African Hawk-eagle, Ovambo, Gabar and Little Sparrowhawk. The Miombo Woodland is home to Racket-tailed Roller, White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike, Miombo Pied Barbet, Spotted Creeper, Yellow-bellied and Southern Hylia.

 **Accommodation: Masuku Lodge**

DAY 5 : Off to Solwezi

After breakfast we will be in the vehicles making our way northwards towards Lusaka, Zambia's Capital City where we will catch a connecting flight to Solwezi. Here we will get our new vehicle and make our way out of town to Mutanda Bridge Lodge where we will spend the night preparing for the next 5 exciting days in the Mwinilunga area, one of Zambia's and South/Central Africa most exciting birding areas. Mwinilunga does have a real central African flavour when it comes to the birding and forms part of the Congo-Guinean Forest zone. If time allows we will be birding around the lodge looking for Black-backed Barbet, Black-faced Canary, African Finfoot, Red-throated Cliff-swallow, Emerald-spotted Wood-dove and Half-collared Kingfisher.

 **Accommodation: Mutanda Bridge Lodge near Solwezi**

DAY 6-10: Mwinilunga

After an early breakfast and scanning the bridge for Red-throated Cliff-swallow and other swifts and swallows we will make our way to Mwinilunga Town and from there the last 60km to Cassin's Camp. This will be our base for the next 5 days and with a stunning setting on the West Lunga River I cannot imagine a better place from where to explore the area. The camp derives its name from the normally elusive Cassin's Flycatcher which is regularly seen flying up and down the river in front of camp. We will explore the Forest patches called Mushitu, Dambo's and Miombo Woodland around camp and do various

day trips to brilliant birding destinations like the Chitunda Plain, The Source of the Zambezi and Hillwood farm further north.

The Mwinilunga area is best known for the accessible Congo-Guinean forest areas and the big number of birding specials that can be found in the forest areas. Some of the best forest areas can be found along the banks of the West Lunga River in front of camp and in and around camp we should see Ross's and Schalow's Turaco, Afep Pigeon, Shining Blue and Blue-breasted Kingfisher, African Broadbill, Blue Malkoha, Honeyguide, Little and Cabanis's Greenbul, Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, Bate's Sunbird, Yellow-throated Leaf-love, Golden and Green-winged Pytilia, Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird, Laura's Woodland Warbler, Bamboo Warbler, Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike, African Finfoot, Black Duck, Fulleborn's Longclaw, Least Honeyguide, African Thrush, Short-winged Cisticola, Black Saw-wing, Bohm's Spinetail and the resident pair of African Wood-owls.

We will spend time exploring Mushitu forest for Grey-winged Robin-chat, Fraser's Rufous Ant-thrush, Blue Malkoha, Buff-throated and Grey Apalis, Blue-spotted Wood-dove, Tambourine Dove, Red-tailed Bristlebill, Laura's Woodland Warbler, Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, Red-bellied Paradise-flycatcher, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher, Honeyguide Greenbul, Bannerman's Sunbird, Bate's Sunbird, Western Bronze-naped Pigeon, Afep Pigeon, African Thrush, Narina Trogon, African Broadbill, African Crowned Eagle, Brown-eared Woodpecker. Exciting Mushitu birds like Sooty Flycatcher, Shrike Flycatcher, White-bellied Kingfisher, Chestnut Wattle-eye and Spotted Thrush Babbler are distinct possibilities. New species for the area are found on every trip which makes this the perfect destination for the adventurous birder.

We will spend time in the Dambo's where we hope to find Anchieta's Tchagra, Marsh Widowbird, Yellow-mantled Widowbird, Fawn-breasted Waxbill, Locustfinch, Black Coucal, Red-chested Flufftail, Grimwood's, Rosy-throated and Fulleborn's Longclaw, Dambo Cisticola, Black-collared Bulbul, Moustached Grass-warbler, Broad-tailed Warbler, African Grass Owl, Marsh Owl, Great Snipe, Red-headed Quelea and Swamp Nightjar. We will definitely visit the huge Chitunda Plain (best known Dambo in the area) for the species mentioned above as well as Black-chinned Quailfinch, Angola Lark, Stout Cisticola, Short-tailed, Pearl-breasted Swallow, Red-throated Cliff-swallow, Black-rumped Buttonquail, Blue Quail, Angola Swallow and the stunning Black and Rufous Swallow. The highlight and main reason we do the trip this time of the year is to find the localised breeding Bocage's Weaver.

With the extensive Miombo Woodland in the area we will search for Bar-winged Weaver, Spotted Creeper, Black-necked Eremomela, Miombo Double-collared, Anchieta's, Western Violet-backed, Orange-tufted, Purple-banded, Scarlet-chested, Copper and Amethyst Sunbirds, Red-capped Crombec, White-breasted and Black Cuckoo-shrike, Anchieta's Barbet, Souza's Shrike, Rufous-bellied Tit, Pale Wren-warbler, Miombo Scrub-robin, Whistling and Trilling Cisticola, Bohm's Flycatcher and White-chinned Prinia is also found not far from camp.

🏠 Accommodation: Cassin's Camp

DAY 11: Departure

After breakfast we will slowly make our way back to Solwezi, birding along the way, where we will catch our connecting flight to Lusaka for your International flight home or we then continue to Kasanka and the famous Shoebill Island where we will look for one of Africa's most sought after birds, the Shoebill Stork. Please let us know if you are interested in this 3-4 day extension.

Thank you for choosing Nature Travel Birding.