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Kenya Birding Safari with optional extension

14 DAY/ 13 NIGHT SAFARI

OVERVIEW

Kenya offers some of the best birding in Africa with over a 1000 species recorded and this 14 day safari covers a diversity of habitats. We will visit Nairobi National Park, Mount Kenya, Samburu Game Reserve, Aberdare National Park, Lake Nakuru and Baringo as well as the famous Kakamega Forest. No Kenya safari will be complete without a visit to the famous Maasai Mara where besides seeing a huge number of birds we will also have the opportunity for game viewing. We have an optional 6 day extension to visit Eastern and Coastal Kenya where we will visit and bird Tsavo National Park, Sokoke Forest and the coast.

DAILY SUMMARY

DAY 1	Arrival in Kenya and birding around hotel
DAY 2	Nairobi National Park
DAY 3	Mount Kenya
DAY 4	Mount Kenya and Samburu Game Reserve
DAY 5	Full day in Samburu Game Reserve
DAY 6	Samburu Game Reserve and off to Aberdare National Park
DAY 7	Aberdare National Park and Lake Nakuru
DAY 8	Lake Nakuru National Park
DAY 9	Lake Baringo
DAY 10	Off to Kakamega Forest
DAY 11	Kakamega Forest
DAY 12	Off to the Maasai Mara
DAY 13	Full day exploring Maasai Mara

DAY 14	Final birding and off to Nairobi
DAY 15	Start of extension: Tsavo National Park
DAY 16	Tsavo National Park
DAY 17	Sabaki River Mouth and Coastal birding
DAY 18	Sokoki Forest
DAY 19	Sokoki Forest
DAY 20	Final birding and off to Nairobi

DETAILED DAILY ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrival in Kenya and birding around hotel

After meeting you at the airport you will be transferred to your hotel for a tour briefing and if time allows we will do some late afternoon birding around the hotel.

🏠 **Accommodation: Summerdale Inn**

DAY 2: Nairobi National Park

After breakfast, we will embark on a full day exploration of Nairobi National Park. The park offers the possibility of seeing the following species: Olivaceous Warbler and Willow Warbler, African Water Rail, Wood Sandpiper, Great Egret, Red-backed and Lesser Grey Shrikes, Rosy-breasted Longclaw, Yellow-crowned Bishop, Jackson's Widowbird, Saddle-billed Stork, Orange-breasted Waxbill, Cardinal Quelea, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Buff-spotted Flufftail, Martial Eagle and several species of cisticolas. Other than that, we might also see Reed Warbler, Lesser Kestrel, Kori Bustard, Eurasian Roller, Spur-winged Plover, Little Stint, Speckle-fronted Weaver, Madagascar Pond Heron and Barn Swallow. At the famous Hippo pools, we will take a walk among the yellow-barked acacias in search of local specialties such as Red-throated Tit, Dark-capped Yellow Warbler and African Moustached Warbler. After spending the full day in Nairobi National Park we return to our accommodation for dinner and our overnight stay.

🏠 **Accommodation: Summerdale Inn**

DAY 3: Mount Kenya

Today we will drive north towards Mt. Kenya where a stop at Thika Blue Post Hotel should produce sightings of Brown-hooded Kingfisher and Trumpeter Hornbill. Our next stop will be at the Mwea Rice Plantation where we hope to see species like Yellow-crowned Bishop, Yellow-mantled Widowbird, Oriole Finch, Winding Cisticola and various species of

aquatic birds. We'll continue to Castle Forest Lodge on the forested slopes of Mt. Kenya, arriving in time for lunch. After a short break we will start our afternoon birding on the main forest road, which is an excellent birding trail where we might see species like Silvery-cheeked Hornbill, Olive and Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeons, Hartlaub's Turaco, Ruppell's Robin-Chat, Mountain Yellow Warbler, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, Red-fronted Parrot, Abyssinian Crimsonwing, Abbot's and Sharp's Starlings, Doherty's and Black-fronted Bushshrikes, Cinnamon, Bracken and Evergreen Forest Warblers, Moustached Green Tinkerbird as well as Yellow-crowned Canary.

🏠 **Accommodation: Castle Forest Lodge**

DAY 4: Mount Kenya and Samburu Game Reserve

Our day will start with early morning birding in the forest before returning to the lodge for breakfast and after checking out we will depart for Samburu National Reserve. Once we pass Isiolo the habitat becomes drier and the Doum Palm becomes the signature tree especially apparent along the waterways. Once we are inside Samburu you will quickly see why this is one of the most exciting reserves in East Africa. An afternoon game drive will produce many of the regional specials including Somali Ostrich, Palm-nut Vulture, the tiny African Pygmy Falcon, Vulturine Guineafowl, Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse, African Orange-bellied Parrot, Violet Wood-hoopoe, White-headed Mousebird, Somali Bee-eater, Eastern Yellow-billed Hornbill, the glorious Golden-breasted Starling, Bare-eyed Thrush, Rosy-patched Bushshrike, Black-capped Social-Weaver and Cut-throat Finch. Back at the lodge we will keep an eye open for Water Thick-knee, Red-billed Hornbill, Grey-headed Kingfisher, Rufous Chatterer and Spotted Mourning Thrush. Eurasian migrants include flocks of Eurasian Hobby, both Nightingale and Thrush-Nightingale, Upcher's and Olivaceous Warblers and Spotted Flycatcher. Other interesting birds in this area include the handsome Buff-crested Bustard, Pink-breasted Lark, Three-streaked Tchagra, the aptly named Shining Sunbird and Somali Golden-breasted Bunting.

🏠 **Accommodation: Samburu Game Lodge**

DAY 5: Full day in Samburu Game Reserve

Today we will have a full day exploring Samburu Game Reserve and will try and find Palm-nut and Hooded Vulture, Bateleur, Martial Eagle, African Hawk Eagle, Crested and Yellow-necked Francolins, Vulturine Guineafowl, Buff-crested and White-bellied Bustard, Black-faced and Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse, Red-bellied Parrot, African Scops Owl, Pearl-spotted Owlet, Somali Bee-eater, Rufous-crowned Roller, Von der Decken's Hornbill, Red-and-yellow Barbet, Bearded Woodpecker, Pink-breasted Lark, African Bare-eyed Thrush, Rosy-patched Bushshrike, Hunter's and Black-bellied Sunbirds, Golden-breasted and Fischer's Starlings, Donaldson-Smith's Sparrow-Weaver, Cut-throat Finch and the stunning Somali Bunting. Samburu is also fantastic for game viewing and we might see Lion, Cheetah, Striped Hyena, the attractive Reticulated Giraffe, Cape Buffalo, Beisa Oryx, the

unusual looking Gerenuk (which means Giraffe-Antelope) and the endangered Grevy's Zebra. African Elephants are particularly common.

🏠 **Accommodation: Samburu Game Lodge**

DAY 6: Samburu Game Reserve and off to Aberdare National Park

We will start with a morning game drive in Samburu looking for any birds and mammals still missing from our list before returning to the lodge for lunch and after checking out we will depart to Nyeri Town which lies at the eastern base of Aberdare National Park. En route we will stop to bird Solio Plains where we might see Jackson's Widowbird, Black-bellied Bustard and a variety of Larks, Wheat-ears, and Cisticolas. Lesser Kestrel are often numerous here and we have a good chance of finding a Greater Kestrel or two. We should arrive at Nyeri by late afternoon.

🏠 **Accommodation: White Rhino Lodge**

DAY 7: Aberdare National Park and Lake Nakuru

After an early breakfast we will be off to Aberdare National Park. Once inside we will make our way into the Aberdare Mountains where a good road will take us above the treeline into moorland habitat. As we ascend through mixed woodland we will look for Jackson's and Scaly Francolins along the roadside. Other interesting birds we might see include Aberdare Cisticola, Mountain Yellow Warblers, Slender-billed Starling, Red-throated Wryneck, Hunter's Cisticola, Mountain Greenbul, Abyssinian Ground-Thrush, Thick-billed Seedeater, African Emerald and Black Cuckoos. We'll stop at the end of the road in moorland habitat above 10,000 feet where Alpine Chat will be common and we'll search patches of Giant Lobelias for the main special - Scarlet-tufted Sunbird as well as Golden-winged, Malachite and Tacazze Sunbirds. By late afternoon we will exit Aberdare National Park and make our way down to Lake Nakuru National Park and we expect to be inside the park by late afternoon.

🏠 **Accommodation: Flamingo Hill Camp**

DAY 8: Lake Nakuru National Park

We will spend the morning in Lake Nakuru National Park, famous for its vast flocks of Pelicans, Flamingos and a wealth of other water birds. In the Acacia woodland around the lake we will look for species such as Narina Trogon, Red-throated Wryneck, Greater and Scaly-throated Honeyguides, Arrow-marked Babbler, Great White Pelican, Great Cormorant, African Spoonbill, African Fish Eagle, African Harrier-Hawk, Hildebrandt's Francolin, Grey-headed Gull, Broad-billed Roller, Levailant's Cuckoo, White-browed Coucal, Green Woodhoopoe, Grey Woodpecker, Black Cuckooshrike, Northern Ant-eating Chat, Grey-backed Fiscal, Brown-crowned Tchagra and African Firefinch. A great diversity of mammals occur in the park and it is one of the few places in East Africa

where the endangered White Rhino can be found. Some of the other mammals we hope to find include Rothschild's Giraffe, Leopard, Buffalo and Deffasa Waterbuck. The Acacia woodland around the lake is especially good for Leopards and they are often found sleeping in the Yellow-bark Acacias. After enjoying lunch at the lodge we will leave the park and make our way to Lake Baringo, a birding paradise. We will stop to look for Silverbird, Black-headed Lapwing and Dark Chanting-Goshawk along the way.

🏠 **Accommodation: Tumbili Cliff Lodge**

DAY 9: Lake Baringo

Today we have left the morning open for a 3 hour boat trip which we highly recommend. We hope to get great photographic opportunities and views of species like Goliath, Green-backed and Squacco Herons, Black-crowned Night-heron, Senegal Thick-knee, Crimson-rumped Waxbill, Malachite, Woodland and Giant Kingfishers, Northern Carmine Bee-eater and many more. The afternoon will be spend birding the cliffs and surrounding dry Acacia scrub where we will look Fan-tailed Raven, Hemprich's Hornbill, Cliff Chat, Brown-tailed Rock Chat, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Mouse-coloured Penduline-Tit, Pale Prinia, White-billed Buffalo-Weaver, Bristle-Crowned Starling, Rufous Chatterer, Blue-naped Mousebird, Abyssinian Scimitarbill, D'Arnaut's Barbet, Red-fronted Tinkerbird, Black-throated Barbet, Nubian Woodpecker, Pygmy Batis, Three-streaked Tchagra, Slate-coloured Boubou, Northern White-crowned Shrike, Northern Brownbul, Northern Crombec, Eastern Olivaceous Warbler, Red-fronted Warbler, Grey Wren-Warbler and Brown Babbler. We will also try to find roosting Northern White-faced Owl, Greyish Eagle-Owl and Three-banded Courser.

🏠 **Accommodation: Tumbili Cliff Lodge**

DAY 10: Off to Kakamega Forest

After breakfast we will travel up the western side of the Rift to Kabarnet and descend into the spectacular Kerio Valley. On rocky hillsides we will search for Green-backed Eremomela and Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver before stopping for lunch in the wooded valley bottom where Brown Parrot, White-crested Turaco, Pearl-spotted Owlet, and Black-headed Gonolek might pay us a visit. A spectacular viewpoint halfway up the valley's western escarpment may offer the localised Boran Cisticola. We will reach our lodge situated deep in Kakamega Forest by late afternoon.

🏠 **Accommodation: Rondo Retreat Centre**

DAY 11: Kakamega Forest

Kakamega Forest is a special place and is home to many birds found nowhere else in Kenya. As always forest birding can be hard work, but with persistence we should find Great Blue Turaco, Blue-headed Bee-eater, Black-and-white Casqued Hornbill, White-

chinned and Banded Prinia, Jameson's and Chestnut Wattle-eyes, Bocage's and Lühder's Bush-Shrikes, Grey-headed Negrofinch, Red-headed Malimbe, and Red-headed Bluebill. Other interesting birds we will try to find include Black-and-white Mannikin, Black-crowned Waxbill, Brown-capped, Forest, Vieillot's and Black-billed Weavers, Chapin's Flycatcher, Eurasian Blackcap, Banded Prinia, Black-faced Rufous Warbler, White-chinned Prinia, Olive-green Cameroptera, Black-collared Apalis, African Blue Flycatcher, Angola Swallow, White-headed Saw-wing, Square-tailed Drongo, African Shrike-flycatcher, Brown and Scaly-breasted Illadopsis, Grey-winged, Snowy-capped, White-browed and Blue-shouldered Robin-chats, Equatorial Akalat, Brown-chested Alethe, White-tailed Ant-thrush and White-headed Wood-hoopoe. Some of the Greenbuls that we might see include Kakamega, Slender-billed, Toro-olive, Cabanis's, Ansorge's and Little Grey. Red-tailed Monkey and Giant Forest Squirrel are two of the mammalian specialties here.

🏠 Accommodation: Rondo Retreat Centre

DAY 12: Maasai Mara

Today we will enjoy an early breakfast before we depart for Maasai Mara Game Reserve in south-western Kenya. The Mara is the northern extension of the famous Serengeti plains. Here we will enjoy a wide assortment of bird life as well as some of the most spectacular game viewing in Africa. Complementing the birding and wildlife are the dramatic scenery of endless grasslands, lush river valleys and steep rock-strewn escarpments. Some of the birds we hope to see include Rufous-bellied Heron, Saddle-billed Stork, Wahlberg's Eagle, Coqui and Red-necked Francolins, Grey Crowned Crane, Temminck's Courser, Wattled Lapwing, Ross's and Schalow's Turacos, Malachite and Woodland Kingfishers, Yellow-throated Longclaw, Rufous-chested Swallow, White-tailed Lark, Familiar Chat, Silverbird, Red-faced, Trilling and Tabora Cisticolas, Green-capped Eremomela, Black-crowned Tchagra, Hildebrandt's and Violet-backed Starlings, Yellow-fronted Canary and Cinnamon-breasted Bunting.

🏠 Accommodation: Mara Leisure Camp

DAY 13: Full day exploring Maasai Mara

Today we have a full day to explore one of Africa's great game reserves. Besides some of the birding specials already mentioned we will also enjoy the excellent game viewing offered in this park. Some of the animals we will try to find include Black-backed Jackal, Bat-eared Fox, Banded Mongoose, Spotted Hyena, Serval Cat, African Lion, Leopard, Cheetah, Bush Hyrax, African Elephant, Common Zebra, Hippopotamus, Common Warthog, Masai Giraffe, African Buffalo, Eland, Steenbok, Bohor Reedbuck, Thomson's and Grant's Gazelles, Impala, Topi, Coke's Hartebeest and thousands of Wildebeest.

We will also see many massive Nile Crocodiles, some over 15ft in length, basking in the sun along the banks of the Mara River.

🏠 Accommodation: Mara Leisure Camp

DAY 14: Final birding and off to Nairobi

After some early morning birding around the lodge we will enjoy breakfast before departing for Nairobi with a few birding stops along the way. We will search Kinangop grassland for Sharpe's Longclaw and the Limuru Oxygenated pond for Maccoa and White-backed Duck, Southern Pochard, Purple Swamphen, Common Moorhen and other water birds. If you are not joining the extension trip you will be transferred to the airport for your outbound flight.

For those joining us on the extension we will drive to our hotel where we will enjoy a good night's rest as we prepare for the exciting 6 days of birding lying ahead of us.

EXTENSION DAY 1: Tsavo National Park

We will spend most of the morning driving southeast to Tsavo National Park. We'll stop at Hunter's Lodge for lunch and a visit with a bustling colony of African Golden Weavers and we may get great photographs of the resident Giant Kingfisher. In the afternoon we'll drive to Sagala Lodge where we hope to find species like Scaly Chatterer, Bare-eyed Thrush, Spotted Eagle-Owl and a variety of Whydahs and Widowbirds.

EXTENSION DAY 2: Tsavo National Park

Tsavo East National Park with its vast savanna lies in semi-arid country at the Eastern edge of the inland plateau, north of the main Mombasa - Nairobi road and railway line. Most of the park is level open country, with scattered rock outcrops. Birdlife is abundant with more than 400 species of birds, 48 species of wildlife and several reptile species are found in the park. We will enjoy a full day of birding and game viewing in Tsavo East National park and look for species such as Crested Francolin, Black-headed Plover, Black-faced Sandgrouse, and Golden-breasted Starling. We also hope to see Crested Bustard, Red-winged Lark and Chestnut-backed and Chestnut-headed Sparrow Larks and with luck we might also see Somali Ostrich, Somali Courser, and Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse. We'll also have our best chance of seeing the Gerenuk.

EXTENSION DAY 3: Sabaki River Mouth and Coastal birding

After a morning in Tsavo we will make our way to the Sabaki river mouth where we will bird in a variety of habitats that include sandbanks, mud banks, dunes and fresh water pools and marshes at the river mouth. The Sabaki is Kenya's second longest river and the state and size of the estuary vary seasonally depending on river water level. Just north and south of the river mouth are grassy dunes that conceal permanent or temporary pools of fresh water. Here we hope to see species like the Sooty Gull, Zanzibar Red Bishop, Greater Snipe, Malindi Pipit, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Whimbrel and a variety of other species like Water Thick-knee, Marsh and Wood Sandpipers, African Spoonbill and Spur-winged Lapwing.

EXTENSION DAY 4: Sokoke Forest

We will spend the next two days birding in the famous Sokoke Forest. Besides being the northernmost *Brachystegia* forest, Sokoke has three near-endemics: Sokoke Scops-owl, Sokoke Pipit and Clarke's Weaver. Other interesting birds found here include Green Barbet, Fischer's Turaco, Black-headed Apalis, Spotted Ground-thrush, Retz's and Chestnut-fronted Helmet-Shrikes, East Coast Akalat and Amani and Plain-backed Sunbirds.

EXTENSION DAY 5: Sokoke Forest

Besides visiting Sokoke Forest we will also visit Mida creek to explore the marine and tidal habitats consisting of inter-tidal rock, sand and mud, fringing reefs and coral gardens, beds of sea grass, coral cliffs, sandy beaches and mangrove forests. A huge variety of birds are found here but we will focus on finding Crab Plover, Terek Sandpiper, Mangrove Kingfisher, Greater Sand Plover and Eurasian Oystercatcher. Other interesting birds here include Little Stint, Eurasian Curlew, Curlew Sandpiper, Lesser Sand Plover, Sacred Ibis, Saunders's Tern, Gull-billed Tern and both species of Flamingo.

EXTENSION DAY 6: Final birding and off to Nairobi

We will enjoy a final morning of birding looking for any species we might have missed before making our way to Malindi Airport for a domestic flight to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport for your international flight connection.

Thank you for choosing Nature Travel Birding.

INCLUSIONS:

- Transportation in either a 4WD Toyota land cruiser or Toyota Mini-van.
- Accommodation on a double sharing basis and on full board.
- Park entry fees
- Airport transfer fees
- Provision of drinking water inside the car only.

EXCLUSIONS:

- International Flights
- Laundry
- Drinks
- Items of a personal nature
- Other unspecified cost in the itinerary.